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The RCN represents nurses and nursing, promotes excellence in practice and shapes health policies.

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Had yours yet?

Every year people die from flu. Even previously healthy people can develop severe complications. The RCN is encouraging all frontline nursing staff to have the flu vaccine. Chief Executive Janet Davies, pictured receiving her vaccine, said: "For nurses delivering direct patient care, getting vaccinated against the flu is about more than protecting themselves, it's about protecting their patients too."

The case for fair pay

The RCN has submitted evidence to the NHS Pay Review Body expressing concern about the state of nurse morale and recommending an uplift that restores the loss of earnings incurred through cumulative years of below inflation pay awards. The Government has said it will only fund public sector pay increases of one per cent a year for the next four years and that these should be targeted, so some staff could receive more than one per cent, while others get less. The RCN has rejected this proposal, arguing it would be divisive and could derail talks on the future of NHS pay.

Don't delay

Time is running out for you to have your say in the RCN Council elections. Your ballot paper, wrapped around last month's issue of *RCN Bulletin*, must be returned by post before the deadline of 9 November. The elections present an opportunity for you to choose who you want to help run the organisation. Visit www.rcn.org.uk/elections



Lapse warning

The RCN is reminding all nurse and midwife members to keep on top of their registration with the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC). From November, if you fail to retain your NMC registration on time you will be taken off the register immediately and won't be able to practise. There is no longer a grace period for late payment. Readmission to the register may take between two to six weeks.

Visit the NMC website for more guidance: <http://tinyurl.com/p6e62sx>



Too many senior nursing posts have been cut and the effects are now being felt

RCN Chief Executive Janet Davies

Alarming differences

Grave concerns have been expressed about "unacceptable variations" in the quality of care being delivered across England. Responding to the Care Quality Commission's annual report into the state of health and social care, the RCN stressed the need for effective workforce planning to deliver good patient care. The College has called for more investment in training, keeping and listening to nurses.

Student surge

RCN members and staff came together for another successful season of events, recruiting thousands of new student members from universities across the UK. Stephanie Aiken, RCN Head of Education, said: "I am always struck by the enthusiasm and commitment demonstrated by students. Nursing offers so many opportunities for each of us to make a meaningful difference and I wish a very warm welcome to all student members who have joined the RCN this autumn."

RCN student membership costs just £10 per year. Visit <http://tinyurl.com/pkcwx88>



Supporting you

The RCN has launched a new campaign to help improve working conditions for nursing staff and support members to enhance their own health and wellbeing. The *Healthy Workplace, Healthy You* campaign (see page 11) has begun as fresh evidence shows nursing staff at breaking point. Eighty-two per cent of respondents to the RCN employment survey said they had worked when not feeling well enough to do so, with 46 per cent saying the main reason was work-related stress. Josie Irwin, RCN Head of Employment Relations, said: "Nursing staff are working themselves sick. Many skip every break, work late after every shift, do their paperwork in their own time, and the pressure just increases. Employers, the NHS and the Government need to work together to ensure there are enough nurses with the right level of skills."

First aid first

The RCN is supporting *Every Child a Lifesaver*, a campaign to make first aid compulsory in all state-funded secondary schools. It has been launched by St. John Ambulance, the British Heart Foundation and the British Red Cross. At RCN Congress in 2010 members voted in favour of a resolution calling on governments to mandate the teaching of first aid to school children. The RCN is encouraging members to fill in their details on the campaign website which will generate an email to their MP. Visit everychildalifesaver.org/action



It is important that nurses ensure they are prepared

The Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) has taken the historic step of giving the green light to revalidation – the new process all nurses and midwives will need to undertake to demonstrate they practise safely and effectively. The regulator's governing council voted to approve the model in early October with the first registrants due to revalidate from April next year.

RCN Chief Executive Janet Davies welcomed the decision and pledged to continue working with the NMC to support members going through the process. "The introduction of revalidation is recognition of the important, highly complex and ever changing nature of the work that nurses do," Janet said. "It is now important that nurses ensure they are prepared for revalidation."

Revalidation replaces the existing system of post-registration education and practice (PREP) and is being introduced in response to the Francis report on care failings at Stafford Hospital. It aims to boost professional standards and will see all nurses and midwives in the UK having to demonstrate, every three years, that they are able to deliver care in a safe and effective way.

It means that from April 2016, every registrant will have to provide evidence that they have undertaken the required continuing professional development hours, collected feedback, reflected on their practice, had a professional conversation about their practice with another registrant, and completed 450 practice hours over the three years prior to revalidation.

Revalidation has been tested in 19 sites across the UK and will be subject to a full evaluation upon going live.

Nearly 16,000 nurses and midwives will be the first to revalidate in April but all 685,000 NMC registrants will go through the new process as their registration becomes due for renewal. The RCN is keen to hear about members' experiences of revalidation so that it can tailor support and help ensure the model works for both nurses and patients.

Contact your local learning representative or RCN Direct on 0345 772 6100 if you need professional help. Also look out for RCN learning events on revalidation in your local area.

What you need to know

In order to revalidate, nurses and midwives will be required to submit evidence of the following:

- 450 hours of practice
- 35 hours of continuing professional development
- five pieces of practice-related feedback
- five written reflective accounts
- reflective discussion
- a declaration about your health and character
- a professional indemnity arrangement
- a form signed by a confirmer.

Visit rcnrevalidation.wordpress.com to find out more.

