

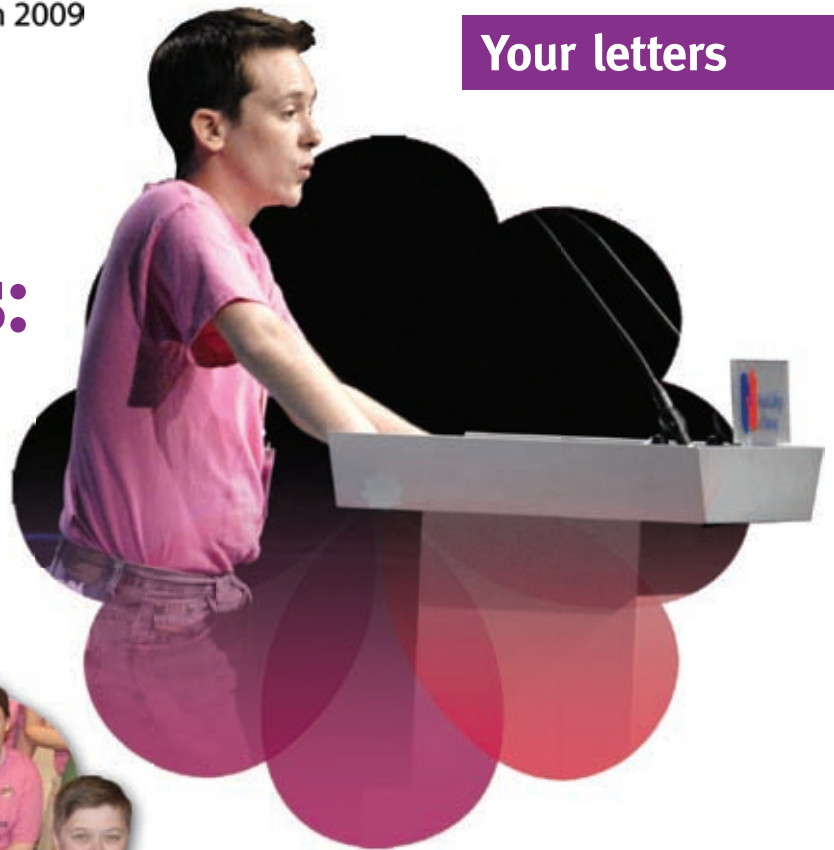
the answer



counting on care
RCN Congress and Exhibition 2009
Harrogate International Centre

Your letters

Gearing up for Congress: booked your place yet?



Police cautions:

How to safeguard your career

Global nurse:

'My Malawi placement taught me so much'



Royal College of Nursing

Dare to Care: Hope to Cope!

RCN Student Roadshow

After the success of last year's UK Roadshow, we will be touring the country again and bringing the Student Roadshow to a venue near you!

At each conference you will:

- learn key skills to help you stand above the rest when applying for your first job
- hear from speakers who will inspire and empower you
- get the information and guidance needed to ensure you can fully utilise our student services
- hear what the RCN is doing in your area, for you
- meet your local ANS Executive Committee Member and the RCN Student Adviser

Conference content*

- Welcome from RCN Chief Executive & General Secretary Dr Peter Carter (via DVD)
- Hydration – who cares? by Amanda Steane
- Making ends meet – managing your finances
- Between two stones – issues around adolescent mental health
- Have learning disability clients been abandoned by nursing?
- Dignity – the heart of nursing
- CV and interview techniques
- What can you get from the RCN?

* Please note that conference content may vary based on speaker availability and venue constraints

Booking form RCN Student Roadshow

Your details

RCN student member? Yes No RCN member no.

Title First name

Surname

University / College

Year of Study (e.g. First) Degree or Diploma

Preferred mailing address:
Postcode:

Tel no (daytime)

Email address

Specific requirements (dietary/accessibility)

Please indicate which regional conference you would like to attend. All conferences are open to all students:

- 11 March** East Midlands (Nottinghamshire County Cricket Club, Trent Bridge, Nottingham NG2 6AG)
- 25 March** South East (Oxford Brookes University, Marston Road Campus, Jack Straws Lane, Marston, Oxford OX3 0FL)
- 12 May** Yorkshire & Humber (Royal Hall Theatre, Ripon Rd, Harrogate HG1 2RD)
- 17 June** Eastern (Best Western White House Hotel, 27-31 Upton Road, Watford, Hertfordshire WD18 0JF)

Delegates are asked to arrive between 9:30 and 10am for registration. The conference will commence at 10am and finish at approximately 3:30pm.

Please note that places are subject to venue capacity. Places will be granted on a first come, first served basis and confirmed by email.

Conference fees

Delegate fee: £10.00 This amount will be refunded to all RCN student members who attend and non members who join the RCN on the day of the conference. Non-attendees will not receive a refund of their deposit.

Payment

By cheque: (made payable to 'The Royal College of Nursing') I enclose a cheque for £10.00

Credit/Debit card: I authorise you to debit my:

VISA / MASTERCARD / MAESTRO / SWITCH (please circle) for £10.00

Card number

Issue no (if applicable) Security code Start date

Expiry date Cardholder's name

Cardholder's billing address

How to book

Post this booking form with payment to: Laura King, Student/HCSW Coordinator, Royal College of Nursing, Room 401, 20 Cavendish Square, London W1G 0RN

Telephone: 020 7647 3758 **Email:** ans@rcn.org.uk

All bookings will be confirmed by email.

theanswer

spring2009

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Editorial



A warm welcome to the first edition of *The Answer* for 2009!

The ANS, in 2008 had a really good year, continuing the student road shows across all regions and countries with great attendance figures and positive feedback. Looking forward to this year, we have many student road shows planned - the locations and dates for these can be found on the inside cover. Please book early and we will look forward to meeting as many of you as possible!

The annual student survey was completed in October with a fantastic 4,547 responses, a staggering amount, so if you took part a big thank you! This has helped us to form our study into the challenges facing today's nursing students. Read our report *Nursing our Future* which, can be found on the RCN students website.

www.rcn.org.uk/development/students/nursing_our_future

Congress is fast approaching. It is the largest gathering of nurses in the UK and we would love to see as many of you there as we possibly can. This year the theme of Congress is *Counting on care* and our Student Day on Tuesday May 12 is called *Who Cares? We Do!*, (booking form at the back of *The Answer*). In the evening we have our spectacular *Nursing School of Rock*, where we have organised a gala dinner, entertainment and live music, more details later on. (P10).

