ROYAL BRITISH NURSES' ASSOCIATION
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Catalogue Reference:
GB0100 GB 0099 KCLCA RBNA

URL:
http://www.kingscollections.org/catalogues/kclca/collection/r/10ro65-1

Title:
ROYAL BRITISH NURSES' ASSOCIATION

Date(s):
1887-1996

Level of description:
Collection (fonds)

Extent and medium of the unit of description (quantity, bulk, or size):
30 linear metres

Context

Name of creator(s):
Royal British Nurses Association, British College of Nurses

Administrative / Biographical history:
The Royal British Nurses Association (RBNA) was founded (as the British Nurses' Association) in December 1887, by Dr Bedford Fenwick, and his wife, Ethel Gordon Fenwick, former Matron of St Bartholomew's Hospital, London, with HRH Princess Christian, daughter of Queen Victoria, as its first President. There was considerable opposition to the Association, particularly from Florence Nightingale, who felt that it would destroy the 'vocational spirit' of nursing. The Association was renamed the RBNA in 1891 and received its Royal Charter in 1893. Dr and Mrs Fenwick took over the Nursing Record (started in 1888), in 1893 and renamed it the British Journal of Nursing in 1902. Mrs Fenwick and Isla Stewart (Matron of St Bartholomew's Hospital) founded the Matrons' Council of Great Britain and Ireland in 1894. The Society for the State Registration of Nurses was formed in 1902, with Ethel Fenwick as Secretary and Treasurer. The National Council of Trained Nurses of Great Britain and Ireland was established 1904, with Ethel Fenwick as President. Between 1906 and 1909 the RBNA drafted three Parliamentary bills on nurse registration. The Central Committee for the State Registration of Nurses was formed 1909 with Ethel Fenwick as joint honorary secretary. From 1910-1914 the Central Committee introduced annual Parliamentary bills on nurse registration. The College of Nursing (later Royal College of Nursing) was established 1916, and in 1917 there were inconclusive discussions on the possibility of a merger between the RBNA and the College. The Nurses' Registration Acts were passed in 1919. The General Nursing Council, chaired by Mrs Fenwick was established 1920. The British College of Nurses (BCN) was founded by Mrs Fenwick, 1926, with herself as President, and Dr Fenwick as Treasurer. In 1927 the College of Nursing applied for its Royal Charter, the application, opposed by the RBNA, was granted in 1928 and it was renamed the Royal College of Nursing in 1939. Bedford Fenwick died 1939 and Ethel Fenwick, 1947. The British College of Nurses closed in 1956.

Archival history:
In 1995 the Association decided to make the archives fully available to the public. Cataloguing and extensive conservation work on the collection was made possible by two British Library Cataloguing and Preservation grants. With the passage of time, the original arrangement of the archives had disappeared and in the process of listing them it became necessary to find a way of presenting the collection which would be easy to follow without imposing on it a completely new structure. Although the subject groups which have been introduced are artificial, they were selected only because they emerged as natural and obvious ones.

Immediate source of acquisition or transfer:
Deposited by the RBNA, 2002
Content & structure

Scope and content:
Archives of the Royal British Nurses Association (RBNA) and the British College of Nurses (BCN), comprising:

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Wotherspoon-Baird, 1911-1950; Embroidered silks commemorating the Coronation of King George IV, 1821, the International Exhibition, London, 1862, and Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee, 1897 Artefacts including RBNA badges, other badges and medals and RBNA banner

System of arrangement:
Collection arranged in 12 classes: RBNA minute books and membership records; Annual Reports and Accounts; Letters from HRH Princess Christian; Other Royal Letters; RBNA general letters and papers; British College of Nurses: general letters and papers; BCN: papers on the History of Nursing Section; BCN: material relating to Florence Nightingale; Papers relating to Mrs Bedford Fenwick; Papers relating to the International Council of Nurses; Printed material and Artefacts

Conditions of access & use
Conditions governing access:
Open, subject to signature of Reader's undertaking form, and appropriate provision of two forms of identification, to include one photographic ID.

Conditions governing reproduction:
Copies, subject to the condition of the original, may be supplied for research use only. Requests to publish original material should be submitted to the Director of Archives and Corporate Records Services.

Language/scripts of material:
English

Finding aids:
Draft catalogue available online and in hard copy in the reading room.

Allied materials
Existence and location of originals:
King's College London College Archives

Related units of description:
Pioneering Nurses database of entries from the RBNA Roll of Nurses (1890-1932) at: www.kingscollections.org/nurses. St Bartholomew's Hospital Archive holds papers of Ethel Fenwick (Mrs Bedford Fenwick), Ref GB 0405 X56.

Description control
Archivist's Note:

Rules or conventions:

Date(s) of descriptions: