It's been a busy few months for local Branch members with activities around the centenary celebrations including a multi faith service up in London, local Nurse's Day events around the patch and ten members heading up to Congress to actively participate in topical debates, and to hear and interact with inspirational speakers. Alongside this we have had the historic EU referendum results which will impact all London Nurses.

Branch chair and lead RCN steward at Epsom and St Helier, Mike Smith, reports that he has been involved in the national health and well-being agenda looking at issues such as bullying, healthy lifestyle whilst at work and general health promotion whilst working alongside NHS Employers. He also reports an upsurge in members grateful for RCN support when attending flexible working appeals, disciplinary hearings and members seeking professional advice about work related issues.

Mike said “With so much on the nursing agenda, it's great to know the RCN is there behind you should you need them and it's always good to have local knowledgeable representatives who have positive working relationships with local employers because it always pays dividends. We don't always get what we want but as we heard at Congress (see page 3)

If you do not GO after what you want, you'll never have it
If you do not ASK, the answer will always be no
If you do not step forward you'll always be in the same place.”

Whilst there is plenty going on locally London has seen big changes with the appointment of Sadiq Khan as the new Mayor and the RCN are already in positive communication with him. We also have two pro Nursing London Assembly members who have attended recent regional events (see pages 2 & 4). Dr Onkar Sahota and Jennette Arnold bring the nursing perspective to many of the debates that affect Londoner's health as well as the nursing workforce.

The so called ‘Brexit’ vote has also brought a lot of concern to members with 33,000 European nurses working in the NHS, many of whom are employed in London. Our regional director Bernell Bussue brings perspective and reassurance to the debate on page 4.

Do join us for our forthcoming events listed on page 7 and 8
The London Regional Assembly has called on the Government to put an immediate halt to proposals to replace NHS bursaries with student loans, saying that the plans would endanger the future supply of nurses in the capital. The motion was put forward by Health Committee Chair Dr Onkar Sahota AM and seconded by Jennette Arnold AM. It comes after hundreds of nursing students marched through London recently in protest at the plans. The RCN has warned the Government's proposal could see future nursing students graduating with £50,000 or more of debt.

RCN London Regional Director Bernell Bussue said: “The message from nurses is loud and clear: the Government’s plans would reduce the supply of nursing staff and damage patient care. “In London we already have a severe shortage of registered nursing staff. We need to be increasing the numbers coming through the system, but the extra debt proposed by the Government risks putting people off nurse training in the future. In a survey the RCN published last week, two thirds of current members said they would not have studied nursing if they’d had to take out a full student loan and pay fees. “We want the Government to put an immediate halt to these proposals and work with the RCN and others to identify a fair, effective and sustainable funding system for nursing education. The London Assembly’s support for our campaign will be welcomed by nurses and nursing students right across the capital.”

Further information about the RCN's work to defend the nursing bursary is available at www.rcn.org.uk/studentbursaries
Saw at least ten Branch members attending the biggest nursing event in the UK which this year was based in Glasgow. Four branch members spoke from the podium to the 4,000 assembled members and visitors attending, on various topical issues. The longest debate was led by Branch chair Mike Smith which was a resolution that England, Scotland and Northern Ireland governments follow Wales and lobby for safe staffing levels. Within a few hours Scottish first minister Nicola Sturgeon announced that Scotland would enshrine, in law, tools to ensure that safe staffing levels were achieved. Voting member Mike Hayward spoke on the safe staffing matter and use of agency nurses. There were other important debates on subjects as diverse as decriminalising abortion, the EU referendum and 100 years of the RCN. Former American nurses association (AMA) lead Rebecca Patton inspired delegates demonstrating how they had influenced policy makers and health strategies by actively supporting campaigns. She also gave these three simple rules in life which inspired her:

“If you do not GO after what you want, you’ll never have it
If you do not ASK, the answer will always be no
If you do not step forward you'll always be in the same place.”

The AMA pushed forward a comprehensive care policy and political agenda on behalf of their members. She said "We haven't always won, but when we have, we've won big" she told us they now has the ear of President Obama and this was instrumental in the passing of the Affordable Care Act. Her advice to us was "Stay committed to an agenda. The long view pays off".

Photos top left: Congress first time Branch voting members Netty Madzogo & Esme Chiwaza; Minions get temporary RCN union status!; Branch voters Sheila Gooljar, Tom Bolger; Dementia Alliance’s Tommy Whitelaw; Mike Smith & Sheila Gooljar, Regional Director Bernell Busue with Sue Tarr and other London members; Branch voting member Mike Hayward; Lego Nurse!; Selvon Armon, Ajay Boodhoo from Croydon Trust; Mike and Sheila with the centenary banner created by the Townswomen Guild.; More Minions; RCN London Council members, Cynthia Davies and Dr Matt Hodson.
The well attended service paid tribute to the work of nursing staff in the capital over the past hundred years. RCN London President Cecilia Anim led the procession into the church, carrying the RCN lamp. Claire Johnston, Chief Nurse at Camden and Islington NHS Foundation Trust, and Jennette Arnold, London Assembly Member, did readings. The turnout was impressive with around 150 London members in attendance. Regional Director Bernell Bussue together with other members of RCN London staff supported the event. Outer SW London Branch was also represented with Amena Warner (above right) and Mike Smith. An informal networking buffet followed the main service.