In this edition of *The Answer* you will find a breakdown of the student survey, a review of an elective in Malawi, some help on budgeting, key advice on police cautions and CRB checks, and the regional round ups from your representatives.

As always your ANS Executive Committee members are here to help, listen and give advice, our contact details are on the regional round ups on pages 12 & 13 so please give us a shout, we would love to hear from you.

The Answer is always looking for student articles, questions you want answered, and pictures of student events so if you feel like putting pen to paper or fingers to keys, please forward them to ans@rcn.org.uk

Have a wonderful and successful 2009, and I look forward to seeing many of you at Congress.

Stuart Young
Consultant Editor



the answer

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The Bologna Process – standardising nursing education across Europe

By Saffron Brown

Late last year I was invited to attend a workshop in Slovakia that was going to try and shed some light on the ongoing Bologna Process for health care students. I went along to represent the RCN ANS Executive Committee as well as the European Nursing Students Association, of which I am the Vice-Chair.

The Bologna Process is a declaration that was signed in the city of Bologna by Education Ministers from 29 European countries back in 1999. Its aim is to standardise nursing education throughout Europe making it comparable and compatible. When complete, the Bologna Process will enable nurses to work throughout Europe because all training will have been completed to an agreed standard. Many people think that qualified nurses can already work throughout Europe but this is only true for those who studied the Adult Branch and have completed their European directives. This leaves many highly skilled nurses unable to enhance their learning by working abroad.

The declaration that was signed by the 29 Education Ministers, ties their countries to complete 10 actions by 2010 - some of which are already underway in the UK. For example, the NMC Pre-registration review looks set to install a degree-only nursing profession and will complete the action that asks for a system of two-cycle (undergraduate and postgraduate) degrees.

The 10 action lines that must be achieved by 2010:

- adoption of a system of easily readable and comparable degrees
- a system of two-cycle (undergraduate and postgraduate) degrees
- a system of credits to promote widespread student mobility
- promotion of mobility
- promotion of European co-operation in quality assurance
- involvement of students in higher education institutions
- enhancement of the attractiveness and competitiveness of European Higher Education to other parts of the world
- promotion of a European dimension in higher education- curriculum development, inter-institutional cooperation, mobility schemes, training and research to add a European dimension
- focus on lifelong learning (added after the Prague summit of 2001)

- doctoral studies - this is in term of research and its importance and the necessity to include doctoral level as a third cycle (added after the Berlin Ministerial summit of 2003).

There have been Bologna student workshops for several years and this year it was an inter-professional event held in Slovakia which specifically asked for student input and involvement.

I found it really interesting to discuss how a health curriculum is delivered throughout Europe and to debate how we could streamline training whilst retaining autonomy and innovation. We started by identifying similarities and differences in curricula between the countries that were represented at the workshop, and it became clear that there are a set of common generic skills of health care professionals. When considering these skills we felt that they are insufficiently taught in our curricula and rarely taught inter-professionally which undermines the teamwork needed for effective care of patients.

Towards the end of the workshop we agreed two actions:

- to produce a statement, informed by a survey of European students that will express any concerns about the Bologna Process as well as suggest ideas to help improve quality of health care and to contribute to current European education reform
- to encourage more student involvement in the Bologna Process.

If you would like to find out more about the Bologna Process you can find some really useful articles on the European Commissions' website as well as Wikipedia. If you have any questions please email me on: saffronbrown208@hotmail.com

The Europe Unit is a sector-wide body to raise awareness of European issues affecting UK higher education and to co-ordinate the UK's involvement in European initiatives and debates. www.europeunit.ac.uk

NMC student publication gets update

The Nursing & Midwifery Council (NMC) regulates nurses and midwives in the UK.

An NMC guide for students of nursing and midwifery is currently being reviewed and updated.

The purpose of the guidance will be to set out the standards of personal and professional conduct that you should be working towards during your pre-registration education programmes. The guidance, is based on the principles of The Code: Standards of conduct, performance and ethics for nurses and midwives and will also help mentors, practice teachers and academic staff and teachers to support you as you work towards your registration as a nurse or midwife. We need your help to make sure that the new guidance is relevant, contemporary and informed by your views.

As tomorrow's health care workforce we are committed to working with you because your views matter. So please make sure that you have your say, visit www.nmc-uk.org until 20th April, 2009.



Well done Gill!

RCN Student Adviser, Gill Robertson (seen holding her award) was nominated for a RCN Staff Excellence Award by two student nurses; Jennifer Luchoomun and Charlie Sloan, for her committed support and hard work on behalf of the UK's nursing students.

Gill accepted the runners up award at the first ever RCN Staff Excellence Awards held at the Park Lane hotel and said, "To be nominated by the members is great, they are the motivation behind everything we do and to be recognised by the students is an honour for the whole team, not just me."

Student survey verdict: it's just not good enough!

Over 4,500 students responded to the RCN's student survey and the results gave us some extremely useful information.

Worryingly, four out of every 10 students had considered leaving their courses and yet only 25% had told their university. This leads us to wonder how the universities can properly support when they are unaware of all that is going on.

With half of all nursing students being over the age of 30 and 36% of those being over the age of 35, this is not your typical student group and departments of health need to be aware of this as they are assessing student support.

Most students cited finance as a reason for leaving with 62% of them saying that they would leave their course in debt. Four in 10 said that experience on clinical placements had been a factor. This highlights the importance of quality clinical placements with effective communication, support and mentorship.

Many of those who took part in the survey said that an on-line tutor service would be useful, as well as a service within universities where students were able to talk to someone face to face during placements when they were likely to have lots of questions and need guidance.

However, many students said that they stuck with their studies purely because they had wanted to complete the course. Many students made the point they had given up good jobs in order of start nurse education and it showed staying power sticking to see the course through. Support from family and friends was also cited as a reason for staying.

89% of students who responded undertake paid work alongside their nursing studies and many said that this enabled them to stay on the course.

This is a situation that cannot be allowed to continue when students are having to work just to make ends meet - is it not enough that we ask students to work a 35 hour week, 45 week year?

