can honestly say that I have never read anything so clear and well written. The article is excellent.

I commend *Nursing Standard* and suggest that a whole series by these authors would be an excellent resource for nursing and our pre- and post-registration students.

Philip Scullion
Coventry

**Aren’t you forgetting something, Mr Hague?**

Who does William Hague think he is kidding (Outlook September 27)?

We had 18 years of Conservative government, during which the NHS went from crisis to crisis.

He mentions a recruitment crisis, but conveniently forgets that it takes three years to train a nurse, so surely even the most loyal of Tory supporters cannot blame this Labour government for the failure to have enough students.

And the Tories failed to pay nurses a decent wage.

I will stick with Labour and its record investment in the health service and, most importantly, a health minister who listens to nurses and respects what we are saying.

I am sure the Conservatives would once again forget the nurses and pay more attention to their traditional supporters within the hierarchy of the NHS.

No Mr Hague, I don’t trust you an inch.

Mark Hancock
Portsmouth

**Others could follow this approach to phlebotomy**

I was excited to read Nan McIntosh’s article ‘Implementing clinical education for phlebotomists’ (Art&Science September 20).

I am a nursing student at Christ Church Canterbury. Before this I worked as a phlebotomist.

Even before I started nurse training, I was concerned about the lack of education for phlebotomists. I performed my first venepuncture on my second day and was working largely unsupervised by the second week.

It was weeks before I attended a fire lecture and we never had any formal infection control training.

When we did have meetings they were in an office where we sat on the floor, packing cases and a bed, and some of us stood outside because there was not enough space for us all.

When the trust launched its new infection control policy we were all invited, but I was the only one of nine phlebotomists and the whole haematology and biochemistry departments who went.

There was never a good team spirit among the phlebotomists. I don’t know if it was because some had nursing or laboratory backgrounds, while others had worked as domestic cleaners, shop assistants or bar tenders. The same training for everyone might help to improve that.

I believe that for the sake of everyone – and especially the patients – there should be a more formal approach to education for phlebotomists.

I hope many other trusts will follow the example in the article.

Dotty Cockcroft
Kent

**Simple things in life can mean the most**

I really loved ‘Nursing her patients’ dreams’ (Features September 27). The simple requests of the people in the hospice reminded me of a very elderly woman I once cared for in a nursing home.

One evening, the woman told us how she remembered as a very little girl her mother wearing beautiful, heavily beaded silk dresses to go out dancing.

She always wanted to try them on and her mother promised her that when she was a bit older she could. However, her mother died while she was still very young and she was sent to live with an aunt. She never saw her mother’s dresses again.

We were so moved we contacted a local antique dealer who brought a selection of dresses to the home for the woman to try on. She absolutely loved it and there wasn’t a dry eye in the house.

Ann Bailey
Wolverhampton