📍 You can find out when you're due to revalidate by setting up an NMC Online account. Visit www.nmc.org.uk/nmc-online to register today

Immigration rules reversal 'a real victory'

Nursing will be placed on the shortage occupation list

The RCN has welcomed the Government's announcement on temporary changes to recruiting nurses from overseas. The changes will allow non-EU nurses to remain in the UK and enable hospitals to continue to recruit from abroad.

The RCN has been campaigning for the Government to make these alterations to ensure patient safety.

Earlier this month, Simon Stevens, Head of NHS England, also urged the Government to reconsider immigration rules, warning it could lead to a shortage of nurses. Under the rules, workers from outside the European Economic Area who are earning less than £35,000 after six years in the UK will be sent back to their country of origin.

The policy was criticised by employers' groups and the RCN, which described it as a recipe for

chaos that could cost millions in recruitment. The RCN has been pressing the issue for months and a heated debate at RCN Congress called for the salary threshold to be reconsidered and for nursing to be added to the list of shortage occupations which are exempt from the rules.

"Since the RCN first raised this issue and lobbied for a change to the immigration rules, a consensus has formed across the health service that cutting the supply of overseas nurses risked patient care," said Janet Davies, RCN Chief Executive. "This reversal is a real victory for nurses, the health service and most of all patients."

The Department of Health has said the move aims to ease pressure on the NHS after the introduction of tough new controls on costly agency spending, and that it will improve continuity of care for patients, invest in the frontline and maintain safe staffing levels.



The Government must now extend this common sense approach



Janet added: "The Government must now extend this common sense approach to the issue of training and retaining more nurses in the long term and significantly increasing student nurse training places so that patients in the UK are no longer at the mercy of global workforce trends."

The independent Migration Advisory Committee will review the change and present further evidence to the Government by February 2016.

Download the *RCN Position Statement on International Recruitment* from www.rcn.org.uk/publications

Read the full Government announcement at <http://tinyurl.com/o8be8og>

Help shape the Congress debate

Submissions are now being invited for agenda items at RCN Congress 2016

Plans are already underway for next year's RCN Congress in Glasgow from 18 to 22 June. Now is your chance to put forward topics for inclusion on the agenda.

Stuart McKenzie, Chair of RCN Congress, said: "It may still seem a long way off but I would encourage you to start thinking about agenda items as soon as possible. Congress really does put nursing in the spotlight and is an opportunity for members to shine."

The main business of Congress, debates on resolutions and matters for discussion, is generated entirely by RCN members. The RCN Agenda Committee reviews all submissions and builds an agenda covering as many important and topical issues as possible.

"Congress is for all members and can only be a success with contributions from you," Stuart added. "This is your chance to highlight topics of interest, put forward an argument on a major issue facing nursing in the future or discuss a challenge within your



Congress really does put nursing in the spotlight

specialist nursing area that deserves wider recognition."

Topic submissions have to be made through the committee of your branch, forum or country/regional boards. The three UK Representatives' Committees can also submit items as can the RCN Students and Health Practitioner Committees. The RCN governance team can help put you in touch if you have a good idea but don't know who to contact. Email them at congressagenda@rcn.org.uk.

The closing date is 15 January.

Find out more about RCN Congress at www.rcn.org.uk/congress

Care on camera

RCN launches photography competition as part of celebrations for centenary year

In 2016 the RCN will be marking 100 years since its inception. It's an opportunity to recognise the history of the organisation, reflect on present achievements and plan for a successful future.

As part of the celebrations, the College is launching a photography competition in collaboration with the Royal Photographic Society. The competition, which is open to RCN members and the general public, has several prizes and aims to create a photographic record of nursing in 2016. The collection will be added to the RCN archive, with 50 shortlisted entries forming a touring exhibition that will be loaned to public buildings across the UK.

Centenary Programme Manager Sarah Abley said: "Photographers of every skill level are invited to join in our centenary photographic competition and capture images of nursing staff in their working



Photo by Ali Lomas

environment. Whether that's making their way across a farmer's field, up a tower block or through a shift on the ward, we're looking for a snapshot of nursing in all its diversity."

Newly qualified nurse and award-winning photographer Ali Lomas said: "I am thrilled to help launch the RCN's *Care on Camera* photography competition. Photography has always been an important part of my life, and has given me the opportunity to capture the most precious moments."



We're looking for a snapshot of nursing in all its diversity

▶ The competition opens soon and closes for entries on 29 February 2016. Find out more at www.rcn.org.uk/RCN100

Celebrating nursing

Save the date and submit an abstract for the special conference next year

The RCN's International Centenary Conference 2016 is a one-off event celebrating 100 years of the College and focusing on the progress of nursing and its impact on care.

Held at the QEII Centre in London from 22 to 23 November next year, the conference will also consider the future of nursing with contributions from health experts.

The RCN is looking for abstracts from current and emerging nursing leaders, influencers and practitioners across the profession. It is a chance for the voices of all nurses to be heard and to explore the role of nursing past, present and future.

The call for abstracts is now open and the final date for submission is 30 November 2015.

The full programme will be announced in January.



Royal College of Nursing

▶ Find out more and submit your abstract at www.rcn.org.uk/centenaryconference



The view from here

Claire Chatterton
Chair of the RCN History of Nursing Society



Last month saw the 100th anniversary of the execution of Edith Cavell, the British nurse shot at dawn by the Germans for helping soldiers she had nursed escape from occupied Belgium during the First World War.

