

Spring 2017

History of Nursing Society newsletter

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Something to say?

Send contributions for
the next newsletter to
the editor:

Dianne Yarwood



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Nurses and casualties
from the Great War
at Clendon Park
Hospital, Surrey

Centenary success and futures plans

Welcome to the spring 2017 issue of the RCN History of Nursing Society (HoNS) newsletter.

The past 12 months were amazing as we celebrated the RCN centenary. Members engaged in conferences, talks, exhibitions and eating lots of cake. We saw groups of staff walk across the UK, adopt Galapagos tortoise hatchlings and play “competitive” football. One particular highlight was the centenary conference, which brought together participants from across the world.

Fiona Bourne, RCN archivist, recently wrote her reflections of the centenary and I share some extracts:

“The RCN100 year created a buzz among members who had a real appetite for more information about the leaders and achievements of their College. HoNS volunteers have worked with the archive team in Edinburgh to clean, repack and list items to support cataloguing activity. Building our collections for the future is an integral part of our activity and we will now be working with the forums on collecting their histories. There are large pieces of work ahead and I know we can count on the continued support of the HoNS – thank you from all of the library and archive team.”

Dianne Yarwood, newsletter editor

There are other significant anniversaries ahead. 2019 marks the centenary of the Nurses Registration Act and the first entry on the general register for England and Wales was Mrs Ethel Bedford Fenwick, who campaigned for many years for nurse registration. This year marks 70 years since she died and she was remembered at a service at her parish church, St Helena’s, in Thoroton, Nottinghamshire, on 12 March.

In 2020 we will be celebrating the bi-centenary of Florence Nightingale’s birth and plans are well underway. The website lists the numerous partners from across the world and you can access the Digitising Nightingale project, which gives free access to a vast quantity of documents and correspondence:
www.florence Nightingale 2020.wordpress.com

So as we begin our next 100 years, we look forward to welcoming members and friends to events and exhibitions in the library. Read about some of those planned for 2017, including a defence nursing exhibition, in the following pages.

Letter from Claire Chatterton, Chair of the HoNS



HoNS at the ICC (left to right): Christine Hallett, Dianne Yarwood, Claire Chatterton, Margaret Graham, Alison O'Donnell, Jane Brooks and Teresa Doherty. Photo by Barney Newman.

The History of Nursing Society continues to be involved with all kinds of events and projects and I remain very grateful to my fellow committee members for all their help and support – Dianne Yarwood, Alison O'Donnell, Jane Brooks, Tristan Griffin and Margaret Graham. We are also pleased to welcome Jane Kemp to the committee.

Members continued to be involved with a range of events to mark the RCN centenary last year. At the RCN International Centenary Conference (ICC) in November, committee and HoNS members (pictured above) presented to a packed room a nursing history symposium focusing on nursing in conflict. I also spoke about nursing's history at the First Annual Public Lecture of the Greater Liverpool & Knowsley Branch and at the North West's regional conference.

Alison O'Donnell spoke at the RCN offices in Edinburgh about the Scottish founders of the RCN. Margaret Graham addressed a special event at the RCN Northern Ireland office on the role of nurses from Ireland in founding the RCN.

Finally, we were all saddened to learn of the death last October of nurse, teacher, researcher and historian Dr John Adams who will be greatly missed. An obituary is available on the RCNi website: www.rcni.com

Join us at RCN Congress

We will be running an evening fringe event at Congress again this year in Liverpool focusing on poor law nursing with guest speaker Carolyn Gibbon. Do come and join us.



Working with other forums

The HoNS continues to do joint work with other RCN forums and societies. Jane Brooks and I have worked with the Public Health Forum on the current library exhibition *A Healthful Form of Work: The History of Public Health Nursing*, which opened in the RCN Library and Heritage Centre in London in October. It ran until March and the exhibition will then be moving to the Edinburgh office.

Our next exhibition and events series will focus on the role of defence nurses both in the past and present. This will be launched on the evening of 10 April and will run until the autumn.

RCN annual HoNS lecture

We're delighted to have re-established an annual history of nursing lecture in the RCN's public events series and we look forward to welcoming Professor Alison Fell in March, who will speak on nurse veterans of the Great War in 1920s France, Belgium and Britain.

Introducing Jane Kemp, new HoNS steering committee member

I began my general nurse training in September 1969, then trained in midwifery and district nursing. The main focus of my career was as a specialist palliative care nurse but I also spent time as an inspector with the National Care Standards Commission (now the CQC). Most recently I was the Independent Sector Adviser for RCN North West.



