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Senior Nurse

I started my training at the Bradford Royal Infirmary. We had the lovely old cloaks, with a red felt lining and a red cross across, and a hood. When I worked at St Luke's in Bradford, the wards were in completely separate blocks. When

you moved a patient from one to another in the rain, you had to put a plastic cover over them, but you had your cloak to cover you! I tried to keep one of those cloaks, but they were just too precious.

Later I went to London

to work in paediatric hospitals. I lived in North London with my boyfriend. We used to go to Minogue's Irish Bar after work, and lots of bands used to hang out there. We used to see the guys from The Madness, the Fine Young Cannibals, Dexy's Midnight Runners - they were just locals, so they used to come into the bar for a good time. We also used to get free tickets for lots of concerts in London - whenever there were unsold tickets, they would bring them round to the nurses!

Of course at that time the Thatcher government was selling off all the nurses' homes. So a lot of the nurses lived in pretty grotty bedsits, in

crammed locations. I used to work in St Mary's, which was also in bedsit land. You'd get whole families living in one bedsit.

We were used as a babysitting service sometimes! I remember one time when I was on night duty at the old Paddington Green hospital, just before it was pulled down, a couple came in with a two-year-old boy and said, "We'll come back for him in the morning." I told them he was perfectly fine, temperature normal, they'd have to wait for the doctor. But they just ran off and went out for the night, leaving this little one with me, in a semi-closed-down ward, with just me and one doctor in

the whole place. He was distraught! There were a lot of incidences like that.

I just loved being in London, with everything open all night, galleries, museums, excitement. Now, funnily enough, I live in the middle of nowhere in an old stone cottage where I chop wood for heating - I'd rather either be in a 'real' city, or in the proper countryside.

I've done a Philosophy degree, I can ride a horse, I've done martial arts, I've done silver-smithing...I love going on courses! The Philosophy degree has completely changed my way of thinking - for example, challenging the way we do things in the hospital, finding

a better way. Almost all nurses have degrees now, and I was a fan of that - it makes us more professional - but the most important thing, the caring side, is coming back round now. The student nurses we have now on the wards are just fantastic.

I still go to lots of gigs - sometimes with VIP tickets - so I've met Bombay Bicycle Club, Two-Door Cinema Club, the Young Knives, Pulled Apart by Horses...but when I tell all my work colleagues about them they always say, "Who?!"

