

## John Interview: December 16<sup>th</sup> 2015

Interview at Brothers of Charity, Lisieux Hall with Nigel Ingham

(0:01:19.0) John talks about Allan Mayer - worked at Lisieux Hall (LH) for about 20 + years starting roughly the same time as John. AM left about 10 years ago.

John been at LH 28 years.

(0:01:32.8) LH used to be an organisation run purely by the Brothers of C with Catholic Staff. 'It was until the late 80s there was a care provider in Chorley run by some nuns - another Catholic organisation. That was purely for women.' c 30 women at Gillibrand Hall in Chorley. For years the Brothers had LH to become a mixed service. 'Even in the 80s we had the odd parent coming to LH and saying, Could you provide a service for my daughter?... Well no parent wanted their daughter to be the only the only daughter in all male service.' So blessing that late 80s GH closed. No of nuns reducing + no religious recruits. So two services amalgamated and all women from GH came to BoC services. Vast majority to live at LH. So great suddenly a mixed service.

(0:03:04.0) 'When I came there in 1988 there was 160 people who lived here at LH. It was a real hub of activity. It was a real community. Very segregated and quite institutionalised. For instance this building we are in now which is the head office, the reception area and all our administration is in this building. When I first came in 88 there were 60 guys who lived in this house. Upstairs was dormitories... We have a kitchen back at the Brothers' House were all the Brothers live - the community house - and the chef there he would cater for everybody. So meals would turn up on tables that were fully prepared. So nobody knew how to peel a potato, what even a potato looked like... there was a 160 people who lived here. There was people who lived in the flats... Our Ladies + Sacred Heart. People living here on Beech Walk etc. And it was a great place at the time. But even though it was a lovely place you still didn't have any neighbours, you were still excluded, very poor transport links etc. And it did have a sense - because my history before that was in institutions - and it did have that sense of institutional life but on a much smaller scale. And it was a lot nicer - there was a great feel about the place... Then they had 5 houses in the community, and that's when I started then. I started as a Registered Care Manager. Part of my job was obviously to open up new houses in the community and get people moving on from LH. Now I'm pleased to say that we only have about 15 people who live here. and that's specialist support for complex needs either in the nursing home etc. And we have - I think the latest count is 60 houses in the community now... We're talking as far north as Fulwood in Preston then it comes through to Leyland, we've got tenancies in Leyland, Chorley, Euxton, Coppull, down to Adlington. That's what we provide from Lancashire. As well as Lancashire BoC we've got Grter Manchester and Merseyside in North West. But here from

Lancashire we kind of support over 250 people now. Not all of them are supported living or residential care, a lot of them are day care supports, social enterprises that kind of thing, supported employment etc. But a huge change. Because here on site years ago we had a social club., where people using the services they would trained in NVQ to do bar work and all those kind of things, which was great at the time... And you get people just tropsing over and going there for a coke and staying there all night with the one coke, and then coming back at 9 o'clock because you had to be back at 9 o'clock for the hand over and all that kind of stuff - which still goes on to some extent unfortunately. There was a great feel about the place. We had a massive hall. These have been demolished now... Everyone's left LH now (0:06:24.0) And every year we'd put on a pantomime. We'd do variety shows and all that kind of stuff. There was a great feel about the place. And as far as the Brothers are concerned... the Director of Services here has always been a Brother until about 1996 I think it was - Brother Denis Carrins(?) he was the last Brother to direct the service here.' Common to other religious orders - recruitment tailing off, ageing members. 'So for the very first time in the 1990s, the Trustees made the decision that they would pass it on to lay people now.' Since mid-1990s lay people run service. 'Huge changes. But changes for the better certainly. The lives that people are living out there are fantastic. Absolutely fantastic. And right that it should be. (0:07:24.9) At minute 15 people on site, includes 9 in St Edwin's - LH nursing home. People with complex disabilities and need nursing care. Recently opened Woodlands, And opening some respite care as well. Possibly for some people in a place like LH for a short time may be ideal - lovely grounds , get specialist support, safe environment. 'Even the people in the nursing home the support is a lot better now. I'll tell you about the days when I was at Brockhall where you had 2, 3 staff for 30 people you know. It was just crazy! Absolutely crazy situation. But here the staffing ratios are a lot better. People can get out and about. Live a life etc. Do what they want to do. Reach their dreams, aspirations and everything else. Even tho' they are still in a very segregated place, they're very much involved in the community now, which is so different. That's the big turn around really since the 80s when I started.