On 12 October – the date of her death – the RCN History of Nursing Society held a memorial event at the Sacred Trinity Church in Salford (which Edith had attended whilst nursing in Manchester) to pay their respects to a remarkable woman.

I first found out about Edith Cavell as a student nurse and hers is an inspiring story of courage, compassion and commitment to care in the face of adversity.

Although she was working in the most extreme circumstances, I think her bravery and determination to stand up for her principles can be an example to nurses everywhere.

A century on from her death, people are still moved by Edith Cavell's story, and it's a story that needs to be remembered.

www.rcn.org.uk/hons



Feedback

Lizzie Dowd

*RCN Parliamentary and Stakeholder
Engagement Manager*



It's been a successful party conference season for the RCN. We've had a presence at the Labour, Conservative and Scottish National Party conferences, where we've been engaging with key politicians and stakeholders to make sure they're aware of the RCN's priorities.

At the Conservative Party conference, we met with newly elected MPs, members of the Commons Health Select Committee, the Deputy Chief Whip and former nurse Maria Caulfield MP. We discussed several issues, including safe staffing, seven-day care and specialist nurses, although our key messages centred on the Trade Union Bill and international recruitment.

As it was Janet Davies' first party conference as RCN Chief Executive it was also a good opportunity for her to build contacts and raise her profile. At a fringe event we held with the British Medical Association she made a great case for the importance of nursing remaining an all-graduate profession.

At the Labour Party conference, RCN Council Member Anne Wells also met with MPs to discuss the Trade Union Bill. MPs seemed sympathetic to our concerns, but more lobbying is needed if we are to see changes to the bill.

www.rcn.org.uk/westminster

What you've been saying

The debate goes on

It is refreshing to see nurses engaging with the complexities of the problem of suffering rather than polarising the debate around assisting suicide as the solution ("Hot topic", October). However, we mustn't confuse people opting for quality over quantity of life as being somehow life shortening. In my experience most people opt to stop treatment because it is either futile or the burden of the treatment is excessive. It is a myth that effective symptom control somehow shortens life. It doesn't. If anything, it prolongs it.



Vicky Robinson, by email

Strength in numbers

Many members will be aware of the contract change to junior doctors' working hours and pay due to be imposed in August next year. As nurses I feel it is imperative we support our colleagues and help to fight these changes.

The strength of the combination of the RCN and BMA in opposing this change would be much greater than leaving the medical profession to fight this alone. We work as a multi-disciplinary team; we should stand behind doctors at the start of their careers to stop changes that could impact patient care and are frankly unfair.

We don't want de-motivated, burnt out doctors when they have only just begun one of the most demanding careers. Once these changes are imposed on doctors, it won't be long before the Government tries to change our anti-social hours pay. I would like to think our medical colleagues would stand behind us if we had supported them.

Together with other vital health care professionals, doctors and nurses are essential components of the NHS, and our strength if we stand behind each other should not be overlooked.



Joanna, by email

Being humble

I have been reflecting recently on the need for nurses to be humble in order to deliver effective care.

If we are to be truly humble we must be open to recognising our own limitations and weaknesses and consider how to address them. We must be confident but not arrogant in our practice, we must share our knowledge and be open to learning new things.



Donato Tallo, by email

Hot topic

Should health workers have mandatory training in emotional resilience?

Jenny Kirsh, lead nurse for infection prevention and control, says: "Yes, but I also think it's really important that there is support to help deal with emotional issues when they occur. You can't always train and prepare for every situation, so health care workers need the support to deal with things as they happen."

Lecturer of adult nursing **Catherine Hughes** says: "Poor or altered health is often an emotional experience for everyone involved. Emotional resilience is 'basic life support' for health care workers.

We should be supported in developing it and maintaining it, and therefore it should be mandatory."

Cat Forsyth, Chair of the RCN UK Safety Reps Committee, says: "In these times of austerity and change in health and social care provision, it is vital that emotional resilience is a core requisite of mandatory training. Many employers provide counselling services, but waiting times are up to 28 weeks in my region and staff who require help are often off sick or not performing to the best of their ability."

A quick question

What do you value most in life?

“My brilliant friends and family and getting outdoors to enjoy the natural world.”

Helen Smith

“I value my family most in life, including my amazing extended family who are always there for each other.”

Pip Hill

“My good health and that of my loved ones.”

Jared Long

3 things I believe

1. Nurses are a huge part of the solution to the primary care crisis, if they could be invested in properly.
2. The current bursary inhibits potentially fabulous nurses from being able to train.
3. There is not one nurse who feels in their heart they are “too posh to wash”!

Sarah Didymus, independent primary care nurse consultant

Nothing to fear

Revalidation is an opportunity to prove our professional value

The Nursing and Midwifery Council has taken the historic step of giving the go ahead to revalidation. For me, it represents the biggest opportunity for nursing in years.

Revalidation has real benefits. The process recognises the complexity of nursing. It will enable us to demonstrate our professionalism and commitment to ongoing development and will provide motivation for us to seek out and push for opportunities to learn. It encourages reflection, so we can gain more and grow from our practice and fundamentally, it attributes value to what we do. It will also require recognition that ongoing opportunities for education are vital.