The RCN is taking part in the talks in each of the countries to address these issues and if you wish to contribute please do get in touch with Gill Robertson at gill.robertson@rcn.org.uk or by keeping an eye on the website for further updates. www.rcn.org.uk/students (campaigns).

The full report can be found at www.rcn.org.uk/students



Why a student work placement abroad...



Child nursing student, Lesley Taylor, 23, recalls her life-changing visit to Malawi as part of the Student Mobility Awards offering health care placements in developing countries.

Last year, I was awarded the International Student Mobility Award by the University of Salford to undertake a nursing placement in Malawi, Africa. The International Student Mobility Award enables students to gain experience not readily available in the UK.

I decided on Malawi as I wanted to gain experience of health care within a developing country. September arrived and I set off for my five week placement. I was apprehensive, but also excited. I had visited Africa in 2007 when I volunteered at Forever Angels Baby Home in Tanzania, so I had realistic expectations of the placement but nevertheless this was something completely different to anything I had done before.

My placement was on a neonatal unit, which provides high dependency care for premature and low birth weight infants and has an area dedicated to the implementation of Kangaroo Mother Care (KMC). Kangaroo Mother Care is an alternative way of caring for stabilised premature and low birth weight infants where traditional incubator care is not

available. The belief behind the KMC concept is that it provides the basic needs of the infant – nutrition, thermal regulation, nurturing and protection.

Kangaroo Mother Care involves the mother or guardian essentially becoming the incubator and carrying the infant in continuous skin-to-skin contact. KMC was developed by Dr Rey and Martinez in Columbia in 1978 and now is an established method of care in many developing countries.

I worked with many mothers of different ages and backgrounds on the unit. In Africa, babies are traditionally carried on the back, so the KMC technique of carrying the infant on the chest was a little strange for a few of the mums at first. That said, the mums I met seemed to like the Kangaroo Care method and despite being very tiring, it empowered them and they were very proud they were providing the best possible care for their infant. I saw their confidence in handling and caring for their tiny infant increase significantly.

The infants were always content and rarely cried when in the kangaroo position, I found this technique fascinating. It is incredibly simple and yet so effective, it was a privilege and heart warming to see it in practice and witness the infants thriving.

There were times when the placement was very difficult. I became frustrated with the lack of resources and facilities I was so accustomed to in the UK. I had to improvise and make use of the resources and equipment available - cardboard for splints, and in the absence of nasal cannula and suction catheters, using tubing from butterfly needles instead. This has definitely enhanced my problem solving skills. Improvisation was a key aspect of the placement for me but was a skill these nurses practiced every day. I have the greatest respect and admiration for the nurses in Malawi who work incredibly hard in tough conditions, trying to implement best practice within the constraints of limited resources.

“I have the greatest respect and admiration for the nurses in Malawi who work incredibly hard in tough conditions, trying to implement best practice within the constraints of limited resources”

This placement has given me an insight into health care within a developing country. I have learnt new techniques such as Kangaroo Mother Care and I have delivered nursing care with limited means. This has been extremely valuable, I believe I have become more assertive and have increased confidence in my own ability. I have gained a lot of new skills, which I hope to utilise throughout my nursing career. I'd encourage all students to look into the opportunity of placements abroad and I think the Student Mobility Award is fantastic.

I hope to return to Malawi as a qualified nurse in the future.

Lesley Taylor is a third year student nurse studying at the University of Salford, based in Central Manchester and Manchester Children's NHS Trust.

...will improve your career

There are similarities and stark contrasts in health care between the UK and Malawi. I did encounter an issue around infection control which was not caused by lack of knowledge but a lack of facilities. The demand for heated cots in the High Dependency Unit was greater than the supply, and as a result there were often two or three infants per cot despite the increased risk to the patients of cross infection. There was a similar dilemma with hand washing. The staff had received training in effective hand washing techniques and procedures, however this was of little use at times when the water supply was intermittent, combined with the fact there was rarely soap and no facilities to dry hands.

As I could not speak the language I had to develop different ways of communicating with patients and families, this was made easier with assistance and support from the nursing staff and Malawian students. The Malawian student nurses were my greatest source of knowledge, through them I was able to learn about life in Malawi, cultural and traditional norms and a little of the language. This not only enhanced my experience in Malawi but also my nursing care.



THE MALAWI FLAG

RCN calls for £12k non-means tested student bursary

RCN's Welfare Adviser Claire Cannings offers her top financial tips to help get you through the recession...

With all the news of the downturn in the economy and with utility bills up by 60% higher than a year ago; many students have found themselves struggling to stretch their bursaries that bit further.

A recent RCN survey found that of the 4,500 students who responded, about 4 out of 10 seriously considered leaving their course with 62% of those citing financial reasons as one of the main factors.

The RCN has called for the government to provide a non-means tested bursary of £12,000 for all nursing students; and is currently involved in discussion with the NHS to find a solution to the high number of students leaving before the end of their course.

But in the mean-time, with the real value of the bursary lagging sorrowfully behind inflation, the picture revealed in the survey is only likely to get worse.

However, it is not all doom and gloom. Most jobs within the nursing sector are considered to be relatively recession proof; and offer good job security.

Access to Learning Fund

This fund can make awards to students who are experiencing financial difficulties. The aim of the fund is to enable those who are struggling financially to complete their course.

Most universities expect students to take on part-time work to solve their financial difficulties. If this is not possible for you due to family or placement commitments you should make this very clear on your application form and get a supporting letter from your personal tutor.

Scholarships and Trust Funds

If you plan far enough ahead and are prepared to spend some time completing application forms and providing supporting letters; then there are other sources of charitable funding available to students. Further details can be found at - www.scholarship-search.org.uk

Rent

This is where the bulk of most students' bursary is eaten up. In November, figures from the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) showed that rents fell for the first time in the preceding three months.

Why not try a little bartering with the landlord or their agent?

Many agents in the south east, for example, are offering 50% off the first months rent as an incentive to attract new tenants.

Mortgages

Six months ago, many students with their own properties were finding themselves in a very difficult financial situation when they came to the end of a fixed rate mortgage, struggling to find equivalent fixed rates.

However, in the recent months; (and at the time of going to press) the Bank of England base rate dropped to 1% which means many owners on variable rates should see a decrease in their mortgage payments.

