

Spring 2016

History of Nursing Society newsletter

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Something to say?

Send contributions for the next newsletter to the editor:

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A centenary special

Welcome to the spring 2016 issue of the RCN History of Nursing Society (HoNS) newsletter

It can't have escaped your attention that the RCN is celebrating its centenary this year and the HoNS has been actively engaged in the preparations. We will continue to be involved in events and exhibitions as the celebrations progress over the next few months.

The centenary launch event took place on 12 January and RCN Chief Executive Janet Davies and President Cecilia Anim said how much they were looking forward to the events of the year ahead. A marching banner, made by members of the Townswomen's Guilds, was presented to the College (see p2). The banner will be taken to key RCN events this year, including Congress, before going on permanent display in reception at RCN headquarters in London.

The launch event also saw the unveiling of the RCN presidents' exhibition, which features photographs of each president and short biographical extracts outlining their contributions to the College (see p5). There was much interest in the new major exhibition in the RCN Library and Heritage Centre. *The Voice of Nursing* explores how nursing has changed over the past 100 years by drawing on stories and experiences of members and items and artefacts from the RCN archives.

We are also pleased to bring you this special extended centenary issue of the HoNS newsletter to coincide with the official anniversary of the incorporation of the College on 27 March. As well as the regular news and events round-up, book reviews and features, there are also articles on the College's founders, its history and a few of the individuals who have made significant contributions to the RCN over the years. I hope you enjoy it.

Dianne Yarwood, newsletter editor



Guests at the RCN's centenary launch event admire a marching banner made by members of the Townswomen's Guilds. The banner will eventually go on permanent display in reception at RCN headquarters.

Remembering Edith Cavell

On 12 October 2015 HoNS members gathered at Sacred Trinity Church, Salford, to remember the life of Edith Cavell, who was a member of the congregation there from 1906-07 when she was nursing in Manchester. The date marked the 100th anniversary of Miss Cavell's execution.



Attendees included RCN members and staff. Professor Sir Ian Kershaw and HoNS member Professor Christine Hallett gave talks and the vicar, the Rev Andy Salmon (pictured left with Claire Chatterton), led an act of remembrance at the war memorial outside, on which Miss Cavell is remembered.

The event was supported by the Manchester Royal Infirmary Nurses' League and was widely reported in the local media.

HoNS members also took part in other commemorative events. Major Tristan Griffin visited the Bowburn local history group to talk about Miss Cavell, while Claire Chatterton spoke in Norwich, where Cavell is buried, and Christine Hallett gave a lecture at the University of Chester.

Letter from Claire Chatterton, Chair of the HoNS

At the end of 2015 there were changes to the HoNS steering committee. We would like to thank John Adams and Christine Hallett for all they have contributed during their four years on the committee. A big thank you also to Dianne Yarwood and Alison O'Donnell, who have just begun their second terms of office. Their continuing support and input is much appreciated, as is that of Tristan Griffin and Jane Brooks, our other committee members.

We are pleased to welcome Margaret Graham, from Northern Ireland, and Helen Goldsmith, from Yorkshire, to the committee and look forward to working with them.

Margaret is a retired nurse and leads the RCN History of Nursing Network in Northern Ireland. She led a project collecting stories from nurses who had worked during the three decades of



Margaret Graham

Helen Goldsmith

civil unrest, which culminated in a book, *Nurses' Voices from the Northern Ireland Troubles*. Most of Margaret's career was in public health. She also worked for the Northern Ireland Department of Health and Social Services commissioning nurse education. In 2014 she received an outstanding achievement award at the RCN Northern Ireland Nurse of the Year Awards.

Helen Goldsmith has had a varied career working in both the public and independent sectors. Her current post is as a clinical lead nurse for a family-run nursing, social and community care agency based in Leeds. Helen has always had an interest in history and is a member of several historical societies. Her special interest is the history of mental health, particularly asylum architecture, and she "spends many an hour wandering around old derelict hospitals taking photographs".

Join us at Congress

RCN CONGRESS
DEBATES | LEARNING | EXHIBITION

We intend to have an active presence at RCN Congress 2016 and hope to see some of you there in Glasgow. Look

out for our professional fringe events. We hope to hold one commemorating the Battle of the Somme in relation to nursing, plus other events celebrating the RCN's centenary. Do get in touch with me at c.s.chatterton@open.ac.uk if you are able to help us organise an event in your area.

