

# Library and Archive Service

## Review of the year 2018



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I am so happy to have this opportunity. Staff were extremely helpful and I have learnt a lot today which will be applied to complete my dissertation.

Library 1-2-1 training session user

## Foreword

2018 was a glittering year with many highlights. We won the UK Women's History Network community prize for our National Lottery Heritage Fund Service Scrapbooks project and were finalists for the Bookseller Library of the Year award. New technologies were introduced including simplifying member sign-on to our e-resources, piloting skype training sessions and finalising plans for the complete replacement of the Library and Heritage Centre IT infrastructure and equipment.

Our online exhibitions launched a new format, and by December our newly introduced Instagram account gained 250 followers. Our temporary exhibitions programme featured *Hidden in Plain Sight: Celebrating Nursing Diversity, Pandemic!* to commemorate the Spanish Flu memorial and *The Wandering Womb* on women's health. Additionally our exhibitions have had a presence in the other country libraries.

Customer service continued to be a priority and we extended our training offer for members. There was a significant increase in online usage across all of our resources and we negotiated excellent deals with our suppliers. We received fantastic donations to our special collections and archive, and completed a number of volunteer projects with our RCN History of Nursing Society (HoNS) members.



Anna Semmens and Teresa Doherty



## Facts and figures

### Library and Archive Service



Footfall to Library and Heritage Centre



items borrowed



4919 items renewed



9,210 face to face enquiries



1,884 telephone enquiries



1,056 email enquiries



540 webchats

### Enquiries



items added to the collection



210,323 full-text journal articles downloaded



e-books accessed



364 enquiries to RCN Archives



364 attendees at library training sessions



literature searches undertaken for members and 81 literature searches for RCN staff

## Events and exhibitions

 Follow **3,532** followers



exhibitions

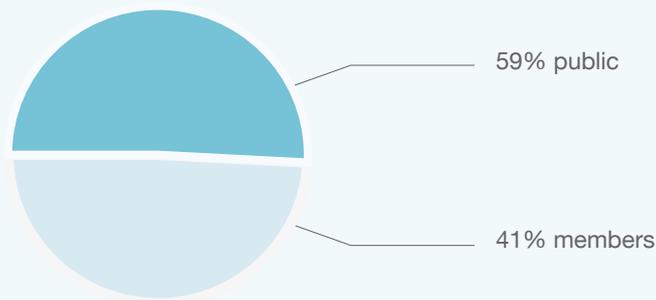


events



tour groups

### 1,793 visitors



## Library outreach and supporting member recruitment across RCN England



LAS staff presented at 48 student recruitment events across all the RCN England regions



Rail miles were accrued travelling to and from these events



LAS services were represented at 12 different conferences and events

## 2018 Highlights



### Growing team

We welcomed a number of new staff to the Library and Archive Service (LAS). Razwana Akram joined us as customer service information assistant. Katherine Chorley became our digital archivist in Edinburgh and Dawn Williams is our collection development specialist. Our successful graduate trainee scheme continued with Catherine O'Carroll, Emily Lawry and Anna Shipway. We also had our first external secondment, with Sarah Cull working at the Wellcome Collection on their Customer Services Excellence project.



### Customer Service Excellence renewal

After successfully achieving the Customer Service Excellence® (CSE) standard in 2017, 2018 saw our first re-assessment. The process involved reviewing all of the criteria we partially met in our first assessment, and we are delighted that we reduced our partials from three to one and we also reviewed other criteria to see if we continued to meet or exceed them. We were delighted to continue to meet all the criteria, exceeding in an amazing 12 criteria.



### Professional conferences and publications

The customer service team presented at the RCN managers conference, the University Health and Medical Libraries Group autumn event, and the CPD25 young professional's event. Philip Segall won the Anthony Thompson bursary to attend the IFLA conference in Malaysia. The events and exhibitions team presented at Discovering Collections Discovering Communities, UK Association for History of Nursing, and Social History of Medicine conferences. Our archive team spoke at the Archives and Records Association, and British and Irish Sound Archives conferences.



### Media

The LAS had a particularly successful year with press. Our staff were interviewed about the Pandemic! exhibition on BBC Radio Four and *The Wandering Womb* exhibition on BBC London, and BBC Health featured the exhibition in an online article. We appeared in numerous magazines including *Who Do You Think You Are?*, *ARC Magazine*, and *The Bookseller*, as well as *RCN Bulletin* and the *RCN Nursing History Now* magazine. The Information Team wrote for *CILIP Update* and continued to contribute to *Activate* and *RCN Students* magazines.

