

## Napsbury - St Albans UK - Memories of a psychiatric hospital by Bob Houlston

**Napsbury** is a residential area to the West of London Colney in the district of St. Albans in Hertfordshire. It was formerly the site of a major psychiatric hospital.

### History of the hospital

The Middlesex County Asylum was founded in 1898, and open from 1905 to 1998. It was designed in a country estate style by architect Rowland Plumbe to house 1,200 residents, although further buildings including nursing homes were added later. The grounds were designed by William Goldring.

The hospital was used as a military hospital during and after the First World War.

Following the closure of the hospital, the buildings were renovated and a new development created by Crest Nicholson builders.

**At the age of fifteen** I was employed at Napsbury Psychiatric Hospital as a porter. I remember being issued with a blue card that entitled me to free meals in the staff canteen. I enjoyed my time working there. I used the money I earned to buy my first electric guitar. I later returned to Napsbury Hospital several times to play in the staff social club.

Check out 1973 photograph here. The first group I gighed with... Pebble Dash. Left to right; Bob Bell, Steve De'ath, Andy Fox and myself on far right. The venue was Napsbury Hospital staff social club.

What is the difference between God and a psychiatrist?  
God doesn't think he's a psychiatrist! ;)