*(0:08:33.0) So what about the rest of the buildings (on site)? It's quite a big site.*

Discussed where they were sitting - like an old manor house. Wooden panelling. It's the original Crook Hall. Mid - 1930s BoC bought the estate & set up their service. At the back now - horticultural and agricultural units. When first came all the grounds full of cattle, sheep, pigs - 'we had everything'. All the animals taken to abattoir at Walton Summit for slaughter. Fresh meat then sold from LH. No cattle now. Fields rented out to local farmers. Arable or sheep. Horticultural unit at back - maybe open up a garden centre (0:10:01.4) 'But at the back when I started in the 80s there was a woodwork dept, contract room, big laundry - these have all gone. They all moved out into the

community. Printing service. They still have a printing service in Chorley, still operates today. We don't have a laundry anymore. We had a bakery at the back, own baking room. But again that's been transferred out into the community, because some of the social enterprises that we've got now in the community, we've got Rococo Coffee Lounge in Leyland and we've also got the White Marina Cafe in Adlington. These are fantastic social enterprises where people we support prepare all the food, serve all the customers etc. And then hopefully move on to some kind of supported employment or otherwise.' Explains at LH that hall used to be on large grassy area near chapel. Social club building still at back, was an art dept but building kept because could be part of garden centre social enterprise scheme. Chapel on site. Then big community house - Brothers always lived there. 9 Brothers still live on site all retired - incl Br. Denis, the last Director. (0:11:46.7) Sacred Hearts and Our Ladies 2 large buildings made into 4 flats in mid-80s. Prob about 8 people in each flat. Now not support people there. These flats used for offices, and a couple of the Brothers live there as well. Old football pitch. By the drive got Beech Walk and the Bungalows for people who lived on site but now offer specialist support 'for people who struggle in the community'. LH: 'The changes over the years have been phenomenal really.' e.g over 28 years - 5 houses in the community to 60. 160 people down to 14/15. 'People are there in the community, in their rightful place. Thank God.'

*(0:13:38.5) And you came here from Brockhall.*

I didn't actually. I started off my career at Brockhall. That was in the early 80s. I was a graphic designer for a few years in Manchester. And the company went bust. I never thought I'd become a nurse. This was 1981. And I was unemployed for a while. But for a few years I'd gone to Lourdes with disabled children with the Handicapped Children Pilgrimage Trust (HCPT) and we'd just take these kids off to Lourdes for a week's holiday at Easter.

*Were you always very involved with the Church?*

I mean I've been brought up Catholic... I'm not particularly a practicing Catholic. But my parents are devout Catholics. And my dad actually was a headmaster at a mainstream primary school for years. And then he got involved with HCPT looking after the children. And I think because - I'm one of 8 kids - as we were brought up we were kind of brought into this family of people taking these children off to Lourdes for a week's holiday etc. When I was about 16 or 17 I went to Lourdes, because my dad was one of the group leaders of the Manchester groups. So I went off with my dad and the rest of the group to Lourdes. I prob went to Lourdes about 5 or 6 times. Every year up until the early 80s. And in 81, that time when I was unemployed I was thinking, Well what have I really enjoyed? The graphic design job yeah it was good but - And the one thing that kept coming back was that one week in Lourdes at Easter. And thinking just how special that was. And I thought, Well maybe I

should have a go at working with people with disabilities? So I wrote off to Brockhall Hospital to see if they had any jobs... I don't know why I wrote off to Brockhall actually I mean to be honest, because I am sure there are other places around that I could have applied for.

*(0:15:54.4) And where were you living?*

I was in Bolton. Born and bred in Bolton. I think it was through a friend of a friend, who knew someone that worked at B. I heard that - because it was always children, my experience was with children obviously with this week at Easter. I wrote off to B. They invited me in for interview and everything else, showed me round the place, which was just a complete different world. But because of my history of children and that was where I could myself really. Luckily at B they did have a children's unit. They had several wards - I mean there was loads of wards. There was the male side, there was the female side and then there was the pediatric.

*So on that visit - can you tell me more about that? You first impressions?*

(Apologies for poor memory). But I remember coming away and thinking, What have I done really? Is this the place where I really want to live? And work? Because they'd offer you accommodation and everything else.

*(0:17:06.0) Do you remember the interview?*

No I don't really. But I do remember walking into the place. Seeing all these strange characters - who came across as very strange to me because I'd no experience with adults. And just to see the people walking around - I just remember thinking, How disowned you look. Very untidy. Very unkempt. One of the striking things was that no clothes seemed to fit anybody, and I'll never forget that. But I was straight into the office. And then I remember going over to the children wards and just having a quick look round there. Anyway I was offered a job. I didn't particularly want to live at B myself. But they had some flats up at Shadsworth in Blackburn, where some of the employees lived there. So I moved into Shadsworth and shared a flat with 3 other guys who worked at BH.

*(0:18:16.1) What age were you then John?*

That was 1982 so I'd be 22. 1960 I was born... Bought myself a little moped so I could get in to and from Lango to B. I was only at B for 12 months. And I was fortunate, or I consider myself fortunate in the sense that I was working on the children's ward. It was called Lilac actually. Lilac Ward. I think it was Laburnum next door. Sometimes we'd help each other out. And there was prob about 24 children on the ward. But the staffing ratios weren't great but they weren't too bad. We prob had about 5. We had the Charge nurse or the sister and then there'd be another senior member of staff and then prob 3 auxillaries, of which I was one. Some of the children had real complex needs, but some great characters. I even remember them to this day. Funnily enough I was at an event last year and I was sat in this room and I was looking across thinking, God I know him from somewhere.