## Online and catalogue development

The use of our online library continued to grow substantially, with year-on-year increased use of our e-books, e-journals and databases. There were 210,000 e-journal user downloads in 2018, an increase of 23,000. This significant increase was due to a number of initiatives we introduced to simplify access and improve signposting. We provided members with just over 1,000 new e-book titles and usage increased by 10,000. This proved that member-driven access to e-books, introduced in 2016, is a sustainable value for money approach.

One key achievement this year was negotiating excellent prices for our journal and database subscriptions. From initial quote to actual spend we saved £161,000, allowing us to continue to provide a specialist journal and database collection for our members in a cost-effective way. We completed our first trial of a new database, which allowed us to create a reliable, agile testing method for potential acquisitions.

During the year we continued to raise awareness of our special collections. In November, two of our rare books went on display at the Charles Dickens Museum as part of their *Glorious Food* exhibition. We completed 127 biographies of RCN fellows for our Archive catalogue, ensuring we hold all of their publications and have a record of their career achievements.

Other key milestones in 2018 include adopting the medical subject headings (MeSH) to make our collection more discoverable externally and reduce the time it takes for new print books to be made available to members. We moved our print book supplier to take advantage of cost savings made by purchasing both our print and electronic book stock from a single supplier.





I'm so used to helping people that it's nice to have such knowledgeable people help me so willingly.

Member on receiving library staff help with her revalidation submission

## Learning and teaching

We continued to expand our learning and teaching provision and the number of RCN members we worked with rose by 31%. In response to member demand we increased the number of training session slots offered. We trialled offering literature search training via Skype and launched this service to members by the end of the year. We continued to work with participants on the RCN Developing Leadership programme, and with RCN staff in the Management Development Programme. As part of the new RCN Infection Prevention and Control module we created reading lists and are providing access for participants to our resources.

Our online support has continued to grow. We created new video tutorials on several topics including accessing eBooks and searching the Maternity and Infant Care Database. We trialled a new format; our British Nursing Index Advanced Searching video featured a conversational style which proved popular. Six downloadable guides were updated and produced including our brand new CINAHL guide, and these are now available on our webpages.

Subject guide use continued to grow with an impressive 30% increase in hits; our most popular guides were advanced nursing practice, mentorship, and district and community nursing. Seven new guides were developed in collaboration with RCN members and nursing experts, bringing the total number of guides to 60. We continued to review and update all our existing guides to ensure they provide up to date key resources.



I am a nurse who also does freelance academic writing and I find the RCN library resources invaluable.

Library user

In 2018, we expanded our information literacy events. We ran three ExpertTeas events, including one on study skills with two learning development advisers from London South Bank University. Two successful events were held to help nurses publish and share best practice and we plan to expand this work during 2019.

There was considerable planning and development work completed this year. We investigated and agreed a citation management format for reporting RCN publications citation figures to the wider organisation. Our project to decide a new RCN reference management software was completed following an in-depth examination of the market, and we will be implementing Zotero next year. In our five year plan we agreed to consider hosting a massive online open course (MOOC); having investigated we decided against offering this.



This is the first time that I have used the RCN library although I have been a member for many years. I am an academic and can see how useful this will be in supporting my work.

Member using literature search service



I found this session incredibly helpful. Existing in a 'techy' world as an older dyslexic person is hard but the 1-2-1 in the library has boosted my confidence and my ability to navigate and learn.

Library 1-2-1 training attendee

## Outreach

The work of our regional contacts continued strongly and, as well as supporting student recruitment events across England, we supported nearly 30 other events. In addition to a variety of RCN conferences, continuing professional development events, branch and regional meetings, we supported Black History Month and family history events.

We attended the RCN UK joint representatives' conference, hosting a stand and demonstrating the RCN reps subject guide. We supported four regional conferences targeted at reps or student information officers. We presented at three learning and development events organised by RCN reps in

their workplaces. In response to feedback from reps we introduced a twice-yearly RCN reps eNewsletter, which had excellent opening rates. We continued to contribute monthly to the *Activate* newsletter for reps with our *Tools of the Trade* column, and wrote an article about using LAS resources to support RCN members. As a team we learnt more about the role of reps through a training session delivered by a current rep.

We ran two focus groups with independent sector reps looking at the LAS. Based on their feedback we developed a leaflet about the LAS to be used to promote our services and the value of RCN membership to independent sector nurses.



