Election of new committee and Chair: an exciting year ahead for the RCN History of Nursing Society

The RCN History of Nursing Society now has a new committee and a new Chair – Dr Claire Chatterton. Our committee has a vast amount of experience and expertise in nursing history as you will see from the biographies featured on page six.

The focus for 2012 will be on showing the relevance of nursing history to today’s profession. With this in mind, we are hoping to present an event at this year’s RCN Congress entitled: The Changing Realities of Nursing: Public and Media Perspectives from a Historical Perspective.

This would seem timely in view of concerns within the profession and the public about deteriorating standards of care. We hope our event will present a balanced debate about these concerns and highlight how the profession has been shaped by historical events including media accounts.

The committee has also made plans to hold the RCN History of Nursing Society Conference on Thursday 15 November. This will be an opportunity for members to discuss and debate our future as a society. We hope all our members will be able to attend and support this event which will feature international and national nurse historians.

The importance of local history groups

The work of the society continues to go from strength to strength and local history groups such as the London and South East group, featured in this issue, shows how nursing history is researched and its findings shared. Dianne Yarwood’s feature highlights the importance of these groups.

The Monica Baly Bursary Award 2012

Of particular interest to our members is the Monica Baly Bursary award which has done so much to promote and develop nursing history and nurse historians.

It is worth noting that two of our committee members benefited from this prestigious award and we hope members will either consider applying for the bursary in 2012 and/or encourage other RCN members involved in local and national nursing history projects to apply.

The closing date for 2012 will be confirmed as soon as possible. Look out for updates at www.rcn.org.uk/scholarships or email scholarships@rcn.org.uk for more information.

I hope you will enjoy and be inspired by this issue and if you would like to submit any feature or advertise any nursing history activities in our next issue, please send me details.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Dr Stephanie Kirby

This issue includes an appreciation of the late Dr Stephanie Kirby who was greatly respected in the world of nursing and made a huge contribution throughout her life to the history of nursing. She will be greatly missed.

Dr Stephanie Kirby

This issue includes an appreciation of the late Dr Stephanie Kirby who was greatly respected in the world of nursing and made a huge contribution throughout her life to the history of nursing. She will be greatly missed.
I received a Monica Baly Bursary in 2010 to pursue research into the life of Florence Nightingale Shore. She was born in 1865, and was a relative and goddaughter of Florence Nightingale (pictured). She became a Queen’s Nurse, and later an army nurse like her godmother – with whom she corresponded and visited regularly. Florence’s life ended tragically when she was attacked on a train in January 1920, and died a few days later. Nobody was ever charged with her murder.

Research beginnings
My research began with examination of the archive of the Queen’s Nurses’ magazine and nursing notes covering the period of Florence Shore’s training, her work as a Queen’s Nurse, and her death. Searching contemporary general newspaper archives uncovered some useful information about the Shore family and the Florence Nightingale connection, which I followed up through family history records such as indexes of births, deaths and marriages.

The bursary proved very helpful in the quest to obtain certified copies of some very significant files of information from the National Archives, including Florence’s entire military nursing record, and the file on her parents’ divorce.

One of the unexpected pleasures of my research, however, was the discovery of a network of archivists, local historians and library assistants who were very willing to search out local information and copy and send it to me, for no payment at all.

Grateful thanks
I am very grateful to all of them, but particularly Laura Gould at the Lothian Health Services archive who patiently repeated a search for me when I needed additional confirmation. Also thanks goes to Ben Collins at East Sussex Library and Information Service who copied reams of newspaper coverage for me, and revisited the files to uncover “the Eastbourne burglar” who features in the investigation into Florence’s death.

In addition to learning about family history and biographical research, this project introduced me to the concept of “prosopography”. This I understand to be the study of a group of people who share an experience or characteristic, in order to deduce something about the experience of one individual for whom there is no separate record. This was a key feature of my research into Florence’s life, since almost nothing of her own writing or records survived the bombing of the Nightingale Shore memorial home in 1941.

However, the Queen’s Nurses led very homogenous lives, with shared standards of dress, education, conduct, work, living arrangements and service delivery. By studying the bigger picture of Queen’s Nurses at work between 1898 and 1919, I have been able to draw a fairly confident picture of Florence’s own life and work, where direct evidence is missing.

Who committed murder?
The results of my research have now been published in a book, The Nightingale Shore Murder. This brings together the story of Florence’s life and times, including the development of district nursing and Queen’s Nurses, and nurses’ contribution to the South African War and the First World War. It also explores the investigation into her death, and the theories, both contemporary and modern, about who might have killed her.

The Monica Baly Bursary has enabled Florence’s story to be written for the first time, capturing her life and achievements, and bringing her a little out of the shadow of her famous godmother, whose name she was very proud to share.

It has been a very valuable learning experience for me, and I would encourage others to apply for a bursary to pursue their own research interests.