Memories of nursing

In January the Bournemouth Public Library hosted an exhibition on the Retired Nurses National Home and its residents. The exhibition was part of a project to preserve nursing history, which also includes recording the stories of the Bournemouth home's residents. Eileen Richardson is leading the project, paid for by a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund. Expect to read more about it in the autumn issue of the HoNS newsletter.

John Bellany and the Scottish Women's Hospitals

An exhibition of paintings by renowned Scottish artist John Bellany is currently on display in the public space at the Scottish Parliament in Edinburgh. The paintings were inspired by the experiences of wounded soldiers and the nurses who cared for them during the First World War. Previously unseen works are featured as well as a specially commissioned poem by Liz Lochhead, Scotland's national poet. The exhibition runs until 16 April. For more information visit <http://tinyurl.com/hrzl6q2>

Museum tour

Helen Goldsmith is organising a visit to the Thackray Medical Museum in Leeds. This will include a tour of the museum, object handling and a cream tea. The trip will be on 27 June at 2.30pm. Tickets will be available to HoNS members and their guests and further details will be available nearer the time.



Thackray Medical Museum

Manchester medics

The HoNS and 207 (Manchester) Field Hospital are planning a joint event at their headquarters in King's Road, Manchester on 5 July from 7.30-9pm.

Captain Lesley Oldham will speak about the history of the Manchester medics and Betty Kershaw will give a talk on her fellow former RCN president Miss M.E. Sparshott called *A Very British Matron*.

There will be a chance to tour the building, which dates back to 1905, beforehand and refreshments will be provided.

The event is free for HoNS members but places must be booked in advance. Contact Claire Chatterton on 07917 551833 or email c.s.chatterton@open.ac.uk

Out of the asylum



A nurses' day-room at Claybury Asylum, Woodford, Essex, c. 1893. Wellcome Library

The RCN's exhibition on the history of mental health nursing, *Out of the Asylum*, came to an end on 4 March. Following its launch last October, the exhibition ran alongside a series of seminars on different aspects of mental health nursing history.

In London, Chris Hart spoke on *Nurses and Politics: The History of Asylum Workers' Unions* and Victoria Northwood on *Art and the Asylum: Patients, Staff and Occupational Therapy at Bethlem*. There was also the opportunity for a guided visit to the Bethlem



Burntwood Asylum, Staffordshire. RCN Archives

museum and gallery. Last month Tommy Dickinson spoke about his book *'Curing Queers': Mental Nurses and Their Patients, 1935-74* (see p8 for a review) and Paul Godin on the history of community psychiatric nursing.

Outside London, Duncan Mitchell spoke in Manchester on *Mental Health and Learning Disability: Seeking Separate Identities*. In Leeds, Helen Goldsmith gave an illustrated talk on asylum architecture and Claire Chatterton spoke on the changing role of mental health nurses. They were joined by Cara Sutherland, curator of the Mental Health Museum at Fieldhead Hospital in Wakefield, who took along some objects to handle and identify.

The final event in the series will be a lecture at Ty Maeth in Cardiff on 30 March on the history of the Cardiff City Mental Hospital. For more information visit <http://tinyurl.com/jjsfcb5>

Cooking up a storm

Fiona Bourne, Archives Operational Manager, and Archives Assistant Neasa Roughan, discover some culinary delights in the RCN archives

Many of us are lucky enough to have inherited a cherished family cookbook, the pages of which are dog-eared and a little sticky in parts. These cookbooks are fascinating not just for their contents, but for the link they form with the lives of our mothers, grandmothers or more distant ancestors. Frequently, cookbooks are the only written records created by women and because of this they give us an idea of the lives of the women who devised and perfected these dishes.

