

## **RCN Forum Annual Report 2024**

### **Forum: History of Nursing (HONF)**

#### **Introduction:**

The History of Nursing Forum's (HONF) stated aim is to 'protect, inspire, preserve, share and cherish' nursing's rich heritage. The forum supports and promotes member's interests in the history of nursing and welcomes any RCN member with a desire to explore the rich history of nursing.

#### **Membership of the forum and committee**

We currently have 2463 members an increase of approximately 5% on last year. Of those, 625 are first choice members, an approximate increase of 4%. With the return of more face to face events there are more opportunities to promote the forum and encourage membership. In addition we have engaged with a wider range of membership groups to promote activity with the forum.

At the end of 2023 the committee chair and one other member stepped down, we send our thanks and regards to Stuart Wildman, former chair of the forum who stepped down at the end of 2023. Also to Dionne Daniel who left the committee in September. We successfully recruited to only three of the five vacancies for 2024, the committee had 4 members for much of the year. We were more successful this year and will begin 2025 with a full committee, and one member as a potential reserve should the need arise.

In recognition of his work in support of the forum over his four years as Forum Chair, Stuart Wildman was recognised at Congress as a Forum Committee Member of the Year.

#### **Reflections on 2024 (outputs and outcomes)**

Forum members continue to be active in promoting and supporting a general and specific interest in the history of nursing as well as engaging in research, discussion and debate. We link with other nursing history groups, both nationally and internationally. Outlined below are some achievements in 2024 and an overview of plans for 2025.

## Nurses in Red, a Wikipedia project.



A small group of members, lead by Vari Drennan, continue to work on the Wikipedia project to increase the visibility of deceased nurses, with an emphasis on RCN members. The volunteers received editor training and ongoing support from Alice White (formerly Wikipedian with Welcome, now English Heritage). A special thanks to Sarah Rogers for her enthusiasm and determination to raise the profile of Eva Luckes and her 'many matrons'.

Following winning the 'Partnership of the Year Award 2023', the trophy was displayed in all of the RCN libraries. Sarah Rogers and Teresa Doherty gave a presentation to the UK Association of the History of Nursing at their 2024

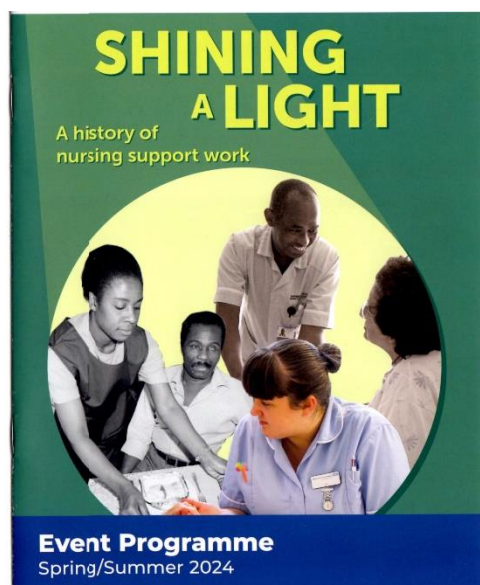
Colloquium and a related paper has been accepted for publication in UKAHN's annual bulletin. As of October 2024 the group have contributed approximately 3000 edits/corrections and have created 38 new articles. In addition there have been in excess of 9 million views of 'our' articles. Plans are underway to recruit additional reviewers in early 2025.

## Oral History Project

Plans were underway and a bid for funding was made to the Forum Governance Group for a project to target significant gaps in the RCN archive oral history collection. These include migrant nurses, prison nurses and Fellowships awarded since 2019 (paused during the pandemic). Unfortunately the bid failed due to the associated costs relating to face to face interviews. Dianne Yarwood was able to carry out 3 interviews in support of the *Shining a Light* exhibition. It has also been possible to conduct some interviews where travel costs are not an issue. This activity is a high priority for the forum, RCN archives and the wider nursing communities. Strategies to recruit additional interviewers are being developed in order to reduce costs and a funding bid will be submitted in 2025.

## Events and Exhibitions

The forum continues to work closely with the RCN Library and Museum to plan and deliver events and exhibitions and to disseminate research and promote the RCN collections. The twice yearly exhibitions are now well established with both the profession and the wider public. In most cases the attendance at events, be they in person or virtual, tend to attract



about equal numbers of RCN members and members of the public.