## Service scrapbooks: nursing and storytelling in the First World War

2018 saw us commemorate the contribution of nurses in the First World War with the completion of our Heritage Lottery Funded project, *Service scrapbooks*. With the help of 32 RCN nurse volunteers, supported by graduate trainee Molly Fennelly, we digitised, transcribed and researched nearly 2,000 pages of photographs, poems, diary entries and illustrations from the LAS collections, from 1909 to 1919. In February, we launched a new website, making the complete diaries and scrapbooks of ten First World War nurses available to the public for the first time.

We also saw the completion of our writer in residence project with a final poetry workshop at a popular family history day in February, and the launch of a poetry anthology, edited by Molly Case. Some of the nurse and health care worker contributors to the anthology attended the launch to receive a copy of the book featuring their poems alongside those from the scrapbooks.

At the launch event, RCN members spoke about their research and their enjoyment of the project. Two had even managed to track down relatives of the nurses in our collection, who were unaware that the scrapbooks existed. In addition, the project made new partnerships possible. Our resource was featured in the #WomensWork100 series led by the Imperial War Museum, showcasing the contributions of women at war, and we held a screening of archive footage and documentary material in Cardiff.

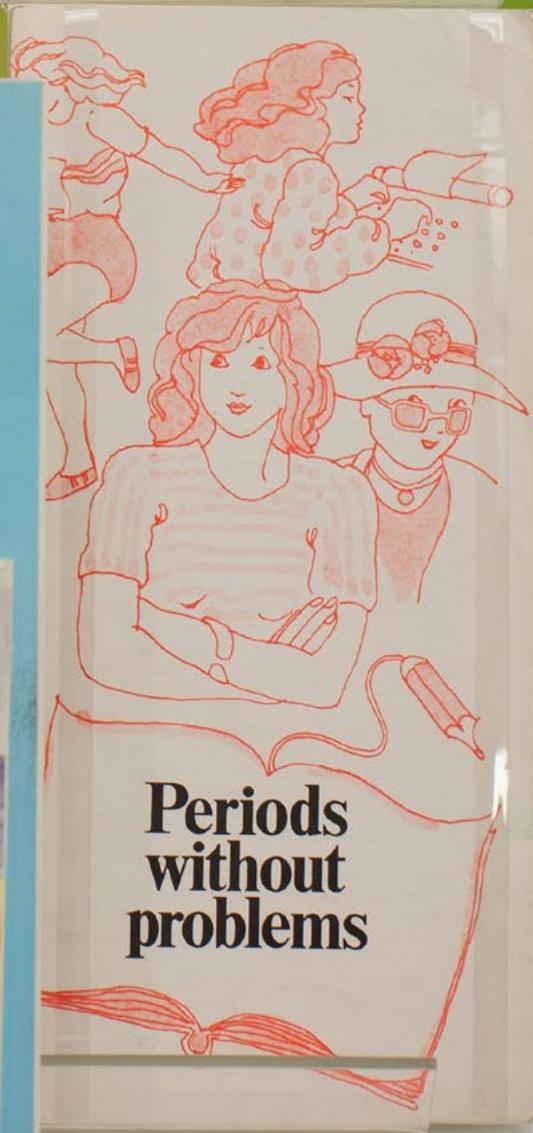
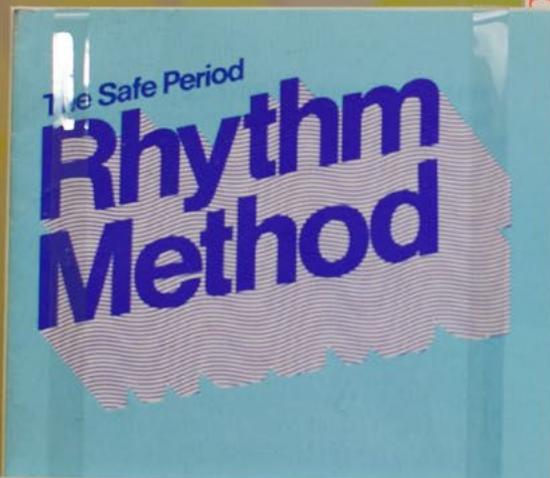
The project was praised by the National Lottery Heritage Fund and awarded the Women's History Network Community History Prize for 2018. The judges were unanimous in their voting, saying that: "We believe that the work you've done is of national and international importance and helps address the gender imbalance in accessible primary material from the Great War as well as shedding light on the work of the nurses."