If you are still struggling to meet your mortgage payments then it might be time to reconsider talking to an independent financial adviser; as some of the fixed rate mortgages are starting to come down again.

Rent a room scheme

Letting a spare room in your property to a fellow student, or a foreign language student could offer much needed additional income. This could offer income that takes up very little of your time or energy - you can receive up to £4,250 a year tax-free under the governments UK-wide Rent-a-room-scheme.

RCN membership gives you discounts at more than 100 shops!

All RCN student members are entitled to some fantastic shopping discounts at over 100 high street stores!

The discounts are the same as those our members enjoy, with a huge range of participating stores, restaurants and attractions such as.....

- Topshop 7% off
- M & S 6% off
- Miss Selfridge 7% off
- Boots 8% off
- Currys 7.5% off
- Waitrose 6% off
- Café Rouge 10% off
- Threshers 10% off
- Wine Rack 7% off
- WHSmith 7.5% off
- London Eye 10% off

To access the discounts you need an RCN membership number. You then go to this site www.membersdiscounts.co.uk/rcn/entrypage.php to register your details and buy the discount vouchers.

Remember you need to purchase vouchers at the discounted rate in advance of going shopping. Happy shopping!

The NUS also has a separate card that offers discounts for a range of goods and services. Details of the card and other discounts can be found on the NUS website: www.nus.org.uk/

Head: Student bursaries: make your voice heard

As part of the Darzi review a fundamental review of student support in England has commenced. The RCN, along with the other unions who represent health care students, have a seat at that group and have jointly produced a paper outlining the issues we would like to see addressed at those meetings. The paper can be found at www.rcn.org.uk/students and then in the section entitled "Campaigns".

This site will be kept up to date with all the latest news so do keep checking it.

Meetings are taking place every two weeks to progress this work and we will be coming back to you, as the consumers of this service, to comment on any proposals or options that arise.

In the meantime I would welcome your thoughts and creative ideas on how the bursary could be improved or simplified, and please don't just tell me that you need more money! We will take that as the base line.

Contact me gill.robertson@rcn.org.uk

Police cautions: know the difference between a simple and a conditional caution

You may think a police caution is not a big deal but did you know that a caution can be recorded on the police database and can be revealed to a prospective or existing employer?

It's a well known fact that student life can involve the odd 'big night out' - most of which end up with nothing worse than the need for some extra strong paracetamol. But big nights out can potentially, if not careful, get a little out of hand and 'boisterous fun' such as for example, disturbing the peace could result in a police caution which, though seemingly harmless, could have major repercussions when it comes to landing your dream job.

The Police have a number of options when dealing with criminal offences, not all of which must be handled by the courts. In relation to adults, for example, and less serious crimes, the police may administer either a simple or a conditional caution. The aim of the caution is to prevent offenders from re-offending, because if you do offend again, you may (save in relation to a very minor, unrelated second offence, or where the first offence happened more than 2 years before) be formally charged and brought before the courts.

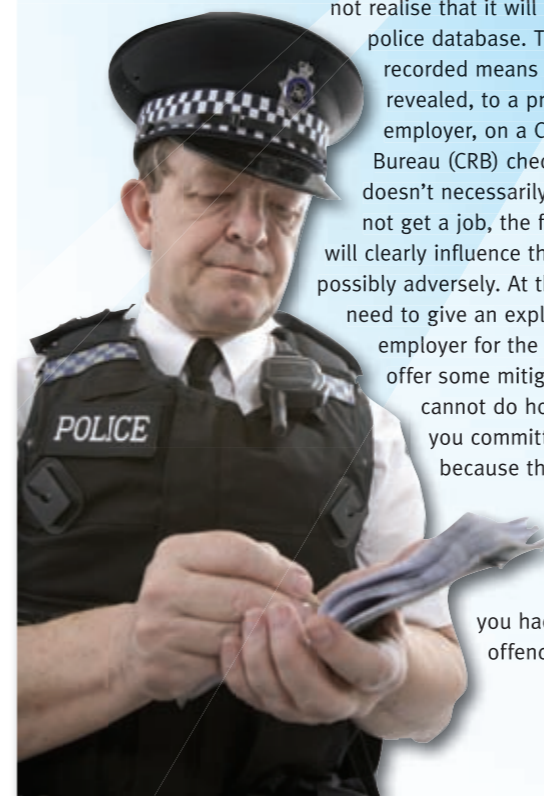
In theory the police will only issue the simple caution where there is evidence that the offender is guilty, the offence has been admitted, and the offender agrees to a caution. You are likely to be advised that a simple caution is not a criminal conviction, but you may

not realise that it will be recorded on the police database. The fact that it is recorded means that it will be revealed, to a prospective or existing employer, on a Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check. Although it doesn't necessarily mean that you will not get a job, the fact of the caution will clearly influence the employer, and possibly adversely. At the very least, you will need to give an explanation to the employer for the offence, and perhaps offer some mitigation. What you cannot do however, is deny that you committed the offence because the employer will realise that, by definition, you will only have been cautioned if you had admitted the offence.

The conditional caution differs from the simple caution in that you must comply with certain conditions to accept the caution and avoid prosecution. Again, it is intended to deal with less serious

offences and conditions may include attendance at a drug or alcohol misuse programme, or on a gambling or debt management course, or making some form of reparation to the victim of the offence, such as an apology or offer of compensation. The conditional caution may only be given after consultation with the body responsible for pursuing prosecutions, the Crown Prosecution Service. Once again, you must admit your guilt, and the fact of the caution will be recorded on the police database, and revealed on a CRB enquiry.

The lesson from this is obvious: it is critical that if you are apprehended by the police and questioned in relation to a suspected criminal offence, wherever it occurs, you do not accept the caution either until you have taken legal advice, or you clearly know that you have committed the offence in question, and you want the matter to be dealt with through this more informal process. But remember, if you accept the caution you will need to be able to explain it to any future employer.



Criminal Record Bureau checks update

Several students have approached the RCN this year having run into problems with their CRB checks. Many application forms are not clear about what you have to declare so if you are unsure ask the university to which you are applying.

At the RCN we are speaking with the universities and the NMC to attempt to have clearer guidelines on what is and is not acceptable.

If there is anything you are anxious about, even if it is some time in the past however, being up front and honest will always stand you in good stead.

