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# RCN BULLETIN



Royal College of Nursing  
Shaping nursing since 1916



# CENTENARY SPECIAL

LOOKING BACK ON A REMARKABLE YEAR

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The RCN represents nurses and nursing, promotes excellence in practice and shapes health policies.

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## Curriculum raises role concerns

Nursing associates must not be used as a substitute for registered nurses, the RCN has stressed.

Health Education England (HEE) has now published a curriculum for the new role, which is designed to bridge the gap between nurses and health care assistants. RCN Chief Executive Janet Davies said: "It is entirely right that support staff be offered a route into becoming a registered nurse and, as a bridging role, this position could be positive for the whole clinical team. We're pleased the curriculum now makes it clear that role development and allocation of work must always take place under the right level of supervision."

But concerns remain that nursing associates may be used as a cheaper alternative to nurses, which could have a negative impact on patients. A recent study published in *BMJ Quality & Safety* found that, in a hospital with average staffing levels, replacing one registered nurse with a nursing assistant increased the risk of a patient dying by 21%. "Without the right number of registered, graduate nurses, patient care suffers," said Janet.

The RCN is also concerned about the speed at which the nursing associate role is being developed. Pilot sites were announced in October, with the first 1,000 trainee nursing associates due to start in January – with a further 1,000 to follow.

## Second term for President Cecilia

Cecilia Anim has been re-elected as RCN President.

Cecilia, a sexual health nurse from North London, said she was deeply honoured to have been chosen to serve a second term. "I'm very excited about the prospect of continuing to serve RCN members and I will endeavour to promote the integrity and dignity of our profession."

She said the priority for her second term would be increasing member engagement.

👉 Cecilia received 12,521 votes and Mike Travis 10,212. Turnout was 5.3%

## Congress 2017: any agenda items?

There's still time to suggest agenda items for RCN Congress 2017. Submissions must be made via an RCN branch, board, forum or representative committee and must be received by 11 January.

If you have a bright idea or there is an issue you feel passionate about but don't know how to contact the submitting entity, email [congressagenda@rcn.org.uk](mailto:congressagenda@rcn.org.uk) for help.

You can also suggest ideas for Congress events to run alongside the main debates. See the Congress website for more details.

👉 Beware of fake Congress websites. For more information about RCN Congress 2017, visit the official site: [www.rcn.org.uk/congress](http://www.rcn.org.uk/congress)

## Cover star

Comghall MacLeod, from the Isle of Barra in the Outer Hebrides and pictured on the front cover, is off to Lapland this month after winning a family holiday in the RCN's centenary Christmas card competition. Sponsored by RCNi, the competition was open to children aged five to 10 and Comghall's winning illustration was selected from more than 1,700 entries. The judging panel was led by BBC presenter Sophie Raworth.

Comghall said: "I was very excited and started screaming and jumping about the living room when I found out. I am really, really happy that I get to see the real Santa Claus."

## What a year



What an amazing 12 months. When we began this RCN centenary year I knew I had some rewarding experiences ahead – as President of the College,

such experiences come with the job. But looking back at the visits I've made, the members I've met and the celebrations I've been privileged to witness, this truly has been a year I will never forget. It has provided me with so many opportunities to remind others of the importance of nursing – and of the difficult times we face.

*RCN Bulletin* this month is a review of some of the events that made 2016 a landmark in the College's proud story. All over the country, members and staff have joined together to mark our 100-year history of developing better care and leading the profession. And we've been hard to ignore: media coverage of our centenary has been extensive, and the public and politicians have been quick to engage with our celebrations.

I recognise, however, that for many of you celebration is far from your minds. Along with its huge rewards, nursing brings pressures that can sometimes make it difficult to remember why we do the job. And at moments like that, the noble tradition of your College might seem immaterial.

If you feel that way, I urge you to spend a few moments remembering all that's good about our profession. Look through the photos and features on the following pages and consider all that unites us.

I hope that doing so reminds you, as it did me, of how strong we are together and how much we have to celebrate.

**Cecilia Anim**  
RCN President

## Innovative nurses help change lives

As health care systems around the world look to adapt to the challenges of the future, nurses are in an excellent position to improve public health and deliver better patient care at a lower cost.

