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| **Then and now- what people have told us** |
| **Then – the national picture** | **Now** |
| In 1949, there were 11,735 full time equivalent hospital doctors in England and Wales, including 3,488 consultants | By 2018 there were 109,509 full time equivalent medical and dental staff, including 46,297 consultants, in England. |
| In 1949, there were 68,013 registered nurses in hospitals in England and Wales. | In 2018, that number stood at 320,422  |
| There were 5,637 midwifery staff in 1949 | By 2018 there were 26,519  |
| In 1963 there were 22,159 GPs in England and Wales, 19,951 of whom were male and 2,208 of whom were female. | In 2018 there were 41,693 GPs, 17,366 male and 21,736 female  |
| **Then- in the views of former staff.** | **Now** |
| We had to empty sputum pots and wash them out | Disposable items, pre-packed. |
| Bedpans were stainless steel; but there was a washer for these |
| Bandages were washed, dried and re-used. They were often tangled. Cadet nurses job was to roll them up |
| Syringes were glass and had to be washed and sterilised manually before use |
| Patients smoked on the ward. Nurses had to empty the ashtrays and clean them out | Strict no smoking policies within the hospital, and other health premises |
| During surgeries, the anaesthetist would pop out for a crafty ‘fag’ |
| Meals were served on a trolley, and where kept piping hot through a ‘bain-marie’ system. They smelt tasty and appetising. Meals were served to the patients by the nurses, so there was some choice. They were very much appreciated. | Meals centrally prepared in kitchens, and are pre- plated. |
| Cadet nurses were involved in preparing food – and food was home cooked using fresh produce – cadet nurses had to pod peas and stone damsons in the kitchen |
| Nightingale wards – people enjoyed the company. A small number of nurses could keep an eye on a large number of patients, especially at night | Bays and smaller rooms. Some people prefer their own room, but some – particularly older people may like the company.Harder to nurses to monitor people when in small rooms and bays |
| Monitoring was all manual – watching and listening | Electronic systems |
| All ward staff- including domestics were answerable to sister; who in turn answered to matron.‘***Nothing got missed!’*** | Employed by the hospital; or by contractors – for example domestics |
| Employed by the Health Authority |
| The progression was – Cadet nurse to student nurse, to staff nurse, to sister. By the third year of training, you were on the wards; you started with making beds. | Nursing now a degree level profession |
| For a nurse, the focus was on care, nursing was about food, comfort, looking after the patients. |  |
| Strict hierarchy, based on earned respect |  |
| Strict dress code – full uniform or mufti  |  |
| There were annual dances – permission had to be requested for partners to attend; and they had to be formally introduced to matron |  |
| Home deliveries, with placenta and other items burned on the open fire, or buried in the garden | Hospital births, and strict clinical waste procedures |
| For a home birth, ladies were told to iron newspaper to ‘sterilise’ it, and use this to lie on |
| Hospital barber visited daily to shave any gents needing this help. |  |
| People were often in hospital for a long time | People in and out quickly |
| **The darker side** |  |
| The hours were long, and days off rare. You finished when the work was done. For example – one night off in a run of 14 nights. |  |
| There were instances of staff being molested by other staff; young, often naïve women struggled to report or action this. Nothing was said; but some staff had a bad reputation. | Safeguarding protocols; behaviours seen as acceptable and staff offered protection and support |
| Nurses lived in, especially trainee nurses. Control extended to this; rooms inspected daily; and personal belongings removed if not thought to be appropriate – examples included books, and a plug. |  |
| In the nurses accommodation, there was one bathroom for over 30 women |  |