Rosemary Cook CBE, Hon D Lett, PG Dip, RGN

The Nightingale Shore Murder can be purchased from the Queen’s Nursing Institute (QNI) at www.qni.org.uk/shop or can be ordered by telephoning 020 7549 1400.
Dr Stephanie Kirby, who died in August, was one of the leading nurse historians of her generation. Her nursing career began when she joined the two-year experimental SRN course for graduates at St George’s Hospital, London, in 1976. A staff nurse post on the cardiac ward at Hyde Park Corner was followed by successful completion of the cardiac nursing course at the National Heart Hospital. After being a ward sister on a cardiac ward at the Royal Free, taking the nurse tutors course and transferring to the school of nursing, she later lectured at London South Bank and Essex universities. Her final post was as a post-doctoral research fellow at the University of the West of England, Bristol.

**Passionate commitment**
Having studied history at undergraduate and postgraduate levels at UCL and Birkbeck, Stephanie fused her interest in the past with a passionate commitment to high quality nursing practice at the bedside. She believed that history had to speak to the needs and interests of current practitioners through the rediscovery of their heritage. Although born and raised in Norfolk, she was fascinated by the history of health care in London. This was reflected in the choice of topic for her PhD thesis entitled *The London County Council Nursing Service, 1929–1948* (University of Nottingham). She remained devoted to St George’s Hospital and took an active part in the oral history project *Nurses’ Voices*. Later work focused on TB nursing, and her last major paper entitled *Sputum and the Scent of Wallflowers: Nursing in Tuberculosis Sanatoria, 1920–1970*, appeared in the prestigious journal, *Social History of Medicine*, in 2010. Alongside the demands of family life, a busy job and her own studies, Stephanie devoted much energy to committee activities to promote nursing history. She was a tireless organiser of study days, seminars and conferences.

**Cinderella services**
Particularly memorable were the “Cinderella services” events which she organised to bring together historians with interests in less fashionable areas of practice – such as mental health, learning disability, and gerontological nursing. She was also active in the UK Centre for the History of Nursing and Midwifery (University of Manchester), and a Trustee of the Royal British Nurses’ Association. A long-time committee member of the RCN History of Nursing Society, she used her training as a City of London and City of Westminster guide to give the London and South East group a memorable “armchair walk” through the City of London entitled, *Poverty, Plague and Pox*.

Dr Stephanie Kirby: born 24 May 1953, died 12 August 2011. She leaves a husband, Robert, and two daughters, Eleanor and Isabelle.
Call for contributions

*The Bulletin of the British Association for the History of Nursing* is a new biannual electronic journal. It aims to become the meeting point for everyone who is interested in any aspect of the history of nursing in all its branches. Contributions are warmly invited.

For further information please contact the editor, John Adams, at the editorial office. Email the editorial office: cassandra.kenny@manchester.ac.uk

---

**Name your space**

**Room naming nomination form**

All fields must be completed for the nomination to be accepted

**Your name:**

**Your RCN membership number:**

**The name of your nominee:**

Please explain why you think your nominee should have a room named after them at the RCN’s headquarters in London (250 words max – continue on a separate sheet if necessary)

Please return your form to: Maxine Nunn, Royal College of Nursing, 20 Cavendish Square, London W1G 0RN

---

**Important dates for your diary**

- **9–11 August 2012**
  *Nursing History in a Global Perspective: International Conference in Denmark.* Further details can be obtained from the conference website at www.dsr.dk/dshs

- **15 November 2012**
  *RCN History of Nursing Society Conference.* Taking place at the Fielder Conference Centre, Hatfield, Hertfordshire AL10 9TP. Details will be available at www.rcn.org.uk/historyofnursing as soon as the programme is finalised.
Update on the London and South East Group

The London and South East Group (L&SE group) enjoyed another interesting and engaging year. It began with a presentation by Dr Susan Hawkins of Kingston University on a project to transcribe the medical records of sick children for the period from 1852 to 1914. Details of the project can be found at www.hharp.org

In the summer, to mark the 10th anniversary of the establishment of the group we had an escorted visit to the Nightingale Chapel at Westminster Abbey, followed by a guided tour of the Nightingale Museum.

September saw an update on the St George’s Nurses’ Voices project, which has now come to an end. Edited extracts from the interviews are published as an illustrated book with a companion CD entitled Nurses’ Voices, Memories of Nursing at St. George’s Hospital London, written by Carol McCubbin and published by Kingston University, ISBN 978-0-9558329-6-3.

Towards the end of the year, on World Aids Day, we heard from Professor Robert Pratt about the changes in the care of those affected by HIV and Aids.

With the pending refurbishment of RCN headquarters the group will be meeting at London region offices in Gray’s Inn Road in 2012.

The meetings will continue to run from 4pm to 6pm on the following dates:

- **Thursday 22 March**
  Alison Wall speaking on plague cottages.
- **Wednesday 4 July**
  Rosemary Cook on Florence Nightingale Shore.
- **Thursday 6 September**
  The Charing Cross Hospital oral history project.
- **Tuesday 13 December**
  Group sharing activity.

For more information about the group, or if you wish to join, please email d.yarwood@ntlworld.com

Dianne Yarwood

Who is your nursing icon?