We shouldn't be afraid. We can do it and will do it. In fact, we're already doing much of what's required; learning from each patient encounter, talking to colleagues about how we can improve practice and looking to progress in our nursing careers. Revalidation puts a name to that and requires us to gather evidence. We must have confidence in our own abilities.



Convince me

Liver disease is on the increase, deaths are up by 400 per cent since 1970, and the average age of death is 59 for certain liver diseases.

Can you make every contact count? Prevention is better than cure, because there isn't a cure for many liver diseases. Look out for obesity, alcohol misuse and risk factors for hepatitis B and C such as migration and drug use.

Michelle Clayton, lecturer in liver care



Nursing is a complex and skilled profession. Nurses and health care assistants are required to make difficult clinical decisions on a daily basis and your knowledge and skills are central to delivering safe patient care. You're so important. But not everyone understands what modern nursing involves. We want each and every person in the UK to appreciate the value of nursing and the work that we do.

So I need your help. Please tell us your nursing stories so we can explain the realities of your role and the positive difference you make for patients. We will make sure the fantastic work you do is heard loud and clear. Visit www.rcn.org.uk/shareyourstory to find out more.

Janet Davies
RCN Chief Executive



What I've been reading

I recommend *In the Company of Nurses: The History of the British Army Nursing Services in the Great War* by Yvonne McEwen. The author has explored the position of nurses in the First World War, both in terms of care giving and in relation to the wider social and political setting. She has drawn on unpublished official and unofficial documents, letters and diaries to give a new voice to the narrative of the time.

Alison O'Donnell, honorary lecturer, University of Dundee



The view from here

Scott Gilbert

Lieutenant, Queen Alexandra's Royal Naval Nursing Service



Remembering the fallen and those who have suffered life-changing injuries from conflicts past is a crucial part of life as a defence nurse.

Passion for this role and pride for our work continues on a day-to-day basis, however the prospect of rapid deployment is never far away and our training for that role remains our primary focus.

Defence nurses are a committed and dedicated group of people who have all been affected and touched by conflict and as we near the annual act of remembrance it is important to remember those who have made the ultimate sacrifice.

The RCN's annual evening remembrance ceremony will take place on 5 November in London. Members are invited to attend the event, which will honour the sacrifice made by nurses and other defence medical services personnel killed or wounded caring for victims in conflict.

www.rcn.org.uk/Remembrance15



Force for good

The RCN has been collecting oral histories from defence nursing staff as part of a project to create a lasting legacy of those who have served. Kim Scott reports

This time last year combat operations in Afghanistan had just come to an end. It was a poignant moment for many military nurses and prompted the start of an RCN project to capture the personal and professional experiences of those who served.

Led by Defence Nursing Forum Chair Major Chris Carter, work began in January to gather audio recordings of members deployed to Afghanistan and Iraq to add to the RCN's archive of oral histories.

"After 13 years of continuous campaigning in Afghanistan, we felt it was the right time to recognise what nursing staff had done," says Chris. "It's about making sure the experiences of military nurses are gathered for future generations. I want people to be able to come to the RCN in 50 years' time and gain access to these inspirational stories. At times they are stories of courage and personal sacrifice but they are also about a health care system that rapidly adapted to meet new patterns of injury."

Creating a legacy

The defence nursing oral histories project will be launched at an event at RCN headquarters on Remembrance Day alongside a film showcasing the unique challenges and rewards of being a military nurse. "The idea behind the film is to have something short, punchy and visual to engage people and raise the profile of the specialty," adds Chris.

Among those featured in the film is army nurse Elizabeth Kagoda who

completed two tours of Iraq before serving in Afghanistan. She recalls her first deployment upon joining the military a decade ago.

"I came out of basic training at Sandhurst in May and was deployed to Iraq that October," she says. "The simulation training we had was excellent and massively important as it mirrors working in a proper field hospital. But I'm not sure anything can prepare you for the real trauma you'll face once deployed, and the experience of working with people who have severe life-changing injuries."

That first deployment was a culture shock, she admits, but it didn't change her as much as her second stint in Iraq. "That really opened my eyes. There are people living through huge difficulty and you realise what a bubble you live in. The trivial things in life become much less important."

Elizabeth, who trained in London and worked as a civilian nurse before signing up, more recently ran the emergency department at Camp Bastion in Afghanistan. Here she treated injured military personnel, civilians and detainees in an army field hospital boasting world class facilities and the very latest in best practice. "You couldn't beat the trauma care being delivered out there," adds Elizabeth.

As for the body armour and rifle she needed to carry constantly while on duty, "it becomes a way of life", she says, as does the sound of mortar attacks and sleeping in a tent with seven other women. "When you're



There were language and culture challenges and the injuries were severe

working and living in such close proximity to people, you form strong friendships very quickly, but you can also fall out. There's an unspoken memorandum of understanding though. We all know why we're there. We all volunteered for it. You don't complain."

Job for life

Nevertheless, Elizabeth says she can't see herself doing anything else. "I've never had a job that's given me as much fulfilment," she confesses. "It's given me a perspective on life I wouldn't have had otherwise. It's enhanced me both mentally and physically."

Naval nurse Lynsay Harris, also featured in the film, agrees. "I think I've become a more confident person," she says. "I'm stronger and a lot more outspoken than I was but I don't think it's changed me for the worse. I feel like I've found my feet. I love the diversity of the job and the people you meet."

Lynsay, who also served in Iraq and Afghanistan, admits to having "fallen into" a career in defence nursing. It was a chance encounter with military recruiters at university that got her thinking about a career with the navy. Even so, it took two years of further deliberation before she took the plunge.

