



## **Nora Morrison MBE 1917-2016**

### **Ballet teacher**

Nora was born at Myrtle Villa, 109 Burford Road, in Hyson Green, where she lived all her life. She started teaching ballet aged 13 and went on to instruct many famous stage and screen performers. At 17, Miss Nora as she was known, voluntarily taught visually impaired people at Nottingham Royal Society for the Blind for whom she also raised £75,000. She trained at the Royal Academy in London and, aged 22, at the outbreak of WW2 along with her sister Tess she opened a dance school – Morrison School of Dancing – in a hired room on Mansfield Road. It moved to the Bluecoat School and then to 32a Clarendon Street and for 80 years taught many dancers in Nottingham. She continued to teach until the age of 98 by which time she was wheelchair-bound. She was awarded an MBE in 2010 following her nomination by Rachel Grant whom she had taught. Rachel, a former Bond girl, felt Nora deserved recognition for her dedication; others had tried to nominate her over the previous forty years. The nomination papers included a letter of support from former pupil, Jenny Sealy, now CEO and director of The Graeae Theatre Company in London, the UK's leading disabled theatre group which describes how she 'started ballet in 1969 at the Morrison school ... I became deaf at the age of 7 and was going to give up dancing because I could not hear the music. Nora took me under her wing and taught me how to hear music with my eyes and through vibrations. She would not let my deafness get in the way and would not let me be defeated because I was deaf.' Rachel Grant accompanied Nora to Buckingham Palace to receive her award. Nora lived with her two older sisters, Violet and Tess, in a house built by their grandfather, James Robert Morrison. It was where they were born and where she died on 8<sup>th</sup> February 2016. The three women were found to have an extensive collection of dolls and teddies including seven small peg dolls in costume which sold for £9,600. Nora

is buried in the General Cemetery. There is a FB documentary about her online and a book 'Brick by Brick, Step by Step' available from Diamond Press.



In 2023 there was a project researching and celebrating her life and achievements and a plaque was unveiled in the Concert Hall at 32a Clarendon Chambers. There was also a documentary made

<https://youtu.be/NJxNJ8wmQyY?si=rZE6ZAnI-0lxKe26>