Please do not try and hide anything from the admission tutors as if it is found out later it can cause many more problems and you may be discontinued from your course for failing to declare something rather than the something itself.

If you are concerned about any of the above information do please get in touch on gill.robertson@rcn.org.uk.

What's on at Congress?

In a word – lots! As ever, Congress this year, *Counting on care* is not to be missed.



In the middle of May (May 10-14) over 4,000 nurses will descend on RCN Congress in Harrogate. Students Day takes place on May 12 as well as International Nurses Day, so what better way to celebrate than being with all your friends and colleagues! *Who Cares? We Do!* is the largest nursing student conference in the UK and features key nursing and political speakers, such as health minister Ann Keen so you can't afford to miss this vital day in the student calendar.

Get the interview know-how!

Do you find it difficult to walk into a new placement setting? Perhaps you feel a bit intimidated by an interview panel? Have you spent ages discussing what to wear to that first interview?

Billy Dixon could be just the person to help.

Billy is a personal and corporate image consultant offering lots of helpful advice on getting that first job. Billy works extensively in the political, corporate and media arenas as well as giving individuals great tips and guidance on how to make a powerful 'first impact' be it through body language, presentation skills, dress sense, and language skills - which students have said they found really useful. Billy is speaking at *Who Cares? We Do!* - the largest student conference in the UK.

Congress highlights:

Still wondering why you should journey up to Harrogate? You'll get the chance to:

- listen to debates on wide ranging topics as uniforms; caring for the homeless, Agenda for Change and dyslexia*
- come and meet students from other universities and network throughout the day and at the FREE student party in the evening
- view the posters that students have submitted
- make your way round the vast exhibition
- attend some great fringe events

* Only RCN members can enter the main debating hall

Why not give thought to submitting your own poster to let others see the research you have completed throughout your training? For further information contact laura.king@rcn.org.uk

Once you have done all that and picked up your certificate of attendance you can join your Association of Nursing Students colleagues in a drinks reception before dinner (both FREE events!). For the first time at Congress we will also be meeting MiXit, a fantastic learning disability pop band who will be playing during the evening.

Then get your glad rags on and let's party!

For further information see our website on www.rcn.org.uk/congress2009 or you can text in for an application form.

Text **STUDENTS DAY** with your name, address and membership number to **88020*** (*text messages will be charged at your normal network rate).



For more information about Congress please contact Laura King by email as above.

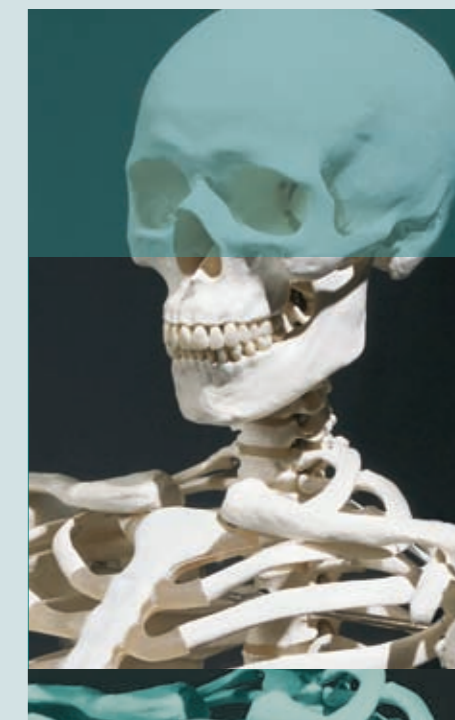
As one of the winners for the first ever Student Nurse Awards held by the RCN Society of Orthopaedic and Trauma Nursing, part of Sarah's award was to attend the 22nd International Conference & Exhibition *Diamonds are forever: continuity and change in orthopaedic and trauma nursing*, held in Llandudno, Wales, back in September 2008.

As a winner, the conference fee, travel and accommodation were catered for and support was given by a senior member of the committee to act as a mentor throughout and after the event.

The focus of the programme was *continuity and change in orthopaedic and trauma nursing* and at first, I found it quite daunting being among so many well established and recognised nurses. As I am just on the beginning of my journey as a pre-registration nurse, it was awe inspiring listening to many of the speakers.

were from all over the world and included the UK, Northern Ireland, Malta, Canada, New Zealand, China, Israel, Estonia and the USA. Many of the international delegates shared information about their countries' practice and efficacy in the care of orthopaedic and trauma patients. The overseas delegates were all members of the equivalent of SOTN, particularly CONA (Canadian Orthopaedic Nursing Association) and also Malta.

As a student still going on placements on various different wards and areas I sometimes find the working climate of many nurses to be negative. Robin Edwards from Nobles Hospital (Isle of Man) discussed task saturation when our multi tasking skills become so overloaded we lose the ability to prioritise them. It heightened my awareness for the future and made me realise how effective teamwork can help alleviate some of these pressures.



Society of Orthopaedic and Trauma Nursing (SOTN) Conference report

Sarah Richardson reports

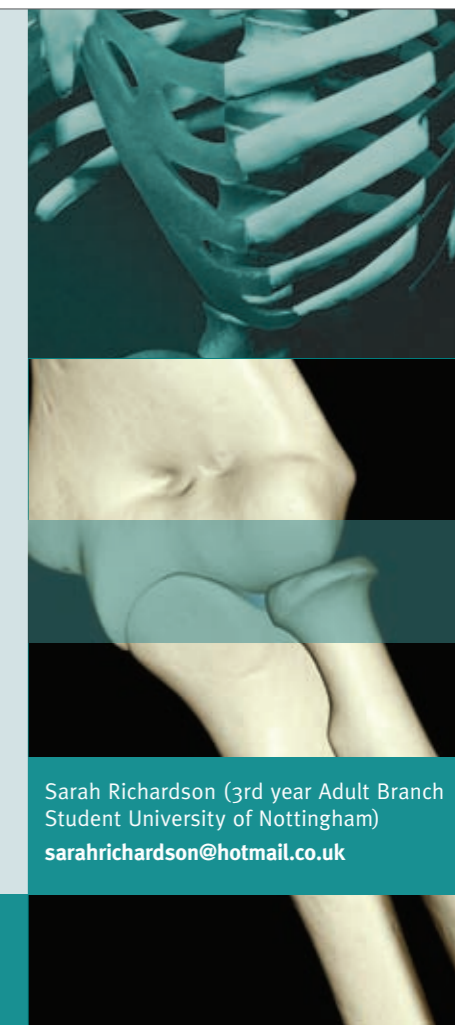
Throughout the course of the conference there were some 30 concurrent sessions running, ranging from development and implementation of practices that impact on the care given to patients. Several sessions were on research papers and their results using different approaches from qualitative analysis to phenomenology.