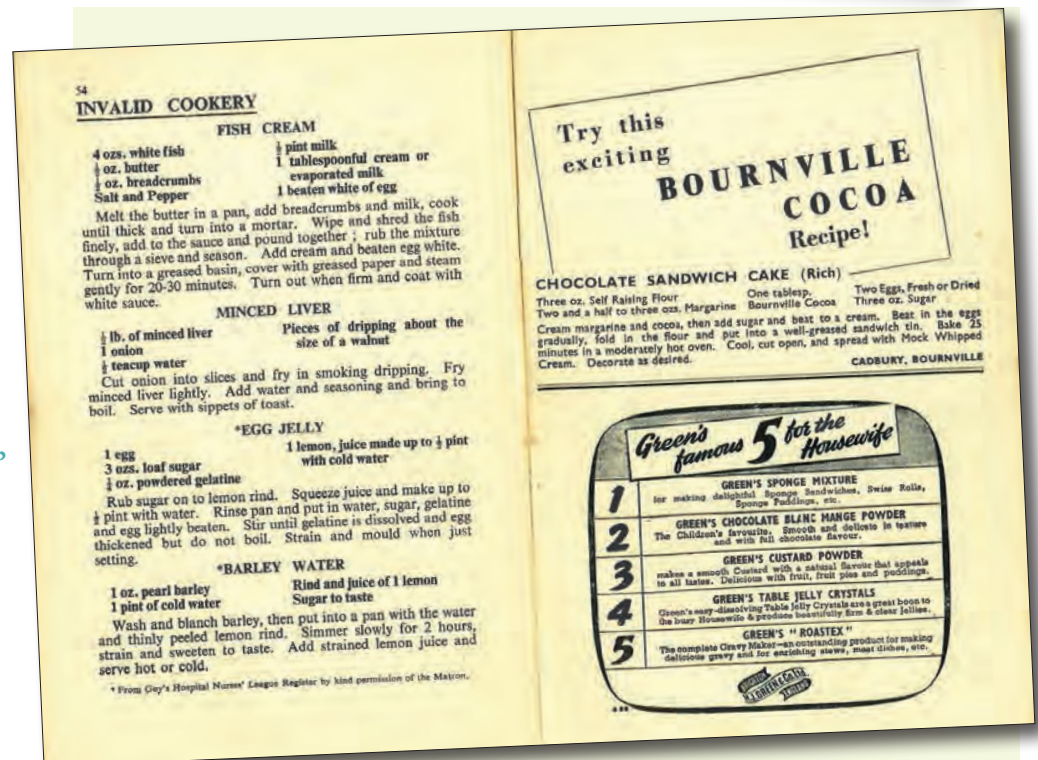
Nurses lead busy lives which aren't always conducive to composing a meaningful diary entry at the end of a long day. However, nurses learned invalid cookery as part of their training and may well have written down and shared recipes with friends, relations and colleagues. The *My Favourite Recipe* cookbook from the RCN archives was produced in aid of the RCN Educational Fund in 1951, with recipes supplied by nurses and other members of the College. It includes recipes for such delicacies as hash-me-gandy, mock turtle soup, Norfolk rusks and semolina buns, as well as the more challenging culinary delights of fish cream and egg jelly for invalids. The ingredients listed reflect the era in which the book was written; Britain was still subject to rationing in 1951 and most of the recipes are evidently intended to make the most of what foodstuffs were available at the time.

'Tasty Tit-Bits and Dishes Dainty'

The archives also hold a copy of the *Colinton Cottage Cookbook*, which was written by Alison Ballantyne in 1988 to raise funds for the Queen's Nursing Institute for Scotland residential and holiday home for nurses in Edinburgh. This featured intriguing recipes for ginger lime fluff, witches foam and sea pie. Ballantyne was housekeeper at Colinton Cottage in the 1960s, and many of these dishes would have been served to the nurses staying at the home.

Our historic journals are also a rich source of culinary treats – *The Nursing Record* published instructions by Lady Constance Howard on how to cook for invalids and convalescents. These "Tasty Tit-Bits and Dishes Dainty" include kidney toast, eggs with endive and savoury rabbit pie.

Whilst not all of these dishes may appeal to the modern palate, they offer an intriguing glimpse into nurses' understanding of nutrition and the role that played in patient care and what was cooked, eaten and served to patients, friends, families and fellow nurses.



Try your hand at fish cream, minced liver or egg jelly from *My Favourite Recipe*. Find more recipes from *The Nursing Record* at <http://tinyurl.com/j5uuoct>

CENTENARY SPECIAL



Royal College of Nursing

In the beginning

In 1916 the war that would be over by Christmas showed no signs of abating and finding well trained nurses to care for the sick and wounded was becoming more difficult. The training of nurses varied widely, from structured three-year programmes in the voluntary hospitals to the perfunctory training of nursing attendants in mental hospitals. The call for state registration of nurses, which had been underway since 1886, was also suspended on the outbreak of war.

Sarah Swift, Matron-in-Chief of the British Red Cross, and Arthur Stanley MP, felt that

nurses needed to organise themselves to meet the post-war challenge that would come from vast numbers of partially trained women.

