

NHS/ Salisbury Hospital Celebratory Service

Paula B Stanic

We Celebrate - Salisbury Cathedral

26th June 2023

CHARACTERS

Eli, (A Volunteer in Archive)

Alex, (A Volunteer for the Hospital Radio)

Jesse, (Volunteer Ward Support/ Buddie)

To celebrate the service through the eyes of its volunteers and others in hospitals we don't immediately see/ think about.

PART 1.

Jesse Fifth of July, nineteen forty eight.

Eli First of March, nineteen forty three,

Alex Twenty-seventh of July, nineteen fifty-three

Eli An archive volunteer appreciates moments from eighty years

Alex A radio Odstock volunteer, digs in to seventy years - well what can be found of it.

Eli Where do you start?

Alex In the beginning there was Paul Mullins.

Eli The army hospital, the last patient leaving the old infirmary.
The first CT scan, test tube baby, liver and lung transplant?
The massive vaccination rollout?

Alex Paul was completely obsessed with radio. His wife ran the Cliff Richard fan club

Eli Our archives hold images, letters, books, instruments, recordings things that present pictures of what should be remembered.

Alex Paul introduced the original radio logo - Oddie the Octopus

Eli An archive bursts with stories so we can tell just how much there is to celebrate.

- Alex We started with records bussed to the studio, played and bussed back to Suttons record shop. Now it's all digital, We broadcast live and recorded, through the hospital and beyond. Always with what will be good for patients and staff in mind. As well as what we like to do.
- Eli I love piecing together personal stories to go with what we have. The 70's photos of sunbathing nurses or staff under hair dryers posed to encourage new recruits into the profession.
- Alex There's a passionate community of us here covering many types of music alongside, interviews and a bit of play.
- Eli This grandson brought in a portrait of his grandmother in her nurses uniform. The family must've been very proud to get her portrait painted. He gives us his grandma's letters, some early photos of her and of her colleagues and pals in crisp uniforms and later images of them all looking, a little more worn. He can't hold on to everything so he's kept his favourites and now offers the rest as a record for anyone who wants to see. His grandma was a real person, a working nurse, not a famous one, so it's something that she's preserved here. These individuals that give a tiny glimpse into another time, that's what I love.
- Alex The service is full of People who want to do something.
- Eli The service is made up of people that want to do their best. No, it doesn't always work out, but mostly people try.
- Alex He wanted to be a presenter since he was five. In the mornings getting ready for school he hoped for the adventures promised in his morning bowl of Frosties. That's till radio 1 - previously in the background, leapt to the forefront of his consciousness. Radio had him, with Its playful pop, lyrical hip-hop and hard rock, but mostly its bantering DJ's chat had him hooked. At school he'd go walking around the playground with a hand outstretched like it was holding an imaginary mike to interview people. As a socially awkward child with cerebral palsy, the thought he could be social in that studio just stunned him. Now he's one of our presenters. It's a passionate community.

- Jesse Twenty, twenty-two was something else wasn't it? After the stillness of the previous two years, to see everything open, an moving again, returned, but not forgotten - not by most anyway. If you can't be better after all that who are you? I think I wanna be better. Everything was quite planned out without much thinking before - I'll go on studying, get a traineeship, then a full time post somewhere. Then when 2020 interrupted the plan, and nothing fell back to what it might've been, I realized I had to think again. I'd never thought about the NHS. I'd always avoided any thought of hospitals, I mean yeah, you see this intense adrenalin in shows like Casualty or Grey's Anatomy and it looks tempting. You see the camaraderie and you consider it for a week and move on. But then comes the pandemic. What's important just changed.
- Alex Sometimes we have groups of young people up to look round the studios, they peer into the job of a presenter and have a go. After the initial shock of a disc that goes on a turntable and makes sound, you see excitement across their faces, hear it in their chatter, it's something else.
- Jesse I just want a purpose?
- Eli Alongside care, the pioneering breakthroughs, research, treatments, the discoveries, innovations, the strides back and forward, are all these people, raising funds, providing services of all kinds, giving time for whatever the hospital needs.
- Jesse I saw the call out and volunteered to help at one of the vaccination centres and it felt magic – the cathedral... The queuing and the music, and that feeling of us all being in this unforgettable moment and pushing on. Admiring our health service workers, who they are and what they do. Volunteering at the hospital was the next step for me.
- Alex I explain to our visitors, we're run by people who love music, love the radio station for what it does. They do this alongside full or part-time jobs. You see the expression change in their faces - they realise the value. And no one wants thanks. But it is something when someone respects the value. Our hospital radio station has run for seventy years by people recognizing that, sharing their love and having fun.

