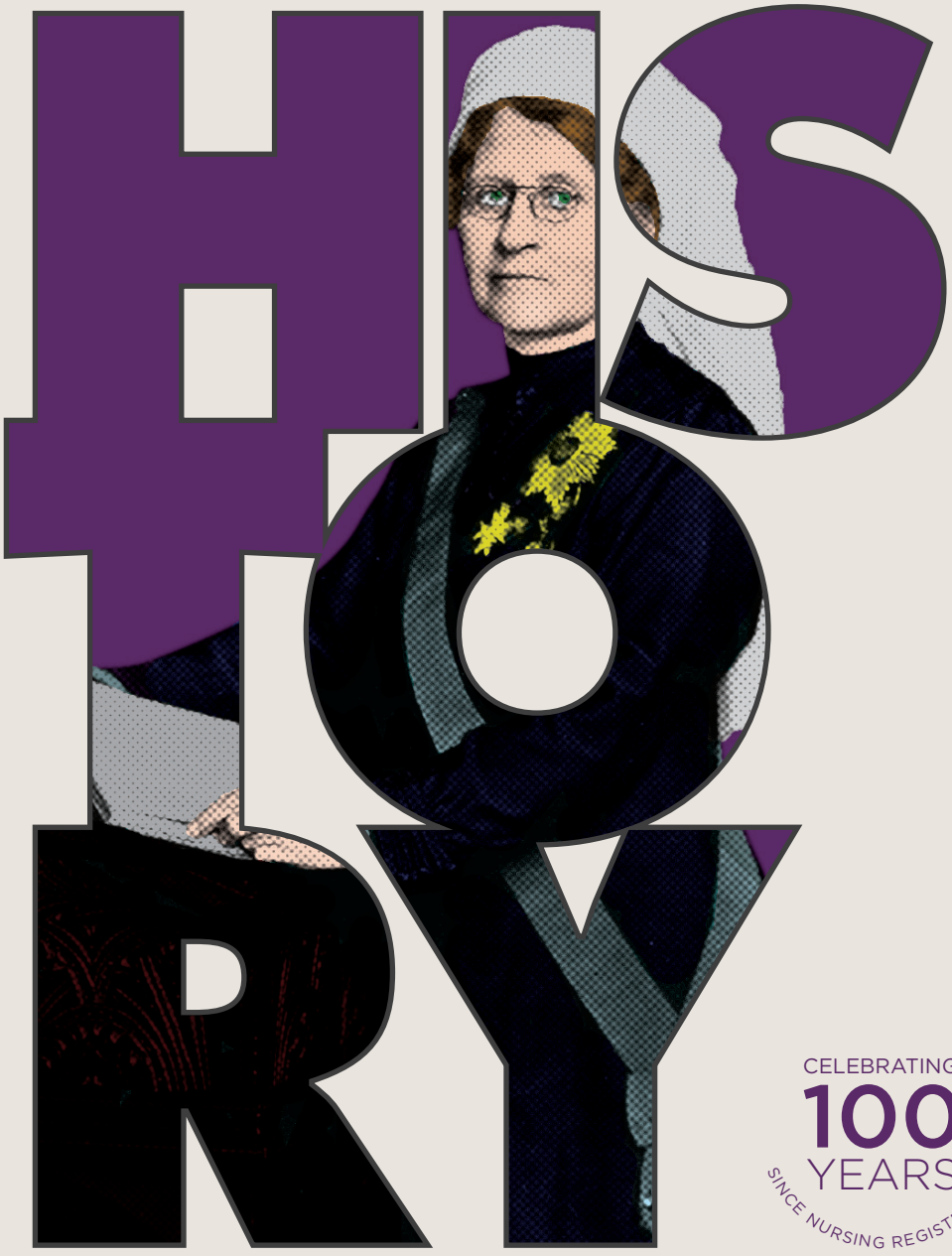


CELEBRATING 100 YEARS SINCE NURSING REGISTRATION

NURSING HISTORY NOW

AUTUMN | WINTER 2019

Royal College of Nursing
History of Nursing Forum

Student nurses pictured in a classroom at a London hospital in the 1960s. Turn to page 16 to read more about the black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) nurses in the RCN Archive (Image credit: RCN Archive)

Goodbye society, hello forum

In the early 1980s, and with the support of Trevor Clay, the RCN's General Secretary at the time, the History of Nursing Society was formed. Back then, the RCN structure included a number of "specialist societies" and "nursing associations". The era of forums was yet to come.

Now, with many well-established forums within the College, we felt that the time was right to change our name to the History of Nursing Forum. This raises our profile as the forum engaged in the history of nursing. We're at the core of promoting and highlighting the unique aspects of our nursing heritage.

To join the forum or find out more, visit our webpage or contact the forum chair Dr Alison O'Donnell at *caputh.aod@gmail.com*

Editor's letter

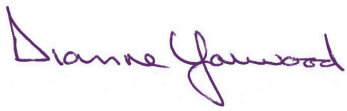
Welcome to the autumn/winter 2019 issue of *Nursing History Now*

After nearly 50 years of discussion, campaigning, heated arguments and many attempts to legislate, the three Nurses Registration Acts were passed on 23 December 1919. The crimson benches of the House of Lords were made available for some campaigners to hear the declaration of the granting of the Royal Assent. Read about the College's role on pages 10-13.

