students’ supernumerary status is flawed (news May 13). Instead of increasing the practical element of their courses, it would leave students too tired to learn theory, then left to manage wards without adequate supervision.

Catherine Knox, by email

**DUMBING DOWN NURSING WOULD BE A RETROGRADE STEP**

David Cameron’s plans for nursing would represent a backward step for the profession if they were implemented (news May 13, analysis May 20). Nursing is a career for dedicated individuals who are not afraid of responsibility or decision-making.

The profession needs nurses to continue to learn and develop throughout their working lives. Mr Cameron suggests the theory should be replaced with practical skills. But theory is essential to nursing. Without theory and reflective practice, we would not be professionals.

The NHS needs carers from degree-educated nurses and specialist practitioners to healthcare assistants. There are some excellent foundation degrees for those healthcare assistants who would prefer a less responsible role within the NHS.

Samantha Chenery-Morris, by email

**LAMP-CARRYING NURSE SHOULD HAVE REMOVED HER WATCH**

It was with interest and pride that I read about the tributes to Florence Nightingale and the service at Westminster Abbey to commemorate the 189th anniversary of her birth (news May 20). The honour of carrying the lamp is something many nurses can only aspire to and the look on the lead nurse’s face in the photograph is clearly one of pride. Given Miss Nightingale’s emphasis on hygiene and reducing the spread of infection, it was disappointing that this nurse was wearing a wristwatch.

Name and address withheld

**THE MEDIA SPOTLIGHT SHIFTS FROM OBSESE TO OLDER PEOPLE**

Anne Diamond (reflections May 20) criticises researchers at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine who claim that ‘the rising number of obese people throughout the world demands more food production – a major cause of carbon dioxide emissions’.

I have some sympathy with Ms Diamond’s view that blaming those who are overweight for global warming is ridiculous. It gives the media another excuse to berate heavier people.

Older people are also under the media spotlight. Apparently, we oldies are also responsible for climate change because we are either sitting at home with the heat full on or flying around the world on polluting aeroplanes.

Jenny Faiz, by email

**EMPLOY LOCAL NURSES BEFORE TURNING TO FOREIGN RECRUITS**

As a nursing student at the end of my second year, I was disheartened by the news story, ‘Restart overseas recruitment, say NHS workforce planners’ (May 27). Given the economic downturn, job prospects for my colleagues and I look grim.

What is the point in spending a fortune to train us and then giving the jobs to overseas nurses? I support bringing in nurses from overseas to boost staffing levels. But give us students a chance first.

Katie Newman, by email

**CORRECTION**

The learning zone article ‘Nursing care and treatment of patients with bladder cancer’ (May 30) contained an error that was introduced during the editing process. The section on diagnosis should read: ‘Although voided urine cytology has a specificity of greater than 90% (Simon et al 2003), it has some important limitations.’ We apologise for the error, which has been corrected on the Nursing Standard online archive.

**Obituary**

Christopher John Goodall RGN DipN RNT, who died at York District Hospital on February 22 aged 60, was a nurse teacher at the North Yorkshire College of Health Studies between 1985 and 1993.

After completing a doctorate in music at the University of Bangor, Christopher trained to be a nurse at the Lister Hospital in Stevenage. The idea of nursing as a profession had taken root when Christopher worked as an auxiliary at the old Lister Hospital in Hitchin during the holidays. He was encouraged by his aunt, Phyllis Goodall, a deputy director of nurse education.

Christopher later undertook intensive care training at Addenbrooke’s in Cambridge before moving to York District Hospital. When, due to a progressive disability, he was no longer able to work on the wards, he combined his previously unfulfilled vocation of teaching with his nursing skills and qualified as a nurse teacher in Durham.

He then taught at the North Yorkshire College of Health Studies, based first at Scarborough Hospital then at York District Hospital.

He was a prolific author of articles on disability and the care of older people, with the occasional side-swipe at higher management. He was also an ardent advocate for students’ welfare.


Vic Gacek is principal pharmacist, dispensing and distribution, Scarborough Hospital