Fantastic event, very interesting talk and a brilliant opportunity to look around the library.

Women's health exhibition launch event attendee



## Events and exhibitions

In collaboration with RCN forums our events and exhibitions continued to expand this year, with exhibitions in London and Edinburgh, and pop-up banners in Cardiff and Belfast. We incorporated more loans from external museums, and had our first formal loans out from our special collections. The start of the year saw the final months of our *Hidden in Plain Sight* exhibition, which celebrated nursing diversity. We hosted an event with Healthy Deaf Minds at which deaf people spoke about careers in health care, largely attended by British Sign Language users.

In April, we launched *Pandemic!* an exhibition commemorating the centenary of Spanish flu. Chief Medical Officer Professor Dame Sally Davies spoke at the launch, and our exhibition was featured on BBC Radio 4 *World Tonight* and in a BBC 2 documentary. The online *Pandemic!* exhibition can be explored at [rcn.org.uk/library-exhibitions/pandemic-nursing](http://rcn.org.uk/library-exhibitions/pandemic-nursing). The event series was varied from life drawing to participation in the AIDS Histories and Cultures Festival, co-ordinated by Birkbeck, University of London. We improved our online exhibitions to make the full content viewable online for the first time.

Our exhibition *The Wandering Womb* launched in October on International Menopause Day, exploring women's health nursing. The RCN Women's Health

Forum and the Vagina Museum led activities at the launch, and media coverage included an interview with curator Frances Reed on BBC Radio London's Drive Time with Eddie Nestor. We also launched the online exhibition at the same time, with a huge increase to 4,500 web hits.

We expanded our partnerships, linking with Queen Mary Centre for the History of the Emotions on a new main exhibition to launch in 2020, gaining external funding for this project at no cost to members. With Westminster Archives we worked on a schools project exploring the NHS, partnered with the Surgery and Emotions team at the University of Roehampton on a bid to the Wellcome Trust, and hosted a PhD student research project funded by the White Rose College of Arts and Humanities.

Beyond this, we participated in UK-wide commemorations including the Windrush and NHS 70th anniversaries, the centenary of female suffrage, and the end of the First World War. We also hosted a fourth year of RCN Public Lectures, funded by the RCN Foundation which included the launch of Christie Watson's *The Language of Kindness*.



What a positive and informative event! It was wonderful to hear about the speakers' own experiences and it was super encouraging. Thank you!

Getting Published event attendee



Very vividly brought to life by excellent reading and fascinating facts and photographs. Thank you.

In-flew-enza event attendee

## Marketing and communications

The LAS social media presence has continued to grow. By the end of 2018 we had over 250 Instagram followers and gained 775 new Twitter followers, taking our total Twitter followers to over 3,500. Our e-newsletter continues to be produced quarterly and is distributed to over 18,000 recipients.

In February we took over the @52Museums Twitter and Instagram accounts. The @52Museums accounts are taken over by a different museum every week, the participating museums are from around the world and vary in size from national to local. Our most popular

Instagram post during the week was pictures from an archive item: the 1950's Ethicon Cat-a-Log, proving that cats are always a hit on social media.

On our Instagram account, pictures from our Black History Month display were very popular, as was our staff Christmas jumper post.

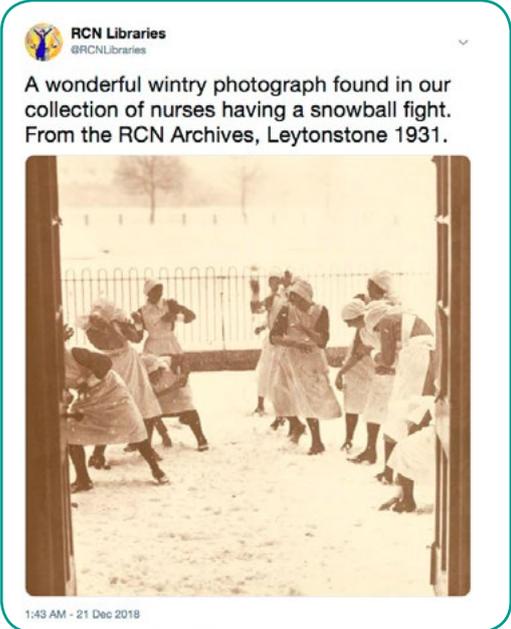
Our annual open day for staff was very successful and we asked for ideas on how we might improve the Library and Heritage Centre – it may be a while before we can install the garden and water feature!