It is also the centenary of the first course training nurses to care for those with learning disabilities. We were pleased to hear from learning disability nurses and on page six we explore an oral history project capturing some of their experiences.

Soon after these two landmarks, the *Quarterly College Bulletin* was established and distributed to all members. It has now been digitised and is available online. On pages 14-15 we delve into the publication to read about 1920s' efforts to raise crucial funds for the College. *Bulletin* also urged members to register. Even then, it could be difficult to spur members into action!

We hope you enjoy this issue and look forward to the many activities planned for 2020, when there will be global celebrations of the bicentenary of the birth of Florence Nightingale.



Editor

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STORY TO TELL?

We're always keen to hear of your thoughts and research related to nursing history. Send your ideas for stories and items for inclusion in future issues of *Nursing History Now* to our editor Dianne Yarwood at *d.yarwood@ntlworld.com*

Front cover: Sarah Swift founded the College of Nursing with MP Sir Arthur Stanley in 1916. She was determined to unite the nursing profession behind registration and believed it would help secure standardised training, pay and professional status. Read about her fight on page 10 (Image credit: RCN Archive)

History in the making

Emotional exhibition

In Cowdray Hall at RCN HQ, three stained glass windows show the emotions associated with nursing 100 years ago: love, faith and fortitude. Now, a new exhibition based on research from Queen Mary Centre for the History of the Emotions will explore how the emotions expected of nurses have changed through time. Read all about the research in the next issue of *Nursing History Now*.

- The exhibition opens on 22 January 2020. Find out more at *rcn.org.uk/whatson*
- For more on the history of emotions visit *emotionslab.org*

Who Cares? *A history of Emotions in Nursing*

Social climbers

The History of Nursing Forum (HoNF) has been getting active on social media. When Panos Poimenidis and Judith Devine joined the HoNF Steering Committee in early 2019 they volunteered to oversee the forum's Facebook group. The group shares and encourages members to post history of nursing events, news and articles – from the RCN and other organisations, such as the UK Association for the History of Nursing. Members have recently shared book recommendations, articles about notable nurses, and national events. We hope it will become an active place for the nursing history community. It's a closed group, but any RCN member with a Facebook account can join, and numbers are growing steadily.

- Search for "Royal College of Nursing History Forum" on Facebook, and send a request to join to the group administrators.

Florence Nightingale's bicentenary

In 2020 the RCN will join colleagues around the world to celebrate Nightingale and nursing. We've partnered with the Florence Nightingale Museum and others to coordinate efforts across nursing and public heritage bodies throughout the UK. With the Library and Archive Service we're creating an exhibition exploring myths and stereotypes in nursing. The exhibition will launch online and in the RCN London Library in April 2020, before moving to the RCN Edinburgh Library in October.

- Look out for our Nightingale events at *rcn.org.uk/whatson*
- Visit the Nightingale Museum's website at *florence-nightingale.co.uk*
- Explore a collection of digitised papers related to Nightingale at *archives.bu.edu*

Award-winning editor

Nursing History Now's Editor Dianne Yarwood was presented with an Award of Merit at this year's RCN Congress. Dianne has played a pivotal role in helping the RCN explore and record its history. She has been an active member of the RCN History of Nursing Forum since its inception and oversaw the transformation of its newsletter into this magazine. Currently leading the Nursing Oral History project, Dianne has worked closely with RCN archivists and librarians on other projects, including the award-winning Service Scrapbooks.

Left to right: RCN Chief Executive Dame Donna Kinnair, President Anne Marie Rafferty, Dianne Yarwood and Chair of RCN Council Sue Warner

Committee changes

The three longest-serving members of the History of Nursing Forum's committee are reaching the end of their terms of office. Our thanks to Claire Chatterton who until June guided us so ably, to Alison O'Donnell who has continued that support over the past six months, and to Dianne Yarwood, editor of *Nursing History Now* magazine. We will be welcoming a new chair and committee members in 2020.

- Visit *rcn.org.uk/forums* to find the History of Nursing Forum webpage, where we'll post committee updates in January.

Outgoing committee, left to right: Dianne Yarwood, Claire Chatterton, Alison O'Donnell

Monica Baly Bursary

The RCN Foundation Professional Bursary Scheme has recently combined its education grants into one biannual scheme, running in spring and autumn. The Monica Baly Bursary for the study or investigation of the history of nursing is included in the new scheme.

- Visit *rcnfoundation.org.uk* for details for the spring 2020 awards.

Northampton history

In the spring edition of *Nursing History Now*, Sue Longworth shared the evolution of nursing at Northampton General Hospital. Sue has now completed her history of nursing in Northampton 1743-2000. Read it at *tinyurl.com/NorthamptonNursing*

Patients with learning disabilities dine together at Normansfield Hospital (now the Langdon Down Centre), Middlesex in 1979 (Image credit: John Minihan/Stringer)

Untold stories

As we reach the centenary of the first learning disability nursing courses, universities in the UK and Ireland have collaborated on The Learning Disability Nursing Oral History Project. The researchers behind it tell us more

A nurse helps a child with her meal at a West Wickham school for children with learning disabilities, 1959 (Image credit:Ray Moreton/Stringer)

Academics have been capturing and analysing stories of learning disability nurses with more than 30 years' experience to understand what drives them to work in this field, and learn lessons that might be relevant to the current workforce crisis. The recordings now form a unique collection in the RCN's archive Dr Su McAnelly, Principal Lecturer at Northumbria University, and colleagues tell us more:

With the closure of learning disability hospitals in the UK and Ireland, and the accompanying move away from congregated living, few practising learning disability nurses will have experience or knowledge of the old "long stay" institutions. This project gives voice to them.