Where do I know him? And all of a sudden some music came on and he started to tap his hands like (on the side of chair) and straightaway, That's John! Because when he was a kid - Because I always used to joke to him and said, Listen you've got to become a drummer. When you're older become a drummer 'cause your rhythm - because I'm very musical - your rhythm is absolutely amazing mate. And he used to sit in this little chair and he'd beat away to the music - it was always on in the background. But I recognised him straightaway. And that's like again 30 years since I'd last seen him, 30 plus years. (0:20:05.2) Unfortunately B as well with not only with working with the children, because the support was a lot better certainly than on the male side of the hospital. The children were lucky enough to have their school on site as well. There was a school at BH. So a lot of the children from the ward actually went through to the school between 9 and 3. We'd just take them across and then we'd leave them with the school staff. And then come back and there'd prob be about 8 to 10 children at home, if you like, on the ward during the day. And we'd support them, try and take them out as often as possible but obviously transport was always an issue. So most of the days as I recall was just trying to make life the best it can be for people in an actual ward environment.

*(0:21:01.8) And what did that mean?*

It was very similar to some of the stories I've told about LH in the sense that food was always prepared in advance for people. It was brought over again. Even though we had a kitchen on the ward, it wasn't used for any food preparation. We just made drinks in there really. Everything was ready made. You tried to make it as individual for the kids as possible... Because I am sure you have heard about the bundles that were always made up for ppl. And to a certain extent that was done for the kids. And there were certain practices - and I think a lot of it was the attitude of the charge nurse or the sister that what went on in the ward - What freedom you had to make changes or propose any changes. Some of the staff - I'll not say a lot - were more institutionalised than the people who lived at B. It just had to be that routine! It had to be done that way! And they just couldn't see through the fog... Their way of doing things. They'd maybe worked in the hospital for years and years and years and there was just no change in them whatsoever you know.

*(0:22:17.4) So how was that for you?*

Extremely frustrating. And I think that was one of the reasons why I was only there for 12 months. There's a couple of reasons actually - And I'll never forget some days when we'd have 4 or 5 staff on with the kids, we'd get a phone call coming through from one of the Officers saying, On one of the male wards they're short staffed today. You need to send somebody across. And I'd hate that phone call coming through. I remember that. Because I didn't spend many days on the male wards but those days that I was across there it was very, very different. And I thank my lucky stars that I was

with the kids on Lilac or Laburnum. "Cause it was, it was only a few hundred yards away but it could have been a million miles away from each other. The differences were incredible really. And the fact that they were totally unkempt. They'd do the bundles every night. They'd get the trousers, the shirt, the underpants, the cardigans whatever it was, just roll them all up. Nothing fit. Nothing was personalised at all. they were completely stripped of any individuality or any personalisation. Very little for people during the day to go to. They had a kind of contract area, there were was animals, and a few people would drift off during the day. But the vast majority would sit there in a massive day room, with no stimuli. I can't even remember there being a television. There was always music blaring. I remember there was always music. And very little interaction. What staff there was - And some days you'd have, particularly - my experience of the male ward I'd go with many one other auxillary and then another Charge nurse. There'd be like 3 of us. And there could be 25, 30 men that needed some kind of care and support. And you just couldn't provide it in a dignified way really with respect and everything else. And that was the frustration to me, 'cause I'll never forget things like bath nights. Everyone had their bath night. You'd probably get two baths a week. Fantastic! But if it wasn't your night for a bath then you couldn't have one. But it was the way it was done. To be honest it was more like a sheep dip. You'd probably get about six to eight men, undressed, get them in a dressing gown, collectively bring them through to the, what they used to call them 'down the backs'... And that was the big bathroom area, which was huge. It was massive. There was one big bath I remember in the middle of this, and then urinals and then lots of cubicles that only had half sized doors on. So there's no privacy at all. But I remember over the bath there was this shower. And I remember the Charge Nurse with the shower in his hand and these guys would be kind of lined up and as you got closer to the bath you'd be stripped of your dressing gown. You'd stand in the bath. The bath wasn't even full of water. It was an empty bath. But the shower was permanently on. And he'd just kind of rinse them down. And then somebody would kind of like sponge them etc. No time to say, What can you do for yourself? Or any thing like that. You're just told to stand still. Had a wash. Showered out. And then out of the bath at the other end. And somebody'd be there with a towel. Next person stripped off, in, showered down, washed. And then dried etc. But it literally was a conveyance belt. There was nothing personal. There was nothing private. There was no dignity... And it's memories like that that I recall that really questioned, What the hell am I doing here?

