



Ethel Gordon Fenwick nee Bedford Fenwick 1857-1947

Nurse Campaigner SRN 1

Ethel was brought up at Thoroton Hall after her mother's second marriage to George Storer a Nottinghamshire MP. She began her nurse training at Nottingham Children's hospital at age 21 in 1878. She did further training in Manchester and at age of 24 in 1881 became one of the first Registered Nurses in England and matron of St Bartholomew's hospital. She improved nurse training by establishing a system of both practical work and theoretical instruction and increasing the length from 2 to 3 years. She began to campaign to improve the professional standing of nurses establishing in 1888 the British Nurses Association which campaigned for nurse registration but met strong opposition. She married and became Ethel Gordon Fenwick in 1887. In 1892 the Nursing Association applied for a royal charter of incorporation which after a Privy council inquiry was granted in part. Eventually in 1919 the General Nursing Council was set up and the Nurses Registration Act was passed with Ethel becoming SRN 1 on the world's first Nursing Register. She is buried at St Helena church, in Thoroton. A plaque will be unveiled to her in 2020 at the QMC and visit www.ethelgordonfenwick.org.uk/wordpress