I joined the RCN as a student and have been a safety rep for almost 30 years. I served on the North West regional co-ordinating committee and held various branch executive appointments. Between 1982 and 1986 I was president of my training school's Nurses' League and I am now joint secretary of the Liverpool Royal Infirmary Nurses' League.

Northern Ireland network plans Great War project

Following the success of its publication *Nurses' Voices from the Northern Ireland Troubles*, the History of Nursing Network Northern Ireland (HoNN NI) is now engaged in recording the history of the province's nurses who served in the First World War.

The project, to produce a booklet and mobile exhibition, has been awarded funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund. RCN members in Northern Ireland who may have a professionally trained First World War nurse in their family tree have been invited to share any relevant photographs or memorabilia for inclusion.



Frances Bostock, a member of the RCN Irish Board, was awarded the Royal Red Cross 1st Class for her role as matron of a civil hospital during war

In addition, more than 180 names of nurses strongly associated with the province who trained in hospitals in Ireland and England have been identified. Many of them served in the QAIMNS and its Reserve or with the Red Cross. Those nurses, often from isolated rural communities, found themselves being sent to all regions where battles were being fought, even as far afield as India, many receiving medals for distinguished service.

While many returned home to continue their nursing careers, there were unfortunately casualties, with nurses dying from disease and trauma, buried in foreign lands.

We are looking forward to having this local nursing history collated and hope it will inspire present-day nurses.

For further details email Margaret Graham: mgraham890@googlemail.com

Rituals and myths in nursing

Who remembers doing something in a particular way because "Sister says so"?

I'm compiling a book about rituals and myths in nursing and would love to hear your experiences, whatever era you trained in.

I'm keen to hear the serious and the ridiculous; the effective and perhaps the less so, although it would have been ardently believed at the time: beds made in a certain way; particular treatments for pressure sores; rules about uniform; weird items on the drug trolley.

Science and evidence-based practice have weakened our hold on tradition but ritual is still part of the fabric of nursing. Tried and tested ways of working, passed on through the generations, have been the mainstay of how and why nurses do what they do.

I will be writing the book with a light touch and plenty of humour but it will be steeped in history, putting the custom and practice of nursing into context and illustrating it with some of the more amusing routines.

For further information or to send me your stories please email claire@clairelaurent.co.uk



A bandaging class at the London Hospital. Credit: Wellcome Images

Diary date: UKAHN colloquium

The 20th UK Association for the History of Nursing research colloquium will be held on Wednesday 28 June at the University of Huddersfield.

The colloquium is an established forum for research into the history of nursing and colleagues from across the academic spectrum of nursing, midwifery, history and health care practice are welcome.

The interdisciplinary nature of the colloquium is reflected in the wide range of past themes including gender and race studies; colonial history; class, politics and international studies; and the development of the art and science of nursing practice.

Although the closing date for abstracts has passed, should you wish to attend, but not present, details of the costs and arrangements can be found at www.ukahn.org

Jane Brooks, Senior Lecturer, University of Manchester

Monica Baly Bursary 2016

The eponymous Monica Baly Bursary is awarded annually in honour of the renowned nurse historian. Dr Alison O'Donnell, a member of the award committee, reflects on research being undertaken by last year's three recipients

There was a strong field for the bursary last year, which for nursing history research is great to see. The panel agreed on the following recipients and for the first time all awardees have a Scottish focus.

In the case of Claire, her research focuses on the experiences of student nurses who "lived in" during their nurse training in Scotland. For Siobhán, her research interest relates to the life of the late Derek Hoy, nurse informatician based in Scotland.

And finally, as the Department of Nursing Studies at the University of Edinburgh celebrates its sixtieth anniversary, Danny's award will enable him to further research this pioneering department.

It is good to see this kind of novel and innovative development of nursing history in Scotland. To showcase the award and the work of Monica Baly, the three awardees will present their current work at an evening seminar on 26 October, at the RCN office at 42 South Oswald Road, Edinburgh – a date for your diary.

Further details of this evening event will be published in the summer newsletter.

Claire Brough Shearer, retired midwife, PhD student, University of Stirling

Control Beyond the Wage Contract for Nurses and Midwives Living in While Training in Hospitals in Scotland During the Twentieth Century

This award will contribute towards the fees for my PhD. I am researching female nurses' lives both on and off duty while training during the 20th century, when nurse training was hospital based and most nurses "lived in".

The research focuses on ways in which patriarchal and matriarchal control was exerted upon them, causing deference, deviance and defiance of both written and unwritten rules.

