

Oxford DNB: February 2020

Welcome to the sixtieth update of the *Oxford DNB*, which adds biographies of twenty individuals who played a notable part in the development of the nursing profession in the twentieth century. The update, which is accompanied by five portrait likenesses, has been curated by Teresa Doherty of the Royal College of Nursing.

From February 2020, the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (*Oxford DNB*) offers biographies of 63,713 men and women who have shaped the British past, contained in 61,433 articles. 11,793 biographies include a portrait image of the subject – researched in partnership with the National Portrait Gallery, London.

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Introduction to the update by Teresa Doherty

This timely launch coincides with *2020: the International Year of the Nurse and Midwife*, which celebrates professionals who play a vital role in providing our health services. In the one hundred years since nursing became a registered profession in the UK, nurses have been responsible for many clinical milestones and are proud to have been at the forefront of the profession as it has developed.

Yet two hundred years after Florence Nightingale's birth, both researchers and the public recognize only a small number of nurses in history. Recent research has been prompted by a wave of anniversaries including the centenary of the Royal College of Nursing (RCN), founded in 1916, and of nurse registration (1919), two world wars, and seventy years of the NHS (1948). These have highlighted the numbers of outstanding individuals who should be better known and the resulting individual biographies in this update illustrate how inspiring these professionals are. The variety of lived experience is remarkable, ranging from nursing in wartime, to mental health, and workhouses; while their roles include publishing, as well as nursing professors, chief nursing officers, and local community district nursing. Around 90 per cent of nurses are women and this is reflected

in the number of biographies of notable women that have been added as part of this project.

The collection released this month focuses on twentieth-century nurses, including many who were active in the Royal College of Nursing. It shares biographies of RCN presidents, fellows, and founding members, reflecting the importance royal colleges have in providing peer networks for support and advice, and also as professional groups leading change.

Many of these biographies have been written by nurses as well as historians, led by the RCN History of Nursing Forum in collaboration with the UK Association for the History of Nursing. The authors hold a deep understanding of the impact these nurses made on their profession and on improving patient care. Many of the contributions are not simply rooted in history but impact on care that is delivered today. This collection of biographies reminds us of the importance of inspiring future generations to enter and support the nursing profession, and to understand the full breadth and depth of the contribution which its members make to our wider society.

Teresa Doherty

February 2020: summary of newly-added lives

Six of the newly-added lives record members of the founding generation of the College of Nursing. The earliest, born in the mid nineteenth-century, is **Anne Campbell Gibson (1849-1926)** who was born in Edinburgh, the daughter of a schoolmaster. She entered St Thomas's Hospital, London in 1881 to train as a nurse, and entered the field of workhouse infirmary nursing. In 1888 she was appointed matron of the prestigious new workhouse infirmary in Birmingham, where she introduced nurse training. She argued that poor law nursing should be controlled by central government which would supervise training and staffing. She came to support standardization of training, advocating registration, and in 1916 was a member of the first council of the College of Nursing. After the Nurses' Registration Act of 1919, she registered with the General Nursing Council – some forty years after she had completed her training. Another founder member of the College of Nursing was **Rachael Annie Cox-Davies (1862-1944)**, who was born near Crickhowell in the Brecon Beacons, the daughter of a solicitor. She trained as a nurse at St Bartholomew's Hospital and after going to South Africa to nurse casualties in the Boer War, was from 1905 to 1922 matron of the Royal Free Hospital, London. During the First World War she was matron of the First London General Hospital, a temporary military hospital. In 1916 she was a founder member of the College of Nursing, and was one of

three members of the college elected to sit on the General Nursing Council, which administered nurse registration after 1919. The Scotland representative on the first council of the College of Nursing was **Annie Warren Gill (1862-1930)**, lady superintendent of nurses at the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh from 1907 to 1925, who took a leading part in setting up the college's Scottish board and was president of the college from 1927 to 1928. Born at Malew on the Isle of Man, the daughter of a clergyman, she had started nurse training at the Royal Infirmary, Edinburgh in 1893 and after qualification served in South Africa during the Boer War. As Edinburgh matron she took a particular interest in training probationers, and was prominent in Scottish nursing organizations.

