

## **Mabel Cooper**

### **The Hospital: First Impressions**

When I first went in there even just getting out of the car you could hear the racket. You think you are going into a madhouse. When you first went there you could hear people screaming and shouting outside. It was very noisy but I think you do get used to them after a while because it's like everywhere that's big. If there's a lot of people you get a lot of noise, and they had big dormitories, didn't they? And the children were just as noisy, in the children's home...

There was bars on the windows when I first went to St Lawrence's, it was just like a prison. Of course it was called a nuthouse in them days, so it used to have bars on it. You couldn't open the windows. Well you could but not far enough to get out of them. You didn't have toys. No toys whatsoever. You couldn't have toys because they would just get broken and thrown through the bars in the windows and get caught in them...

So in St Lawrence's they never went to school. They went and made baskets.

Mabel Cooper (1997) Mabel Cooper's Life Story in Atkinson D, Jackson M and Walmsley J (eds) *Forgotten Lives: Exploring the History of Learning Disability* Kidderminster BILD pp 22, 23 and 24

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