*(0:26:17.4) Did you think that at the time?*

Yeah. Several times. What am I doing? This is nothing like Lourdes. This is nothing like what I expected life would be. 'Cause that week at Easter with those kids was amazing. There's just nothing like it = so much fun,, so much adventure. Getting kids - just witnessing over a week period of one to

one attention, just growth and development of those small ppl. It was incredible really. And I was really disheartened by it all but in another sense I was encouraged, because I soon recognised that if you want to make any changes, if you want to make a difference you've got to be somebody. It was only the Charge Nurses that had the authorisation to say, Right OK we'll try it this way or we'll try it that way. So I remember it was the end of my first year where I thought, I need to do something about this. If I want to make this my career I've got to look into doing my nurse training and everything else. so I actually applied at BH and they couldn't provide anything for about 18 months. And I thought, I don't want 18 months here. Doing my head in. So I wrote off to lots and lots of institutions up and down the country, just saying, Have you got a place for me to do my nurse training? Because I want to be a registered nurse. I want to eventually become a Charge Nurse then I can do something. And the first reply I got was from a big institution down in Hertfordshire called Harperbury Hospital. And I went down to Harperbury. That was the May of 1984. And then I started n=my 3 years nursing there, down at Harperbury, And my wife, Sue, who currently works for Brothers of C services, she also started in 1988 so she's also been working here 28 years along with myself. She's a Devon lass and she came up from Devon to H. and we're in the same group and became best of mates, and at the end of the first year we got together and there you go. Yeah spent 5 years in total down at - 1984 to 1988, no 4 years down at H.

*(0:28:36.9) And what do you remember of the training, John?*

Very good. Very daunting. Lots of Deja vues. Lots of, God I'm back at B again. The systems seemed to be nationwide. The routines. There was nothing different about H than there was at B. I'd go on some of the male wards as a student nurse and it was exactly the same. And I'm thinking, Is there a book here that tells that have been in this job for years and years and years that you can not change, that you must do it this way? And it was certainly second, possibly third year where you were kind of listened to a bit more by the old institutionalised charge nurses and everything else. They'd listen to the senior students a bit. Your first year student you were treated just as a nursing auxillary. People wouldn't take on any ideas... But I remember there seemed to be a bit more respect in your second - certainly your third year of your studies.

*(0:29:49.3) And I wonder as well - I talked to somebody who did nurse training at C and he said, well the way he described was they went on the better wards as student nurses, because those wards... were part of the training regime... So he didn't actually witness if you like what you describe as some of the worse wards at C - ?*

I can recognise that to a certain extent... But at H I certainly experienced both. There was one ward - I forget what number it was. It was like Male 6 or something - and I remember there was this Ch/N who was a fantastic guy. I think he came from Sri Lanka or somewhere. But his attitude towards it all

- it was very much, I mean the word person centred and everything else that just wasn't around in the early 80s and mid-80s. But his approach was very much person centred. He did whatever he could to make sure that people had a life, a personality, an individuality... But I remember some wards that I did - even it might have been 2nd, 3rd year training, where it was still very much the old B style of bath nights and no privacy and all that kind of things. Bundles were still being done etc. So people were still walking around with somebody else's clothes on and somebody else's shoes and somebody else's coat... But it's the simple things in life that they just seemed to pay no attention to.

*(0:31:36.1) And when you were at B was that the sort of thing you would talk about with other Nursing Auxillaries or other people that worked there?*

Yeah but I was just kind of shot down because it was such a shock to me and I'd try and say, Well why is it being done like that? Where's the respect? Where's the dignity? Oh no it's got to be done like that. We've got to get through the day. We've got some many jobs to do. There's only three of us. We've got thirty people to look after. That's just the way it's done... I mean I can't remember someone saying, Keep your mouth shut. But that's the kind of sense you got. You weren't in a position - certainly of somebody new - to make any actual recommendations or stuff like that. With the kids it was a little bit better. 'Cause we had a great Ch/N, we had a great Sister, and I still remember her now. And Delia had a really good attitude towards, she wanted the best for the kids. So they were much more open to listening to the people new coming in. But certainly the male wards - The Ch/Ns that I met at BH I can't remember their names, I can't even remember their faces, but I just remember their attitude, and it was 'I don't give damn' attitude. This is a cushy life for me. Most of the time they just spent their time in the office, in the background. You would never seem them. It was always the two or three auxillaries that were absolutely sweating like crazy, just trying to give some time, some care and attention to each and everyone of those guys that had no life in a sense really. That's how it came across to me at the time. I know I was young and I'd never experienced this certainly with adults. But it came across to me as, You really have no life.