## Social media

Our most popular tweet was in June, about the Google doodle celebrating Dame Cicely Saunders, which was seen by over 32,500 people. Another popular tweet in December, a 1921 photograph of nurses having a snowball fight, was seen by over 17,500 people.

We ran our always popular #nurseduck Twitter competition during Congress 2018, 10 lucky people won a Titanic duck, chosen this year as Congress was in Belfast for the first time. We gained 85 new followers during Congress and our tweets were seen 8,500 times each day of Congress.





The literature search was very quick and gave me a good amount to start my research. Brilliant starting point.

Literature search service user

## Service development

2018 was another fruitful year for our customer facing services. We answered around 13,000 customer enquiries by phone, email, face-to-face and webchat, with a marked increase in the latter. Our guided tours and family history search service continued to gain in popularity and we completed our plans to launch paid tours for the public in 2019. We gained our first non-member subscriber to the LAS. Family history continued as a growth area and our Ancestry records had 676,108 hits, an increase of 93%. We reviewed our statistics collation and introduced a new cross-team statistics group who report quarterly and are providing a more succinct and complete picture of our service.

Mystery shopping continued, with staff continuing to receive overwhelmingly positive feedback, and mystery shoppers commented that they thought we were an example of best practice. All shoppers commented that the service they experienced was outstanding and universally met all timeliness and quality standards. We captured feedback from our customers in our new 'You said, we did' feedback wall in the Library and Heritage Centre and on our website.

2018 saw the introduction of a number of exciting new services and features. Members now only need one password to access both MyRCN and our online library which improves the user experience of our eResources. We successfully held our first ever first fines amnesty. We installed an open public access catalogue (OPAC) tablet allowing members to search for books in the stacks, and a feedback tablet to give instant feedback on our space and exhibitions.

Space and IT reviews took place in the Library and Heritage Centre. Based on feedback from members, we will be implementing an improved IT infrastructure including making more fixed PCs available and replacing our laptops with newer models. We spent time asking our users for their thoughts on and experiences of using the Library and Heritage Centre and as a result we introduced clearer signage and rearranged some of our group study spaces.

We completed a stock check at the Library and Heritage Centre, and supported the first stock check at the Edinburgh library. The library search tool was updated and we saw a significant number of new features available to members to allow better inter-resource linking.





They [Archive Team] were so helpful and kind in making sure that I had what I needed each day, and I truly appreciate all their hard work.

Researcher using the Archive

## Archive

We began the year by completing the full cataloguing of the RCN Council meeting minutes and papers from 1916 to the present. We made great progress with our other cataloguing projects, including the RCN Finance Committee and RCN Annual General Meeting records.

Thirty personal archive catalogues were completed, including scanning photographs which are now available for the first time through our partner Mary Evans Picture Library. 2,000 historical RCN publications were added to the RCN digital repository and made available via the library catalogue. We redesigned our webpages and online catalogue to make these more user friendly.

We ran a highly successful project to collect records from RCN regional boards, dating back to 2002. These mainly digital records are an important addition to the RCN archive. The new GDPR legislation, which came into effect in May, saw RCN staff checking compliance and rationalising record storage, increasing the need for advice and transfers to the archive.

We wish to express our gratitude to RCN History of Nursing Society volunteers who contributed 367 hours of their time. They helped us preserve material from our archive and special collections including digitising RCN publications and magazines such as *RCN Newslines*.





So useful and productive for my research.

Researcher using the Archive

## Collections

This year we added three original Spanish Civil War nursing recruitment posters to our collection, and a 1916 poster from the American Women's Hospital Service. These show the powerful role that nurses and medical professionals played in different war efforts. The 1916 poster was produced to publicise the work of the American Women's Hospitals Committee, through donations the committee was able to establish an all-women volunteer hospital during the First World War. This was significant as female physicians were excluded from the war effort by the American government. The Spanish Civil War posters were aimed at encouraging more women to join the nursing profession and contribute to the war effort. We had the opportunity

to add another Florence Nightingale letter to our collection, especially significant as we prepare for her bicentennial celebrations in 2020.

We received over 180 donations of personal papers collections this year, and 69 oral history interviews were added to the collection. Our RCN Fellows project, completed its first phase this year, improving the information we hold about Fellows' careers, and ensuring we hold their publications. Early in the year, Professor Dame June Clark donated her professional papers to the archive, followed by Dr Elizabeth Jenner and Jane Denton, strengthening the research potential of our collections in their specialist nursing areas.





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

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