RCN Deputy President, Bobbie Chadwick, spoke about nursing 'being a future of challenge and change' giving examples of ways in which nursing is evolving and changing with the 60th birthday of the NHS in mind. Professor Dame Betty Kershaw spoke of a 'very special type of nurse' with focus on the value of the contribution of orthopaedic nurses. Another speaker, former RCN Nursing Advisor, Bernie Cottam gave an interesting presentation on the Defence Nursing Services and shared her experience of 'A Day in Iraq with Peter Carter.' Delegates

Julie Santy from the University of Hull and Jean Rogers from Stockport NHS Foundation Trust gave a presentation entitled the 'Next generation of nursing' with a reflection of the nature and features of current orthopaedic nurses. They discussed issues relating to intergenerational relationships within the workplace which also related to all aspects of nursing where the patients and the health care team can vary in age gaps of up to 40 years. The need for excellent pre-operative assessment, support and time invested in the patient prior to surgery will impact effectively on their post operative results.

Although some practices in orthopaedic nursing have most definitely changed, from times where patients were on long term bed rest and traction, to an age where nursing promotes early mobilisation, all patients still face the same journey.

As a pre registration student the opportunity to attend the conference has given me the motivation and direction I needed to continue on to my last year of study.



Sarah Richardson (3rd year Adult Branch Student University of Nottingham)
sarahrichardson@hotmail.co.uk

regional roundups

East Midlands round-up



Phil Schneider

Car parking fees still seem to be a problem that I'm hearing about and is being looked into.

There has been a bit of interest in the student information officer role and I'd like to welcome Mark in Boston and Bea in Nottingham to their role. But we are still short of SIO's in certain areas of the East Midlands such as Mansfield, Lincoln and Leicestershire. If you are interested in this rewarding role please email me.

Finally I look forward to meeting you all at our student roadshow which promises to be an educational day, coming up on March 11 at the Trent Bridge Cricket Ground in Nottingham. We have inspirational speakers and workshops with advice for all students and of course - a free lunch!

philip_schneider@hotmail.co.uk

London round-up



Jennifer Luchoomun

There has been a lot of activity in the London region amongst nursing students. Student Information

Officers meet regularly to network and discuss issues in their region. I haven't been able to link up with students from Kingston University or City University, so if you are reading this and want to get involved with RCN activities in London, I'd love to hear from you.

There will be an event on Thursday 12 February at RCN HQ for Child Nursing students. The theme of the seminar will be children's mental health and learning disabilities. A buffet supper will be provided. All details on the student section of the RCN website.

jen_luchoomun@hotmail.com

North West round-up



Emma Gilchrist

I'm a first year student, studying at the University of Central Lancashire (adult branch, Diploma). I've now been an HCA looking after older people with dementia for the last two years, which I've really enjoyed.

I'm very excited and proud to represent you for in the North West and hope that I can make a difference. Please contact me if you have anything you would like to push for or have an opinion e.g. on bursaries or increases in childcare.

emmagilchrista@yahoo.co.uk

Northern round-up



Saffron Brown

Last year was a fantastic year with many students qualifying gaining great jobs and a very successful conference. So let's build on that success. I hope to see lots of you at Student Day at RCN Congress in May. This is your event and we have the added bonus of being closer to

home in Harrogate this year. The universities fully support the event, it will be of educational benefit and an opportunity to network but also lots of fun- work hard, play hard!

saffronbrown208@hotmail.com

South East round-up

Leighann Veitch

I am passionate about nursing and the role we take in shaping our profession and greatly interested in the political issues which relate to us, notably the pre-registration education strategies in nurse training.

I strive to raise awareness of the issues and problems surrounding student nurses. I will try to promote discussion between ANS members, encouraging students to use their voice in the RCN national forum.

Through my new role with the ANS I hope to help students to accomplish their training with a sense of confidence and strength within the nursing role. I am proud to be a part of the RCN and would like every student nurse to become more involved.

leighannveitch@hotmail.com

South West round-up

Steve Blakeway

The committee have some really important issues which we will be looking at in the year ahead including attrition rates for students, mentorship and newly qualified nurse issues.

Alongside the national issues I have also wanted to strengthen our local ties between universities and students in the South West, in order to represent issues which are close to you. We have a large region and so it is vital for student involvement in order for this to be achieved.

We had a really successful student roadshow in Plymouth last year where it was great to see so many students join together to make our student voice stronger. A big thank you to our RCN student team for making it happen. We also had over 10 new Student Information Officers join our network which was brilliant. We still however are a little way off having a SIO in every tutor group. If you would like to join us as an SIO (you get a memory stick packed with info and you can put the RCN on your CV) then get in touch!

southweststudents@ymail.com

Wales round-up



Claire Evans and Sarah Evans

My first event as ANS member for Wales took place in October at the student roadshow in Llandudno. It was very successful day with a great turnout of students who thoroughly enjoyed the speakers and have said that they have taken a lot from the day. We are hoping to hold a roadshow in the south so if you are interested, then please contact either myself or Sarah.

Another date for your diary is Students Day on May 12 at Congress which takes place over four days in Harrogate between May 10-14. The Students Day on May 12 will be full of interesting speakers, followed by the evening dinner and dance.

We are still seeking Student Information Officers in all universities throughout Wales. It is a great opportunity to get involved with RCN and make a difference to the student nursing experience. If you are interested then please go to www.rcn.org.uk/development/students/getinvolved.

Claire: evansclaire84@hotmail.com

Sarah: Hsu71c@bangor.ac.uk

West Midlands round-up



Stuart Young

It was great to see so many of you at the regional student roadshow on February 4, I really enjoyed meeting you all and what a fantastic day we all had.

Recently I met up with Rachel Milward our student board member, and we are focusing on poverty, uniforms and support for newly qualified nurses. We would love to have your input please feel free to let me know what your thoughts and feelings are.

