

Mary Seacole: Myths in the Making of the Nursing Profession

Lynn McDonald, Professor Emerita, University of Guelph
14.00 Wednesday 10 April 2019

B5, Franklin-Wilkins Building, King's College London, SE1 9NH

Mary Seacole's memoirs paint a different picture to the figurehead we know today. Lynn McDonald peels back the layers, before presenting a new minority ethnic nursing leader.

In this talk, Lynn McDonald will relate Mary Seacole's many contributions, using her own fine memoir, *Wonderful Adventures of Mrs Seacole in Many Lands*, and a number of other primary sources. She will then present the Seacole myths that have grown over recent years, drawing on nursing textbooks, historical and reference books, and children's books.

Comparison will be made with the myths associated with Florence Nightingale, from exaggerations in the Crimean War period to attacks on her from the late 20th century on.

The contributions of a Nigerian nursing leader, Kofoworola Abeni Pratt, will be introduced: a nurse trained at the Nightingale School, supported by the Royal College of Nursing, later a fellow of the RCN, the first black nurse in the NHS and the major founder of professional nursing in Nigeria.

Lynn will show that widely accepted narratives about both Nightingale and Seacole are wrong, when credible primary sources are used. The role of historians, nursing leaders, the NHS, Department of Health, RCN and unions in revisionism will be discussed.

A question and answer session with Lynn will follow her talk.

A drinks reception will follow the lecture.

About the speaker: Lynn McDonald PhD LLD (hon) is Professor Emerita at the University of Guelph and former member of the House of Commons of Canada. She is editor of the *Collected Works of Florence Nightingale*, and author of *Mary Seacole: The Making of the Myth* (2014) and *Florence Nightingale, Nursing, and Health Care Today* (2018). Lynn is co-founder of the Nightingale Society, which promotes the legacy of Florence Nightingale.

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