



**Dr Sarah Gray 1860 – 1941**

**First woman GP, Suffragist**

**First president of Medico-Chirurgical Society**

Sarah was born in Tipperary and from an early age was determined on a medical career at a time when this was seen as eccentric if not improper for a woman. She studied in London but took a qualification in Scotland as London did not award degrees to women.

She moved to Nottingham and became the City's **first** woman GP facing bitter opposition and hostility. In 1899 she was appointed to the Women's Hospital and became assistant surgeon in charge of outpatients. Her male colleagues viewed her with mistrust and for a year insisted that a male colleague be present whenever she administered an anaesthetic. She applied to be in charge of inpatients but was refused the position being told that her qualifications, while being the highest open to women, were not high enough.

At 40 she took her FRCSI and in 1902 was appointed surgeon to Nottingham and Notts Convalescent home, medical examiner to the Board of Education and the Education Committee and surgeon to the Girl's evening Homes. In 1921 – 2 she was elected the **first** president of Nottingham Medico-Chirurgical Society. She was a pioneer among medical women, and against the prevailing times was nonetheless finally recognised for her outstanding abilities.

She was involved in Nottingham branch of the National Union of Women's Suffrage Society (NUWSS) and also in the National Union of Women Workers (NUWW). On 1 June 1910 she presided over the NUWSS AGM at the Mikardo café.

She lived at 21 Regent Street with her younger sister, a teacher at the Nottingham High School for Girls, also her niece, a cook and a maid. Sarah had many interests in the city where she practiced for 37 years – temperance, foreign missions, rescue work and social reform. In 1955 Mrs Hilda Hobson, Lady Mayoress recalled Dr Gray as a familiar sight, driving down Park Row from the General Hospital in her open Victoria car.

'She was a little woman with very bright eyes and wore steel rimmed spectacles. She always wore a grey costume, perhaps so she was deliberately unobtrusive. In those days there was a tremendous prejudice against women as doctors, and for years it was an uphill climb against it.'

Her obituary appeared in The Lancet, March 8th, 1941.