Maybe you would like to get involved with the RCN and become a Student Information Officer, this is a really valuable role helping fellow students by providing information and pointing them in the right direction, it also looks great on your CV.

I am looking forward to seeing many of you at the RCN Congress which this year is in Harrogate, I would really like to see a large contingent of nursing students there from the West Midlands, so please book early and keep an eye out in the RCN Bulletin for details of coaches to Congress.

swayoung@googlemail.com

Northern Ireland round-up



Gillian Larmour and Darren McMenamin

Calling all Northern Ireland nursing students!!

We need you!!

Northern Ireland needs more Student Information Officers, it's a great way to become involved and help support other students. It's also a great learning opportunity and can help you prepare for your future career. For more information see the RCN website or contact either Darren or myself on the address below.

We also would like you to contact us with any problems or issues (big or small) you are currently facing, and need advice and support on. We are very willing to help you as much as we can, just drop us a line.

Finally, if anyone has anything they would like published in *The Answer* or on the student section of the RCN website, please get in contact!

Students day at Congress is on May 12, in Harrogate, for more information give us a shout, or check out the website.

Looking forward to hearing from you.

Darren: darren.ans@googlemail.com

Gillian: g.larmour36@hotmail.co.uk

Scotland round-up



Karen Winchombe

Unfortunately the student roadshow in Aberdeen was cancelled but we are working towards rescheduling another date.

I attended the planning meeting in Leeds for the International Nursing Research Conference in November which is being held in Cardiff on March 24-27 2009. An important date for your diaries folks is Friday 27- **STUDENTS DAY!** The programme of events looks exciting and very relevant to nursing students from all the branches.

November saw a hugely successful Scottish Government Conference in Glasgow aimed at supporting the recruitment and retention of Nursing and Midwifery students of which students from Hamilton and Dumfries helped play a part, and I'd like to thank all those that gave up their lunch break and assisted with the voxpops.

I'm here to represent students from Scotland so if you have any concerns, problems, or require further information, do please get in touch. You can contact me on:

karensmob@supanet.com

Yorkshire and The Humber round-up



Damian Ronsley

Hi everyone! There really isn't that much to tell you from the Yorks & The Humber region at the moment

– as you read this we should hopefully be settled into our Yorks and The Humber office in Leeds, so a big cheer for that. Your ANS exec have been busily working over the past few months on issues close to students hearts, such as bursaries, student retention and the NMC review of pre-registration nurse education. On behalf of the ANS, I have submitted and had accepted, a motion to this years' Congress on uniforms so we have been working hard perfecting our message for that one. I have also been getting involved on discussions around diversity issues, more on that one next issue. On a very bright note, we as a region are hosting student day at this years Congress (seeing as it's being held in Harrogate!), and looking at the agenda for the day I think you're going to have a great time. I am working on getting as many of you there as possible. Well I think that's about it from me, I'm sure I'll have lots to tell you next issue, after Congress – but in the meantime if I or my colleagues can be of any help at all, don't hesitate to get in touch:

ans_yorks-humber@hotmail.co.uk

regional roundups

RCN Council report



The last RCN Council meeting took place back in October at the Annual General Meeting in Liverpool which was very well received and gave all attending members the opportunity to voice their opinions on the RCN's work and commitments over the past 12 months.

The number of RCN forums is being streamlined in order to deliver a more effective service to members. At its meeting RCN Council agreed a new framework of 41 forums and a plan to implement the transition.

RCN Council also discussed the Congress Voting Review. The reduction of RCN forums as well as reductions in the number of branches following recent boundary reviews would result in the number of votes at Congress being reduced unless the constitution is changed. In addition the review identified the need to distinguish between members in governance positions (those on decision-making committees or boards) and those who represent the members in branches and forums.

Therefore some changes are being proposed at Congress 09 with a view to implementing them in 2010.

From a student's perspective, ANS members and students serving on Boards are in governance positions so would attend Congress in a listening rather than a voting capacity. However because the Boards are being asked to ensure that branch representation at Congress is as representative of its membership as possible – branch representatives should include significant numbers of student members who will have a vote. So overall our voice will be significantly strengthened by these proposals.

RCN students have the ability to influence decision-making in Council, with myself and fellow student member of Council, Harvey Morgan, holding Council seats.

If you have any queries on Council or RCN Students, please don't hesitate to contact myself or Harvey, or your regional Executive Committee Member.

Naomi Baker, Chair of the Association of Nursing Students –
naomi.baker@rcn.org.uk

Harvey Morgan, Student Member of Council –
harvey.morgan@rcn.org.uk

Council round-up



Firstly can I start by thanking those students who voted in the elections this summer, I was overwhelmed by your support and I hope that I can repay the faith!

The first Council meetings have gone well and I am now on the Nursing Development Committee which looks at various issues regarding best practice. It's quite a challenge sitting on committees with such experienced and learned practitioners. However, a big thank you must go out to my Council mate Naomi B who keeps me in check – cheers Nay!

Not only have I seen a productive Council but I have seen a productive ANS Executive Committee who I firmly believe can take RCN Students forward. So welcome on board those new members of the exec and keep the good work up! Otherwise good luck to all students doing assignments at the moment.

Harvo2005@hotmail.com

Letters

Send your letters in to ans@rcn.org.uk

Counting on - seeing you at Congress!

Dear *The Answer*

Just a few quick words to say that although it seems like a long way away, Congress 2009 is only in May, and it's not too soon to start planning your trip.

I went for the first time last year, and had a thoroughly enjoyable time. As an ANS Executive Committee member I had a few "duties" to perform which I was a bit worried about. However, I soon found out that the worst part of this was wearing a pink T-shirt! The duties turned out to be lots of fun and a way of meeting new people and socialising.

Congress is not only about meeting people and socialising – there is an interesting exhibition where you get to pick up loads of freebies and talk to people about jobs and current developments in nursing. There are lots of workshops and presentations about campaigns the RCN is involved in, as well as "fringe" events held by some of the RCN forums.

The main purpose of Congress is the debating, which is quite an experience if you've never seen anything like it before. I was intrigued by the remote-controlled voting, but more by the interesting, and sometimes zany nature of the topics up for discussion. Some extremely serious issues are raised too, and as a nursing student it was fascinating to watch experienced nurses talk passionately about nursing issues.