Like all defence nurses, Lynsay completed eight weeks of basic training. Though this varies for each of the three forces – army, navy and air force – it has core elements including self-discipline, physical fitness, problem solving

Katharine Sanderson



Lynsay Harris



Elizabeth Kagoda



Photos by Duncan Spar

and weapons handling that are common to all. “It was pretty intense,” says Lynsay. “But it was interesting. There was such a mixed bag of people. You go through so much together.”

This sense of forces’ friendship was firmed up during her first deployment to Iraq in 2007. But it was in Afghanistan a year later that she felt her nursing skills were put to the test.

“I really had to step up,” she says. “In Bastion I was treating injured young people. There were language and culture challenges and the injuries were severe. We were treating gunshot wounds and blast injuries and needed to look after civilians, service men and women as well as detainees.”

Though civilian casualties made up just 20 per cent of those treated in the field hospital, they stayed longer as service personnel were transferred home as soon as they were able.



Looking after injured soldiers is a massive privilege

▶ Find out more about the defence nursing oral histories project at www.rcn.org.uk/defence

“Nothing really fazed me,” says Lynsay. “In Iraq we got mortared every day so it became normality. I do remember the first night it happened though. I grabbed my helmet and body armour and felt excited but sick with nerves. It’s crazy how quickly you adjust. We had to lie on the ground of the ward during a mortar attack for two hours once. There was nothing you could do but watch TV. So I lay there on my stomach, watching *Friends*. It was bizarre.”

New challenges

Lynsay currently works at the Defence Medical Rehabilitation Centre at Headley Court where she will stay until next July. Like other defence nurses not on deployment, she transfers to a new role every two years. It’s this promise of new challenges that really appeals to Katharine Sanderson, a general nurse in the air force and another RCN member featured in the film.

“I don’t like to stay in one place for too long,” she says. “I like to move around and experience different things. I’ve only been qualified for nine years but I’ve already done so much in my career.” She now works as a lecturer for military nursing students at Birmingham City University.

Elizabeth has recently started a new role working with army reserves. “Looking after injured soldiers is a massive privilege,” she concludes. “Yes, we work hard, but it is an honour when people let you into their lives.”

“We’re rewarded two fold. We’re not only nurses, we’re also soldiers and officers. In our day job we might work for the NHS, but we still wear our uniform and have the benefits of friendship and camaraderie that come with being in the military. I consider myself to be very lucky. I work with some remarkable people. I look at my peers and think ‘you’re amazing’”

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A healthier you

The RCN has launched a new campaign to improve working environments for nursing staff and support members to look after themselves. David Ford reports



Recent RCN research has shown that members are finding their workplaces increasingly stressful with extra pressure and workload meaning the majority wouldn't recommend nursing as a career.

The *Healthy Workplace, Healthy You* campaign aims to identify areas that need improvement and calls on the College's trade union reps to work with staff and employers to improve conditions.

Tracey Budding, an RCN steward for several years, has been involved in building the campaign and says a healthy workplace means more motivated staff and better outcomes for patients.

"Members are being worked to the bone in hugely stressful environments," she says. "Many feel so undervalued they're thinking of leaving the profession. We are hopeful that this campaign will help to reinvigorate their working lives, making them feel valued as individuals."

Visit the *Healthy Workplace, Healthy You* website where you can learn more about the campaign and download the *Healthy You* leaflet: www.rcn.org.uk/healthyworkplace

Improving morale

The campaign, launched last month, focuses on five themes which help specify areas where your workplace can be improved. They are work-life balance, dignity at work, job design, health and safety, and learning and development.

Representatives in your workplace are being encouraged to download the RCN's toolkit accompanying the campaign and use it to form pledges with employers to help improve working conditions. "We believe the *Healthy Workplace, Healthy You* campaign can have a significant and very positive effect on the morale of nursing staff," adds Tracey.

As well as workplace improvements, the *Healthy You* aspect of the initiative emphasises the importance of nursing staff having ownership of their own physical and mental health and taking the time to apply the same level of care to their personal wellbeing as they would to their patients.

"This might be things like appreciating the support of friends and family or drawing up a career plan so you have goals and objectives which help to keep you motivated. We want nurses to be seen as individuals and valued for their personal traits that allow them to provide the fantastic levels of care that we know exist in health care settings across the country," Tracey says.

Tanja Koch, Counselling Co-ordinator at the RCN, has helped create a leaflet offering tips and

advice on maintaining wellbeing. She says: "We see a lot of members at the counselling service who are at the very extreme. They've stopped taking care of themselves and are at risk of self-harm. We wanted to develop something that will encourage members to recognise when they're neglecting their own health and find ways to deal with what's affecting them."

Holistic approach

The leaflet identifies techniques to help you prevent and manage physical and emotional stress. It outlines that self-care and self-compassion are the foundations on which you are able to engage positively with others, be that your family, colleagues or patients.

"Because nurses are already of a caring nature they often put everybody else before themselves," says Tanja. "We want to embed an attitude of self-care within the nursing culture so individuals can sustain their health and wellbeing and consequently provide excellent patient care."

The leaflet looks at body, mind, heart, work, career, spirit and balance. "It's a holistic approach. Not every aspect of self-care might apply to every individual but they can use the different sections at different points in their life," concludes Tanja.

