

Message from Clare Cable, Chief Executive and Nurse Director



Clare Cable

When we stepped into 2020, the Year of the Nurse and Midwife, as declared by the WHO, we hoped to raise the profile of nursing. We did not expect that it would be a global pandemic that put our profession in the limelight. As you would expect, community nurses across Scotland have stepped up to the challenge, many deployed to COVID assessment centres, others to support care homes, everyone working across health and social care in new ways to support our most vulnerable families. It has been exhausting and many are now feeling the effect of running on adrenaline since March.

At QNIS we have been working incredibly hard to support. The QNIS team is working from home, we have had to cancel most of our events and furlough some staff but we have moved everything we can online. Our new digital ways of working have provided much needed support for nurses, midwives and health visitors across Scotland. I have been hosting Zoom evening support sessions two evenings per week for the new Queen's Nurses, to offer them a safe space to debrief and connect with one another.

We have developed two new sections of our website, one ensuring that staff have the latest guidance on COVID, the other focussed on self-care. We have published twice weekly blogs from leaders and frontline staff, sharing their perspectives through the pandemic. If you have access to the internet, do have a look at our website as there are some very powerful accounts of the challenges people have been facing.

We have filmed a series of videos of wellbeing practices to help practitioners look after themselves, making sure to 'put your own oxygen mask on first'. Nurses and midwives recorded poems to inspire and encourage one another and with the Scottish Poetry Library we published one a day on YouTube every day through most of April and May. Retired Queen's Nurse Christina Thomson recorded a reading of her own poem 'Lament for Nurses' in response to the COVID crisis which we have included in this newsletter.



Christina Thomson pictured with podcast presenter Kim McAllister

It has been very strange working from home and many of us are experiencing an odd sense of isolation, separated from friends, family and colleagues. We inhabit a new digital world, jumping from one videoconferencing platform to another, but it's not the same as being in the same room as others. We have been thinking of you all and hope that the lockdown has not been too hard. We have been much more conscious of the seasonal changes, welcoming the Spring and now the Summer, noticing the small changes day by day in new ways. Do please get in touch and tell us your stories of the last weeks.

We would love to hear from you.

Clare

You Cannot Pour from an Empty Cup

COPE Scotland Chief Executive and QNIS Honorary Fellow

Hilda Campbell reminds us how important self-care is, especially for Scotland's community nurses who are more likely to put others first. She encourages us to *“read or listen to an audio book for at least 6 minutes each day”* or to *“try mindful colouring in”* and other enjoyable distractions. However you relax, *“you can count on the power of taking care of yourself”* Hilda reminds us.



Hilda Campbell

The Voice of Nursing

2020 Queen's Nurse candidate Annie-Theresa MacDonald, based in South Uist, chose to speak up on BBC Scotland's Debate Night. She applied to join the virtual audience and was a great ambassador for District Nursing. The program, first aired Wednesday 10th June, is available on catch-up TV on the BBC iPlayer.



Annie-Theresa MacDonald

Unearthed from Retirement to Help Volunteers

Dr Linda Pollock, QNIS vice-chair and former Community Nurse in NHS Lothian's Primary Care Trust returned early from her alpine ski holiday at the start of the year as France went into lockdown. Immediately she wanted to come back from retirement to assist the NHS and said: *“To be honest, the NHS is in my DNA, I would have done anything to help.”* Within weeks Dr Pollock found herself in PPE on the wards, organising volunteers and issuing continually evolving guidance on COVID-19. Unphased by the unrecognisable Royal Infirmary, Edinburgh which was adjusted for the needs of the pandemic she said: *“I am indebted to NHS Lothian who have welcomed me back to help, and to the volunteers who have made my role during COVID so enjoyable. I am so lucky!”*



Linda Pollock as volunteer co-ordinator

For the latest QNIS events and information please visit our website: www.qnis.org.uk

Louisa Jordan and the Scottish Women's Hospital

In anticipation of the growing number of coronavirus patients the Scottish Government set up a temporary field hospital in Glasgow named after Queen's Nurse (QN) Louisa Jordan.