Based on the model of the medical royal colleges, they drew up a proposal which was widely circulated to influential matrons and held a series of meetings to plan the way forward. The first meeting was so successful that no others took place and despite diverse objections, which the ever diplomatic Stanley managed to address, the College of Nursing Ltd was incorporated on 27 March 1916.

“ ... THE WORK OF THE COLLEGE OF NURSING ... HAS BROUGHT THE INFLUENCE OF THE NURSES TO BEAR ON ALL QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE INTERESTS OF WOMEN, POLITICAL AND SOCIAL ”

Sarah Swift, founder of the College of Nursing



Arthur Stanley MP

Arthur Stanley was a professional diplomat and had been an MP since 1898. He was also Chairman of the British Red Cross Society. He devoted much of his time to voluntary work relating to health and disability and his grandfather had been an ally of Florence Nightingale.

Sarah Swift

Having retired as the matron of Guy's Hospital in 1909, Sarah Swift accepted the post of Matron-in-Chief of the British Red Cross Society in 1914. With her extensive experience and contacts with the matrons of large and prestigious hospitals, she and Stanley were ideally placed to champion the formation of the College of Nursing.



Some significant members

Over the years there have been many significant and influential RCN members and staff. HoNS newsletter editor Dianne Yarwood highlights a few of her personal favourites

Avis Hutt, 1917–2010

Left on the doorstep of a London poorhouse, Avis was often heard to say that she did not have a birthday and knew only that she was born in 1917. She began her nurse training in 1935 at Mile End Hospital and, along with her surgeon husband Roscoe Clarke, soon became a radical activist and member of the Socialist Medical Association.

She risked her job both by getting married and by being involved in political activity. She believed fervently in the NHS and recalled buying her copy of the 1942 Beveridge Report, the (at the time) radical document which paved the way for the founding of the NHS and welfare state.



© Philip Carpenter

Avis was an active member of the History of Nursing Society, a writer of letters and campaigner against what she saw as the increasing privatisation

of the NHS. Described in her 2010 obituary as a nurse, socialist and peace campaigner, she was a truly remarkable woman.



Trevor Clay, 1936–1994

Trained as a general and mental health nurse, Trevor gained experience as a clinical nurse and manager before being appointed Deputy General Secretary of the RCN in 1979. In 1982 he became the first man to be appointed General Secretary and he came into post at a time of great change. He understood the power of the media and was skilled in his interactions with them. He also

recognised the power of political lobbying and introduced parliamentary officers to the College. But first and foremost he was a nurse. During his time at the RCN Trevor's efforts saw an improved pay offer, the creation of the independent pay review body and a special commission on nurse education, and much else. He was awarded an RCN Fellowship in 1985. After retiring on health grounds in 1989 he put his energies into helping those with chronic lung disease.

Jean McFarlane, 1926–2012

One of nursing's great pioneers and England's first professor of nursing. Having trained in London, Jean returned to her hometown of Cardiff as a health visitor. In the 1960s she qualified as a nurse tutor and became an education officer at the RCN. She was an enthusiastic promoter of graduate education and research for nurses, and became the Director of Education at

the RCN in 1969. She left to become Professor of Nursing at Manchester University, where she stayed until her retirement. She introduced the nursing world to research, the nursing process and degrees in nursing, and was one of the first cohort of RCN Fellows in 1976. As a member of the House of Lords – she was made a life peer in 1979 – Baroness McFarlane of Llandaff continued to support nursing and served on a number of select committees.





Monica Baly, 1914–1998

Described at the time of her death as Britain's leading nurse historian, Monica taught the subject on the London University Diploma in Nursing course and wrote the influential

book *Nursing and Social Change*, first published in 1973. She persuaded Trevor Clay to establish a nursing archive and appoint a professional archivist at the College, and was also responsible for the formation of the History of Nursing Society.

After training in London, Monica joined the Princess Mary's RAF Nursing Service and was mentioned in despatches for her work in Italy during the Second World War.

She joined the RCN as a regional nursing officer in 1952 and acted energetically for her members, not least with her part in the *Raise the Roof* campaign which resulted in a 22 per cent pay rise for nurses. She was made an RCN Fellow in 1986 and completed her PhD after retirement, remaining an energetic and prolific nurse historian.

