

**The BRI Inquiry into Paediatric Cardiac Services in Bristol 1984-1995**

**Lorna Wiltshire's Comments on the Statement of F V Thomas**

1. I have been invited to comment upon paragraph 17 of the statement of Fiona Thomas dated 17 May 1999.
2. I can confirm that I took over the position of Nurse Manager for the Cardiac Unit at the BRI to cover for Julia Thomas' maternity leave. This was at the beginning of April 1990 and I covered this position until Julia's return later in 1990. I always knew my time as Nurse Manager for the Cardiac Unit was for the fixed period of Julia Thomas' maternity leave.
3. I would agree that the period was a difficult one for the Unit. The Unit was used to having Julia around and it was difficult for me as I was not so up-to-date as other, more experienced, members of staff, on the Unit. My role was less clinical and more management orientated. We were coming up to the election and it was clear that there were going to be changes in the Unit with the change at the BRI to Trust status.
4. I would not say that I had a difficult working relationship with Mr Wisheart. Mr Wisheart speaks his mind and so do I. Occasionally we disagreed, but I do not believe this was any more or less than any other person in that type of working relationship.
5. Some babies or children did remain on ICU for a long time and this can make it very difficult for nursing staff in ICU. Whilst they were trying to do their best for the child, they are also trying to do the best for the relatives. It is a difficult working environment. In addition, there was pressure from other consultants for beds to be made available for their adult patients.
6. The Summer of 1990 was very hot, and I can remember that someone gave some money to the Unit to buy fans, as with all the electrical equipment there is in an ICU area, the working environment was hot.
7. During my time on the Unit, the 12 hour shift system was trialed for nursing staff. Before I arrived the Unit had carried out their research and were very keen for this to take place.

8. I knew Julia planned to return to the Unit and I knew that my time as their Manager was limited. I was sad to leave the Unit and the team but I was pleased to see Julia back. It was a steep learning curve for me making the move to a post which was predominantly a management role.
  
9. I did not return to my former position as that post no longer existed. I became an Assistant Manager within general surgery looking after the surgical out-patients department.

Signed *Lorna Wiltshire*

LORNA WILTSHIRE

Dated *27<sup>th</sup> July 1999*