The interviews, from 20 English and 10 Irish nurses, reveal their motivations and the changes in learning disability nursing over the past three decades. The nurses expressed a strong sense of justice – that they were doing the right thing and making a difference. Many of the nurses reported a very early interest in working with people with learning disabilities. They also shared enjoyment, satisfaction and passion.

Although the nurses said they would repeat their careers again, many experienced extreme stress. Some recalled being burned out and feeling isolated. There were many accounts of coping mechanisms. Instances of personal resilience and fighting the system were expressed proudly.

Nurses also had to respond to the challenges of a changing service landscape. Many of the women in this study began their nursing careers without the qualifications required to become registered nurses, but took up opportunities to convert, or did specialised diplomas or higher qualifications.

Some men reported that career promotion was rapid after qualification, recalling opportunities for senior positions in learning disability services. Some promotions appear linked to gender and perhaps also to physical attributes. Particularly in the early days of institutional care, some men were targeted for work with "challenging" clients because of their physical size.

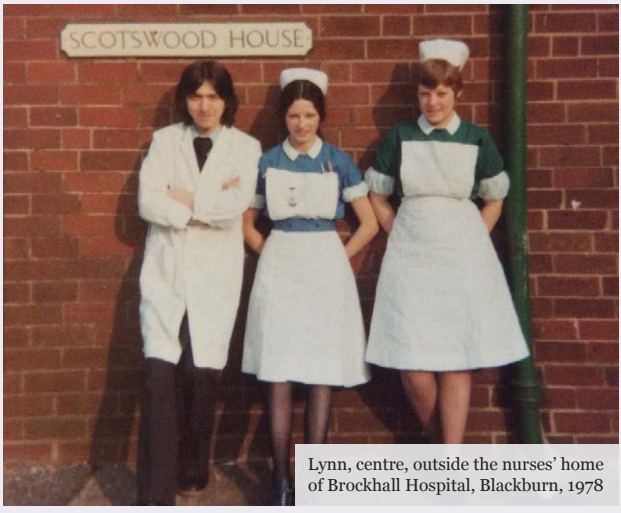
Although the learning disability workforce seems to have a strong shared vision, this was not necessarily shared with other professions or the wider nursing family. Sadly, almost universally, these nurses felt "undervalued". ■

- To find out more contact Dr McAnelly *su.mcanelly@northumbria.ac.uk* (for England) or Dr Sandra Fleming *flemins@tcd.ie* (for the Republic of Ireland)

- Authors: Dr McAnelly, Dr Colin Griffiths, Paul Keenan, Dr Sandra Fleming, Dr Carmel Doyle and Michelle Cleary (Trinity College Dublin); Dr Helen Atherton (Leeds University); Professor Bob Gates, Dr Paul Sutton (The University of West London)

MY LIFE AS A LEARNING DISABILITY NURSE

Lynn Hannon began learning disability nursing on 31 October 1977, working in the old style "asylum" hospital setting



Lynn, centre, outside the nurses' home of Brockhall Hospital, Blackburn, 1978

"I am passionate about learning disability nursing. It is an area of practice often misunderstood by other nurses until they have direct contact with a person who has a learning disability. That's when you see the real value of learning disability nursing.

It is truly holistic, creative and values-based. It is about enabling, empowering and supporting people to develop and reach their potential, from cradle to grave. It is also about meeting individual health needs and, as a nurse, this has always been my primary focus.

We raise awareness of the needs of people with a learning disability. We support families and other services to get to know the person, dealing with behaviour management, communication and independence levels.

After 42 years I am still learning! To me, learning disability nursing is extremely interesting and rewarding."

‘Idiot boys’ at the London Foundling Hospital

Thomas Aird, Foundling Museum volunteer, looks back at the experiences of boys living with learning disabilities in the 18th century

During the 18th century, the London Foundling Hospital was home to a small group of “idiot boys”. Despite the label, investigation has revealed that many of the boys were able to function well and were apprenticed to appropriate trades. As we celebrate the centenary of the first course for learning disability nurses, the lives and experiences of these boys give us an insight into the attitudes to learning disabilities in past centuries.

Established in 1739, the London Foundling Hospital was given a government grant in 1756 on the proviso that they accept every child under two months of age. This period, the “general reception”, lasted until 1760 and six branch hospitals were established to accommodate the rapid increase in numbers. The two main branches were at Ackworth in Yorkshire and Shrewsbury.

Many of the children left at the hospital were disabled and 10 years after the general reception ended, the governors had to consider how to deal with the adolescents regarded as unfit or unsuitable to be

apprentices. On 17 November 1770 the hospital sub-committee ordered: "That the secretary do lay before the Committee an account of those children who by reason of blindness, lameness or other infirmities, may not be fit to put out to apprentice."