In 1998 the Monica Baly bursary was created as a public recognition of her work. Since 1999 the bursary has been awarded annually for the promotion of scholarship in nursing history. The winner receives between £300 and £1,000 to undertake activities related to the history of nursing including courses, projects or research. Applications for this year's bursary are expected to open in May. Visit <http://tinyurl.com/oz7vjqh> for details.

Mary Good 1914–

An RCN member since 1942, Mary was two years old when the College was formed. She first trained as a children's nurse and remembers being taught how to scrub the cots, but also recalls the introduction of sulphonamides to treat meningitis and the reduction in deaths following the discovery of the vaccination for diphtheria.

In 1939 Mary began general training in Oxford, where the use of penicillin was being trialled with the patients' urine being collected to extract penicillin for re-use. She trained as a midwife in 1942 in Manchester and was involved in setting up a premature baby unit there.

After completing the nursing administrator's course at the RCN in 1950 she spent 10 years as a nurse manager, before taking the RCN sister tutors course in 1960 and joining the



Mary, left, with HoNS newsletter editor Dianne Yarwood

College as tutor to the ward sister's course in 1963. She remained there until her retirement in 1972, however she then spent the next six years delivering in-

service training in Bath. Although fully retired for some years, she remains at 101 an active member of the College eager to share her memories of an amazing career.

The first 10 years

Although established for women, who then mostly made up the profession, the College of Nursing was founded by male and female leaders in society such as Sarah Swift, Rachael Cox-Davies, Sidney Browne, Mary Rundell and Arthur Stanley MP.

Without them, it would have been nigh on impossible to make serious headway in post-Edwardian society. From the beginning the College has been able to recognise the reality of its situation and play to its strengths, which today involves intelligently influencing, shaping and driving the nursing agenda.

The founders were pioneers in organising, establishing and gaining patronage for the College. They were the nursing leaders of their time. Even more notable was that the College was established during the First World War.

Open to all

The College's objectives were for the educational and professional development of those who had been trained as general nurses and for the compilation of a register of nurses.

In 1960, after changes to the state register, much debate and some resistance within the College, Catherine Hall, the then General Secretary, succeeded in gaining overwhelming support from the membership to admit "all who were named on a nursing register". Thus men and those on the supplementary registers could become members.

The student nurses' section had been formed in 1926 and students were active participants in College life. The student section became fully integrated in 1968. With the admission of health care assistants to the membership in 2001, the RCN now supports and represents the full range of those engaged in nursing care.

Founders' exhibition

To coincide with the RCN's centenary, HoNS steering committee members Alison O'Donnell and Tristan Griffin worked with Fiona Bourne, Sarah Chaney and Frances Reed from the RCN Library and Heritage Centre to put together an exhibition looking at the key founders of the College.

Speaking about the exhibition Alison said: "From 1916, the creation of the College was intended to promote professionalism in nursing and the art of caring. It aimed to achieve these high standards through designing, establishing and advancing nurse education. This exhibition will show the pioneering work the founders undertook in creating and establishing the College, which aimed to achieve a professional status for general nurses and to raise the standard of nursing.

"The founders also wanted to ensure that the College was there to care for those who cared for others. Their creation and co-ordination of the College as an



RCN 1926 Brochure cover. RCN Archives

organisation ensured that this ethos of caring was established for future generations of nurses and nursing."

The exhibition at the RCN Library and Heritage Centre in London will launch on 29 March with a special event featuring talks from Alison and Tristan. For more information visit <http://tinyurl.com/jobbkyp>



Rachael Cox-Davies (right) at Portland hospital, South Africa, in the Boer War. RCN Archives

Shaping 100 years of nursing

For almost a century, RCN presidents have embodied the ambition, vision and values of members; influencing nursing and improving patient care. Tom Metcalf looks at some of the remarkable women who held the role

Although it was Sarah Swift who founded what would become the Royal College of Nursing in 1916, she was not the first to assume the role of president.

This historic position dates back to 1922, and while Swift did serve as president between 1925 and 1927, the first to fulfil the role was Sidney Browne, from 1922-25.

For nearly 100 years, 36 RCN presidents have acted as ambassadors for the College and for nursing, representing the RCN and nursing across the UK and around the world, and serving as role models to members and wider health care professionals.

An exhibition charting the history and achievements of the RCN's presidents over the past 100 years was recently installed in the College's London headquarters.

An online version of the exhibition is available on the RCN website. Here, we take a look at the College's figureheads in the years leading up to the Second World War.

