



## **Mental Health: Lennox Castle**

### *Institutional Clothing*

I recollect certainly as a young nursing assistant, and as a student nurse, that there was no personalised clothing. There were a few residents usually very very able people, who arguably shouldn't be living in a hospital in the first place, who would have had personalised clothing. I think some of the guys who lived in the huts, would probably have personalised. But the vast majority of the people that I worked with, there was no personalised clothing. You would go in the morning and you would fill up a trolley with socks, pants, underwear, shirts and the famous battle dress.

Yes. Undoubtedly one of the skills you had to have.

Was to match.

Yes. Was to choose the right, or tend to choose the right size of clothes for the residents.

Yes. And in actual fact when I came back to work in the hospital after training as a general nurse, which would be round about 1980, which isn't that long ago. Then it was exactly the same on the female side of the hospital. So there was no personalisation, real personalisation. And that came along. You think that probably just over a generation ago. The perversity of that, that folk didn't even have their own clothes. They would have had clothes, but they would be for special occasions. And they would have been locked up. They would have been in the lock up, or Fort Knox, as it was often called. And that they would be used for special outings, or for maybe folk to go to Church or whatever. And they wouldn't have access to them.

Certainly the children's ward, the clothes were slightly better. But the institutional clothes that they wore all the time, except 'Oh so and so's visitor is coming up today, better get these clothes on.' And they wore decent clothes then.