The Boorman review into health and wellbeing in the NHS highlighted the relationship between staff health and wellbeing and patient safety, the patient experience and the effectiveness of care.

Celebrating half a century

Fifty years ago nurses helped raise £300,000 to build a permanent home for the RCN in Wales. Tom Metcalf looks back on the history of Ty Maeth



Photo from the RCN Archives

For 50 years Ty Maeth, the imposing white building with the iconic blue and red RCN hands, has served as the headquarters of the RCN in Wales.

When the first RCN Welsh Board was formed in 1962, with the aim of bringing nursing education and representation to Wales, it was based in a small and expensive office in the centre of Cardiff.

But thoughts soon turned to the need for a permanent base in the country and a massive fundraising effort was started which would lead to the establishment of the building we see today.

The Welsh Nursing College Appeal was officially launched on 20 September 1964 with a television broadcast by comedian and singer Harry Secombe. The appeal poster, with three nurses proudly smiling, became symbolic of the drive to raise money.

Undaunted by the task ahead, nurses across Wales threw themselves into fundraising. They took part in all manner of activities from bridge and whist drives to cocktail parties, an 18th-century men's evening and a charity film premiere of *How the West Was Won*. One nurse even used her barrel organ and a friend's pet monkey to raise money.

Fond memories

Megan Edwards, a retired RCN member from North Wales, remembers the fundraising drive well.

"There were coffee mornings and fashion shows. All the branches really went to town with it," she says. "Everywhere you went there was a drive to get more money. Everyone knuckled down and got involved.

"Nurses were held in high esteem in those days. You only had to mention

nursing and you didn't have a problem getting donations."

RCN member Dianne Yarwood, a student nurse at Llandough Hospital at the time, recalls taking part in a flag day to raise money.

"A number of us were sent to sell flags in Cardiff on a Saturday afternoon, which happened to coincide with a rugby international between Wales and France. Although our collection boxes were filled I doubt many of those French fans knew what they were supporting."

Ultimately nearly £300,000 was raised for the new building, far in excess of what was initially hoped for. The location was chosen for its proximity to the University Hospital of Wales, then under construction, and on 27 October 1965 Princess Margaret, Countess of Snowden, officially opened the new headquarters of the RCN Welsh Board.

Christened Ty Maeth, meaning "house of nurture", the building contained a lecture theatre, conference hall and library, as well as a small fountain in reception.

A second floor was added to Ty Maeth in 1983, again opened by Princess Margaret, and over the last half-century the building has continually served as a physical reminder that nurses in Wales are a force to be reckoned with.

"It's hard to believe 50 years have gone by," says Megan. "The building has grown as nursing has grown. Welsh nurses should feel great pride about Ty Maeth and its history."



The building has grown as nursing has grown

► Ty Maeth is currently being refurbished so plans to celebrate its anniversary have been postponed until next year. If you would like to be kept informed about commemorative activities, please email katie.branch@rcn.org.uk

Winning ways

Susan Embley talks to RCN Nurse of the Year Amanda Burston ahead of nominations opening this November for the RCNi Nurse Awards 2016



Life has become a lot busier for major trauma co-ordinator Amanda Burston since winning the accolade of RCN Nurse of the Year 2015. Her innovative work in helping to set up a domestic violence service in the emergency department at Royal Stoke University Hospital three years ago has reached around 400 survivors of domestic abuse and trained about 200 staff.

After winning the award in May, she's been invited to speak at conferences, been on television – on *The Paul O'Grady Show* for Nurses' Day – and liaised with other NHS trusts around the country about ways to help victims of domestic abuse.

At the time of winning, Amanda said she accepted the award for every person who has suffered from domestic abuse. "I don't believe I'm different from any other nurse," says Amanda, who's been working in A&E departments for 20 years.

"The difference was that I wanted to talk about what we were doing. I wanted to raise awareness and keep the conversation going about domestic abuse. Winning the award helped me to do this. It went from being something local to being something national. My aim has always been to keep talking about domestic abuse."

Raising awareness

Working with domestic violence charity Arch, Amanda took on the task of creating a steering group for the charity's Safer Steps programme outside of her day-to-day job. The programme's aim is to raise awareness of domestic abuse among nursing staff so that victims coming into emergency departments can seek help.

"Initially, we had small aims – to increase training and awareness for staff – but I quickly realised there was



My aim has always been to keep talking about domestic abuse

a lot more going on," says Amanda. Not only does the programme help patients, but staff who are victims of domestic violence have found the service has supported them too. "I want the conversation about domestic abuse to continue. We need to make it easier for people to disclose what's happening."

As an RCN member, Amanda is considering taking the debate to RCN Congress in Glasgow next year. "Spotting the signs of domestic abuse should be included in the training and education of nursing staff," says Amanda. "There should be policies to support victims of domestic violence to speak up and seek help."

Amanda continues to facilitate the Safer Steps training for Royal Stoke University Hospital and is passionate about continuing to make sure domestic violence is something to talk about. "Winning the award has given me a bigger audience. It's very easy to continue to do something that you're passionate about."



Opening soon

The Nurse of the Year Award is given out each year as part of the RCNi (formerly *Nursing Standard*) Nurse Awards. The awards, which celebrate all that is great about nursing, are open to nurses, midwives, student nurses and health care assistants who can demonstrate excellence in practice and improvements in patient care. The categories reflect the core areas of nursing.