That was the key message from Maureen Bisognano (pictured), President Emerita and Senior Fellow at the Institute for Healthcare Improvement in Cambridge, Massachusetts, as she addressed delegates at the RCN's International Centenary Conference in London last month.

As the global health care workforce faces changing demographics and new technologies, nurses should play a central role in redesigning services and bringing in new models, said Ms Bisognano.

"One of the reasons I'm so hopeful for the future is that innovations started by nurses are making a huge difference to the lives of patients." She highlighted examples from all over the world –



from the Buurtzorg model of nurse-led community care in the Netherlands, to training patients to carry out their own dialysis in Sweden.

She also gave examples from her native United States, including an initiative in Boston where pregnant women are invited to attend group appointments, which allows them to support each other and improves efficiency.

## Hurdles ahead?

The College's two-day International Centenary Conference brought reminders of the challenges the profession faces over the next 100 years.

In his keynote address, James Campbell, Health Workforce Director for the World Health Organisation (WHO), warned about the problems posed by ageing populations, co-morbidities and climate change, among other things. But he stressed the importance of nursing staff in overcoming these hurdles. Referring to one of the WHO's key aims he added: "Universal health coverage will be won or lost with nursing and midwifery."

The RCN International Centenary Conference attracted hundreds of delegates from around the world. Speakers addressed a huge range of topics relating to nursing and health care, and a book of abstracts is available at [www.rcn.org.uk/icc](http://www.rcn.org.uk/icc)

# 4 THE YEAR IN PICTURES...



Vintage uniforms and cupcakes at a centenary Nurses' Day celebration at North Manchester General Hospital.



Delegates at RCN Congress in Glasgow were invited to dress up in vintage uniforms and pose in front of an archive image of the city's Royal Infirmary. The uniforms proved popular as light relief from the debates and attracted queues during breaks.

The nationwide Walk100 taking in 12 RCN offices included an impromptu diversion to the Florence Nightingale statue in the grounds of London Road Community Hospital in Derby.



As part of the Norfolk branch centenary celebrations, RCN President Cecilia Anim visited the grave of Edith Cavell at Norwich Cathedral. The British nurse was executed by the Germans during the First World War.



Centenarian Mary Good, one of the RCN's longest serving members, was among those celebrating the RCN's official centenary on 27 March.

# A look back at some of the people, places and events that contributed to a memorable 12 months



The RCN banner was prominent during a centenary service at York Minster. Glenn Turp, RCN Regional Director for Yorkshire & the Humber, said: "This event was a wonderful opportunity to recognise the service given by individual nurses and nursing as a whole to the country."



Walkers in cheerful mood before setting off from the RCN Sunderland office at the start of another leg of the centenary Walk100.



The centenary conference in the West Midlands in July attracted members from all branches of nursing.



BBC journalist and presenter Huw Edwards was among the famous names to send congratulatory centenary messages to the RCN.

## Centenary people

### Molly Case, nurse and poet

Molly Case's poem, *100 Years*, celebrates a century of the RCN by weaving key dates from the College's history into the story of a nurse witnessing open-heart surgery for the first time. Molly's memorable Congress debut in 2013, when she read *Nursing the Nation*, brought a standing ovation. That poem, a powerful affirmation of the profession's purpose and resilience in the face of many challenges, went on to become an internet hit, with more than 380,000 views on YouTube. Molly was specially commissioned by the RCN to mark its centenary – and *100 Years* was the result.





The Lord Mayor of Belfast, Arder Carson (left), presents the Freedom of the City of Belfast to the city's nurses and the RCN. Pictured with the Lord Mayor are (left to right): Kathleen Robb FRCN, Fiona Devlin, Chair of the RCN Northern Ireland board and Janice Smyth, Director of the RCN in Northern Ireland.



Members invited to attend a royal garden party as part of the centenary celebrations pictured before heading off to Buckingham Palace to meet the Queen.



Erskine, the not-for-profit company providing care for veterans and their spouses, also celebrated its centenary this year. As part of an away-day, staff from RCN Scotland, including Director Theresa Fyffe (far right), visited Erskine Home in Bishopton, Renfrewshire, and undertook work in the grounds before celebrating the twin centenaries with residents.



South East region's centenary celebrations attracted many members to Embley Park in Hampshire, once the family home of Florence Nightingale. She is said to have had her divine calling to be a nurse while sitting beneath a tree in the grounds.