Among the other College of Nursing founders was a nurse of Irish descent, **Louisa Victoria Haughton (1867 - 1954)**, born in Harrow, Middlesex into a professional family, who began her nurse training in 1896 as a probationer at Guy's Hospital. After seven years as a matron in Dublin, she returned to Guy's in 1909 as successor to the disciplinarian Sarah Swift. She was a campaigner for nursing education and the regulation of standards in the profession. Also involved in establishing the College of Nursing, in 1916, was **Margaret Elwin Sparshott (1870-1940)**, who became president of the College in 1930. She was born in the Seychelles, the daughter of a missionary. Brought up in

England, she qualified as a nurse at Nottingham General Hospital, going on to hold posts at Birmingham, Grimsby, and Derby before in 1907 being appointed matron at the Manchester Royal Infirmary, where she remained until retirement. She had a lifetime commitment to increase salaries and holiday entitlement, and improved the nurses' living accommodation. In 1916 **Annie Sophia Jane McIntosh (1871-1951)** was co-opted onto the council of the newly-formed College of Nursing. Born in Bromyard, Herefordshire, the daughter of a draper, she became a governess before in 1897 commencing nurse training at the London Hospital, where she went on to work in the matron's office. In 1910 she became matron of St Bartholomew's Hospital, a controversial appointment as she had not herself undergone the three-year training which that hospital required of its nurses. In 1916 she campaigned for legal registration of nurses, and established a preliminary training school at St Bartholomew's. Her appointment in 1925 as president of St Bartholomew's League of Nurses was indicative of how popular and effective she had proved as matron.

Among the other early lives are a military nurse and an organizer of district nursing, both of whom were born in Scotland. **Katharine Edith McCall Anderson (1866-1924)**, born in Glasgow the daughter of a university professor of medicine, trained as a nurse at Dundee. She was awarded the

Royal Red Cross for her service in South Africa during the Boer War. After a spell as matron of St George's Hospital, London, she returned to military nursing during the First World War as matron of the Lady Hardinge Hospital for sick and wounded Indian soldiers at Brockenhurst, managed by the St John Ambulance Association, and later, under the auspices of the Queen Alexandra's Imperial Nursing (Reserve) as matron of the Bagthorpe Military Hospital, Nottingham. Born in Bower, Caithness, the daughter of a blacksmith, **Christina Alexandrina Tait McKay (1870 - 1949)** kept house for her parents until, aged twenty-nine, she decided to take up nursing, and went on to train at Guy's Hospital. Rather than pursue hospital nursing, she preferred to nurse the sick poor in their own homes, and underwent training at the Queen Victoria Jubilee Institute for Nurses, becoming in 1911 superintendent for the Cornwall nursing association, responsible for 70 nurses. On the outbreak of the First World War she became matron of the 4th Southern General Military Hospital, Plymouth. From 1924 to 1948 she was secretary of the Northumberland County Nursing Association, responsible for providing home nursing for the county.

A leading figure in the area of poor law nursing, **Charlotte Seymour Yapp (1879-1934)** represented its interests on the General Nursing Council (GNC), of which she was a member from 1920, to counter the dominance of the London

voluntary hospital matrons. Born in Ardwick, Manchester, the daughter of a railway guard, she trained as a nurse at the Aston Union Poor Law Infirmary and held nursing posts at poor law infirmaries in Yorkshire and north-east. From 1914 to 1925 she was matron of the purpose-built hospital attached to the Ashton-under-Lyne workhouse, and was tireless in promoting poor law nursing and raising its standards. The first syllabus for nurse training, produced by the GNC in 1925, was influenced her training scheme at Ashton. A product of the pre-1914 training regime at Guy's Hospital, **Emily Elvira Primrose MacManus (1886-1978)**, born in Battersea, London, the daughter of a general medical practitioner of Irish descent, joined the Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service Reserve in 1917, serving in hospitals in France. In 1927 she became matron of Guy's Hospital, and wrote an influential textbook, *Hospital Administration for Women*. From 1942-4 she was president of the RCN. In retirement she wrote an autobiography, and also stories for children, and was a castaway on *Desert Island Discs*.

Lucy Gwendoline Duff Grant (1894-1984), born in London the daughter of a business executive, began her nurse training at St Thomas's hospital in 1916 - the year in which the College of Nursing was founded - and after a succession of posts became matron of Manchester Royal Infirmary in 1929. Among her particular concerns was the reduction of nurses' hours of work. From 1950 to 1952 she

was president of the Royal (as it had become in 1939) College of Nursing.

