



## "THE RNABC HISTORY GROUP"

MEMBERS' NEWSLETTER

January 1991

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WILL THE REAL SARAH GAMP  
PLEASE STAND UP ...

History Group Lecture

Saturday, February 2, 1991 - 1:30 pm

Faculty Lounge, UBC School of Nursing  
Third Floor, UBC Acute Care Hospital

Speaker: Dr. Anne Bursewicz



"SAIREY GAMP," A NURSE OF SIXTY YEARS AGO,  
c. 1907. Illustration from the Wellcome  
Trustee's PROFESSIONAL NURSES DIARY.  
Wellcome Museum for the History of Medi-  
cine, London, England.

Dr. Anne Bursewicz, who graduated in medicine in Edinburgh in 1947 and who has practiced in Public Health in Canada since 1958, has made a study of "Sarah (also called "Sairey") Gamp." This midwife, sick-nurse, and layer-out of the dead, immortalized in Charles Dickens' novel Martin Chuzzlewit, has come to represent the lowest image of nursing. This reputation, however, was bestowed upon her not by the author, but by critics in the 1900s. This talk tries to show what Mrs. Gamp really faced as a nurse among the poor in London in the 1830s.

The History Group's Executive will report on current happenings.

Coffee will be served.

Members Free

Guests \$2.00

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History Group members are urged to attend this lecture and to bring guests and potential members. Dr. Bursewicz is a noted speaker on this subject and is looking forward to sharing her comments with her professional nursing colleagues.



Notes from the Executive Meetings

\* The History Group's executive committee is beginning planning for the Annual Meeting, which will once again be held in conjunction with the RNABC's Annual Meeting and Convention. More information will be available in the next newsletter, but mark the Monday, April 8, and Wednesday, April 10, in your calendars!

\* Funding for the RNABC's History of Nursing Advisory Committee has been discontinued by the RNABC Board of Directors and the committee was disbanded at the end of 1990. The Board felt that our History of Nursing Professional Practice Group was the proper channel for carrying out the duties formerly carried out by the Advisory Committee. All members of the Advisory Committee were founding members of our Group -- and the RNABC's move was expected. The Advisory Committee will make one last report to the Board early this year to encourage the Association to continue to support history of nursing projects and events.

\* The Oral History Project, which "officially" reported to the Advisory Committee, was left without a "home" (and without funding support) when the Advisory Committee was discontinued by the RNABC Board. The History Group Executive has therefore invited the Oral History Project to come under our "umbrella." Almost all those who were participating in the Oral History Project are already members of our Group anyway, and the Executive believe that the Oral History Project, under Chair Sheila Zerr, is doing a valuable service that should be continued, probably with increased support. Sheil has been attending Executive Committee meetings and reports that the Project should be able to continue at least until April with only minimal funds needed.

A formal motion to support the Project will be brought to members at our annual meeting in April. Meantime, the Project members will receive mailings from our Group.

\* Membership Chair Glennis Zilm reported that we have achieved our revised goal of 60 members. A list of those who have joined since our August mailing is attached for your information; add it to the earlier lists for a complete list of 1990-1991 members.

\* Secretary-Treasurer Nina Rumen reported that our finances are in good order, with about \$1,200 in the bank.

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The illustration of "Sairey Gamp" on page 1 was taken from Patricia Donahue's Nursing - The Finest Art: An Illustrated History (St. Louis, Mosby, 1985). This excellent book will be on display at the February 2nd get-together. We hope to raffle a copy of this book at our annual meeting in April.



Logo Contest -- New Deadline

The deadline for the Logo Contest to supply the History Group with a "logo" -- or identifying symbol or sign to be used on letterheads and newsletter mastheads -- has been extended. At the deadline of October 31, 1990, we had received only one entry (from an executive member) and we felt we would like to have more. The new deadline is February 28, 1991, and we will bring the ideas to the April Annual Meeting.

Members and friends are urged to submit ideas for the logo. Perhaps you know a young graphic art student who would like to submit one or more designs. Please check the August Newsletter for information on how to submit a design (or call the Editor, Glennis Zilm, at 535-3238). Entries should be submitted, unfolded, for judging, and given to an executive member or mailed to: The History Group Logo Contest, The RNABC History Group, c/o Registered Nurses Association of B.C., 2855 Arbutus Street, Vancouver, B.C. V6J 3Y8.

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Book Review

by Helen Shore

Bedside Manners: The Troubled History of Doctors and Patients, by Edward Shorter. (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1985)

Written by a professor of history at the University of Toronto, this book depicts fundamental changes that have characterized relationships between doctors and patients. Shorter traces the evolution of doctors from unschooled, intuitive, yet respected healers to the doctor-scientist of today who has become more disease-oriented than patient-oriented. He also portrays the progression of patients from trusting captive subjects to today's active, informed subjects keenly aware of medical practice and its risks. Shorter has written a fascinating and witty book, combining anecdote, science, and history, to argue that nurturing is a neglected therapy that needs revising.

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Those interested in another view of Mrs. Gamp might wish to read the article "Who the Dickens Brought Sarai [sic] Gamp To Canada?" by Joyce M. MacQueen. This paper was originally presented at the Charlottetown Conference of the Canadian Association of History of Nursing in 1988 and is published in The Canadian Journal of Nursing Research (formerly Nursing Papers), Vol. 21, No 2, Summer 1989, pp. 27-37.

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