Jennette Arnold, a London Assembly member who formerly worked for the RCN, gave one of the readings at London region's centenary thanksgiving service at St Augustine's church in Kilburn in May.

More than 350 people, each donating £1 to the RCN Foundation, entered a competition to name a Lego nurse built brick by brick at RCN Congress. Third year student Poppy Winckles is pictured adding a badge bearing her name to the model, which is now on display at 20 Cavendish Square.



Staff and religious leaders at RCN South West region's centenary thanksgiving service.

## Centenary people

**Anthony Baines, gold award winner, RCN Care on Camera competition**

More than 800 entries were submitted for the centenary photographic competition and Anthony's image of a community nurse visiting one of his patients was the overall winner. Anthony said: "I wanted to show the truly caring interaction between nurse and patient." The competition shortlist formed a touring exhibition visiting schools, libraries and various health settings.



# 8 Presenting the past

Alex Davis discovers how 100 years of nursing history came together in an exhibition for members and the public to enjoy



“

It is an amazing profession and one we should be proud of. Thank you for a great exhibition

“

My mum was a nurse and it's very interesting to get a small insight into what nursing must have been like when she trained and worked

The RCN's Library and Archive team has been at the heart of the College's centenary year. From creating exhibitions detailing the RCN's rich history to organising an educational "handling" collection (see opposite) of historic artefacts, it's been a challenging but highly rewarding experience for all concerned.

The centenary was quickly recognised as a special opportunity to tell members and the general public about the College's history. Effective and early preparation was therefore vital.

"Preparations started in 2012 with our audience engagement plan," explains Fiona Bourne, RCN Archives Operational Manager. "We recognised members were enthusiastic about visiting our

historic headquarters in Cavendish Square and the building's refurbishment in 2013 was the perfect excuse to widen our exhibition space."

The refurbishment opened up a new space for more exhibitions in the Library and Heritage Centre. These included the experience of First World War nurses, the history of mental health nursing and the inspirational founders of the RCN.

The hard work culminated in *The Voice of Nursing: RCN Centenary Exhibition* (see opposite), which describes how the nursing profession has developed alongside wider social changes. The exhibition runs until 23 December next year. For visitor information including details of opening times go to [www.rcn.org.uk/library](http://www.rcn.org.uk/library)

“

This exhibition made me proud of our history and is an inspiration for the future

## The Voice of Nursing exhibition

The RCN's flagship centenary exhibition is a celebration of the College's history as the "voice of nursing". Staff worked with designers to develop an impressive display that showcases objects and images from the RCN's archives.

With 500 linear metres of paper records, 10,000 photographs and around 3,000 badges to choose from, selecting items was no mean feat.

"We wanted visitors to feel a connection to the items on display and therefore, where possible, tried to include artefacts with personal stories attached to them," explains Sarah Chaney, RCN Audience Engagement Manager.

"I was personally moved after discovering that a textbook we placed on a student's desk from the 1960s was actually written by my great aunt."

"Many visitors felt nostalgic walking through the exhibition," adds Frances Reed, RCN Library and Archives Events and Exhibitions Co-ordinator. "Much of our display was recognisable to older visitors and within their living memory. It was a humbling experience for us all."

Visitors discover how the RCN developed from a small professional women's organisation to a highly influential professional organisation and powerful trade union.

The exhibition includes an interactive quiz, an eye-catching map of the UK made entirely of nursing badges, and an area staged to look like a waiting area in the Cowdray Club, an organisation devoted to the progression of women in professional organisations and formerly based in the RCN building.

As Sarah notes, the centenary provided the team with valuable momentum. "We were delighted to see visitor numbers increase as a result of this historic milestone in the RCN's journey. The centenary has encouraged people to explore the College's history and we hope to maintain interest far beyond 2016."



## Chatelaines and a urinal pot

Interest in the centenary also encouraged the team to create a handling collection of 20 notable artefacts from nursing history.

"The idea was to help people experience nursing in a different way. Objects evoke

memories, so a 1960s Sue Barton book or a 1940s baby-weighing net can be a brilliant way of encouraging people to reflect," explains Frances Reed, RCN Library and Archives Events and Exhibitions Co-ordinator.