The post-1945 work of the RCN is represented in several of the lives. Born in Kincardine, Fife, and brought up in Dundee, **Margaret Currie Neilson Lamb (1906-1991)**, the daughter of a worker in a paper mill, wanted to become an English teacher but, attracted by the 'sister tutor' role, was drawn to nursing and trained at the Dundee Royal Infirmary. After holding staff nurse posts, she was appointed in 1946 by the RCN as education officer, organizing courses for nurse tutors in Scotland. She sat on several government committees relating to nurse education and was involved in planning the undergraduate nursing degree programme at the University of Edinburgh. Her work in developing nurse education programmes made a substantial impact on the status of nursing as a profession. **Mona Elizabeth Clara Grey (1910- 2009)**, the daughter of missionaries, was brought up in India where she trained to be a teacher and taught for two years before moving to London where she decided to change profession and train as a nurse at the London Hospital, qualifying in 1937. After qualifying in hospital training school administration, she was appointed in 1946 the first salaried secretary of the Northern Ireland committee of the Royal College of Nursing, and masterminded the fundraising for an appeal to establish a permanent headquarters and teaching centre in Belfast.

From 1960 to 1975 she was chief nursing officer for Northern Ireland. The experience as a patrol leader in the girl guides drew **Barbara Noel Fawkes (1914-2002)**, who was born in Tonbridge, Kent, the daughter of a farmer, towards nursing, and she trained at the Middlesex Hospital where in 1946 she became the principal of the school of nursing. In 1959 she became chief education officer at the General Nursing Council, working closely with the University of Manchester which introduced the first nursing degree programme for nurses in 1967, and was RCN representative on the International Council of Nurses (ICN) Western European group of nurses which undertook the work leading to the 1967 Agreement on Basic Nurse Training and preparing for free movement within the European Community. She became a fellow of the RCN in 1976.

The daughter of a medical officer working in South America, **Juanita Bennett Rule (1914-2008)**, hoped to follow her father into medicine, but was thwarted by the lack of science teaching at her school so she began nurse training at Bristol General Hospital, where she became a ward sister. After taking RCN sister tutor and nursing administration courses, she joined the education division of the RCN as a tutor, also taking an Edinburgh University degree in moral philosophy. As director from 1971 of the RCN's Institute of Advanced Nurse Education, she was outspoken about financial constraints on nurse education, which she regarded as the

reason for government resistance to nursing degrees. Her nursing lecture 'A crisis of identity', at the RCN's AGM in 1974 discussed the extended role of the nurse. Her contemporary, **(Hilda) Marjorie Simpson (1914-1992)**, born in Bournemouth the daughter of a probate registrar, undertook nurse training at St Thomas's Hospital and registered in 1937. She went on to run external industrial nursing courses for the RCN, where she became research officer in 1960, encouraging research into nursing, and led an inquiry into nurse education for the International Council of Nurses. From 1963 she was a research officer at the Ministry of Health, creating a framework for nursing research. A council member and fellow of the RCN, **Peggy Dina Nuttall (1917-2008)**, born in Ilford, Essex, the daughter of a master bootmaker, began her working life as a librarian, but short-sightedness caused her to train instead at the London Hospital school of physiotherapy, qualifying as a teacher of physiotherapy. She sought a career change to nursing and completed the course at St Thomas's in 1955 where she returned as a staff nurse. In 1960 she became editor of the *Nursing Times*, which under her leadership became a truly professional journal. She encouraged nurses to write clinical articles, and encouraged them to formulate and share their own views.

The final three lives record new trends. **John Greene (1916-2001)** - the only male nurse in the update - was born in

County Clare, Ireland, the son of a farmer. He moved to England in 1935 and became a nurse in a private mental hospital, qualifying in 1939. A wartime posting on a hospital ship in the Far East, caring for ex-prisoners of war, brought to light his qualities and in 1953 he became chief male nurse at the Moorhaven Hospital, Devon. In 1964 he became chief nurse for Cornwall and in 1977 became the first mental health nurse to be elected to a fellowship of the Royal College of Nursing. He served on numerous committees on nursing staff structure and standards of care, and was regarded as both inspirational and a role model for leadership. Born in Austria, the daughter of a government architect, **Lisbeth Hockey (1918-2004)** initially trained to be a general practitioner, but her Jewish ancestry caused her to flee Austria after the Anschluss and she came to England under the care of Quakers. She trained as a nurse at the London Hospital, and completed her training at Watford, registering in 1945. After working as a midwife, health visitor, and district nurse in Essex, she took the tutors' course at the RCN, and undertook a national survey of district nurse training for the Queen's Nursing Institute, enrolling at the London School of Economics to take a degree in economics. In 1971 she was appointed to head a nursing research unit at Edinburgh University, and became the first director of nursing research in the UK. Another refugee from Nazism, **Annie Therese Altschul (1919-2001)**, was born into a Jewish family in Vienna and settled in Britain where

she trained as a nurse. She became committed to the care of the mentally ill, and undertook pioneering psychiatric nursing research. She taught at Edinburgh from 1964 to 1984 and became a key figure in the development of nursing both nationally and internationally.