**RCN members are being offered the opportunity to nominate figures from nursing history who they think should be acknowledged at the organisation’s UK headquarters in London**

Would you like to formally recognise someone who has made a significant contribution to nursing and/or patient care? Have you been inspired by an individual from the past whose story you would like to celebrate with other members of the RCN?

As part of the HQ Replan project, new meeting rooms at 20 Cavendish Square in London will be named after nurses who have had a significant impact on nursing and could inspire others across the UK.

To nominate your nursing icon, let us know why a room should be named after your nominee by completing the form overleaf and posting it to the RCN no later than Friday 29 June.

You can also fill in the form online and read more information at www.rcn.org.uk/yourspace

View some suggestions at www.rcn.org.uk/bulletinextra

**Nomination criteria**

Your nomination should be no more than 250 words and must meet the criteria outlined below. The judging panel is looking for individuals who have made a significant contribution to the development of the profession in the UK or to the RCN. These individuals could either be well known or may not have been widely recognised in the past.

When writing your nomination, please try to include:

- why you think this individual should have a room named after them
- how this individual has inspired you
- what impact this individual had on nursing during their time, or continues to have today
- how this individual could inspire others who haven’t heard their story before.

Your nominee must:

- have been connected to the UK
- have been a nurse
- no longer be alive.

A panel of members from the History of Nursing Society and the Research and Development Governance Group will then release a shortlist which will be put to a vote of RCN members. The nursing icons with the highest number of votes will be used to name the rooms once building works at RCN HQ have been completed.
Meet the committee ...

RCN History of Nursing Society committee members elected 2011

John Adams lectures in nursing at Anglia Ruskin University in Cambridgeshire and has a particular interest in the history of “Cinderella services”, such as poor law and early orthopaedic nursing. After completing a study of Fulbourn Hospital, Cambridge, using oral history and documentary sources available at oro.open.ac.uk/22137 he is now working on a history of the recent developments in mental health care across the UK.

Claire Chatterton trained as a general nurse at the London Hospital and then later trained as a mental health nurse at Littlemore and the Warneford Hospitals, Oxford. Claire was awarded a PhD for her research in the history of mental health nursing from the University of Salford in 2007 and is now an Open University staff tutor in the Faculty of Health and Social Care, based in the Manchester regional office. Claire was also elected Chair of the RCN History of Nursing Society in 2011.

Rosemary Cook qualified as a nurse in 1980 and was a practice nurse and primary care manager in two health authorities before being appointed as Nursing Officer for Primary Care at the Department of Health. Rosemary led the working time directive programme at the Modernisation Agency and has been Director of the Queen’s Nursing Institute since January 2005. Rosemary became a CBE for services to nursing and health care in 2008, she also holds an Honorary Doctorate from Manchester Metropolitan University, and was Visiting Professor of Enterprise at Northumbria University from 2008–11.

Ruth Davies has a professional background in children’s nursing and health visiting. She entered higher education in 1992 where she taught across a range of educational programmes in nursing and medicine at Cardiff University. In 2004 she became Senior Lecturer in Child Health at Swansea University. Ruth has been a member of the History of Nursing Society since 2007 and organised the fourth annual RCN History of Nursing Society Conference at Swansea University entitled Nursing Public Health and Welfare. Ruth was Acting Chair 2010–11 and will continue as Editor of the society’s newsletter. Her interests are in the history of children’s nursing and palliative care.

Christine Hallett is Professor of Nursing History and Director of the UK Centre for the History of Nursing and Midwifery at the University of Manchester. Christine trained as a nurse and health visitor in the early 1980s and moved into higher education in 1989. Her research interests include the history of nursing education and the history of occupational health. Her recent book, Containing Trauma: Nursing Work in the First World War, has won strong reviews in scholarly journals while her Celebrating Nurses: A Visual History has been circulated in Europe, the USA and Australasia. Christine holds fellowships with both the Royal Society for the Arts and the Royal Society of Medicine.

Alison O’Donnell is a Lecturer at the School of Nursing and Midwifery, University of Dundee, and was awarded a PhD from Queen Margaret University College, Edinburgh. Her thesis considered the role that some nurses adopted during the euthanasia programmes in National Socialist Germany. In 1999 she was awarded a Monica Baly Bursary which enabled her to extend her scholarship of the Holocaust and nursing by consulting archival sources in the USA. In 2002 she was awarded a Carnegie Trust Travel Award which enabled her to visit the Hilde Steppe Archive in Frankfurt, the Hadamar Asylum, and the Ravensbrück Concentration Camp and Museum in Berlin, in 2004. Alison continues to research this aspect of nursing history.

Dianne Yarwood is a retired nurse educationalist and began her career as a theatre nurse before moving into clinical teaching and then tutoring. In the course of her nursing career she qualified as a biologist and psychologist before practising as a manager while remaining an enthusiastic, albeit amateur, historian. Dianne has been an RCN member since she was a student during the 1960s and has been a member of the History of Nursing Society since its inception. She is currently secretary of the London and South East history of nursing group and is actively involved in an oral history project for the Charing Cross Hospital Nurses’ League.