



May Catherine Mary Burgis 1874-1930

Suffragette

May, as she was known, was born in Benson in Oxfordshire, she was the eldest of a family of 10 – her younger brother George was known as Decimus. Her father died when she was 26 and the family moved to Nottingham about 1901 largely it seems because of a friendship with two women who ran the Stockwin School of Music, in Regents Street – Miss Amy Stockwin the Principal and her partner Miss Winnifred Richardson. Two of May's sisters worked at the school of music – Edith, a violinist is a partner and Norah a salaried teacher.

May worked for the Education Committee for 29 years. She was involved in National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS) but became an active suffragette about 1907 joining the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) and was elected the Honorary Secretary in 1908 until a paid organiser Rachel Barrett was appointed in 1908. She was present in London on 24th Feb 1909 when Helen Watts was arrested outside the Houses of Commons and wrote to Helen warmly supporting her action, saying she had 'suffered terribly for the Cause'. A notice, posted by C.M. Burgis in 1909, announces that Helen Watts will give an account of her imprisonment in Holloway on 26th April 1909 at Clarendon Street School. In April 1911 she evaded the Census but her mother and siblings were at home at 21 Chaucer Street.

May went on to teach at Mundella Grammar School for some years becoming Head of the Clarendon school for girls in 1925. She died at home at 4 Whittingham Road in Mapperley after a short illness and NEP reported her death and funeral which was attended by Aldermen Councillors and Education Committee members.