At Ackworth, five boys are listed as "idiot", with sub-categories such as "inclining to idiotism" and "low capacity". By comparison, nine girls are listed. The term "idiot" was often associated with children described as being of "low capacity" or "weak understanding" impacting on the children's ability to perform day-to-day tasks expected of them.

The hospital's sub-committee discussed the children's potential and suitability of becoming apprentices. Some were described as "grown much better", "has become useful", "can do something" and "not likely to become useful". There is also a suggestion "that they be not assembled with other children".

At this time, boys were usually apprenticed aged 10 until the maximum age of 21. Common occupations included service at sea, husbandry, gardening, peruke (wig) making, and bookbinding. In 1772, the boys at Ackworth were employed in the coal yard and pump, manufactory and the pig yard. The governors considered offering financial incentives to find the boys a stable situation: "Some person in the trading towns in the neighbourhood of Ackworth might be induced to take some of them with a moderate premium". The five boys were, however, returned to London in 1773.

On 4 May 1774, the governors were approached by the director of a house of industry in London offering to house some of the boys. The governors wrote: "the sending of some of the ailing children into that House might be the means to give them a better turn to industry than they can acquire in this Hospital". Four of the "idiot" boys were sent, along with five other boys, to the house of industry. One died there, but the reason is not recorded.

The other boys remained for a year, before returning to the Foundling Hospital by order of the governors. The reason why is not clear, but the sub-committee reports that the boys were "quite destitute of clothing". By 1777, one of the boys was apprenticed to a mariner; the other two are listed as "discharged being of age". ■

Engraving of the Foundling Hospital from c.1753

A centenary of nurse registration in the UK

Alison O'Donnell, Chair of the History of Nursing Forum, explores the College of Nursing's role in the hard-fought battles for registration

Ethel Gorden Fenwick and Eva Luckes were opponents in the fight for registration

The Nurses Registration Act of 1919 was not without controversy nor critics. Passed in December, reaching that point was not an easy journey.

The fight for the state registration of nurses emerged following the 1860 establishment of the Nightingale Training School where "the concept of a state register" began to be suggested. At this time, doctors, teachers and other professionals had achieved state registration. However, Florence Nightingale was opposed to it, believing that nursing was a "calling", which should focus on practical nursing skills and intrinsic personal qualities.

Ethel Gordon Fenwick (née Manson) trained at Nottingham Children's Hospital and then Manchester Royal Infirmary. She was a ward sister at The London Hospital then in 1881, aged 24, was appointed matron of St Bartholomew's Hospital. After marrying Dr Bedford Fenwick she retired from nursing, but remained an active campaigner, promoting that nurses should be the ones to lead and organise nursing. Mrs Fenwick did not, however, recognise the many nurses working in asylums as qualified nurses. And, like Nightingale before her, the number of male nurses "were a cause of consternation".

The registrationists' campaign was strengthened in 1902 by the passing of the Midwives Act, and soon after Mrs Fenwick created The Society for the State Registration of Trained Nurses (SSRTN). In 1903 and 1904, two unsuccessful bills were presented in parliament, and by 1904 a select committee on the registration of nurses was established. It collected evidence from contrasting viewpoints, with witness testimonies reflecting hospital and rural settings.

Eva Lückes, a disciple of Florence Nightingale and matron of The London Hospital, was one of the key influential matrons opposing state registration. She produced pamphlets against it in 1914 and 1915.

Among 26 recommendations the select committee reported to the House of Commons in July 1905 was the establishment of a register of nurses, maintained by a central state-appointed body. It recommended a separate register for asylum nurses. Fees would be charged for names held on this register.

Before the First World War began, at least eight bills were presented, but none progressed through both houses successfully. By 1914, world events overtook the registrationists' campaign. ▶

Ethel Gordon Fenwick (centre) marches alongside other nurses and midwives to the Royal Albert Hall, London, in 1909. (Image credit: Christina Broom/Museum of London)

A college of nursing

Founded in 1916, the College of Nursing emerged as a force within the nursing establishment. The founders, Sarah Swift, Arthur Stanley MP, Annie Warren Gill, Mary Rundle and Rachael Cox-Davies, felt that a college of nursing would help the scholarship and training of nurses, advancing nursing as a profession.

They recognised that there would be battles within nursing over divisive issues including: nursing being an unregulated occupation; the status of voluntary hospitals versus poor law infirmaries; the variability of training, staff quality and pay across the country; and nursing as a female-dominated profession. A college that was also a professional body could unify and campaign on issues for its membership.