*(0:33:26.4) It sounds like your benchmark was this week in the year with these kids - and that was you viewed, that was what you compared what you were seeing -*

Definitely. Absolutely. Absolutely. Those were great experiences. And I'd like to think throughout my career, since I qualified in well 87 we qualified, and then just for 12 months I was a Staff Nurse on one of the wards at H. A good year in the sense that you could make changes. You could make improvements. People would listen. You could get people out and about. You could make sure that they had their own clothes and they were labelled. They had to be labelled. But at least they were their clothes. They were trousers that would fit, they weren't just below the knees, they were round the ankle. And shoes that weren't flying off because they were 10 sizes too big. So even the little

things. I remember one ward actually - it was 9 o'clock, every shift 9 o'clock. All the guys had to be ready in their pyjamas. If it was their bath night they would have had their bath. And they'd be sat in the dayroom. And then the CH/N would - he'd be sat in his office - and he'd have a glass of whiskey in his hand. And for that last half hour, hour of that shift he'd just open up a bottle of whiskey and have a drink of whiskey. Shut his door. Don't disturb me now, you know, I'm finishing my shift now. And I'm thinking, What the hell's going on here? It was crazy. It was crazy... That was H... Probably did happen at B. Like I say the Ch/Ns I came into contact with in the the male wards they would spend all their time in their office. So what they did in there God only knows. But they certainly weren't hands on ppl. They certainly weren't person centred.

*(0:35:43.9) And with B on the Male wards it sound like you're describing neglect in many ways?*  
Yeah.

*Did that spill over into abuse in any sort of form with people that you witnessed?*

I suppose it did. That's what kind of provoked the way that I felt, that this is just crazy. What the hell have I landed myself in? This is not what I signed up for. And it was through seeing people uncared for, unkempt, in their own clothes, not having anything constructive to do during the day. Such a monotonous boring life that people were living day in, day out for - like I say I was there for 12 months. Luckily the amounts of days I had on the male wards I could probably count them on one hand. I wasn't transferred across very often thank God.

*You dreaded that phone call -*

Absolutely. I thought, I really don't want to spend my day, today at work over there. Maybe I should have spent more days over there, maybe the more time I could have spent the more difference I might have been able to make or - But I doubt it very much... I was at B for first year and it was at the end of that first year that I thought, Yeah I need to do something really. It was another 12 months actually before I started my training. '82 I went to B. I left B in '83. Because some of the kids from Lilac - Community Care was coming into force then in the mid-80s. And the hospital for the first time ever were getting on board with this institution and they wanted to open up a home in the community for children. And some of the kids from Lilac that I had supported were transferred out to the community house for kids. Eshton Terrace it was in Clitheroe. That was the first community house. and I was chosen to be part of that team, to be in the community with the kids. And that was a great year. So my first year was at B, my second year was in the community house in Clitheroe. We had 6 children who lived in the house. And then my start date because it was May 84 that I got the date to start my training. So that's when I had to leave Clitheroe and move down south and start my training... Then 87 I qualified, spent 12 mths at Harperbury and me and Sue were engaged by then. We decided that we didn't want to stay down there. We wanted come back up north or go down to

Devon. Prices of property were a lot cheaper up here. All my family were up here. And we said, Yeah let's do that. Let's get married in Devon but let's make a career and let's live up north. So I found the position here at BoC services... Residential Supportive Manager. Live in manager. Got the job in 88. That was March 88. We got married in June. Sue started work for the Brothers as a Team Leader, Senior Support Worker in July 88. And we've never looked back. We're both still here. There's some good reasons why we're still here - they do some great work. They've got a great vision, great values, great ethos. Just something that I empathise with it really and it's kept me here. But 25 years in management was enough for me. So 2, 3 years ago I came out of that. But luckily there was a job on offer with the organisation for advocacy in communications for the organisations. And that's obviously how I met yourself Nigel with Voice for All going to Accrington, being part of the regional forums, and Blackpool conferences and everything else... Very different but very enjoyable.

*(0:39:54.0) Bit of a contrast to the male wards?*

Very.

*... At that point were residents themselves voicing frustrations or expressing frustrations with the regimes they were living under?*

I'm sure there was but I think people just saw it as behaviour. Looking back I am sure that a lot of the behaviours we witnessed and that were exhibited was the environment. It was all the factors. The fact that it was structured. There was no choice. Because you kind of put yourself in those shoes and you think, God if I had to get up and get dressed and put somebody else's clothes on that didn't fit me and sit in a room all day long with no attention, no stimuli - no wonder people behaved in certain ways. And for those that really did communicate in that way, that was seen as aggressive, violent and everything else, they're either drugged up to the eyeballs. We did have padded rooms. I remember one at B. There was certainly one at H that for my liking was used far too easily. It's a big part to play. As we know now, as experienced nurses and everything else you know what kind of impact - even ppl's approaches, ppl's attitudes, your environment can have on behaviour. And looking back to the way that people had to live their life and had no choice about it, no wonder you've got people with major issues. And maybe it is their normal way of communicating that I'm not happy with this.