Patients and their families will also be able to nominate a person they feel has made a real difference for the special Patient's Choice Award with the winner chosen by a public vote.

Nominations open in early November and close on 1 February. The winners' ceremony will take place on 6 May 2016. Find out more at www.nurseawards.co.uk

Maintaining momentum



It's been a busy few years for the RCN Defence Nursing Forum with more activities planned for 2016

Since being appointed Chair of the RCN Defence Nursing Forum three years ago, Major Chris Carter has been on a mission to put military nursing on the map. The priority for his first 12 months in post was to spread the word about the forum and increase awareness of it among the wider nursing community.

A joint event with the Critical Care and In-Flight Nursing Forum the following year proved popular and there was a spotlight on defence nursing at RCN Congress in 2014 as members looked ahead to the imminent end of combat operations in Afghanistan.

In the same year, the forum steering committee produced professional guidance to emphasise how military nursing can enhance patient care. A successful evening remembrance event was also held at RCN headquarters in London, an occasion that will be repeated on 5 November this year following a joint workshop with the Ethics Committee looking at how to reconcile moral dilemmas in the field of defence nursing.

"We've had a lot of successes over the past couple of years so our focus now will be on maintaining



We want to show that our specialty has something to offer in terms of education and professional development

Visit www.rcn.org.uk/defence to find out more about the work of the RCN Defence Nursing Forum

that momentum," says Chris. "We saw a 16 per cent increase in forum membership at the beginning of this year and I'm hoping the oral histories project and defence nursing film (see pages 8 and 9) will encourage further interest in the work that we do."

There are more ambitious plans for next year. A defence nursing workshop on refugee health is pencilled in for April and there are hopes to produce an RCN publication featuring peer reviewed articles on clinical areas relevant to defence nursing.

"We want to show that our specialty has something to offer in terms of education and professional development," Chris adds. "It is our aim to create a repository of knowledge that can help current and future thinking on defence nursing issues."

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Surgical best practice

Members of the RCN Perioperative Forum have been working on a project to help support best practice to prevent surgical site infections (SSI).

OneTogether is a partnership between leading professional organisations including the Association for Perioperative Practice, Infection Prevention Society, College of Operating Department Practitioners and the RCN.



Tracey Radcliffe, Chair of the RCN Perioperative Forum and quality and practice development lead nurse, said: "The aim of the partnership is to explore how guidance on infection prevention in relation to surgery is used in practice, identify challenges that affect that guidance and inform and support surgical staff with resources designed for best practice."

Seeing is believing

The RCN Ophthalmic Nursing Forum held a successful conference at RCN headquarters in London last month providing delegates with information on the latest developments in the field of eye health. The programme included topics ranging from glaucoma to dementia.



Chair of the forum Mary Shaw said: "I was really pleased with the turnout. The interaction from the audience made me feel that those who attended were truly engaging with what was being said."

The forum is currently working with the Eye Health Committee for the Department of Health and advises on National Institute for Health and Care Excellence guidelines for improving eye health.

▶ To be involved in the work of the forum visit www.rcn.org.uk/ophthalmology

Standard delivery

The RCN has launched two new publications providing information and best practice for administering immunisations. *Supporting the Delivery of Immunisation Education: A Quality Framework to Support the Implementation of National Standards and Guidelines on Immunisation Training* recommends the standardisation of immunisation training. A separate *Immunisation Knowledge and Skills Competence Assessment Tool* is also available. Download the publications from www.rcn.org.uk/publications

International reach

The National Resource for Infection Control's (NRIC) website is undergoing a facelift to make it more accessible for its worldwide audience. Sue Wiseman, content manager for the now-called International Resource for Infection Control, said: "As global communication increases in the fight against infection and infectious diseases, the new website is supporting this international need and collaborating globally with colleagues who promote professional excellence in this area." Visit the website at www.nric.org.uk

Mental health focus

The RCN Mental Health Forum and History of Nursing Society are co-ordinating a mental health nursing seminar series in conjunction with the ongoing history of mental health nursing exhibition. The next event, *Nurses and Politics: The History of Asylum Workers' Unions*, is on 18 November at the RCN Library and Heritage Centre in London. The library will also host *Art and the Asylum: Patients, Staff and Occupational Therapy at Bethlem* on 8 December. Visit www.rcn.org.uk/library

What I'm thinking

Wendy Mashlan
RCN Older People's Forum



The NHS has been under immense scrutiny in its provision of care to the older population with many front-door acute hospital services being overstretched, under resourced and unable to provide adequate medical assessments. This position has led to failings in care, lack of dignity and decline in many peoples' health and wellbeing. Has the time come for nurses to step in and employ their diverse skills to ensure that patients' needs are fully met from all perspectives?

Nurses are key players within the evolving health service and exploring the use of the advanced nurse practitioner (ANP) as a key clinical driver for older persons' services may be a way forward. The ANP role is clinically focused with a strategic element, delivering high standards of holistic care to patients as well as leading on global health service changes. The ability to practise from a more "medicalised" perspective, yet remain embedded within the nursing profession is advantageous.

www.rcn.org.uk/forums ▶

Effective continence management

Wednesday 25 - Thursday 26 November
The International Centre, St Quentin Gate,
Telford, Shropshire TF3 4JH

This two-day conference, hosted by the RCN Continence Care Forum, provides an opportunity to meet other health care professionals who are passionate about promoting healthy bladder and bowel management. Come together to build strategies to challenge disbeliefs about growing old and the expectation that age must bring with it bladder and/or bowel problems. Sessions will focus on moisture lesions, frameworks for continence care in nursing homes and how professionals can inform patients from a public health perspective.