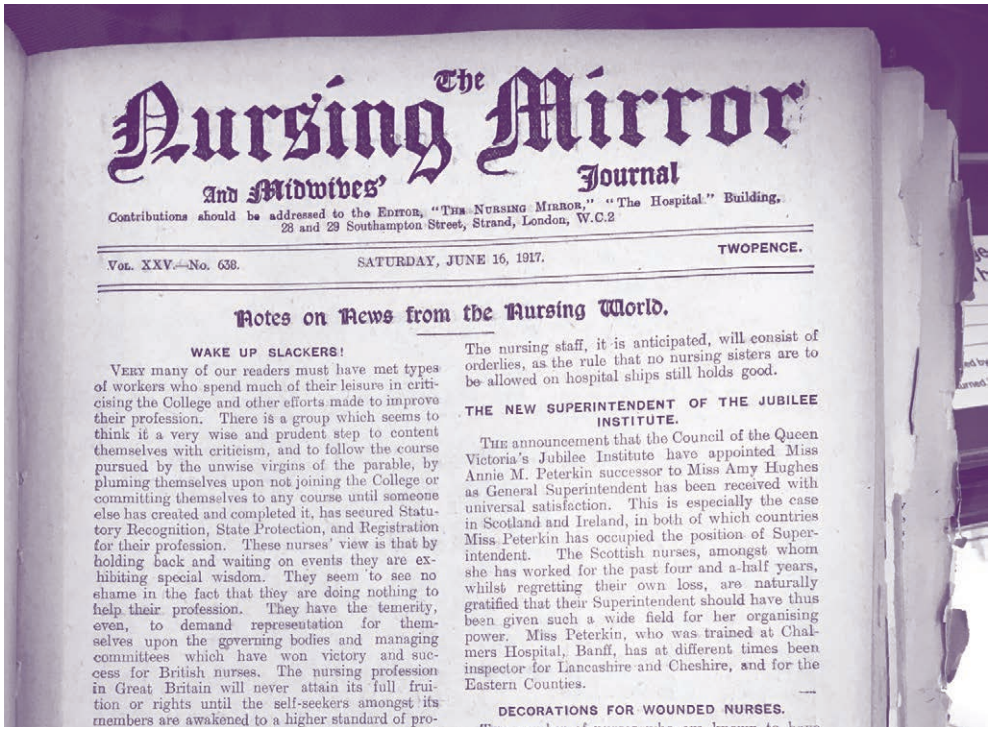
The founders knew nursing would need strong post-war leadership, which a college could, and would, provide. As the war extended, finding appropriate nurses to work at the front became a priority. Many nurses would become disabled by war work and face limited income – the College began campaigning on their behalf.

By 1916, a form of the Registration Bill was at parliament. The SSRTN asked nurses to sign their petition. In 1917, the College asked members to withdraw their names from the petition, as it wanted the bill to be revised.

Correspondence shows College secretary Mary Rundle was key in the organisation's support for state registration legislation. As well as lobbying and promoting it, she was often found managing the diverse debate. The title of the new registration exhibition at RCN headquarters – *Wake Up Slackers!* – is taken from a 1917 *Nursing Mirror* (pictured below), attempting to galvanise inactive members into supporting registration.

> College secretary Mary Rundle was key in the organisation's support for registration... she was often found managing the debate

Individual members also shared their views with the College. Miss A G MacDonald, matron of The Norfolk War Hospital, wrote to Rundle on 23 May 1917: "It is really a matter of minor importance how State Registration comes to us, provided we get it..."



The Nursing Mirror And Midwives' Journal

Contributions should be addressed to the Editor, "The Nursing Mirror," "The Hospital" Building, 28 and 29 Southampton Street, Strand, London, W.C.2

Vol. XXV.—No. 638. SATURDAY, JUNE 16, 1917. TWOPENCE.

Notes on News from the Nursing World.

WAKE UP SLACKERS!

Very many of our readers must have met types of workers who spend much of their leisure in criticising the College and other efforts made to improve their profession. There is a group which seems to think it a very wise and prudent step to content themselves with criticism, and to follow the course pursued by the unwise virgins of the parable, by pluming themselves upon not joining the College or committing themselves to any course until someone else has created and completed it, has secured Statutory Recognition, State Protection, and Registration for their profession. These nurses' view is that by holding back and waiting on events they are exhibiting special wisdom. They seem to see no shame in the fact that they are doing nothing to help their profession. They have the temerity, even, to demand representation for themselves upon the governing bodies and managing committees which have won victory and success for British nurses. The nursing profession in Great Britain will never attain its full fruition or rights until the self-seekers amongst its members are awakened to a higher standard of pro-

The nursing staff, it is anticipated, will consist of orderlies, as the rule that no nursing sisters are to be allowed on hospital ships still holds good.

THE NEW SUPERINTENDENT OF THE JUBILEE INSTITUTE.

The announcement that the Council of the Queen Victoria's Jubilee Institute have appointed Miss Annie M. Peterkin successor to Miss Amy Hughes as General Superintendent has been received with universal satisfaction. This is especially the case in Scotland and Ireland, in both of which countries Miss Peterkin has occupied the position of Superintendent. The Scottish nurses, amongst whom she has worked for the past four and a-half years, whilst regretting their own loss, are naturally gratified that their Superintendent should have thus been given such a wide field for her organising power. Miss Peterkin, who was trained at Chalmers Hospital, Banff, has at different times been inspector for Lancashire and Cheshire, and for the Eastern Counties.

DECORATIONS FOR WOUNDED NURSES.

Influencing the acts

College papers show how the organisation influenced the development of the Nurses Registration Bill. Copies of the bill introduced to the House of Commons on 28 March 1919 are held.

As well as a statement from the College, it sought support from "their lordships" and was presented on 22 May 1919 by Arthur Stanley and Edwin Cooper Perry. Much of the debate was led by Rundle and Stanley.

On 9 December 1919, adaptations were made setting out three acts: one for England and Wales, one for Scotland and one for Ireland. The acts for Scotland and Ireland were both amendments to the bill.

