

Date: 29.09.16

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Media Release

48 and out – long-serving RUH employee hangs up his boots

Sports-mad teenager Alan Winsley faced a difficult career choice when he left Bath Art School in 1968 – take a steady office job he'd been offered at the Royal United Hospital, or try to become a professional footballer.

He said: "I was a midfielder with Larkhall Athletic and Odd Down – I like to think I was a bit of a Bobby Charlton-style player – and was scouted by Plymouth Argyle who offered me an apprenticeship. But my father wanted to have a 'proper job' and warned that if I chose football I'd only end up cleaning boots. He convinced me – and probably it was the right move – but I still regret it a bit now because in my heart I loved my football."

It turned out to be a good decision to join the RUH because this week (Sept 29) Alan, who's just celebrated his 65th birthday, retired after 48 years, one of the longest-serving members of staff.

Hospital Chief Executive James Scott presented him with a cheque and a certificate and said: "Alan really deserves a medal for his 48 years of service. Thank you for helping the hospital for so long - many congratulations and all our best wishes for your retirement."

Alan was born in Midsomer Norton and lived in Larkhall with his parents, and later with his family in Colerne. He now lives in Chippenham.

His NHS career began as a medical records filing clerk at the RUH in 1968. He worked his way up the career ladder to department manager before re-training as a hospital computer analyst in the 1990s, a role that saw him design and implement the Trust's first hospital computerised patient administration programme. He was also responsible for training many hospital staff on new computerised systems.

Since 1995 he's worked in the Clinical Coding department, a vital service that makes a computer record of a patient's stay in hospital, from admission to discharge. It converts the information into alphanumeric codes that the NHS then uses to set resource-management targets and receive reimbursement for treatment and care. He retires as team manager.

Alan said: "I've really enjoyed my career. I've worked with many dedicated people and hope I've done my bit over the years to help staff and patients here at the RUH."

Alan, a grandfather of three, plans a busy retirement with his beloved sport a major interest. He follows Premiership football – still a Leeds fan from their 1970s heyday – and is a passionate Somerset cricket supporter. He's also keen on the study of marine life and has a large aquarium at home. "It's a fascinating hobby. I absolutely love it," he said.

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