Library and Archive Service
Review of the year 2017
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2017 has been a year of awards and recognition for the Library and Archive Service (LAS) team. We began with the news we successfully achieved Archive Accreditation, joining just 70 Archives across the UK. In the first six months of the year we worked towards the Customer Service Excellence standard; following an intensive testing and examination of our service we achieved the standard and were judged ‘exceptional’ in five criteria. Finally, in November we won the RCN Team of the Year award, which we received from Sir Ian McKellen to the team’s complete delight.

Our member support has continued to increase with the introduction of our Saturday drop-in training sessions, our re-designed literature search webpages, new subject guides and new information literacy events programme. The collections team has been adding and reviewing our books and journals including our new Mark Allen subscription and we have created more training materials than ever before. We have continued to work tirelessly across the country supporting even more student recruitment events as well as working at reps conferences, Congress and attending regional and nursing events.

It’s been an outstanding year for projects and we have launched two particularly significant developments. We introduced a digital repository which included hiring our first corporate digital archives specialist who spent the year laying foundations to ensure the RCN’s digital archives are accessible in perpetuity. Our other project has been the First World War scrapbooks digitisation project which has seen the team working with volunteers and writer in residence in new and exciting ways.

Anna Semmens and Teresa Doherty
Very useful session. The librarian helped me define my search terms and also improve my understanding about the key terms and definition of my literature search.”

RCN library user
### Facts and figures

#### Library and Heritage Services

- **226,929** footfall to Library and Heritage Centre
- **11,739** items borrowed
- **4,991** items renewed
- **12,166** face to face enquiries
- **2,526** telephone enquiries
- **1,357** email enquiries
- **634** web chats

#### Enquiries

- **4,235** items added to the collection
- **128,197** full text journal articles downloaded
- **30,414** e-books accessed
- **124** enquiries to RCN Archives
- **309** attendees at 1:1, drop-in and library training sessions
- **44** literature searches were undertaken for members and 81 literature searches for RCN staff
Facts and figures

Events and exhibitions

1,930 twitter followers to @rcnlibraries
(as of 31/12/17)

- exhibitions: 3
- events: 26
- tour groups: 1,449

1,449 visitors

- 51% public
- 49% members

Library outreach and supporting member recruitment across RCN England

- L&A staff presented at 59 student recruitment events across all the RCN England regions
- A total of 18,788 rail miles were accrued travelling to and from these events
- L&A services were represented at 81 different conferences and events
- meetings with university nursing librarians

26,063
2017 Highlights

Archives accreditation

In July, we celebrated achieving Archives accreditation, gaining UK recognition in meeting international professional standards - the first royal college and only UK-wide service to achieve this in 2017. Accreditation demonstrates our best practice in collecting, preserving, cataloguing and making our nursing archives available. The assessors described us as, “ambitious and effective”, applauded our “admirable aspirations to reach out and ensure visibility” for our collections and our member offer as “exceptional”.

New staff

We welcomed three new staff in new roles this year, Elisabeth Thurlow joined as our first corporate digital archive specialist, Porshia Boafo is the Collections Team’s first graduate trainee and Molly Fennelly is our first heritage trainee working on our Heritage Lottery funded Service Scrapbooks project. We continued our successful customer service graduate trainee roles, welcoming Oliver Brookes and Stephen Keeler. In spring, Nate Evuarherhe joined us as our collection development specialist from the National Art Library.

Website

Our work with the website continued this year with numerous improvements and we reached a sensational 1,000,000 hits since launch. Reflecting our focus on user needs and developing content to match this, we overhauled our literature search pages and created our new current awareness services. Our subject guides now number 53 and have been accessed over 150,000 times. The team has been busily blogging away to keep everyone updated about life in the library, archives and the wider RCN.

Archives hub

2017 saw us join Archives Hub, a key historical research resource where information about UK archive services and their collections comes together online. Our newly created hub page shows the collections we have already uploaded and this content is regularly updated allowing researchers to find our content as soon as we make it available. Joining the hub gives us the ability to advertise our archives and availability for research much more widely and helps grow awareness of our collections.
Service development

In August, we achieved the Customer Service Excellence® (CSE) Standard. CSE is an independent accreditation of the quality and standard of our customer services. The standard emphasises that the customer should be at the heart of everything we do, and is a tool for practical customer-focused change.

To attain the standard, we had to demonstrate that we excelled in 57 different aspects of customer service, covering delivery, timeliness, information, customer satisfaction and staff attitude. CSE was a whole team effort and in nine months, we collated and recorded 342 pieces of evidence covering all 57 aspects including documents, papers, reports, emails, and published our LAS and enquiry standards on the website for the first time. We also needed to show that we had embedded customer service excellence into our ways of working.