The early years

Sidney Browne, 1922-25

Along with Sarah Swift, Sidney was involved in setting up the College of Nursing in 1916 and remained a founding member of the first Council until her retirement in 1927. She was the first honorary treasurer of the College as well as the inaugural president.

"Put a high ideal before you, and do your future service in a greater strength than your own, and your life will be for the betterment of the world."



Sidney Browne

Sarah Swift, 1925-27

Founder of the College of Nursing. Find out more about Sarah in the special centenary section of this newsletter.



Annie Gill

Annie Gill, 1927-29

The fourth founding member to join the College of Nursing in 1916, and largely responsible for the foundation of a Scottish Board of the College. Annie was the first Scottish Board Secretary, and founded the Scottish Matrons' Association.

"At the end of a long nursing career I can say that the nurse's life is an extremely full and happy one, and few nurses would wish to change it for any other life."

Rachael Cox-Davies, 1929-30, 1934-35

Shaped the College's educational policy for which it subsequently received a royal charter. Rachael was instrumental in the foundation of the Cowdray Club and the gift of the London headquarters building to the College.



Rachael Cox-Davies

Margaret Sparshott, 1930-33

A committed supporter of the College and state registration, Margaret had even begun a register of nurses at Manchester Royal Infirmary (MRI) and helped establish a Manchester branch of the College. When she was appointed Lady Superintendent at MRI (1907) she immediately set out to improve the standards of the nursing school and the administration of the hospital.

Edith MacGregor Rome, 1933-34, 1937-38

A member of the College from 1916, Edith became organising secretary in 1920, developing the regional branches. She was later the first secretary of the Student Nurses' Association and an active Council member from 1931.

Dorothy Coode, 1935-37

Particularly interested in professional issues, Dorothy took up several roles at the College, including President of the London Branch, Vice Chair of Council (1937-40), Chair of Council (1940-46) and President (1935-37).

Beatrice Marsh Monk, 1938-40

Spent her career at the London Hospital, where she was Matron from 1919-31. Beatrice worked to reduce nurses' working hours and was in favour of a 48-hour week. During her time as president, in 1939, the College of Nursing was granted the coveted prefix "Royal", enhancing the organisation's prestige.

To read about all the RCN's past presidents visit www.rcn.org.uk/centenary/projects/presidents-exhibition

An Irish nursing pioneer



*Mary Frances Crowley.
Picture courtesy of the Royal
College of Surgeons in Ireland*

John Adams looks at the life and career of Mary Frances Crowley, the first dean of the Faculty of Nursing and Midwifery at the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI)

Located within the RCSI, the Faculty of Nursing and Midwifery is uniquely placed as an integral part of a surgical college. Founded in October 1974, its 40th anniversary provided the impetus to explore how this arrangement came about and to celebrate its pioneering work in education and research for the whole of Ireland.

The RCSI was founded in 1784 by royal charter and is still based in its impressive original building overlooking St Stephen's Green in the centre of Dublin. It runs medical schools in Ireland and abroad and acts together with surgical colleges in England and Scotland to award qualifications and foster research in the

field. The decision to found a faculty, originally for nurses alone, was not an isolated gesture, as the RCSI had been supportive of nurse education since the late 19th century. The College was instrumental in the foundation of the Dublin Metropolitan Technical School for Nurses in 1893, reputedly the world's first centralised nurse training school, which ran successfully until 1969.

A need for education

Mary Frances Crowley (1906-1990) was born in Wexford and began her training in 1931 in the English municipal hospital sector, first at St Catherine's Hospital on the Wirral and then at St James' Hospital, Chester (later renamed Chester City Hospital). Returning to Ireland in 1941, she began her long association with the Royal Victoria Eye and Ear Hospital in Dublin, where she established a nurse training school. As the principal driving

force behind the formation of the Nurse Tutors' Academic Society, an organisation which stressed the importance of research in underpinning nursing practice, she was greatly concerned that the closure of the Dublin Metropolitan Technical School for Nurses meant that educational opportunities for nurses would be diminished.

Her typically forthright response was to call a meeting in 1970 of representatives from the national board, the trade unions, RCSI, and leading figures in the world of Irish nursing, to discuss her proposed solution. Her philosophy was that nurses should refuse state aid and come together to plan and fund an organisation capable of promoting advanced education for nurses. Her proposal was overwhelmingly rejected by those who believed the responsibility for post-qualification education for nurses should fall on the Irish Government.