The House of Commons sat on 22 December 1919, when the final amendments were ratified and sent to be printed. With 23 December 1919 as the finalised print date, the Nurses Registration Act(s) became law. Copies are held in the College archives.

This enshrined in law three separate General Nursing Councils for England and Wales, Scotland and Ireland, each tasked with compiling a register of qualified nurses.

Each register was to have five parts: general; male (which was supplementary); mental diseases; sick children; and any other prescribed part.

Mary Rundle

Registration's legacy

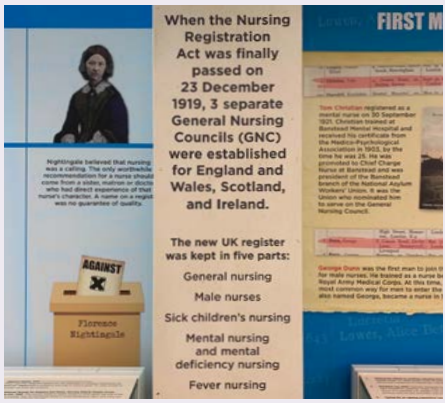
The impact of state registration continues to be debated by historians. As Anne Witz wrote in 1992: "The passage of the Nurses Registration Act in 1919 did not represent a victory for pro-registrationists nurses. The nursing profession had not come to power. Instead, nurses were henceforth to be tightly constrained within a state-profession relation within which they were the weaker partner, as well as within the employment relation between hospitals and nurses and the inter-professional relation between doctors and nurses."

The constraint of state governance can still be felt in today's health care setting. It could be argued that nursing is not wholly independent. The act of 1919 and its subsequent legislation has not fully secured professional independence for nursing, nor solved many of the underlying tensions that still exist today. ■

Wake up, slackers!

Find out more about the heated arguments surrounding nursing registration in the new exhibition at RCN HQ. This exhibition will be open to members and the public for six months in London, before moving to RCN Scotland in spring 2020. Discover why the Nurse Registration Act 1919 was controversial and how it was secured.

Until 20 March 2020
RCN Library and Heritage Centre
Read more at *tinyurl.com/wakeupslackers*



Read more

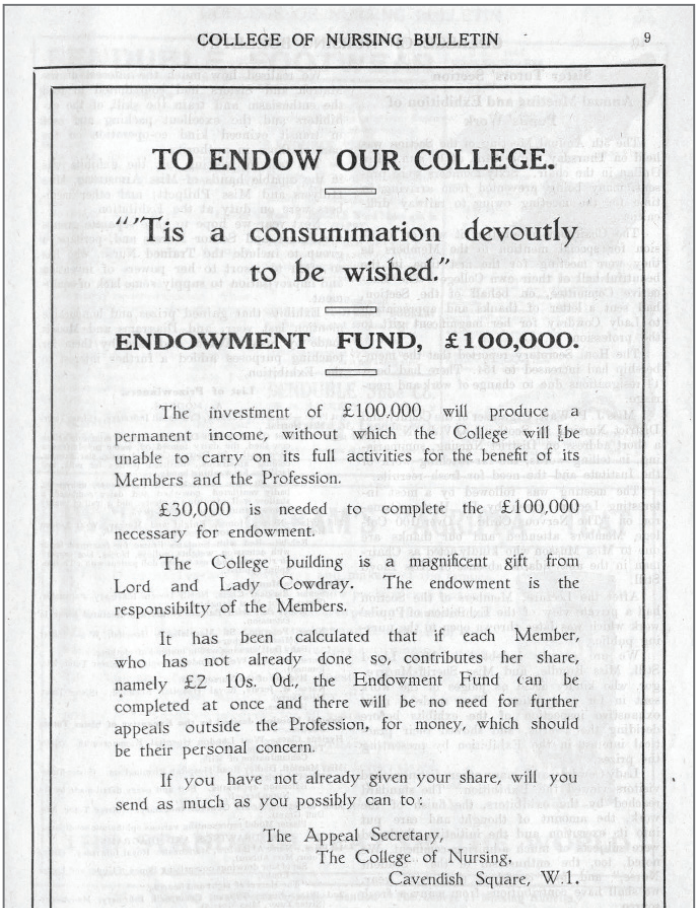
- This is an extract from a longer, referenced article. For a full copy please contact Alison at *caputh.aod@gmail.com*

Keys and cakes to save the College

In the 1920s, the College faced a financial crisis. Dianne Yarwood shares her discoveries from the RCN Archive about innovative fundraising schemes

As a volunteer with the library and archive team I have recently been involved in digitising the College's *Quarterly Bulletin* 1920–1926 and was fascinated to read how the College raised the funds it needed to function. Famously, the Cowdray family spent about £100,000 on purchasing, building and renovating the Cavendish Square and Henrietta Place premises, but in *Bulletin* I discovered the source of funds for day-to-day running costs. And it was not from members' subscriptions!

When established in 1916, the College of Nursing's objectives were largely educational and professional, but also encompassed the health and wellbeing of member nurses. In 1917 the Nation's Fund for Nurses was conceived with two parts: a "tribute fund" for all nurses and an "endowment fund" for the College, each with a £100,000 target. The tribute fund soon reached this and began providing support to nurses in need as the result of war or sickness. The endowment fund was to provide "permanent buildings and scholarships in perpetuity".



