

IN CONVERSATION WITH

JANE BROCKSOM


 BAUN 25th
 BRITISH ASSOCIATION
 of UROLOGICAL NURSES

We were delighted to chat to **Jane Brocksom**, President of BAUN, about her background in urology nursing and plans for the association in its 25th year.


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Can you tell us a bit about your background and what led you into urological nursing?

I started my training in 1988 and by 1992 I was failing my finals, not once but twice, and looking for a job in Tesco or M&S stacking shelves! Instead I found myself as a HCA in the operating theatres, a place I'd enjoyed during my training. I spent many a happy hour paddling in glycine and prostate chips – whilst qualifying as an EN then an RGN, rather convoluted but I got there in the end! I remained here until 2000 when I became a urology CNS. Urological anatomy, conditions, patients and staff I always found interesting – complex but interesting. Theatre was always a place of teamwork, camaraderie, and times of high jinks but stressful moments – the extremes of life but with the patient at its core. As a CNS I found the opportunity to grow educationally, clinically, practically and personally. I was lucky to have doors open for me, fate crossed my path, colleagues believed in me, I developed abilities I didn't know I had. I was pushed to develop – nothing was easy. Adversity is my middle name; 1992 was a year that shaped me, I must confess whilst I worked hard – I also played hard!

Who has inspired you in your career and why?

I've been lucky to work with some amazing colleagues, those I can remember from my student nurse days to those whom I work

alongside today. Nurses are a wonderful collection of individuals – often humorous even in periods of high emotion, they know how to play hard yet are extremely serious, conscientious and loyal. They can have the wildest of times but also the darkest times and that's just on one shift! I refuse to name individuals but on any given day my colleagues can inspire me – personal patient care, activity above and beyond, kindness to a fellow human, honesty and transparency, overcoming adversity or personal obstacles, or by simply challenging me to think or question, making me laugh or frustrating me. I have met so many wonderful people during my professional career that I have been inspired by many. That's not to say I am easy to please – not at all. I am open, non-judgemental, warm, honest, friendly, truthful, and humorous, attract conversation, uncomplicated, observant, open-minded, and noisy, absorb like a sponge and am a grafter – a straightforward Yorkshire lass. I can make enemies and have plenty of people who ignore me at the printer and on hospital corridors. I don't suffer fools. But I have intuition and I make good use of it. A friend is usually for life.

What has been the best piece of advice that you have received in your career and what advice would you offer to those following in your footsteps?

I do feel inspired by those for whom life has been a challenge, who have taken circular routes taken or who have taken a chance somewhere in life. I am sure the individuals who have inspired me will have said:

"What's for you won't go by you."

"She believed she could so she did."

"Do unto others as you would have them do to you."

And, of course, the Yorkshire creed:

"See all, 'ear all, say nowt"

Eyt all, sup all, pay nowt"

An if iver tha does owt for nowt"

Allus do it for thissen."

You can learn so much from other people, that's what makes human beings so interesting – the weird, the fascinating, the infuriating! I am curious – I love to observe, listen, making my own decisions, learning but at my own pace. I'm receptive to change and have an inquisitive nature but only if it interests me!

My mantra would be – *"No path in life is easy, money has to be earned and life can throw curve balls, but, be true and honest to yourself and of yourself. Work is for life and we will spend more time in the company of colleagues than loved ones, more time in an organisation than within the property we call home. Accept the positives, face the challenges and if in doubt embrace it! Read, exercise, walk in the fresh air and listen to music. Accept your flaws physical or psychological, these make you unique and special. Listen to yourself!"*

You are halfway through your two-years as BAUN President; how is the role going so far?

If in 2013, when I joined BAUN as a Trustee, you'd have said in 2018 I would be the 10th BAUN President, you'd have needed a resuscitation kit! I certainly wouldn't have believed I was capable, worthy, confident, able, or had the time or skills. I was not the person I am today. Apparently, I'm a better person today, the last few years has been a ride of a lifetime and I'm still on it. I've had support, encouragement, coaching from people who have believed in me or been brave, honest and bold enough to offer me advice – one humbling and amazing journey. I would do it all again!

To me the President's role is about continuity. Overall, it's a four-year role – the Vice-President year first, a two-year term of office, and finally an immediate Past-President year – continuing what is started by your predecessor or what you've been involved in during your Vice President year. So whilst you continue your salaried role, within an organisation where you are possibly quite senior, balancing a clinical, leadership and managerial role, you develop a business, financial, strategic role within BAUN, responsible for self development and developing and leading a team of fellow trustees. The trustee development programme has become established to develop individuals ensuring that the role of trustee is attractive and mutually beneficial. The educational framework for urological nursing (EFUN) is an example of the continuity of work started and completion is still a number of years away. As I reflect on my first year – I have been visible, transparent, approachable to our members, I have a cohesive group of trustees and conference 2019 was very, very successful. I couldn't have asked for a more successful first year – very humbling.

What are the major challenges facing urology nursing at the moment and do you see BAUN as central to addressing these?

The future of urological nursing is not without challenges. I see these being around diversity of roles, keeping up to date with technology and advances in surgical techniques, all of which benefit patients and patient care but add to healthcare pressures. The 'nurse' title is another example of constant change and evolution. Access to education is another example; free education is not sustainable, industry supports nurses but changes in MedTech rules mean we need to apply for money – it is out there, but hoops need jumped through. The MDT approach to teamwork and clinical supervision support the development of advanced roles and this is essential if nursing is to remain a profession.

Networking is a huge benefit BAUN membership can bring. Succession planning is another challenge addressing the issues of attracting nurses into the profession and, once in, attracting them to urology nursing.

Would you encourage others to get involved in BAUN?

I am inspired by nurses who wish to become involved in their association. We are the only UK based association for urology nurses and I believe it is imperative to be a member and receive the benefits of this but, equally, to be inquisitive enough to wonder if there is anything that you could do to become more actively involved. There are many benefits from being involved – opportunities to network, mentor junior colleagues, inspire others to seek their best, write for the newsletter or our journal – the only peer

reviewed urological nursing journal – speak at a study day, host a study day or chair an event. Developing outside of the clinical field is a rewarding challenge but can be time consuming and does require individuals to seek the challenge. I believe we all have the skills to be a trustee – warm, cheerful, friendly, accessible, open minded, altruistic and authentic.

And finally, if you have any spare time, how do you relax?

I've had to learn to manage my own self-care – this is by reading, listening to music, having quiet time alone and relearning to switch off – feeling relaxed by doing this and not guilty. I enjoy travel, theatre, cinema, craft beer, gin tasting, eating and 'date' nights! I now know I need a balance of extrovert socialising and introvert peace and quiet.