The spring of 2024 saw the opening of *Once Upon a Time; a history of nursing children and young people*. This moved to RCN Scotland and is now available via the RCN website. Volunteers from HONF, the CYPF and the wider RCN membership were engaged in a series of successful focus groups to plan the exhibition. The strategy was successful and is being developed for further exhibitions.

The autumn event, *Shining a Light; A history of nursing support work* was particularly successful in highlighting the rich history and diversity of nursing

support workers.

The exhibition has now moved to RCN Scotland and has been replaced in London with *You Mean The World; Nursing in a climate crisis*, which explores issues from air pollution to recycling.

In October, the annual history of nursing lecture was delivered by Emeritus Professor, Dr Christine Hallett who drew upon her past as a nurse and historian in a fascinating lecture. This was the first in person event this year and attracted an enthusiastic and engaging audience. A recording of the talk can be found on-line. Plans for events and exhibitions in 2025 are well underway and the forum continues to engage with the events team and promotes all events to forum members via the Chair's e-mails.

## Tracing Nurses

This guide, which can be accessed via the RCN archive pages as part of the Research Starters pages, was updated this spring by Vari Drennan and Janet Hargreaves. At the Forum Chairs Committee meeting in October it was identified as one of three projects to be explored with RCNi as a way of opening channels of communication between RCNi and the forums to inform journal content and webinar programmes.

The guide also formed an integral part of a joint event with Edinburgh Napier University, National Library of Scotland and the RCN. It was a very successful day and received press attention from Scottish TV News promoting the event. The guide will be reviewed and updated in January 2025.

## **British Library Web Archive: Nursing Collection in the UK**

Following continuing success in increasing the size of the collection, the British Library suffered an attack on its web based systems and had to pause activity. The collection of appropriate additional UK nursing websites has continued and the project will now be taken forward by Sean Graffin in conjunction with Teresa Doherty.

## **Social Media and Blogs**

The forum continues to have a good social media presence with the various pages being maintained by committee members. With the recent announcement that RCN will stop posting on X, the forum will explore possible ways forward at their December meeting.

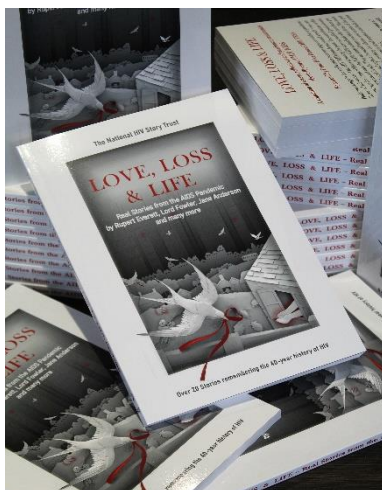
By the end of the year the forum will have met its target of posting 10 blogs and aims to complete at least that number in 2025.

## **Congress**

Dianne Yarwood attended as the forum voting member, was present and busy at the World Café and the 'meet the forum' stands. She was joined by Dionne Daniel who was present as a practice/clinical supported attendee. We had been pleased to receive a number of applications for congress funding, but unfortunately none of the applicants demonstrated any insight or understanding of the role of the forum and had no past experience of engaging in any forum activity.

## **The National HIV Story Trust**

The forum has partnered with the National HIV Story Trust on a three project to collect the stories as oral histories of those who nursed people with HIV/AIDS.



Forum members are currently being recruited from across the UK to undertake interviews. More details about the project can be viewed on the HONF web page and details have also been circulated to HONF members via a chairs e-mail.

In 2021 stories from the AIDS pandemic were published and this current project is very much a collaborative continuation of that work.

## **Plans for 2025**

Throughout the report I have identified how various activity will continue to be taken forward. The allocation of roles and responsibilities was addressed at the annual strategy meeting and the final version of the 2025 strategy will be agreed at the meeting in December. Some highlights however are;

- Ensure the HIV Story project achieves its objectives,
- Engage and collaborate with other forums, the library and museum and other appropriate entities to continue promoting the essential nature of nursing history.
- To continue to increase HONF membership, and support and encourage local and national engagement with the history of nursing.
- Through appropriate social media activity, blog publication, journal articles and engagement at Congress, raise the profile and visibility of the forum.

### **Conclusion**

The activities and successes of the forum have been encouraged and supported by Teresa Doherty, Denise Alexis and the exhibitions and events team. And would not have been possible without that support, the committee offer their thanks and appreciation.

Dianne Yarwood

Chair, History of Nursing Forum

29<sup>th</sup> November 2024