COLLEGE OF NURSING BULLETIN 9

TO ENDOW OUR COLLEGE.

"'Tis a consummation devoutly to be wished."

ENDOWMENT FUND, £100,000.

The investment of £100,000 will produce a permanent income, without which the College will be unable to carry on its full activities for the benefit of its Members and the Profession.

£30,000 is needed to complete the £100,000 necessary for endowment.

The College building is a magnificent gift from Lord and Lady Cowdray. The endowment is the responsibilty of the Members.

It has been calculated that if each Member, who has not already done so, contributes her share, namely £2 10s. 0d., the Endowment Fund can be completed at once and there will be no need for further appeals outside the Profession, for money, which should be their personal concern.

If you have not already given your share, will you send as much as you possibly can to:

The Appeal Secretary,
The College of Nursing,
Cavendish Square, W.1.

In 1920, the year of the first *Quarterly Bulletin*, the endowment fund had still only reached around £30,000. The Cowdray family had agreed to purchase, equip and furbish 20 Cavendish Square, but without the full endowment the College could not fulfil its aims.

The membership agreed that as of November 1920 all new members would pay an annual subscription of five shillings (25p), in addition to the one guinea (£1.05) registration fee. The existing "founding members" were not required to pay the subscription, but some chose to. By the end of 1922, with the Cowdray Club for nurses and

professional women soon to open and work underway on the College building, an energetic campaign to fill the endowment fund began. The treasurer suggested that if every member (now about 19,000) saved a "penny a day for two years" the target would be reached. Members were asked to raise £2.10.0 (£2.50) each before the building opened.

Over the next four years, *Quarterly Bulletin* ran competitions, local centres organised tea parties and whist drives, and members were encouraged to "spend a shilling and raise 10 shillings" and write in to share their ideas and successes.

The *Bulletin* competitions included a crossword puzzle, complete a limerick, compose an acrostic and identify errors. Prizes were £1.10.0 and entry cost one shilling. All members were sent a small cardboard collection box for "mystery donations".

The College also incentivised donations. Once members reached the target, they were sent a 'silver' key (pictured above) to wear as a sign of pride and added to a roll of honour, kept in the library. Cow and Gate offered a £50 prize for a competition open only to those who'd donated. The September 1926 *Bulletin* reported on the opening of the College building – even with membership up to 24,000, the endowment fund was short by about £30,000. The issue included a full-page appeal for further donations.

Throughout the four years of fundraising, the honorary treasurer expressed disappointment that so few members donated or entered competitions. But there was also celebration of individuals who baked cakes, knitted socks and grew flowers for sale.

- To read these accounts in more detail browse the archive at *rcn.access.preservica.com* ■

Celebrating nursing diversity

During Black History Month 2019, the RCN Library and Archive team launched an online exhibition sharing the stories of black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) nurses from decades past

Students on an overseas introductory course pose inside RCN headquarters in the early 1960s (Image credit: RCN Archive)

Last year was the 70th anniversary of the NHS and of Empire Windrush, the ship that brought many nurses from the Caribbean to work in the newly formed NHS.

The RCN Library and Archive team delved back though its collections and found many interesting photographs, stories and artefacts – not only of the Windrush nurses, but of black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) nurses who arrived at different times and from different countries. Now, the team, coordinated by Raz Akram, has compiled these materials into an online exhibition.

"We hope people will see what we have and use these resources, because they're there to be used," says Raz.

Within the collection are many amazing photographs of nurses from the 1950s, 60s and 70s – attending training at the RCN, working at hospitals around the UK and socialising with one another. Many of the subjects of the photos, however, are unnamed.

"It's lovely to see, but we don't know very much about them," Raz says. "But if people see this, they might know who the person is. They might be able to fill our catalogues with information or donate items from the same nurses."

The heart of the online exhibition is the oral histories – recorded interviews with inspirational nurses. "Our oral histories are very moving," says Raz. "Personal stories really resonate and it's always important for people to tell their stories themselves."

Raz and the team are also asking for nurses and former nurses to make donations to the archive. This could be in the form of photographs, paperwork, badges or an interview or written account of their time as a nurse.

"We want to promote diversity as much as possible at the RCN because we want our resources to reflect our staff and the patients that our nurses see," Raz explains. "We really want to make our collections as diverse as possible."

- Visit the online exhibition at *tinyurl.com/BAMEhistory* ■

Dr Neslyn Eugenie Watson-Druée

Born in Jamaica 1949
Came to the UK 1969

"On my first morning at the training school, I was waiting for there to be daylight to get up and of course in March if it's a cloudy day you don't get daylight until 10am. I went back to sleep and by the time I woke up I had missed breakfast and lunch.

However, in those days there was always milk and bread. One of the girls made me some toast and said: 'Now you mustn't miss supper'. By then it was dark anyway. That's my introduction and the next day I started work."

Diane Morarji

Born in Trinidad 1958
Came to the UK 1975

"I was age 17: all the way here on my own, but I was determined to go... When I arrived, all I had [was] my suitcase in my hand. The matron said: 'This is your room, nurses'...

The English accent was strange to me so I had to listen carefully to understand what people were saying, but it was like a challenge.