Jesse I knew the experience of volunteering at the vaccination centre would probably not be replicated helping on a ward an afternoon a week. But it didn't matter. I watch staff just constantly moving between patients, shifts, meetings, monitoring, examining notes, administering medications, and that's just the bit I see. Seeing it, I'm in such awe. I just came to help till I do something else. But then, I started looking forward to this feel it gives me. Peace?

Alex I lost my father at the hospital - so at first it was difficult thinking about coming back inside - because of what it meant. But I did a one off and it wasn't so bad, what I was there for felt far more important than my feelings. So I came back. It's my thank you.

PART 2.

Jesse Seventy five years.

Eli Eighty years of our hospital.

Alex Seventy years of our hospital radio station

Eli Though the archives go back far further.

Alex From three broadcasts a week - in nineteen fifty three, to twenty four hours a day, three hundred and sixty-five days a year – and always run by volunteers.

Jesse I look forward to going in.

Eli Everywhere has its problems.

Jesse I'm asked if I'll be in during strikes. There are accusations of doing what someone skilled should be paid for, but we're helpers, not substitutes for qualified staff.

Alex One of the S's are prominent in sentences concerning the service - Stress, severe staff shortages and now strike.

Jesse I hate that they have to, but I support striking.

- Alex On top of re-organisation, waiting lists, ambulance waiting times, inquiries and more...
- Jesse A crisis in staffing is the problem, not me. I respect the staff too much to do anything I think might hurt them.
- Alex But we're here to focus on things our listeners can escape into.
- Jesse We're here to celebrate
- Eli Medicine, healthcare, history the strides to offer more.
- Alex It's a joy, even when patients keep requesting the same Abba track or - Daniel O'Donnell
- Eli What it was, where it's come too and who brought it to where it is today. We discover more about our hospital every year.
- Alex I see people at their best.
- Jesse You see people at their lowest and highest.
- Eli Artists using their skills to help with staff and patients well being.
- Jesse I have fed patients. I've even sung to a couple of them. They ask because I look like I have a nice voice apparently. I listen. I read. I sit so they know someone's there. I take requests and pass them to the radio station. Had a couple of songs dedicated to me too.
It's satisfying, even when I see someone's seriously ill. I didn't think I'd be good at that. Being here has shown me a few things, I'm better than I thought.
- Eli From the pioneering four theatre operating unit with its no hands intercom in '66 to the bright new children's unit with its ultra modern clinical area in 2011.
- Alex We reach out to cheer people up.
- Eli We preserve so people see and remember
- Jesse The NHS looked after us when we needed care and now I give back in my way.

Alex It's good to remember.

Eli The care. The staff. The wards. The facilities. The services.
The communication. The care... We hold a collection that
tells so many stories that are a tribute and tell me why we
should care.

Alex ...There was a lovely young lad, Graeme, he loved the station,
loved the studio. He trained with us from the age of fifteen on
the children's show and became a really good presenter in his
late teens. Graeme died in a car crash, he was only twenty-four.
His family funded the installation of our vinyl library, and last
year they did a sponsored walk to raise funds for us because
they know how much he loved being in the studio.
And I say this as my last words about the station, because it
reminds me how - you really see people at their best working
here. And that's what I want to celebrate.