What more can I say – Congress is a great, not-to-be-missed experience. I can't wait for Harrogate 2009!

Jennifer Luchoomum

Help at hand for nurses with disabilities

Dear Students

The Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) has an expert panel for disability issues that includes both members of the public and nurses: it provides advice to the NMC on areas of disability, as well as doing work such as considering the "good health" statute in nursing. Natalie Salmon is the NMC's Equality and Diversity officer.

One of the key areas of discussion for the group has been support for students coping with disability, how that support differs between placements and university, and what a student should be able to demonstrate in order to qualify. If any students have a disability (it's not meant derisively, only to identify those with a physical or mental impairment, no matter how well the person adjusts) and would like more information about the NMC's work, you can contact Bethann Siviter through RCN Student Co-ordinator, Laura King on laura.king@rcn.org.uk.

Also, please bear in mind that although WING means "work injured nurses' group", RCN WING is open to any RCN members who are disabled or who support colleagues who may be disabled, or who have a strong interest in disability advocacy. WING provides advocacy, advice and support in many areas of disability including employment law and benefits through a specialist advisor, and a quarterly newsletter. To join, contact RCN Direct on 0845 772 6100.

When nursing was primarily a physically demanding profession only, nurses needed strong backs more than anything- but health care has changed, and it is increasingly recognised that there is more to being a nurse than being able to lift and carry... and that nurses (and students and HCSWs) with disabilities should not necessarily be excluded from practice.

The NMC is looking into providing guidance with support from their expert panel – and WING is there to support those who need more information or help.

Bethann Siviter
West Midlands

The RCN libraries and information services are available online, via the telephone or you can come and visit our libraries, some of the largest nursing libraries in Europe.

Our student information officers will assist you in your studies. We can direct you to help on finance, careers and local issues and we are continually campaigning on your behalf to ensure that your time as a student nurse is as enjoyable and informative as possible.

We know that being a member of the RCN has made a difference to many student nurses, and now we want you to tell us what difference it has made to YOU.

The students with the five best stories will each receive **£100 of high street shopping vouchers**. To be in with a chance of winning a prize, all you have to do is tell us in 250 words or less how the RCN has made a difference to you as a student nurse.

Please send your submissions to victoria.barnett@rcn.org.uk by 31 March. Prize winners will be notified by 30 April.

**tell us
a story
and win a prize...**

Were you in deep conversation with the RCN library staff the day before your assignment was due?

Were you relieved to find our free online publications to answer your questions while on placement?

Has the Learning Zone helped you with stuff you were too afraid to ask in front of the class?



Submissions must be word processed. Please include your name, address, email, telephone and membership number with your submission.

By entering your submission, you agree that the RCN can use the information therein, and quote from your submission in future RCN marketing materials without further correspondence to you.



Student booking form

RCN Congress and Exhibition 2009 is **FREE** to attend.

Please complete all parts of this form in BLOCK CAPITALS. Please note that only fully completed forms will be accepted. This will ensure your fast-track entry to RCN Congress and Exhibition 2009 on the day.

Voting members: If you have been selected to vote on behalf of your branch, forum, committee or the Association of Nursing Students, please contact the Chair or Branch Secretary of your group to arrange your registration.

Are you attending (please tick):

- Congress debates (RCN members only), exhibition and fringe programme
 Congress debates only (RCN members only)
 Exhibition and fringe programme only

Are you an RCN member? Yes No RCN membership number*
*If you do not know your membership number, please call RCN Direct on 0845 772 6100 between 8.30am – 8.30pm, seven days a week.

Title Forename Surname

Email address

Acknowledgement of your booking will be sent by email only. If you do not supply a correct email address we are unable to send you acknowledgement of your booking. Event information, including directions, will be sent to you approximately two weeks prior to the event.

Mobile telephone number Home telephone number

Preferred mailing address

City County Postcode

University or college

What year of study are you in? First Second Third Are you attending as part of a coach party? Yes No

Do you require child care facilities? Yes No (information will be sent to you at a later date)
Please let us know of any individual requirements you may have (dietary, accessibility etc)

Please let us know when you will be attending RCN Congress and Exhibition 2009

Sunday 10 May	AM	<input type="checkbox"/>	PM	<input type="checkbox"/>	Congress opening only
Monday 11 May	AM	<input type="checkbox"/>	PM	<input type="checkbox"/>	Congress debates, exhibition and fringe programme
Tuesday 12 May	AM	<input type="checkbox"/>	PM	<input type="checkbox"/>	Students' Day , Congress debates, exhibition and fringe programme
Wednesday 13 May	AM	<input type="checkbox"/>	PM	<input type="checkbox"/>	Congress debates, exhibition and fringe programme
Thursday 14 May	AM	<input type="checkbox"/>	PM	<input type="checkbox"/>	Congress debates and fringe programme

Congress hosts many social events throughout the week which are free for RCN members. Please let us know if you plan to attend any of the following social events*

- Sunday night *Nursing Standard* disco
 Monday night Congress party
 Tuesday night Student dinner (open to all students)
 Thursday night End of Congress party

* all social events require a ticket for entry which will be sent in your 'Congress and exhibition pack'

Data protection We like to keep you informed about services, campaigns, events, publications and new initiatives. It is also important for us to find out your views on a range of issues. This may be by post, telephone or electronic mail. Should you NOT want us to do this, please tick this box.

In addition we often negotiate favourable rates for a variety of externally provided services. This may be by post or electronic mail. Should you like to take advantage of this, please tick this box.

Throughout RCN Congress and Exhibition 2009, we are running our **Fit for Congress** programme. Come along and take part in our fun events to get fit for Congress and fit for practice. Monday is **HCA's day**, and Tuesday is **Students' day**, each with a full professional development programme designed specifically for you. Tuesday is also **Nurses' Day**, so join us to celebrate nurses and nursing!

Please send your completed application form to:

- RCN Congress 2009 Registration, PO Box 2329, Cardiff CF23 8YZ
- Register online at www.rcn.org.uk/congress2009
- Telephone Events Registration on 029 2054 6460

The closing date for pre-registrations is **Wednesday 29 April 2009**. Thereafter registrations should be made in person at Harrogate International Centre. For further information about RCN Congress and Exhibition 2009, visit www.rcn.org.uk/congress2009

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