I felt immediately very well off, I didn't feel isolated... I just thought: 'OK, this is nice, this is food I've never seen before, I'll give it a go.' I loved the food! I'd never seen puddings ever – I was like: 'Gosh, pudding, that's nice.'"

BOOK REVIEW

A History of Nursing

By Louise Wyatt, Amberley Publishing 2019

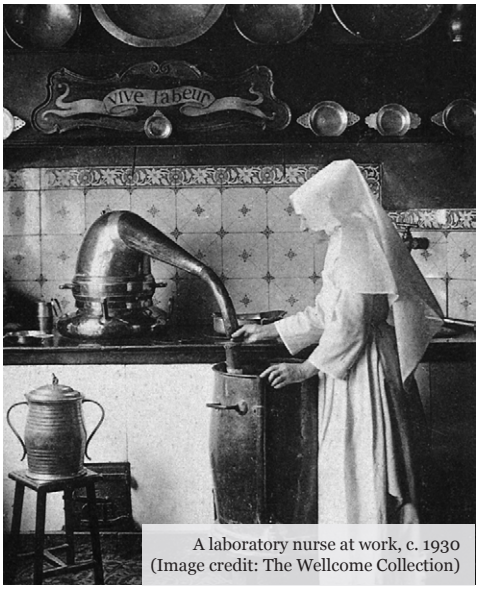
Dianne Yarwood reviews a long-view on the origins of nursing

Nurses take a bandaging class at Tredegar House, 1906 (Image credit: The Wellcome Collection)

Louise Wyatt has produced a richly illustrated overview of the history of nursing. Beginning in "ancient times", she draws upon the growth of scientific knowledge and the development of medical practice which run in parallel with the developments in nursing. From antiquity, she then explores a number of religious orders, reaching the development of modern nursing in the nineteenth century. She also touches upon what she calls "nursing specialisms" and after an outline of some lesser-known nurses, concludes with a brief overview of some of Florence Nightingale's achievements as an administrator, statistician and nurse.

In places throughout the book, Wyatt has inserted extracts from the NMC Code of Conduct 2015, perhaps in an effort to show parallels with the past, but I feel that their inclusion would benefit from some explanation, especially for a non-professional reader.

She has taken a vast subject, aiming to give an overview of nursing's development, and manages to sum up 300 years of nursing history concisely. A number of her examples however are tangential to nursing – for example, the discovery of blood



A laboratory nurse at work, c. 1930 (Image credit: The Wellcome Collection)

Headstone erected by the RCN in 2012 on Betsi Cadwaladr's pauper's grave in Wales (Image credit: Professor Donna Mead, University of South Wales)

circulation in the 16th century and the invention of the printing press in the 15th century.

Generally, this is an impressive overview of nursing history, although I take issue with some assertions, for example that the St John's sisterhood "took over Charing Cross" and the omission of the fact that Ethel Gordon Fenwick became SRN1 when the first nursing register was created. Its bibliography has some interesting and less frequently quoted sources and I feel that the book serves as an appropriate introduction to the history of nursing. I hope it prompts readers to explore our rich history further. ■

Q&A

Nursing History Now speaks to author Louise Wyatt

NHN: What inspired you to write *A History of Nursing*?
LW: There was a museum at the university where I trained in Bristol, it used to be an asylum, so they had old instruments and my interest took off from there. I wanted to find out what nursing was and how far back I could take it, before Florence Nightingale.

NHN: What did you discover about the connections between nursing and religion?
LW: The more I dug down, the more I realised that, yes, you had abbeys, nunneries and things, but a lot of [nurses] hadn't taken religious orders. They were doing it because there was a lot of poor, ill people with things like smallpox and the plague. They were caring because they could.

A lot of the trailblazers, be they Roman matrons or 19th-century women, were wealthy and had the time to dedicate themselves to it. Religion was the basis of a lot, but not all of it, which I was excited to find.

Why did you include detail of medical discoveries through history?
LW: I think I had to really, so that the nursing part made sense. Nursing evolved from that, so it was a background of what was going on.

NHN: You discuss Florence Nightingale and challenge her legacy in some ways. Why is that important?
LW: She was an amazing intellectual woman, but [nursing] had been going on a long time before she came along, and I discovered a couple of things [she has been credited with] that she actually wasn't responsible for. Handover documentation, for example, was put in motion by an American nurse who had trained by Nightingale's side. But it wasn't actually Nightingale that instituted that.

NHN: What are you working on next?
LW: A big thing now is nature, wellbeing and mental health, and I found a lot of that in older types of nursing, so I'll maybe follow up with something along those lines.

Dates for your diary

Aspects of Age Exhibition

Until 20 December 2019
RCN Wales Library

Until 28 February 2020,
RCN NI Library

Until 30 April,
RCN Scotland

The value of care: women's work and emotional labour

29 January 2020
5-7pm
RCN HQ, London

Struck Off! The GNC Disciplinary Committee 1922-36

5 February 2020
4-5.30pm
Riverside Museum,
University of Chester

Black nurses in Britain before Windrush

10 March 2020
5-7pm
RCN HQ, London

RCN History of Nursing Forum Annual Lecture delivered by Professor Christine E. Hallett

1 April 2020
5.30pm-7.30pm
University of Worcester

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Royal College of Nursing
History of Nursing Forum

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