For more information, and to book online, visit www.rcn.org.uk/continence2015

Northern Ireland

www.rcn.org.uk/northernireland
Belfast

Wednesday 11 November,
6.30pm
The Mac Theatre, 10 Exchange
Street West, Belfast BT1 2NJ
*Regulating Rita – The Story of a
Nurse and Her Code*
For more information and to
apply for free tickets email
cst@rcn.org.uk

Scotland

www.rcn.org.uk/scotland
Glasgow
Wednesday 25 November
The Lighthouse, 11 Mitchell
Lane, Glasgow G1 3NU
*Nursing Scotland's Future
– RCN Scotland campaign for
the Scottish Parliament
elections in 2016*

Wales

www.rcn.org.uk/wales
Cardiff
Monday 16 November
The Group Education Room,
Glossop Unit, Cardiff Royal
Infirmary, Cardiff CF24 0SZ
*Two RCN Wales seminars. In
the morning, Clinical Update
on Sexual Health. In the
afternoon, HIV and Hepatitis
Clinical Update*

For more information call
029 2068 0713 or email [rhona.
workman@rcn.org.uk](mailto:rhona.workman@rcn.org.uk)

East Midlands

www.rcn.org.uk/eastmidlands
Nottingham
Saturday 14 November, 9am
Simpson 2, City Hospital,
Nottingham NG5 1PB
*Society of Orthopaedic and
Trauma Nursing Nottinghamshire
Group study day*
Update your skills and find out
more about the latest
developments in orthopaedic
and trauma nursing. Places are
limited, so book now by email:
ruth_hartley@btconnect.com

Eastern

www.rcn.org.uk/eastern
Chelmsford
Wednesday 18 November
Marconi Centre, Beehive Lane,
Chelmsford CM2 9RX
*Nursing Leadership: Building
Resilience and Raising Standards
in the Independent Sector*
For further information contact
jenna.williams@rcn.org.uk

London

www.rcn.org.uk/london
London
Various dates
Various locations

Autumn of Learning

RCN London is hosting a series of day-long educational conferences across the region. The programme aims to provide development opportunities for members at all levels, in venues chosen by the local branch networks. All the events are free to attend and venues include St Pancras Hospital and Whipps Cross Hospital. Registration is open now at www.rcn.org.uk/autumnoflearning

North West

www.rcn.org.uk/northwest
Warrington
Thursday 26 November,
9.30am-4pm
The Centre at Birchwood Park,
Birchwood WA3 6YN
*Making a Mark – RCN North
West regional conference*
This year's annual regional
conference will celebrate
examples of good practice and
innovation across the region.
Free to RCN members. For
more information contact Karen
Hughes on **01204 552 447** or
karen.hughes@rcn.org.uk

Northern

www.rcn.org.uk/northern
Sunderland
Thursday 3 December,
9.30am-4pm
RCN Sunderland Office,
Avalon House, St Catherine's
Court, Sunderland Business
Park, Sunderland SR5 3XJ
*The Role of the Rep: Ensuring
Revalidation, Education and
Escalation Through Listening to
and Representing Members*
This workshop for accredited
RCN reps will provide an
overview of issues impacting
workforce safety and look at
available strategies to help
members improve working
practices for nurses.

South East

www.rcn.org.uk/southeast
London
Monday 30 November, 9am-4pm
RCN HQ, 20 Cavendish Square,
London W1G 0RN
*HCA conference – Breaking
the Code: Getting the Best for*

Your Patients

One-day event for HCAs
comprising a range of sessions to
enhance your career and practice.
Free to members and £10 to
non-members (refundable on the
day if you join).
To book, email your name,
membership number and any
dietary requirements to
[regionaladmin.croydon@rcn.
org.uk](mailto:regionaladmin.croydon@rcn.org.uk) by 20 November.

South West

www.rcn.org.uk/southwest
Truro
Monday 16 November, 1.30pm
St Erme Community Centre,
Castle Field, Trispen,
Truro TR4 9BD
Want to know about how you, as
a health care worker, can make
your voice heard on health
issues? Want to know about how
the Health Select Committee in
parliament works? Come along
to hear Andrew George, health
campaigner and former Liberal
Democrat MP, and learn more
about how you can make a
difference. To book your place
contact RCN Cornwall Branch
chair Lesley Pallett on
01726 627 995.

West Midlands

www.rcn.org.uk/westmidlands
Birmingham
Friday 20 November 2015,
registration from 9am
Uffculme Centre, Queensbridge
Road, Birmingham B13 8QY
*Unexpected Connections – Diversity
in Health Care 2015*
Join us to explore ways that we can
talk differently about diversity in
health care. Email [eventsreg@rcn.
org.uk](mailto:eventsreg@rcn.org.uk) or call **02920 546460**.

Yorkshire and the Humber

[www.rcn.org.uk/
yorkshireandhumber](http://www.rcn.org.uk/yorkshireandhumber)
Willerby
Thursday 5 November, 10am-3pm
Humber NHS Foundation Trust,
Willerby HU10 6DT
*Learning event – Supporting You
in Practice*
This event will explore issues in
clinical practice and look at the
work of RCN learning reps.