

News Release

District nursing celebrations 'have taken on a life of their own' says Queen's Nursing Institute



The Queen's
Nursing Institute

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Halfway through the 150th anniversary year marking the foundation of district nursing, the Queen's Nursing Institute (QNI) has been surprised and delighted by the number of local organisations across the country which have seized the opportunity to celebrate their community services in innovative ways.

'We hadn't realised how enthusiastically other organisations would take up the celebrations', comments QNI Director Rosemary Cook CBE. 'It really has taken on a life of its own. There are trusts and universities all over the country holding balls, parties, conferences and exhibitions to celebrate community nursing. It's wonderful to have such a groundswell of support for this essential part of the nursing workforce.'

The Institute has a programme of its own events to highlight the anniversary, which marks 150 years since Liverpool merchant and philanthropist William Rathbone first employed a nurse to care for his dying wife at home. These include a reception at Rathbone Brothers offices in London, a conference held on Nurse's Day (12 May), special meetings with retired Queen's and District Nurses, and the publication of '2020 Vision', a report that draws lessons from the past to inform the future of district nursing. The Institute launched a special commemorative website in January (www.districtnursing150.org.uk), which is drawing a thousand visitors a month from all over the world, and has been selling a DVD of six archive films of district nursing, as well as notecards featuring archive photography, to raise funds to continue its work.

The QNI website lists 25 separate events all over the UK, including Gloucester, Cardiff, Belfast, Portsmouth, Worthing, Heywood and Wolverhampton. 'I was thrilled to be asked to speak at Wolverhampton PCT's event' Ms Cook says. 'Lots of their nurses spoke and illustrated the changes in district nursing over the years. They had a fantastic exhibition of memorabilia, and of the new and innovative things their community nurses are doing today. It was a privilege to share the day with them.'

Community nurses and others are also running to raise funds for the charity on 12 July in the London 10k run. Supporters can find out more on the QNI website or can sponsor the runners at www.justgiving.com/qni

QNI Marketing and Communications Manager Matthew Bradby added: 'This year has been a great opportunity to retrieve and preserve some items of great historical significance that have been hidden in the archives for many years. We are really pleased that more people will get to see them now. We have been adding information to the website including more archive photographs that have come to light.'

Following a special celebratory event at Liverpool John Moores University in April, the QNI will be holding a major end-of-year event in the Port of Liverpool building in the city where district nursing began - on 3 December to draw the celebrations to a close.

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