Other items included two chatelaines used for hanging keys from a nurse's belt and dating from the late 19th century and early 20th century, a 1960s membership card and even a urinal pot.

There was considerable interest in the collection, which travelled across the country from a parliamentary reception in Speaker's House at Westminster to a centenary conference in Newcastle.

## Centenary people

### Dorothy Boreland, retired nurse

When Liz Donaghy received a mailing from the RCN earlier this year, she contacted the College to say she was "surprised and thrilled" to find that one of the nurses in 1950s uniform featured on the envelope was her mother-in-law. The photograph of Dorothy Boreland, as she was then, was taken at the Royal Berkshire Hospital where she trained and worked as a staff nurse from 1951 to 1956. Dorothy's colleague, Jackie Coker, from Sierra Leone, was pictured alongside her. Liz wrote: "My mother-in-law enjoyed a great career, working as a nurse, a midwife and, in later years, as a health visitor in Northern Ireland."



# 10 A tower of strength

Patients have always been grateful for the difference that good nursing care can make, as a special RCN in Wales award has acknowledged

In this centenary year, the RCN in Wales asked patients to nominate nursing staff for an award that recognises the significant impact College members can have on individuals' lives.

"The RCN in Wales Centenary Patient Award is our way of marking very publically 100 years of the RCN and its members," says Tina Donnelly, Director of the RCN in Wales.

"It celebrates the brilliant nursing staff we have in Wales and demonstrates the value of their dedication and care. It also commemorates all that nursing stands for and all it has done in the last century."

Sharon Woods knows what a brilliant nurse looks like. For the last five years, she has received what she calls "outstanding care and compassion" from RCN member Michele Pengelly.

That's why Sharon nominated Michele for this special centenary award. Michele is a supportive care lead nurse at Velindre Cancer Centre in Cardiff. As well as leading her team, she works with patients on a one-to-one basis.

## Cancer journey

"I met Michele in July 2011 when my cancer journey began," says Sharon. "Her support helped me get through the treatment, the operations, and deal with my emotions. She has empowered me by making sure I am aware of the services available to me and she also referred me for extra counselling with another service."

It's the personal touch Michele demonstrates that makes her stand out, Sharon believes. "She'll call just to see how everything



Patient Sharon Woods (left) with award winner Michele Pengelly

is going with me and recognises when I'm getting anxious. I've had some very difficult times to deal with: surgery, waiting for results, friends who have died from cancer. Michele has been there throughout all this.

"She has a sixth sense of how I am feeling. I can, and feel able to, approach, call, email or visit Michele at the drop of a hat. Also I can see she is a tower of strength to her own team. She goes above and beyond in her role. She makes me feel completely valued and treated as an individual."

## Congratulations, Sian

Sian Thomas, a consultant nurse in child health with Aneurin Bevan University Health Board, was named Nurse of the Year at last month's RCN in Wales awards. Sian said: "I feel very honoured to be a children's nurse and work with families and multi-agency staff to make a real difference to children and their families."



Read more about the awards at [www.rcn.org.uk/wales](http://www.rcn.org.uk/wales)

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# 12 Building on history

RCN offices in the four UK countries have been playing their part in the centenary celebrations, as Tom Metcalf reports



## 20 Cavendish Square

RCN HQ flung open its doors to the public in September as part of Open House London, the capital's annual festival of architecture and design. The building itself dates back to the 1720s and was once the residence of former Prime Minister Herbert Asquith.

"20 Cavendish Square" began life as four separate buildings. There have been many changes and renovations over the years, but the central London address has allowed the RCN to hold its head high among the medical colleges whose headquarters are nearby and has added to the RCN's international prestige. One of the main attractions is the main staircase, reputed to be among the best of its kind in London.

To give the Open House event a centenary twist, visitors were

greeted by actors dressed as the College's founder Dame Sarah Swift and benefactor Lady Cowdray (above).

After topping a public vote as part of Museums at Night, 20 Cavendish Square also hosted a special evening with artist Peter Liversidge. A select group of lucky attendees were treated to a night of music and art curated by Peter, and food as well. Museums at Night stages after-hours events that aim to encourage visitors into heritage sites and galleries as well as museums.

