

150 Years of District Nursing to be showcased in new website



The Queen's
Nursing Institute

21 December 2008

In 2009 it will be 150 years since the first district nurse, Mary Robinson, was employed to nurse the sick poor in their own homes in Liverpool. The Queen's Nursing Institute begins its celebrations with the launch of a completely new dedicated website.

The site, www.districtnursing150.org.uk, went live on 21 December.

Archive films, photographs of district nurses at work from the early years of the NHS, and excerpts from the Queen's Nurses' Magazine going back to 1904 have been chosen from the extensive QNI archive that goes back to the foundation of the charity by William Rathbone and others. As well as a wealth of historical information there are also personal accounts from district nurses that have not been previously published. Questions and answers from Queen's Nurse examination papers also show the range of knowledge that previous generations of district nurses were expected to know, reflecting medical and nursing practice at the time.

Rosemary Cook, Director of the QNI said, 'Some of the material on the new site hasn't been seen for over a hundred years. There are quite graphic and moving accounts of district nurses volunteering for service in both world wars abroad and on the Home Front, amazing for the bravery that they show. There are also lighter aspects, such as invalid recipes from the period when rationing was still in force that are heavily reliant on country ingredients. District nurses often had to be amazingly resourceful and improvise when conditions were not ideal.'

The site will be updated throughout 2009 as research in the archives progresses. A programme of activities to commemorate the anniversary is planned over the course of the year.

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NOTES TO EDITORS

1. The Queen's Nursing Institute is a registered charity, No.213128. We support community nurses in any specialty with project funding, professional development, information networks, financial and personal assistance, and work to influence national policy affecting nurses in primary care.