

Elizabeth Sunter 1823-1903

Suffragist

Elizabeth was from Cumbria worked initially as a teacher at the British School, Shildon in County Durham as her father worked for the Stockton & Darlington railways. The family then moved to Derby where she experienced some persecution as the family was Methodist and temperance. She moved to London to teach at the Home and Colonial Training College which was based on the principles of Pestalozzi.

In 1856 she was appointed to People's College (11 College St) as Head Mistress of the Girl's department where she introduced natural science and physiology, which was criticised and considered improper. In 1861 she was living as a boarder in Talbot Street and in 1866 she signed the first petition for women's suffrage, with her address listed as Park Row.

Elizabeth became the secretary to the Nottingham Suffrage committee of the NUWSS founded in 1871 and regularly spoke at meetings - the committee was an umbrella organisation comprising of various women's groups eg Women's Temperance Society, National Union of Women Workers. By then she lived at 40 Bilbie Street, where Trent University is now sited - a narrow cut called Bilbie Walk remains.

In 1881 she was living as boarder at 74 Shakespeare Street, having opened a private school for girls. In addition to her work and involvement in the suffrage society she was on the committees of Woman's Total Abstinence Union, Ladies Sanitary Association; Liberal Association. & Nottingham Temperance Mission. In 1891 and 1901 she was living with her sister Rebecca in Streatham as a retired schoolmistress.