### Remarkable women

The RCN kicked off its centenary celebrations in style back in January with the unveiling of a permanent exhibition charting the history of the College's presidents.

Now occupying the corridor

between Cowdray Hall and the Library and Heritage Centre at RCN HQ, the exhibition features portraits and profiles of the 36 remarkable women who have served as the College's figurehead over the past 100 years.

View the exhibition online at [www.rcn.org.uk/rcn100](http://www.rcn.org.uk/rcn100)



## Scotland

More than 200 people visited RCN Scotland's Edinburgh office on Doors Open Day 2016. Visitors included nurses past and present, local residents and other members of the public from further afield, all intrigued by the architecture and history of the building and the RCN. "It was great to have such a fantastic response," said Theresa Fyffe, Director of RCN Scotland. "The feedback has been extremely positive."

As well as guided tours of the building there were a number of exhibitions and films for people to view, featuring nursing archives, the First World War, mental health, a nursing badge collection, pictures of the recent building restoration work and old maps of the area where the office is based. There was also a display of vintage nursing uniforms and hats in a "selfie corner" for visitors.



## Northern Ireland



A highlight of the year for the Belfast office was marking the end of the final stage of RCN Walk100, which saw hundreds of RCN members, staff and supporters walk the length and breadth of the UK over the course of six months.

The building also hosted other centenary events, such as the RCN Northern Ireland History of Nursing Network's autumn conference, which looked back at the role of nurses from Northern Ireland in the First World War.

Other celebratory events were held around Northern Ireland, including the Northern Ireland Nurse of the Year Awards at Hillsborough Castle and a centenary church service at St Patrick's Cathedral in Armagh.

## Wales

Ty Maeth, the RCN Wales office in Cardiff, hosted a centenary themed coffee morning on Nurses' Day, featuring presentations exploring the past and future of nursing in Wales.

Ty Maeth itself marked its 50th anniversary in 2015. In the mid-1960s Welsh nurses helped to raise nearly £300,000 to fund a permanent home for the RCN's Welsh Board as part of a campaign launched by comedian Harry Secombe.

When Princess Margaret officially opened Ty Maeth in 1965, she was greeted by crowds outside the building and a nursing "guard of honour". After she died the mantle of royal patronage passed to Anne, Princess Royal, who visited in 2005, Ty Maeth's 40th anniversary.

The building underwent a complete refurbishment of the bottom floor and exterior in 2015/16. To mark this, as well as celebrate the anniversary, a rededication ceremony was held in March, with First Minister Carwyn Jones unveiling a commemorative plaque.



# 14 In my day...

The skills of nursing staff today would be unrecognisable to the RCN's founders a century ago. But what impression will nurses have in a hundred years' time of their 2016 forebears?

An RCN centenary project has been asking nursing staff what it means to them to be a part of the profession in 2016. A selection of the emails received will be kept and stored in a sealed box with instructions that the box should not be opened until 27 March 2116 – the 200th anniversary of the RCN. Many members have already responded. Some have included advice for their future counterparts, while others have reflected on their time spent in nursing.

Here are just a few extracts from the emails and messages received so far.

“

The RCN Mental Health Forum recently collaborated on a project about the history of mental health nursing, which was displayed in the RCN library and at RCN Congress. I wonder if you, in 100 years' time, will look back on our practice with the same sense of horror and amusement as we look back on our contemporaries from 1916. Our hope for the future is that mental health is treated more seriously, funded more generously, and treated with as much compassion as physical ailments.

“

I'd love to see how this turns out in 100 years' time. I'm a student nurse right now, and I've seen so many things on placement. Every nurse I've met so far has been amazing with their patients. You hear stories and see things in the media about jaded nurses, but I've not yet met one bad example of a nurse. If nothing else, I hope that remains!

“

Nursing in 2016 is very different from when I started my training at Glasgow Royal Infirmary in July 1977. I feel that nursing today is still all about the patients at the centre of all we do. To any nurse reading this in 2116, I hope you have as good a career as I have had – ups and downs, tears and laughter, but no regrets and always there for patients.

“

I joined the RCN as a young newly qualified nurse, initially feeling pained at the extra monthly fees I had to pay out. But the truth is, as I've learnt with time, [the RCN] is essential for our survival and protection as a profession. I personally have used their support on a few occasions. I sincerely hope that this service is around for many more nurses in many more centuries to come.