A faculty is founded

A lesser person would have abandoned their plans in the face of such overwhelming public rejection, but Miss Crowley was made of sterner stuff. She continued to lobby the RCSI and her persistence eventually paid off when the new faculty was founded and she became its first dean. Although not a researcher, Miss Crowley was convinced that nursing research was crucial to the future of the profession. The faculty's first annual research conference was held in 1981 and continues to be a highlight of the research calendar, bringing together researchers and clinical nurses from Ireland, Britain, USA, and the Middle East.

Mary Frances Crowley deserves to be remembered for laying the foundations of a thriving organisation.

Read more about Mary Frances Crowley and the faculty in *Faculty of Nursing & Midwifery 40th Anniversary History 1974-2014* by John Adams, Marie Carney and Thomas Kearns (2014). Download at: <http://www.rcsi.ie/anniversary>

Nursing in Northampton

Sue Longworth, a retired nurse and volunteer at Northampton General Hospital (NGH) archive, describes how the nurses' home at NGH came to be built

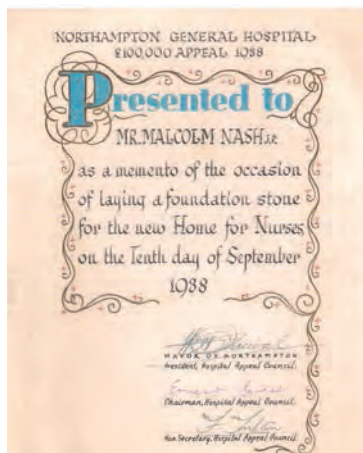
Northampton General Hospital opened in 1744 as "the public infirmary for reception of sick and lame poor". It was supported by voluntary subscriptions and donations. Archive sources tell us the hospital "...is capable of containing 80 beds and is regularly attended by physicians and surgeons. The number of outpatients is unlimited who are supplied with medicines and advice gratis upon every Saturday between the hours of 11 and one".

A new infirmary was built in 1793 (which today occupies a 46-acre site) and by the turn of the 20th century it was recognised that there was a need for a nurses' home – accommodation was often in cubicles adjacent to the wards, which was not conducive to relaxation or study. In 1901 Sir Henry Burdett carried out an inspection of the hospital and estimated the cost of the home would be around £15,000.

The years went by and it was not until 1935 that a campaign was eventually started to raise the necessary funds. A total of 40,000 letters were sent out and a scheme offering "bricks for sale" proved popular.

A home for staff

On 10 September 1938 a ceremony was carried out to lay the foundation stones and plaques of the nurses' home. The committee chairmen of each of the 11 town wards who had raised funds set their own concrete panels to the right of the entrance and a thousand local residents attended the ceremony.



*Above: The nurses' home at NGH
Left: The Duchess of Gloucester at the opening of the home in September 1939
Bottom: A certificate commemorating the laying of the home's foundation stone in September 1938*

All pictures © Northampton General Hospital Trust

The nurses' home was opened on 19 October 1939 by Her Royal Highness the Duchess of Gloucester, accompanied by Earl Spencer. It had been almost 40 years since the first suggestion of a new home was put forward and 76 years later it still serves the same purpose of accommodation and learning for hospital staff.

Library and archive

The hospital archive owes its existence to the Northampton Medical Society, which was formed in 1787. In 1790 the doctors decided to form a library. Although the annual subscription was one guinea, the house officer who acted as treasurer and librarian was allowed free membership. The collection began with 33 books and each year the hospital made a donation to the library. Currently the collection comprises more than 2,000 books and journals.

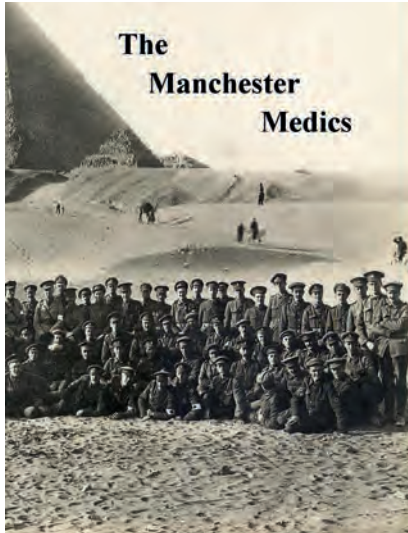
Find out more

Sue has produced two interesting books about hospitals in Northamptonshire. One is on the history of Manfield, an orthopaedic hospital which closed in 1992, and the other on Creaton Hospital, a sanatorium which closed in 1979.