Advances in medical and nursing care, female emancipation and changes in nurse management and education will also be critically analysed to ascertain how these affected nurses living in.

Archival material and oral histories concentrating on training and living in have been collected.



The dining room of the nurses' home at St Thomas's Hospital, London, and, inset, the nurses' home at Plaistow, east London. Courtesy of The Royal London Hospital Archives & Museum

Interested in applying?

Applications for the annual Monica Baly Bursary awards close this year on 31 May. The awards are worth up to £1,000 each and recipients must be undertaking activities related to the history of nursing, including courses, projects or research. They are open to registered nurses and nursing students. For more information please visit www.rcnfoundation.org.uk

Professor Daniel Kelly, FRCN, RN, PhD, Royal College of Nursing Chair of Nursing Research, EONS President, Cardiff University

Leaps in the Dark: 60 Years of Nursing Studies at the University of Edinburgh

The recent sixtieth anniversary of nursing studies at the University of Edinburgh inspired me to apply for the Monica Baly Bursary. I wanted to capture the experiences of the earliest graduates who completed an honours or ordinary MA as well as nursing registration. This was a five or six-year

programme, the forerunner for degrees in nursing elsewhere in the late 1960s. Some of the early graduates attended the alumni conference in Edinburgh and can provide rich insights, via oral histories, into the early days of nursing entering the world of academia. I am interested in how they experienced the

early degree programme and how they were perceived by others. In many ways, Edinburgh broke new ground and relied on the strong support of key individuals to do so.

To be involved in the project please contact me: KellyDM@cardiff.ac.uk

Siobhán O'Connor, lecturer, Edinburgh Napier University

The Origins of Nursing Informatics in Scotland

Thanks to the Monica Baly Bursary the life and work of Derek Hoy, a nurse informatician based in Scotland, is being explored. As a lecturer in nursing at Edinburgh Napier University, I plan to examine what motivated Derek to enter the field of nursing informatics and become one of the first nurses to examine how technology could be

designed, developed and implemented in the NHS to improve patient care. I will interview his former colleagues in NHS Scotland, at Glasgow Caledonian University and the Scottish Government, and review the pioneering research he published in health and nursing informatics over a 20-year period. The project will demonstrate the impact

his clinical, educational and research practice has left on nursing in the UK and internationally, which will help inspire others to follow in his footsteps.

To find out more about this project you can contact me via www.napier.ac.uk/people/siobhan-oconnor

Telling nurses' stories

Sophie Volker introduces the personal papers collections of the RCN Archive

The archive of the RCN thrives on contributions from members. These (often small) additions to the collection are an invaluable way of learning about individuals' experiences of nursing as they cover such a wide range of times and circumstances.

The collections can constitute anything from a few items (a badge, a photograph, a certificate) to large volumes of correspondence, lectures notes and even medical equipment.

A lovely example of our personal collections is that of Eleanor Macara (pictured), a member of the RCN who worked for the Territorial Force Nursing Service (TFNS) during the First World War and, after that, in hospitals which specialised in post-war

trauma. The small collection of medals, badges, photographs and letters of hers, donated to the RCN, represent both her career and her as an individual.

It includes a TFNS medal, a pressed cardboard identity tag and a metal identity bracelet – all standard army nursing items – but we also have photographs, a silver locket containing an ornate “EM” stamp and a small watch, all intensely personal items which tell us a bit more about Miss Macara.

The watch (pictured) is especially interesting, as it started life as a normal watch, with straps, but she removed these and hung it from a ribbon so it could be used as a fob watch.

The RCN Archive is lucky to hold such a variety of items which can tell the stories of nurses through their own possessions.



Eleanor Macara and, inset, her fob watch

Women in red

HoNS members have joined a project that aims to increase the number of Wikipedia entries about nurses and the history of the RCN

“There are some key women in history who are inspirational and incredible. They have benefited the world and people don’t know about them,” says Dr Alice White, the Wellcome Library’s Wikimedian in Residence. Alice is on a mission to change Wikipedia’s “women in red” to blue – and if you’re struggling to know what that means, you’re not alone.

Wikimedia is the umbrella group of

free-to-use online sites including the encyclopaedia Wikipedia, Wiktionary, a dictionary, Wikimedia Commons, an image library, and many more.

Wikimedians are the people who encourage, train and facilitate volunteer editors to populate these sites. In Alice’s case, she’s working with the Wellcome Library on the WikiProject *Women in Red*.