“

Nursing in 2016 is in a difficult place. The National Health Service is facing some turbulent times. It's an exciting time to be alive though. Medical advances are being made all the time. Diseases we face on a daily basis may be eradicated by the time you read this. As we speak, type one diabetes research has found some exciting news that may see a cure in our lifetimes.

“

I started my career in the Royal Army Medical Corps with my sights set on becoming a physiotherapist, but it was weekend volunteer work at a mental hospital which first opened my eyes to nursing. I went on to train as a general nurse in Hartlepool in 1971. I was one of just three men on my course. In 2016 I don't think there is such blatant prejudice against male nurses who make up just 10% of NHS nursing staff. If there was, it certainly wouldn't be tolerated. I believe that the work of the RCN has gone a long way to helping with this problem and other prejudices.

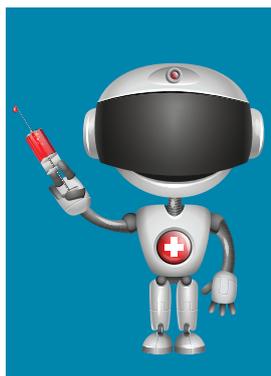
“

I left full-time employment in a National Health Service hospital to study for a nursing degree. I really don't think the UK will have a free NHS when you read this though. My greatest reward is seeing patients going home well and smiling. Then you know you have done your job to a good standard.

“

I knew from two years old that I wanted to go into nursing. I qualified as a midwife and in my early twenties provided care for a remote rural village in Ghana. I moved to the UK in the early 1970s to continue my nursing education. Not long after that, I started to support my fellow nurses to improve our working lives. I hope that by our bi-centenary, the steps that we have taken to advance our profession in my lifetime will mean nursing is even better respected as the complex and skilled profession it is.”

Cecilia Anim, RCN President



## Capturing time

There's still time to send your message to future nurses. Your emails will form an important historical record of nursing skill today, and the feelings and motivations of the people doing the job. Just send 100 to 250 words, including your name and job title, to [RCN200@rcn.org.uk](mailto:RCN200@rcn.org.uk)

The closing date for submissions to be considered is midnight on **31 December**. If your message is selected for the archives, you will receive an email from the RCN.

# 16 Telling tales

Members have been sending in their stories as part of a centenary project to chart the history of RCN forums and the groups and networks that preceded them



Gathering for a College study tour to Russia in 1935

The RCN archive has some of the most important collections in the UK dedicated to the nursing profession. Many of the records relate to the work and history of the RCN and include images, recordings and objects that will preserve the College's story for decades to come. But items about the RCN forums are sparse and during the centenary year members were asked to send in their memories as part of a project called *Save Our Story*.

The RCN's forums and networks were originally developed in the 1970s to ensure the member voice was heard on specialist nursing issues. They continue to be central to the work of the College today. The forums evolved out of five specialist societies – geriatrics, occupational health, primary health care, psychiatric nursing and research. Today, there are 41 forums and networks representing all areas of nursing care.

Jason Warriner, Chair of the Forum Chairs Committee, said: "Being able to see the contribution forums have made to the progression of nursing practice is a great motivator and something we should be proud of, too. By donating to the RCN archives we can ensure our story is recorded and celebrated for years to come."

Donations received so far include personal photographs of forum events as well as substantial amounts of forum records.

"Everything helps, no matter how small," says Fiona Bourne, RCN Archives Operational Manager.

## Donating items

There's still time to donate forum materials to preserve the history of the forums. You can send items to RCN Archives, 42 South Oswald Road, Edinburgh, EH9 2HH or email [archives@rcn.org.uk](mailto:archives@rcn.org.uk)

## A private matter

Forums today highlight the work of specialisms and promote best practice. But the purpose of a specialist group set up by the College in 1931 was rather different: to protect the rights and working conditions of nurses working privately for wealthy families. Often self-employed, private nurses usually found work by word of mouth. But wages were unregulated and working conditions varied greatly. The Private Nurses' Committee was established to "consider and report upon the position of private nurses". The committee was later followed by a Private Nurses Section in 1939 but with the outbreak of the Second World War, and later the NHS, private nurses had an uncertain future.

A Private Nurses Section study day in 1930s London