*(0:41:51.8) And what was health care like?*

At B I remember - I think for the first 3 months I thought he was a patient. And then I had been at B for about 3 months and somebody said. You do know who that is, don't you? And I think his name was - he was the hospital doctor. And I think it was Doctor Dunkin. Dunkin rings a bell. And he was just as unkempt, if not worse than a lot of the people that we were supporting. He always had this long dirty mac on. And this really unkempt beard. And you'd see him wondering round and I just

presumed that he was somebody who was receiving supports from the institution! He was the guy. And it was on one of these occasions where I was at one of the male wards that he came into the ward. And he had this little bag with him. And he disappeared into this room and then next minute he's pulling out this syringe and injecting somebody with something. and I'm thinking, What the hell - Who is it? That's Doctor Dunkin. He's been here years, been years. You could tell he'd been here years. I can't remember, certainly from the male side of things - I mean the kids' health care was - again I've no strong memory of it all, but in a way maybe that's a good thing, because I don't remember people being particularly unwell or unkempt, certainly not ill treated. and obviously the likes of Delia etc they were nurses, they would give a lot of the care themselves. But a lot of the kids they had a purpose every morning. They'd go to school, they'd go and learn. We'd try and organise outings and trips. It was a very different life, like I've said before, 300 yards apart but you could have been worlds apart.

*(0:44:12.0) Did B have a hospital at that point? Did it have some medical unit?*

I think it did. I can't recall. But I think it did... (Jokes about memory!) But it was those early days experience that really got me to where I am today really. 'Cause I never thought I would become a nurse and UI would have social care as my career, 'cause I am very musical, I'm very artistic and I love that side of the gifts and skills that I've got. But it was just I think that - obviously HCPT and Lourdes etc - but that first 12 months at B I think I was so taken back and astonished and astounded and thinking, If that's the only way you can try and make a difference then do something about it John. It's that little voice in the back of your head. Let's go for it! Let's go and get trained and see if it is for me.

*(0:45:17.4) And what were your shifts at that time?*

12 hour shifts... 4 days. 12 hours. 8 'til 8. Eight in the morning 'til eight at night. 4 days a week. And by 8 o'clock you'd have to have the kids ready for the night staff. And the kids weren't ready at 8 o'clock in the morning. The night staff didn't repay the same gesture.

*(0:45:53.4) Did you just work on days?*

Yeah I didn't do any nights. Certainly not at B. Obviously in your training you do. You do the whole spectrum. But at B no, with the kids or either on the male wards. It was just a straight 12 hour shift. 4 days a week.

*N explains project about B and C. What about the relationship with C?*

Some of the people who worked at B they'd either worked at C or - So I had heard all about it. I never actually went to C. I've never experienced C. There was a lot of negative things said about B but as I recall there were more negative things about C. C seemed to have this kind of - people seemed to have an attitude that it was worse from B for whatever reasons, a lot more challenging

people I seem to recall people were saying that lived at BH. Because I think B (I think JW means C) had a school of nursing as well because when B said they can't do an intake for 18 months I must have applied to C as well. But there was a reason I ended up in Harperbury and that was the fact they were the first ones to come back really to say, Yeah we can offer you training next May... I've no experience of C at all.

*And when you say people thought this of C were these people in B that thought this of C?*

Yes staff and colleagues at B that I was working with.

*And were these people that had worked at C as well?*

I presume so to pass on those kind of comments. Whether it was just hearsay I honestly don't know. Whether there's a bit of competition, rivalry between the two I really don't know. My time there was so short really. Last night I was trying to think - think back to B! At first you think, God I can hardly remember anything! Then I got into conversation with Sue about Harperbury. Talking about H and our shared experiences down there brought a bit more back about B because I just remember, God yeah! Some of the practices - that was at B. Like the sheep dip baths, and the bundles, food catered for you. So you were never in the kitchen, never had an opportunity to prepare a meal, or make a brew even I don't think. I can't even remember somebody going in the kitchen to make their own drink, for God's sake.

*(0:49:02.6) And with food and drink - thinking particularly of the male wards - did people eat and drink together, like staff and residents?*

No! No God forbid. No. And even I think, people I would say that given a bit of time and attention would have been able to feed themselves but I just remember, I have this memory, and it happened to a certain extent with the children as well, is that people would just be fed. And I actually remember some people not being fed very nicely, food was rushed. Huge spoonful's put into ppl's mouths. Swallow! Swallow! Open! Yeah - sad. (pause) I seem to have a memory of - it was on one of the male wards - of somebody pouring the tea over the cornflakes. I remember it was a CH/N. He came through while we were feeding breakfast and he said - somebody was going to be late for something, or had to be somewhere else - and I remember him getting the tea pot, putting the cornflakes in the bowl, getting the tea pot, pouring the tea over the cornflakes and then a bit of milk, and thinking that'll speed up the process. And it's little things like that that just like - !! You know. Another day thinking, God! What is this?! What is this? Yeah people were rushed. It's not an excuse but the staffing ratios were horrendous. You could only do what you could. I remember coming back from a 12 hour shift, particularly on the male wards, just physically drained. Absolutely shattered. Thinking, Thank God I'm not working tomorrow. Because you just physically needed that rest, because it was constantly, constantly on the go. You know when you've got thirty men to kind of

care and support, a lot of which were doubly incontinent, needed feeding, could do very little for themselves. Ch/N would be sat there in the office. So you'd be calling him under your breath. But you just get on with it, but that was how it was. Thank God we've changed. Never may we go there again. God forbid! In this day and age it's a bit frightening that it might slowly creep back to some extent but hopefully not.