Regional Director Bernell Bussue message on the EU referendum

The result of the referendum on Britain’s future in Europe could have profound effects for everyone working in nursing and all of our patients here in London.

The referendum has brought particular instability for nursing colleagues who originally moved here from other parts of the EU and may have wider implications for other international nurse recruits. The immigration rules which will result from our new relationship with Europe remain unclear.

One thing is certain though: the RCN values all our members, whether you are originally from the UK, Europe or further afield. The NHS, particularly here in London, has heavily relied on the contribution of health care professionals from around the world. None of that will change with recent events.

The RCN will do everything we can to support European members through this time and we will continue to speak up for the magnificent contribution you make for this country’s patients.

It is not yet clear what the vote to leave the EU will mean in practice. The NHS was used in argument by both sides throughout the campaign. Many wild promises were made about how to increase the funding available for the health service, most prominently the Leave Campaign’s pledge that exiting the EU would mean an extra £350m for the NHS. It is clear now that that promise was totally unfounded.

Whatever happens we will soon have a new Prime Minister and a new Government. The health service has already had years of squeezed resources, not least a counter-productive NHS pay freeze which drove many people to choose agency work rather than permanent contracts. The priority must be for nursing staff to be properly funded to provide a 21st Century standard of care to a growing and ageing population.

The context for all NHS nursing staff will be driven by the Chief Nurse for England’s new nursing strategy, “Leading Change Adding Value”, which was launched here at the RCN in May. We all have a responsibility to make sure a commitment to diversity is reflected in the way the new strategy is delivered. Nursing staff must continue to take positive action to address inequalities, bullying, racism and discrimination wherever they occur.

The most worrying upshot of the reports of hate crime. This is completely victim of abuse, whether it is from with, then the RCN will stand with you. If the first instance contact RCN Direct on can help.

The referendum has been an increase in unacceptable. If you or a colleague are a patients, the public, or someone you work you need support or guidance please in 03457726100 where our trained advisers
First time Congress 2016 attendee and Branch member Nettie Madzogo —>
report back from her visit to Glasgow

RCN Congress 2016 was an incredible week. It was well organised, debates and presentations were well delivered. It provided an excellent opportunity for learning and enhancing career pathway.

The debates for me provided great learning opportunities and for me it challenged me to access further training in areas I felt I had very little knowledge of, for example one debate which spoke about Sickle cell disease or disorder. There were also various workshops for instance, managing your emotions which provided coping mechanisms.

It was lovely to meet the first minister of Scotland in person ← Nicola Sturgeon whilst she delivered a very powerful speech. I was also excited to see Becky Patton (pictured top left) retired leader of the ANA from the United States whom I had the privilege of getting a photo with. It was very exciting times.

Lastly it was a brilliant opportunity to network with other healthcare professionals from various sectors which provided a form of support including de-stressing. There were loads of informative exhibition stands with goodies to take away including lovely pens.
A special award ceremony at Epsom and St Helier hospitals recently saw three members of exceptional staff pick up prestigious titles – as the hospitals named their nurse, midwife and qualified healthcare assistant of the year. As part of the celebrations of International Nurses’ Day, which takes place every year to coincide with Florence Nightingale’s birthday, staff were thanked for their continuing hard work and dedication, and heard from special guest speakers. The day was organised in conjunction with the Royal College of Nursing (RCN) and gave nurses, midwives and support staff the chance to take some time out of their busy schedule to sample international food and cakes, and to reflect on the successes and challenges of the year gone by.

During the celebrations, Charlotte Hall, Chief Nurse, said: “Being a nurse is a very special job that takes a unique and particular set of skills, and I see those incredible skills in our staff every day. I am very proud to be a nurse and midwife, and it is a privilege to work with such caring, motivated staff. I am always humbled to hear how staff go above and beyond the call of duty for our patients.

"International Nurses’ Day is always one of my favourite days of the year: it is a very special day, where we can celebrate and say thank you to all our wonderful nurses, midwives and care assistants.”

Huge congratulations go to:

- Winner of Nurse of the Year 2016, RCN member Noleen Arrowsmith, Discharge Coordinator.
- Midwife of the Year 2016, Alison Hide, Antenatal Ward Manager.
- Qualified Healthcare Assistant of the Year, Stanley Devassy.