The culmination of the journey to achieve Customer Service Excellence was a two-day visit from an external assessor. Our assessor spoke directly to our users, observed our staff in action and carefully read all of the evidence. At the end of the assessment, our assessor stated that we have fully embraced the CSE standard, successfully embedding it in our ways of working and making demonstrable improvements for customers. He highlighted how proud staff are to work for the RCN, and they have a genuine passion for its history and the history of nursing more broadly.

In addition we achieved ‘compliance plus’ in five areas, where we demonstrated customer services that go above and beyond the practice of similar services and demonstrate innovation. Joint Library and Archive Service Manager, Anna Semmens, said: “achieving the standard speaks volumes about the team’s commitment to our members – I am frequently impressed with the customer focus and the lengths the team will go, to ensure our members get their needs met”.

We received an excellent response to our annual user satisfaction survey this year, with a spread of respondents from across the UK and employment sectors. Overall, 95% of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with our services which is a 5% increase on 2016, and the number of respondents who would recommend the service has doubled since 2016.

Satisfaction with our staff continues to be rated highly and all of our library services were very well received, with subject guides and the literature search service being very popular with members. One respondent referred to the library as “one of the jewels in the crown of the RCN” and others commented that “it is a fabulous service and good support for clinical practice” and that the service has “massively improved over the last few years…”

The survey also highlighted some areas for development including making our online resources easier to use and helping members keep up to date with current information in their area of practice. We will be investigating ways we can address these issues in the coming months.
We were awarded a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund to deliver the service scrapbooks project. The aim of this project is to conserve, digitise and create a web resource for ten nurses’ scrapbooks from the First World War. Molly Case, our first ever writer in residence started in May, shortly followed by our heritage graduate trainee, Molly Fennelly. We did a volunteer call out to RCN History of Nursing Society members and got an overwhelming response. Instead of the eight volunteers expected we have 32!

Part of our aim for this project is to help RCN members develop new skills. Those who can travel to HQ have learned how to scan books, and we have digitised 1,940 pages in 976 scans. From these scans, volunteers around the UK have been transcribing the documents; we have nearly finished documenting every word written in the scrapbooks. Other skills volunteers have gained include text writing for a public audience which will be used in the online resource, and researching nurses’ stories.

Assisted by our volunteers, we have held a number of public events. Including five creative writing workshops, run by our writer in residence. One of these workshops was with a local school, All Souls CE School. The children performed some of the poems they had written at a special event at Lords Cricket Ground in November. Many of the poems penned for this project, including new work by Molly Case, were published in the *Poetry Anthology* in February 2018.

What has been achieved here is what scientists have not managed – a portal through time. You brought them back to life.”

Blondel Cluff CBE, HLF Chair of the London Committee
Everyone I’ve met so far through attending these events has been so lovely [...] just brilliant, all very knowledgeable, enthusiastic, and interesting - and my fellow volunteers are a great bunch too. I’m so pleased I signed up for this.”

Lesley Macfarlane, archives volunteer
Learning and teaching

Following our 2016 literature search service review, this year we started to implement our recommendations. A significant development was the launch of a suite of literature searching webpages tailored to the needs of our different service users. We created a webpage to help our member’s link to current awareness resources and are planning additional enhanced content to these pages. A more user-friendly format for the results of literature searches is also now in place.

The information team delivered training to 309 RCN members, an increase from 230 members in 2016. 2017 saw the introduction of Saturday afternoon drop-in sessions which have been very successful, and allowed us to meet more members than previously. An online self-service booking system for our training sessions made it easier for members to book their place and streamlined our administrative procedures.

We continued to develop our successful subject guides and our most popular guides were mentorship, advanced nursing practice, and HCAs, APs and TNAs. Nine new online subject guides were developed in collaboration with RCN members and nursing experts, bringing the total number of guides to 53, new guides included RCN reps, IELTS and OSCE exams, and safe staffing. We reviewed and updated all our existing guides ensuring they continued to provide up to date key resources.

A total of 12 video tutorials and four print guides have been produced this year. The short videos offer quick tuition and bitesize information on using library resources and services. You can find these videos on the library guides section of the RCNOnline YouTube channel at: www.youtube.com/user/RCNonline. These videos are embedded on our library training pages and relevant subject guides.

