Preface

I am proud to be able to write that *Histories of Nursing Practice* is based on papers presented at the international nursing history conference 'Nursing History in a Global Perspective', held in Denmark in August 2012. The conference took place at the beautiful and historical Hotel Koldingfjord in Kolding, where the Danish Museum of Nursing History is also situated. The Danish Society of Nursing History, the Danish Museum of Nursing History and the Danish Nurses' Organisation hosted the conference.

It was also at this conference that the European Association for the History of Nursing (EAHN) was launched and I was elected its first President. Today, the EAHN has thirteen nursing history associations, with members representing thirteen European countries. The members communicate through the *EAHN Annual Bulletin*, a website and the annual meeting hosted by a member association. In 2013 the EAHN meeting was held in Kaiserswerth of Düsseldorf, Germany, in Dublin, Ireland, in 2014 and in 2015 the meeting took place in Tromsø, Norway.

The idea of an association representing nursing historians in Europe began in 2005 when the then President of the American Association for the History of Nursing (AAHN), Dr Arlene W. Keeling, invited European scholars to jointly host a conference with AAHN in Europe. A European Nursing History Group (ENHG) was formed and, in partnership with AAHN, hosted a very successful international conference at Royal Holloway University of London in September 2010. On the last day of the conference, the historians representing the ENHG and other interested delegates met and agreed to pursue the idea of establishing a European association. The

group accepted my invitation to a meeting at the Danish Deaconess Foundation in Copenhagen in March 2011. To organise the meeting, a steering committee was appointed, consisting of Dr Christine Hallett, Dr Gerard Fealy and myself. At the Copenhagen meeting, the terms of reference of EAHN were drafted and a year later finally confirmed at a meeting held at the Danish Museum of Nursing History. The mission of the European Association for the History of Nursing (EAHN) is to promote the development and advancement of nursing history through scholarly work and public outreach. The association brings individuals and associations together in order to provide mutual support and opportunities for collaboration.

The establishment of EAHN was the result of a long-held desire to cross national borders in Europe, to strengthen our bonds, and to unite the project of nursing history in the European countries, from north to south and from east to west. We were already tightly connected as citizens of the European Union member countries and we were related even before the founding of the union, despite various attempts through history to break down the individual national identities. We share the same roots and culture as human beings as well as in our studies of nurses and nursing.

The origins of professional or modern nursing emerged in medieval Italy with the introduction of the Rule of St Benedict in the sixth century AD, in Renaissance France with the Daughters of Charity, in the nineteenth century in Germany with the deaconess movement, and in England with Florence Nightingale. The idea of nursing has always crossed national borders and has been practised no matter what the political circumstances or conflicts of the time.

However, when it comes to investigating the impact and significance of nursing – a 1,500-year period of nursing history – it is often limited to our individual nations and colonies and to our native languages. The aim of EAHN is to change this and to encourage history scholars to widen the scope of research and explore the fact that we are all European citizens with a shared professional and cultural inheritance.

The conference at Kolding in August 2012 provided both the launch platform for the EAHN and the opportunity to promote the mission of the new association. The interest in the conference was immense and 150 scholars from all over the world assembled in

Denmark. The volume of submitted abstracts was remarkable, representing a wide range of topics in the history of nursing and a truly global historiography. The scope of research was so extensive that Dr Christine Hallett, Dr Gerard Fealy and I conceived the idea of an edited volume based on selected papers from the conference. We decided to give priority to an under-researched theme in nursing history: nursing practice. During the conference we approached prospective contributors for the volume, which we have titled *Histories of Nursing Practice*, and we are most grateful to the many scholars who so willingly agreed to contribute to this important subject matter in nursing history. Thank you so much for making this book possible. We are also grateful to The Danish Society for Nursing History for funding the work of indexing the book. For my part, I wish the reader a scholarly, enjoyable and enlightening journey in the footsteps of our foremothers in nursing practice.

Dr Susanne Malchau Dietz

President, Danish Society of Nursing History and President of
the European Association for the History of Nursing
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