*(0:52:14.2) You saying there about it being physically demanding... The way you're describing it John it sounds so emotionally demanding.*

It was. I think because it was just so - If you could have the attitude that it's a job and it's just got to be done, and do it, I don't think I would've been as drained. Because it was just my whole upbringing and my attitude to life and people that I struggled so much with that in the fact that you couldn't give people time, you couldn't give people you know life that I think mentally it was just so much hard work because it just didn't feel right. You did your best but at the end of the day - I never drove home on that moped once I think, thinking, What a great day today. Certainly not from the male wards. I did from working with the kids. It was always, Thank God. That day's over. Please don't let that phone ring tomorrow. Or, Please don't ask me. Because it was, it was worlds apart. Worlds apart.

*... One of the things you started off with was your memory of John, the child, with the music. And you said about your interest in music. So did you get a chance with the kids to - ?*

With the kids I did. Yeah. I play guitar. I play piano but I've never had lessons so it's always by ear really. The guitar definitely. Music - I can't ever remember taking the guitar into B. But I remember my guitar lived at Eshton Tce. In the community house with the 6 kids. We'd have kind of musical evenings and stuff like that. I'd do a lot of artwork and paint with the kids... I remember a massive mural I painted in the lounge. They wanted a mural of all this jungle scene. I mean you try and put your talents and your gifts to good use. Honestly Nigel I can't think of ever taking the guitar into - why I didn't I don't know why. But I can't remember that. But music was always - like I say there was always music on in the background. And again - was that institutional behaviour? Because from morning 'til night the radio was always on... I think even with the kids. They must have had a television. I've no recollection of sitting down watching (a video), but there's always this music in the background. But yeah every day I would come in and as I was walking through the door you'd hear the music and the next thing that would come to your mind was (rhythmic tapping on chair) There's John! You know he'd be tapping away, just drumming away! He's have a big beam on his face. And he's always move his head a little bit, like Stevie Wonder... And we'd sing together and stuff like that...

*(0:56:14.7) And the kids that went to the school, do you know what they would do?*

I never got to stay at the school with the children... We'd take them across there, just walk across. do a very, very quick handover if there were any health issues or anything that we needed to pass on to the staff at the school. And then we'd come back to the ward... I think they came back at lunchtime actually... But it was standard kind of 9 'til 3 education... It was only a very small unit, the school, very small. It was like a pre-fab building.

*(0:57:08.1) And I'm thinking about that time - early 80s, early to mid-80s - there was, in general terms around institutions there was a slightly opening out. You were talking about the children moving out to Clitheroe but in some places there was more people coming into the hospitals as well and doing things - were you aware of anything like that? I mean other professionals coming and say doing stuff with the kids or - ?*

I can't recall that at all. Not for that 12 months I was there.

*I mean the way you're describing it, it was quite closed -*

It was closed - yeah. Certainly closed. Certainly for the older people in B. I can never remember any of the guys actually going out of that institution into the community, into the wide world. I've not one memory of any of the guys going out.

*What do you mean leaving or just going - ?*

Just going out - to a shop or to the seaside, whatever, to a pub for a pint. No recollection at all of that.

*And would there have been locked wards at that time John?*

Yeah. There would have been. Certainly. I can't remember whether any of the wards that I worked on were locked. But there certainly were locked wards. Yeah. and you would have either the Staff Nurse or the Ch/n with a massive bunch of keys on their belt. You'd hear them jingle. You'd hear them coming. Yeah there was a few that - a couple that I can think of that thought they were the bees knee - because I've got the keys on my belt. You've got to go through me for EVERYTHING. That kind of attitude. I'm actually sensing the smell at the moment - of the wards. Urine, very unpleasant smell. Yeah not good days Nigel. Not good days. And it was the typical day room. Chairs just pushed up against the walls. Radio on in the background. Crimpolene clothes. I think the trousers were all elasticated waist bands with no zip.

*(0:59:59.1) And what were the sleeping arrangements like?*

Just dormitories. Rows of beds.

*... Were there any dividers between the beds?*

No dividers. Open. Just rows of beds. I think they may have had a bedside locker. And then we had a cupboard right at the end, where you'd have - just label it all - shirts, trousers, socks, underpants, jumpers. But they're all piled on top of each other. And then that was your last job before you went

off at night, before you finished your shift, you'd go to the cupboard. Most of the guys were in bed at that time. 8 o'clock at night. Certainly those that needed support would be in bed. Then you'd do your bundles before you left. You'd go to cupboard, get a pair of trousers, and you'd try and think, Now will that fit? But you just rolled them all up. Left it at the end of the bed. Signed off. That was it. (Pause) I'd like to say, Happy days. But I can't.