“Thank you for providing such a fantastic service. The drop-in session is very helpful and offered me lots of good ideas.”
RCN library drop-in session participant

“Very useful for my dissertation searching and professional development.”
RCN library user

“Easy to use and a fabulous service for members.”
RCN library user
In 2017, we launched an exhibition on the history of defence nursing: *For Queen and Country: Nursing, Trauma and War*. We worked with the RCN Defence Nursing Forum and History of Nursing Society to explore the role that technical innovations have played in improving health care within the military, and the specific contributions of defence nurses to these changes. We expanded the number of external loans for this exhibition, including modern defence equipment and objects from the British Red Cross Archives. This enabled us to highlight the differences and similarities in care in a conflict situation, such as the emergency tourniquet, the design of which has barely changed since the First World War. We had over 6,300 visits to the exhibition space, including 258 people on guided tours.

October saw our temporary exhibition space changed again, with an exhibition celebrating nursing diversity, *Hidden in Plain Sight*. We worked with a huge number of people across the RCN and beyond to both create an exhibition showcasing stories that are often overlooked, but also to collect material for the archives, including seven new oral history interviews. Among these are the RCN Archive’s first BSL interviews, one of which is with the UK’s very first deaf qualified nurse, Susan Eagling. The events series alongside this exhibition has been equally diverse, including a talk on non-binary gender and a deaf poetry evening.

This year we have been particularly successful in achieving funding for our public activities. We gained a grant from the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) to work with researchers at the University of Oxford to develop and test a game, *Mind-Boggling Medical History*. This educational card game is aimed at school and university groups, including nursing students, and designed to challenge pre-conceptions about health care and history. It will be launched in early 2018.

We also expanded our public lecture series, applying successfully for RCN Foundation funding to continue into 2018. This year, our most popular event focused on animals in health care, from therapy pets to medical detection dogs. The series also included events in Bristol and Birmingham, such as the first ever RCN student debate, at which expert speakers and students discussed the role of trade unions in the future of health care.

Our exhibitions and events programme has included more partnership activities. In October, we hosted *Up Close and Medical*, a well-attended handling session and evening open mic with the London Museums of Health and Medicine. Our partners promoted the event to their audiences, raising awareness of the RCN at other royal colleges. We also joined forces with Queen Mary University of London for an event in the Being Human Festival of Humanities, showcasing research into the history of emotions and health.

2017 saw the first ever dedicated exhibition cases installed in the Scottish headquarters in Edinburgh. The series was launched in April, and our public health exhibition was visited by the Member of Scottish Parliament for Public Health and Sport, Aileen Campbell. The presence of the exhibition cases has led to a number of donations to the archive and a heightened awareness of the history and heritage of RCN Scotland. Our events programme continues to include a dedicated page of activities supported by the RCN Scotland team, in addition to a new series of events at the RCN Wales Library in Cardiff.
Our social media presence has been bigger and better this year, with 2,700 followers now on Twitter and a new Instagram account @RCNLibraries. Our top engagements on Twitter included tweets supporting the RCN’s successful Scrap the Cap campaign. Popular individual tweets covered the defence nursing exhibition launch, Remembrance Day and Explore Your Archive. Instagram, managed by our writer in residence and heritage graduate trainee, has showcased HLF project activity, with images of poetry workshops and volunteers digitising scrapbooks.

At Congress in May, we hosted a fringe event like no other. Nursing Show Off put the spotlight on six acts – RCN members and staff – as they showed off about nursing past and present. The room was near full capacity with over 100 attendees and one commented “In 16 years of my attendance at Congress this was the best social event the RCN has done.”

We streamlined our e-newsletter to make it more engaging and readable for our recipients. A clearer layout, strong images and carefully selected content have all contributed to making it more exciting for our contacts. News stories sent out this year include collecting donations for the diversity project and reporting a donation of First World War postcards to the archive.

In February, we held an open day to highlight our services to RCN colleagues. We hosted drop-in information sessions, tours of the exhibitions, family history workshops with Ancestry and displayed the handling collection. Later in the year as part of Learning at Work week, we held an Expert Teas drop-in with Molly Case and a library resources stand tailored to staff, led by the information team which led to more staff signing up to the library.

“Library staff have been so creative in terms of the generation of intelligence, and of materials of interest to members across a wide spectrum of interests, and in delivering these in ways that are accessible to members outside of our main building infrastructure.”

