

LISBURN HISTORICAL SOCIETY



Seymour House, Lisburn

In 1862 Mrs William Steen Hunter and her two daughters, Anna and Mary opened a boarding and day school for young ladies at this handsome early 19th Century building, then No 40 - now renumbered 20, Seymour Street, Lisburn, known as Seymour House.

Her venture proved successful, and Mrs Hunter being an astute business lady realised that there was a far greater potential for development in the rapidly expanding city of Belfast. She acquired premises in College Square East and in 1870 her school opened there. The school prospered, and in November 1887 it was again on the move, to large terrace house, No 4 Princess Gardens, close to the University. In 1901 houses on the street were renumbered and the address became No 69 University Street where it remained throughout the two world wars. The school's name was changed to Princess Garden School. With the continuing increase in student numbers and no possibility of extending accommodation at No 69 conditions were very cramped. In 1945 Stratherne, a large house with extensive grounds between Finaghy and Dunmurry was purchased from the Barbour family. Harland and Wolff had used it during the war and had a number of temporary buildings in the grounds were well suited for classrooms. Thus the school occupied two sites until 1967 when No 69 University Street was closed and all pupils moved to the Dunmurry campus.

An amalgamation of Ashleigh House School and Princess Gardens School took place in 1987. As the headmistresses at that time were both named Hunter, and with Mrs Hunter being the original founder of the School in Lisburn in 1862, it was appropriate for the new college be given the name Hunterhouse College.