*It just sounds like the way you're describing it it was a very difficult place for you to work. But actually what you did was think, This is not what I want to do. And I want to make a difference. Definitely.*

*I can't do it like this so I have to do something to do that.*

Definitely

*(1:01:26.9) But it's also interesting hearing you talk that you had that opportunity almost with the B connection to move out with the kids, so there was at least that next year where you were with the kids on this new venture.*

Absolutely. Oh! I remember the delight when I got offered the post. Because a lot of the staff on both Lilac and Laburnum from the two houses, most of the kids that went to Eshton they from the actual paediatric unit that I worked on. I think 4 out of the 6 were from the ward - so I was very familiar with those 4 children. And then there was 2 kids from next door who again we did support now and again. But I think the staff from both teams really wanted this opportunity to be a part of this and I just remember being thrilled when - And we had a great team of support staff. Delia who was the Ch/ns Sisters on Lilac, she got the post of being kind of the team leader for the new project, and going out with the kids. And Trish, Naisha(?) I still remember them all, Nicky, Gary, these were all the staff I remember. I only spent 12 mths of my life with them, but it was a great 12 months. But the difference to the kids was incredible. Absolutely incredible. To be in that small family unit with neighbours on a street with shops and life around, it was fantastic. They had their own transport. We had our own little minibus. Yeah those were happy days.

*(1:03:18.3) And how were the neighbours?*

As I recall - I can't visualise them or remember them but I certainly don't remember any conflict or - I seem to think that an awful lot of work was done in preparation, because it was a detached house, it needed a few adaptations doing to it, because Lee - one of the guys we supported, one of the kids - had spina bifida and he was in a wheelchair. Because I remember we'd go on the occasional visit before we actually moved in, but it was quite early on. 'Cause I remember building work being done. I would imagine by the time the children were ready to make it their home that the neighbours would be fully aware and a lot of work would have been done in trying to get them on board. But I certainly can't remember any conflict. I just remember it being a lovely place to work. A lovely home

for the kids. A nice community. We used to work into Clitheroe with them and take them here, there and everywhere in the minibus. (Pause)

That's great John. Thanks.

You're bringing a lot of memories back here Nigel! Some of them are great, Some of them are - No never forget. Because you don't want to go there again.

*... It's a mixture of memories.*

(1:05:05.0) Oh I'll tell you another thing. I remember a question that I once asked when I was at B. Saying, Why is everyone carrying things with them? I'd noticed that a lot of the older guys. They'd have these carrier bags. And everyone would be walking round with either one carrier bag, two - You'd even see people with 5 or 6. I'd think, Where are they going with all that? I mean you obviously soon realised that these were people with their life possessions and what they were carrying around is their life. and they ain't going to leave it back in the ward because they know that if they did it'd be gone. We had a guy here actually, at Lisieux Hall. He came from B or C and same thing. Carrier bags. Came to live on Beech Walk. And you'd see him with 3 or 4 carrier bags. And he'd have them for weeks and weeks and weeks. And no matter what you said or did you just couldn't get him to comprehend the idea that you can walk out of your front door with nothing in your hands. You can leave those behind that door, which is now locked. Your bedroom, because you've got your own bedroom key. That space is yours. It's private. If you leave those bags there when you come back they'll still be there. But then you start to go on that journey don't you? Well let's just take one thing out the bag and let's just leave that there. See if it's there tonight. Then you take two items out. Then you leave a bag. You've still got two or three but over a period of time he's eventually just carrying the one bag. \_And then eventually no bags. It's that process that people have to go through. Just to get that understanding that it's safe at home. You can leave it. It's all right. Crazy.

*(1:07:00.6) So deeply engrained isn't it?*

Crazy. Yeah.

*(Thanks John) Is there anything else that you want to add... ?*

There are no other recollections that come to mind...

*...Who was in charge at B at that time?*

Couldn't tell you. There was this management team that you never get to see... I had my own - I'm just trying to think of the title. An officer of some sort but I can't remember his title now. But we had this kind of Area Officer. I remember mine - a guy called Phil. Great guy. He managed the children's side of it all... He was called Phil Donnelly... He died quite young as I recall. I think I was at

Harperbury or just soon after that I heard that he'd died young. But he had a great attitude. I had a lot of respect for that guy.

*It sounds like as well as Phil, you've talked about Delia - there were these people who did have a bit of clout, a bit of power, who made an impression on you.*

Yeah. Absolutely. Definitely. And its funny, well it's not funny, because I mean people who do have an impact, an impression you do remember them. I can't think of one of the Ch/ns or even the Staff Nurses on those male wards. I wasn't there much. Even from Harperbury I struggle to remember many of the people who were in a position to make a difference. There you go.

*John thank you so much for doing this.*

Pleasure.

...

(End: 1:10:27)