Nurse of the Year, Noleen Arrowsmith, was nominated a whopping 26 times. She said: “I am absolutely delighted to win this award. It’s almost 40 years to the day that I began my nurses training at St Helier (which was then home to the Carshalton School of Nursing), and I am still very proud to work here. I’d like to thank everyone who nominated me and supports me in my work.”

The celebrations also provided the opportunity to celebrate 100 years of the RCN with a slot from special guest speaker, Professor Dame Donna Kinnair, Director of Nursing, Policy and Practice at the RCN, who spoke about the importance of International Nurses’ Day and her experiences in nursing.

Mike Smith, an Emergency Nurse Practitioner at Epsom Hospital and the trust’s RCN representative who helped organise the event, said: “International Nurses’ Day celebrates the tremendous impact nursing has on people’s health and wellbeing. This year’s event was particularly special, as we heard how our staff go above and beyond the call of duty to ensure their patients receive the best care possible. We also had the chance to hear from a nurse who has worked in our trust for fifty years, Chris Bowyer – now that’s commitment!”
Next meeting
Monday 11th July 2016
Seminar Room, Post Graduate Medical Centre, Epsom General Hospital 7pm–9pm
Branch News and Business followed by
Guest Speaker Paediatric Nurse Specialist Chris Bowyer
Celebrating 50 years of local nursing
Chris has worked locally as a nurse for 50 years and shares some of her experiences and interesting stories from the 1960’s onwards
As part of our local RCN Centenary Celebrations we will be providing a free finger buffet and celebration cake

Hold the dates
After the successful free study days last November the Branch hope to repeat a similar event at Sutton as part of London Regions Autumn of Learning. An amazing opportunity to update yourself professionally and add to your revalidation portfolio. The date is provisionally booked for Friday 25th November 10 - 4pm

The Branch Annual General Meeting will be held at Croydon University Hospital on Wednesday 14th of September in the Post Graduate medical Centre. We plan to have our usual curry meal, a guest speaker and conduct the Branch AGM as part of the evening 7-9pm. Please put these dates in your diary.

40% OF LONDON NURSES PLAN TO LEAVE THE CAPITAL IN THE NEXT 5 YEARS
74% SAY THE NHS PAY FREEZE HAS MADE IT MORE DIFFICULT TO LIVE IN LONDON
75% OF NURSES WOULD BE MORE LIKELY TO STAY IN LONDON IF THEIR HOUSING NEEDS WERE BETTER MET

The London Region of the RCN recently surveyed members about the challenges of living and working in London. The survey results are out and politicians and the new Mayor of London Sadiq Khan needs to pay attention. See the results opposite.
Here to Help ~ Useful Names + Numbers

The Branch is run by volunteer local nurses and the current branch team are:

Chair - Mike Smith (07930 410386)
Secretary – Lynette Drakes (Day Case Unit Epsom)
Treasurer – Gerry Cotter (01372 735279)
Recruitment - Joan Chappel
Learning & Development - Sheila Gooljar

Local RCN Stewards
Mike Smith (ESH)* 07930 410386	Gerry Cotter (ESH) (01372 735279)
David Simpson (Independent Sector) Selven Armon (CUH)

Health & Safety Reps
Sheila Gooljar (Independent sector) Mike Smith (ESH)
David Simpson (Independent Sector) Learning Reps
Debbie Broom (Independent sector)

Full time officers
Paula Delaney, Judith Janes, Trish Davis & Julie Mulvey based in London Regional
Office covering Merton & Sutton, Croydon & SW London

RCN Council Members for London Regional Board Member
Cynthia Davis, Dr Matthew Hodson -> Selven Armon

*CUH - Croydon University Hospital  *ESH - Epsom and St Helier
*Community CCG’s - covering Merton & Sutton, Surrey Downs

RCN London Region, 5th Floor, 20 Cavendish Square, London
W1G 0RN Tel. 0345 458 6968
<- Director of London Region Mr Bernenl Bussue

Raising concerns, raising standards (Whistleblowing) help for RCN members: 0345 772 6300
RCN Member Support Services 0345 408 4391.
The service offers guidance on benefit entitlement, money advice, counselling and careers.

RCN Foundation - bursaries, project grants and help for times of need or hardship - go to
www.rcnfoundation.org.uk 0207 647 3645

Branch meeting dates for 2016:

Monday 11 July, Centenary celebration event, Epsom, 7-9 evening Chris Bowyer 50 years in NHS
Wednesday 14 September, AGM & meal at Croydon, evening
Friday 25 November, Autumn of Learning - Joint Branch Event, Sutton Hospital education site TBC

We welcome feedback from local members and the contribution of short articles for this quarterly newsletter. Please contact Mike Smith, Branch chair on his e-mail address

michael.smith@esth.nhs.uk