Tom Sandford, Director RCN England
Online and catalogue development

Our commitment to purchasing digital first collections has seen us continue to grow and develop our digital holdings. Building on 2016’s successful member-led purchasing project, this year 650 titles were directly selected by our members and were accessed across the UK. Our new subscription to the Internurse journal package has given members online access to 19 key nursing titles from Mark Allen publishing, including British Journal of Nursing, British Journal of Healthcare Assistants, and British Journal of Community Nursing. Across the year these titles have proved to be the most heavily used of our online journal collection with over 28,000 full-text downloads.

We have three collecting projects in place. Our diversity collecting project aims to gather material for our current diversity exhibition. The aim of the diversity collecting project is for the diversity of our membership to be reflected in our collections, ensuring the LAS collections represent our entire membership. We are particularly anything relating to members personal story and experiences as a nurse, and by collecting them now we ensure our diverse membership is represented in the future.

The forums project aims to improve the gathering of material from RCN forums for our archive. This project has two objectives, to gather records of administration and governance of all the RCN forums and to engage with forum members and encourage them to add their own records and memoirs to the archive resource we are building.

Our final collecting project was to capture the work of our RCN fellows. The project focuses on collecting their published works and encouraging fellows to donate their personal papers. As part of this project we were very pleased to receive 14 boxes of books and papers from RCN Fellow Dr Elizabeth A. Jenner in October and we have plans for more fellows project work in 2018.

There have been some notable additions to our rare book collection. We purchased an annotated syllabus of lectures on midwifery delivered at Guy’s Hospital by Dr Haighton given over a hundred years ago. This item is particularly special is the inter-leafed student notes and illustrations throughout. We have also added A History of Trade Unionism by Sidney and Beatrice Webb from 1926, and the Report of the Commissioners appointed to inquire into the sanitary state of the Army in India, which includes Florence Nightingale’s observations from 1893.

“I feel more confident finding articles in my subject area. Thank you for running these sessions.”

RCN library drop-in session participant
Richard was a very powerful speaker who has a wealth of experience to share with nurses and other health care professionals.”
Deaf poets event attendee

The speaker hooked me in with her clear passion for the subject and grasp of the history/research.”
Passchendaele event attendee

It was a wonderful description of nurses at the frontline in one of the worst battles in history.”
Passchendaele event attendee

Fantastic service, which as a member, I feel extremely fortunate to have available to me.”
RCN member using the literature search service
Volunteers

An increased number of RCN History of Nursing Society volunteers supported the varied work of the Library and Archive Service through projects in London and Edinburgh. Their support involved digitisation and research into First World War nurses’ scrapbooks and albums, cataloguing support for the archive team making more collections available for research and building the oral history collection with new recordings.

Working with and supporting RCN representatives

We supported the Employment Relations Department (ERD) with a stand at both of the UK RCN joint representatives’ conferences. During the conferences we were able to demonstrate LAS website developments to staff and reps and display our new resources on employment relations, conflict resolution and influencing.

We distributed a survey at the joint representatives’ conference in response to an ERD initiative valuing representatives. The feedback received led us to develop a reps’ LAS support package which includes a new subject guide, in collaboration with ERD colleagues with links to relevant books, journals and key documents. Additionally, we created a promotional presentation for reps to use with existing and potential members. With our country library colleagues we agreed an enhanced reps offer with extended books loans and prioritised literature searches.

Regional contacts

The work of our regional contacts team has gone from strength to strength, with a 10% increase in our activities to support members and staff in the regions. As well as student recruitment, we attended conferences, continuing professional development events and branch and regional staff meetings, giving presentations and interacting with staff and members.

Student recruitment

The LAS staff attended more student recruitment events than ever before. The team attended nearly sixty events and assisted in getting many thousands of new student members to join the RCN. Michael Riley, RCN England Business Manager said “The library team collaborate well with regional teams and make a real difference to our student recruitment activities. When they speak at events it’s clear that students understand their offer and why it is helpful in their studies”.

Student recruitment
In 2016 we celebrated our centenary, raising questions about what resources created today would survive for the celebration of our bicentenary. In January 2017, we launched the RCN digital repository project, an important first step towards permanently preserving our digital legacy. By safeguarding our digital resources for the future, we will ensure that the nursing resources we create will remain available for future generations. Actively managing our digital legacy will allow us to continue to capture our corporate memory as the voice of nursing.

The project established a new digital repository for the RCN, hosted by Preservica, and delivered with IT Services. We piloted the use of the use of the digital preservation system with the RCN corporate communications and publishing and governance teams, to ensure their important resources remain accessible over time. To support collections management, the new digital repository has been integrated with our archives catalogue system.

“Very useful and informative. Interactive and tailored to the needs of the student. Thank you very much.”

RCN library training user