First trained at Crumpsall Infirmary, Manchester, Sister Louisa Jordan then returned to her birthplace of Glasgow to work at Shotts Fever Hospital. Following training, she moved to live and work as a QN in Buckhaven, Fife. Like many other QN's, she served her community as a nurse at home and abroad with compassion and care. During the First World War she was posted to Serbia working with Scottish Women's Hospitals for Foreign Service (SWHs). These SWHs and casualty clearing stations were remarkable units as they were funded, managed and staffed entirely by women. One of QNIS principles is, *“the pioneering of new services and co-operation with other agencies”*, the NHS Louisa Jordan Hospital is a fitting tribute to this former QN, the legacy of other QNs and the wider contemporary caring community.

Growing Together

Some heartening news from Scotland's Gardens Scheme who have been able to reopen some of their gardens from 15th July 2020. The annual Queen's Nurse programme benefits greatly from Scotland's Gardens Scheme funding which allows QNIS to nurture and promote the next generation of community nurse leaders. For anyone not yet comfortable visiting the garden openings Scotland's Gardens Scheme have wonderful **Virtual Garden Visits** available at: www.scotlandsgardens.org

One such virtual tour is of Kevock Garden in Lasswade, a beautiful hillside space.

Scotland's GARDENS Scheme



Kevock Garden—Photo by owners Stella and David Rankin

The QNIS Team

The QNIS Team have continued to work, albeit from home, and have been supporting community nurses with resources to both inform them and support their wellbeing.

There are some new faces in the office.

Catriona is our new permanent Administrator and she leads on the co-ordination of the flagship Queen's Nurse programme.



Catriona McClelland

Tasha is looking after the Communications function while Rob is on shared parental leave to look after his little girls while his wife returns to work and Karrie is on maternity leave.



Tasha Prigmore

Keeping in touch

Do you have a friend who is a Queen's Nurse who doesn't get mailings from us? This might be because they have moved house and we don't have their current address or our records are incomplete. Please ask them to get in touch with us on 0131 229 2333 so we can add them to the database.

Musical Interlude

Many thanks to Annette Patience, who on the 25th June 2020 asked Classic FM to play a rendition of 'Danny Boy' dedicated to the Retired Queen's Nurses.

Celebration Wall

Any Queen's Nurse can have their name inscribed. We ask that you make a donation to cover the cost of the signwriting and a contribution to the work of QNIS. Please contact the office on 0131 229 2333 where you are interested in having a name added to the Celebration Wall.



Lament For Nurses

a poem by Christina Thomson

Prepare ye to serve is what they said

Prepare ye to care and that's what we did

But no one told us

Prepare ye to let them die.

We wash we mend

We listen we tend

But no one prepared us

To let your loved ones die!

We nurse the young

We nurse the old

And every age in between

And do as we are told.

Our backs are aching

Our hearts are breaking

To hold a hand

To wipe a tear

Wishing we could hold you near.

We try our best and love our task

But please don't allow this

Is what we ask?

Prepare ye to serve you said

But no one said this ugly word

Coronavirus!

We long to hug and cherish you

To wipe your sweating brow

But here's the rub

We can't and don't

That's what's hurting now!

Please forgive us for our lack of care

But it is so hard to stand back and stare

We smile at you with love in our eyes

Over masks that keep us dehumanised

Please forgive us- it's not our way

But this is what we want to say

We love you and will forever

Remember each and every one of you!



Sheila Gentle and student nurse Sophie Cormack

Sad News

Most of you will remember Miss Sheila Gentle who ran Colinton Cottage and was the visitor in charge at the Crieff Holidays when they first began. Gentle by name and by nature, Sheila was respected and loved by all who knew her. Sheila sadly died on 6th February. Her full obituary will appear in the Annual Review.

QNIS Visitors

The Trustees and staff would like to thank our visitors for all they have done during the pandemic to continue to keep retired Queen's Nurses connected to the Institute and each other. We have been pleased to hear about your cheery phone chats.

There are visitors across Scotland who are happy to keep in touch with you by phone from time to time. If you would like more information on this or about becoming a visitor please contact us. Although staff are working from home the normal office number—0131 229 2333 is still in use and will put you in touch with a member of the team.



Former visitor Annie Stephen and some current visitors

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