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I've worked in York in the Health Service since 1974, in different organisations. My first job was as a clerical officer in what was then called the Personnel Department, and since then I've worked in lots of administrative and managerial roles in

various departments. In the early days of my career, it was quite easy to move around and change jobs to get experience in different areas - this was a bit of a luxury, it's not like that any more.

In the early 1980s, there was a period of time when a series of industrial disputes took place and a lot of the ancillary staff took strike action. A lot of the porters were out on the picket line. Anybody who had a pair of hands was therefore called on to work as a porter. So we admin staff delivered meals, collected dirty laundry, and even took bodies to the mortuary. My claim to fame is that I drove one of the electric tugs up and down Main Street. Unfortunately for me I put it into reverse instead of going forwards, and took a door off! Actually, that's probably the time that I learned the most about how the hospital ticks.

*"My claim to fame is that I drove one of the electric tugs up and down Main Street."*

If you dig hard enough, there's still a family atmosphere in the hospital. There were lots of characters in the old days - matrons, porters - sometimes people you were a little bit frightened of, that you knew not to "mess" with. I remember one charge nurse, for example. Back then, you could guarantee that when you were moving wards, there would be some Christmas decorations stuffed in the back of a cupboard. The Coop department store always used to have a massive rocking Rudolph

or something similar on its shop front. This charge nurse must have had connections with the Co-Op and he would acquire these Rudolphs and Santas for his ward! They would also bake Christmas cakes on the ward kitchen for the patients and so on. A lot of that doesn't exist any more.

If I am involved in giving a tour of the hospital, I wouldn't necessarily take people to the wards. I'd take them to the Estates department, the kitchens, the medical records department - to let them see all those other facets that make up the work of hospital. Doctors and nurses are vital of course, but all

the army of 'behind-the-scenes' people are all busy knitting their services together too, to create the patients' experience.

In Capital Planning, I've been involved in planning new wings and buildings, refurbishing departments, the multi-storey car park, all sorts of things. These days, I have to look at the plaques from the official openings to remember what we have done as a department.

What a lot of colleagues don't know about me is that I play the ukulele. My husband bought me it as a joke, and I thought, "Oh no, I'm going to have to learn how to play

this thing!" I play with a group called the Grand Old Uke of York that meets every week at The Habit in Goodramgate; we'll play (and sing) just about anything, Country, Rock, popular tunes. We occasionally have "gigs" in York - so sometimes I am spotted in the group and my secret is out!