Wikipedia’s red links are those within its text which, unlike their blue counterparts, don’t lead anywhere. They highlight where information is missing

and, in the case of notable women, there’s an extensive list that covers the past and present, fact and fiction. Since November 2014, the project has boosted



*Above: Wellcome Library Wikimedian Dr Alice White
Left: Members and staff at a recent Wikipedia event at RCN headquarters*



the number of female biographies by nearly 2% and when you take into account the 1.5 million biographies on the site, that’s no mean feat. Alice’s focus is on women in medicine and health, and she’s already begun working with RCN members, including former President Dame Betty Kershaw and other HoNS members, to ensure nursing is high on the agenda.

“We’re making the history of nursing more accessible and I think the more knowledge there is available to people the better,” says Alice.

Taking up the challenge

Currently, the College’s own history is under-represented on Wikipedia, with several RCN presidents on the red list and many others existing as stumps – truncated entries offering no more than a couple sentences. However, under Alice’s guidance, a group of members and staff are taking up the challenge to boost the profile of our nursing leaders.

Jessica Anstee, a pre-registration master’s student, is eager to get started.

“I’m passionate about getting nursing more recognition as a profession,” she says. “We all benefit from and use Wikipedia so it’s good to give something back. Nursing role models are important – they inspired me in my career.”

Training is not a requirement to become a wiki-editor and anyone can add to or create a new entry.

As Alice says: “It’s so easy to start. If you can use Word or send an email, all you need is the courage to dive in and press the edit button. The hardest part is finding a unique user name!”

From refugees to pioneering nurses

Jane Brooks is seeking help with a new project on Jewish refugees in the nursing profession

In the years between Hitler's appointment as chancellor in 1933 and the declaration of war in 1939, a significant number of Germany and Austria's Jewish population managed to emigrate. Despite quota limits, nascent anti-Semitism and "cherry-picking" of refugees, many ordinary Jews and non-Aryans came to Britain. For young women, two crucial pathways were available: domestic service and nursing.

The nursing profession in Britain had been suffering from chronic under-recruitment and low retention throughout the 1920s and 30s, problems that were severely tested with the declaration of war. Yet Jewish women, whose entry into Britain was supported through a promise to nurse, were not initially welcomed by the profession. By the early 1940s hospitals became increasingly open to them and more were admitted to nurse training programmes. Significantly, because of the demography of these emigres, many



Professor Annie Altschul, one of the most influential nurses of the late 20th century

Credit: The Scotsman Publications Ltd

were highly educated women. Some had experienced university education, including medicine, and a few were qualified doctors.

Three of the most influential nurses of the late twentieth century were Jewish refugees from Nazi Europe: Annie Altschul, Lisbeth Hockey and Charlotte Kratz.

The purpose of this project is to uncover

the lives, experiences and professional work of Jewish refugees who entered the nursing profession following their migration to Britain in the 1930s.

If you have any suggestions, archives or knowledge of any surviving members or families from this cohort, I should be very grateful if you would contact me.

jane.brooks@manchester.ac.uk

Susan Cohen recommends *Hebridean Heroines: Twentieth Century Queen's Nurses 1940s-1970s* by Catherine M. Morrison (Islands Book Trust, 2017)

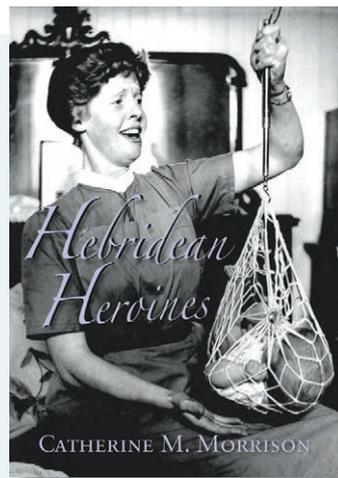
As a nurse, midwife and Queen's Nurse who worked in the Scottish Highlands and Islands, Dr Morrison is well qualified to write about the trials, tribulations and challenges her district nurse heroines faced in caring for the inhabitants of the remote Hebridean islands.

The book begins with an overview of the history of professional district nursing in England and Scotland, and the pivotal role played by the Liverpool social and welfare reformer, William

Rathbone VI, in the creation of the Queen Victoria Jubilee Institute for Nurses in 1889.

The main focus is on the day-to-day working lives and experiences of district nurses in the Hebrides during a time of change, before and after the introduction of the NHS, using the personal testimonies of retired Queen's Nurses who the author interviewed.

