

# Celebrating the Women of MTW

## Audrey Timbers – how one Christmas Day set a career path in nursing

Some 32 years as a cardiac nurse, Audrey remembers clearly the day she made the decision to go into nursing. She was 15 years old and a Girl Guide and had been asked to help out in an old people's home on Christmas Day. Whilst chatting to the residents and helping them during the day, Audrey realised that she wanted to dedicate her life to making a difference. She went home and applied to all the teaching hospitals to start her nursing training. She received offers from all of them – and how did she choose the one that would shape her career? The one with the best uniform of course!



Audrey qualified as a Registered General Nurse from the London Hospital in Whitechapel and went on to complete her ENB 254 Cardiac Nursing course at the National Heart Hospital. She spent two years as a night sister at the Royal Brompton before moving into a ward manager role at the Kent & Canterbury Hospital. Three years later she became a Clinical Nurse Specialist in Cardiac Rehabilitation in Walsall.

It was then that she married her husband who was in the RAF and moved to Wales where he had been posted. She soon found a role as CNS in Swansea where she was involved in recruiting a 150 strong team to support a brand new cardiac hospital. Once this was operational, Audrey took a more managerial role which she didn't enjoy as much as pure nursing. Following return from maternity leave, Audrey decided that after 5 years, she was going to move back into a more traditional nursing role and became a Cardiac Nurse Specialist at MTW where she has been for the past 17 years.

Not one to be idle, Audrey obtained a distinction in her Masters in Nursing with two young children and a full time job to contend with. She also became a nurse prescriber in her area of expertise. And in her spare time, Audrey attends tap dancing lessons twice a week and has been running for the past 6 months using the Couch to 5K programme as a kick start.

- General Nurse and ENB 254 in Cardiac nursing
- Ward Manager
- Distinction in Masters in Nursing
- Nurse Prescriber
- Clinical Nurse Specialist
- Accomplished tap dancer

Audrey's two daughters are both talented performers and she describes her house as being like an episode of 'Glee' with them bursting into song and dropping into splits all over the place! She also says it's sometimes hard being a Mum – being a "fixer" at work doesn't always equate to dealing with teenage girls and a skill that she has learnt is just to listen. She spends a lot of time juggling and is super organised, planning days and weeks ahead.

"Find something you enjoy, something that you can get your teeth stuck in to, something that can make a difference and share your knowledge with people" is Audrey's advice. As a mentor to nurse specialists joining MTW and manager of a team of nurse specialists, she encourages people to develop specialisms and become experts in their field. She knows it can be easy to get stuck in a rut but says the Trust is full of opportunities. "Change things to stop getting in a rut. It doesn't have to be a big thing, you can stay in the same place just consider what small changes you can make to make things better for yourself, your colleagues and patients. Or consider doing some bank shifts in a different specialty, to learn about a different area. You may find something that re-ignites your enthusiasm".