HoNS newsletter editor Dianne Yarwood offers a brief review: "Both books have an interesting collection of photographs and other visual images and documents. They also draw upon the personal recollections and memories of former staff, patients and local residents. They are an informative and enjoyable read and manage to bring together a significant amount of information in an engaging way."

Proceeds from the sale of both books go to charity. For more information about the hospital and archive, and to buy copies of the books, visit <http://tinyurl.com/h9vzummm>

Claire Chatterton recommends *The Manchester Medics* by Eric Hunter and Lesley Oldham (Architects' Publishing Partnership Ltd, 2015)



This book tells the fascinating story of 207 (Manchester) Field Hospital, which forms part of the Army Medical Services (AMS) providing medical support to UK forces on operations overseas. It is currently one of 10 Regional Army Reserve (formerly the Territorial Army) Field Hospitals in the British Army and has centres in Manchester, Stockport, Bury and Chorley.

The authors are Eric Hunter, a retired specialist nurse at Macclesfield Hospital who served in the Territorial Army for almost 30 years, and Lesley Oldham, a serving member of 207 (Manchester) Field Hospital.

The unit was founded in 1885, when a Volunteer Medical Staff Corps was formed from professors and lecturers at Owen's College, which later became the University of Manchester. It grew to encompass recruits from across Lancashire and Cheshire and its members served in the Boer War and all subsequent conflicts including most recently Afghanistan.

During the First World War Manchester Medics staffed three field ambulance units that saw service in Egypt, Gallipoli, Mesopotamia, France and Flanders. They also worked in the 2nd Western General Hospital, the largest home-based military hospital in the Great War. The first principal matron was Miss Margaret Elwyn Sparshott, who was president of the RCN between 1930 and 1933.

The authors place the unit's history within the wider context of the growth of the Territorial Army and the army's medical services. Drawing on archival material, photographs and oral history accounts they succeed in bringing together a rich history of more than a century of medical and nursing care provided by this unit.

“A RICH HISTORY OF MORE THAN A CENTURY OF CARE”

Dianne Yarwood recommends *'Curing Queers': Mental Nurses and Their Patients, 1935-74* by Tommy Dickinson (Manchester University Press, 2015)

Tommy Dickinson has delivered a detailed, comprehensively referenced and frequently moving account of the ways that gay men and male transvestites were

treated by doctors and nurses in order to cure them of their “deviant” behaviour.

“A FREQUENTLY MOVING ACCOUNT”

The book has a largely chronological structure and includes discussions on the development of mental health nursing, the treatment of the mentally ill in Nazi

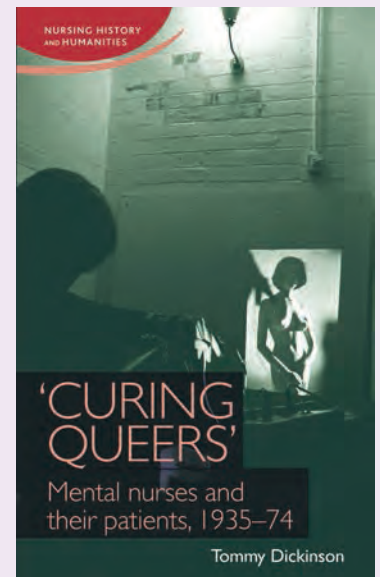
Germany and concludes with an outline of the emergence and impact of the gay liberation movement in the 1970s.

Central to the book, however, are the stories of the eight gay men and 17 nurses involved in the treatment of homosexuality and transvestitism as psychiatric conditions.

The author describes how the move away from legal sanctions to medical treatments which had no evidence base and the self-referral of patients resulted in a confusing time for the nurses. They reported feeling marginalised and unable to act as patient advocates. However, some nurses acted in subversive ways and some collaborated with the patients to claim that they were “cured”.

Whilst this book is the result of in-depth study, it is not possible to address the full reality of the medicalisation of homosexuality, but it does bring us new insights and expands upon earlier research.

Such a short review can only scratch the surface of this remarkable book and I recommend it to everyone.



If you've read a book related to nursing recently and would like to review it for the next issue of this newsletter, get in touch with editor Dianne Yarwood at d.yarwood@ntlworld.com