From their district training through to the patients they nursed, these moving accounts vividly demonstrate the isolation and the frequent danger the

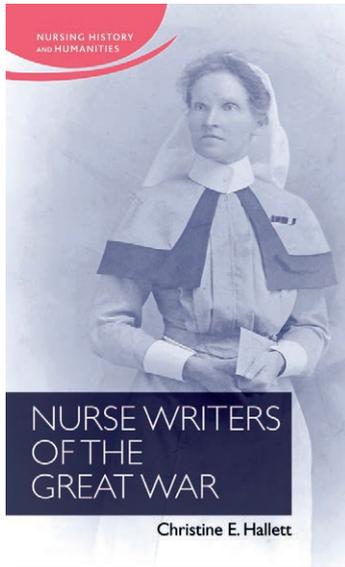


nurses and their patients faced. But they also highlight the skills of the women, their tenacity, and ability to adapt and improvise in the most testing conditions.

Morrison's "heroines" were resilient, tough professionals who may have claimed they were only "doing their job", but as we

find in this illustrated book, it took a special person to live and work in these remote, often inhospitable islands. These district nurses deserve the respect of the communities in which they worked, for they provided invaluable nursing care, often going far beyond the call of duty.

Claire Chatterton recommends *Nurse Writers of the Great War* by Christine Hallett (Manchester University Press, 2016)



HoNS member Christine Hallett has complemented her existing work as a writer and researcher on nursing in the First World War with this new book, which discusses and critiques the writing of some of the British and American nurses who wrote about their experiences in the form of diaries, letters and narrative accounts.

The book has three parts. The first discusses the “independent ladies”, such as Millicent, Duchess of Sutherland, and Mary Borden, who used their initiative and

wealth to set up and fund their own hospital units. Hallett compares and contrasts Borden’s writing with some of the staff who worked at the hospital she founded (L’Hopital Chirurgical Mobile No 1), including Ellen La Motte, Agnes Warner and Maud Mortimer, finding fascinating differences both between their writing styles and the way they made sense of their experiences.

The second part concerns the “professional women”, the trained nurses who volunteered for war service such as Kate Luard, Alice Fitzgerald and Helen Dore Boylston. Hallett also critiques the writings of the “free agent”, who used her ingenuity and initiative to nurse in sometimes unconventional ways (for example, Elsie Knocker and Violette Thurstan).

Lastly she discusses “volunteer girls”, or VADs, as they are often referred to, including Rebecca West, Vera Brittain, Enid Bagnold and Florence Farmborough. These women were generally new to nursing work, and wrote some vivid and arresting accounts.

The book combines a textual analysis of these nurses’ writing with biographical research. It therefore gives an insight into how they conceptualised their war-time nursing experiences, but also how their lives and backgrounds contributed to the style and the content of their writing. This approach enriches the book and it is a welcome addition to the literature on nursing and World War One.

“ A WELCOME ADDITION TO THE LITERATURE ”

Mavis Raper, HoNS member and collector of medical instruments, has recently rediscovered a memoir published nearly 30 years ago. She recommends *Dorothy: The Memoirs of a Nurse* by Dorothy Moriarty (Sidgwick and Jackson, 1989), the recollections of a determined and multi-talented woman

Dorothy was born in 1889, two years after Queen Victoria celebrated her Golden Jubilee, and 100 years later she told her story, describing how she shocked her parents when she decided to become a nurse.

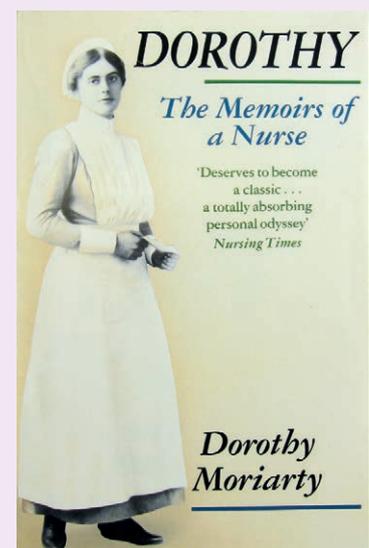
“ COCKROACHES WERE AN EVERYDAY HAZARD ”

Her memoirs are an engaging account of her first 40 years as a middle-class Victorian lady and of her

determination to leave home and contribute to the First World War effort.

The book describes patient care before antibiotics, in a time when surgeons baptised babies before operating, cockroaches on the ward were an everyday hazard and nurses worked a 14-hour day for an annual salary of £8. The book ends in 1926 when Dorothy and her family left Egypt and she gives a very brief overview of the next 60 years.

Dorothy had clear views on how she remained happy, and a disciplined training gave her a firm foundation to cope with any situation. Written with great charm, Dorothy is a delightful, moving, often humorous portrait of a romantic and sometimes lonely girl.



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