

ROBERT RAIKES TOUR NOTES

INTRODUCTION Robert Raikes was born in Ladybellgate House in 1736 and was baptised in St Mary de Crypt. He was the eldest child of Mary Drew and Robert Raikes senior; the latter was the founder of the Gloucester Journal which Robert junior inherited when he was 21 year of age in 1757. He was educated at Crypt School and then the Kings School. Details of his further education and early journalistic and business activities are not clear, but he speedily displayed great aptitude for business and under his control, the Gloucester Journal prospered equally well, if not more so, than in his father's day. While working in London he became a member of the Court of Assistants of the Stationers Company

Robert married Anne Trigge in December 1767 and they had 3 sons and 7 daughters. Robert, as did many of his contemporaries, had something of a social conscience. His newspaper gave him the means to influence public opinion and he gave his support to all sorts of issues of the day. However, he is remembered principally for his work on penal reform and as being at the forefront of the introduction of education for poor people. He had his opponents and his efforts were derided by many. His Schools on Sunday scheme was known by the epithet 'Raikes' Ragged School'. Detractors were also fond of recalling Raikes' youth when he was considered to be a bit wayward and they nicknamed him 'Bobby Wild Goose' for his fashionable clothes and the dubious company that he kept at times. That side of his character was soon left behind when he inherited the newspaper from his father.

STARTING THE TOUR We start the tour at the Robert Raikes House pub, (the landlord doesn't open the doors of the house until 12.00 noon so try to start your tour after that time if possible so you and your party can see the interior and garden). By 1758, Robert had established his printing office in the middle and southern gables and established his mother as a resident some 10 years later, until she died in 1779. He and his family moved into the house in 1772. (Samuel Smith owner of the Tadcaster Brewery bought the place in 2008, restored it at a cost of £4.5 million, and then opened it as the Robert Raikes House pub).

This fine house is a 16th century former grocers' shop, still identifiable today, by the 3 sugar loaves and richly carved barge boards that resemble a cow's yolk. It had a pleasant garden which he is said to have used as an outdoor classroom whenever possible, for his Sunday scholars. He used to invite his contemporaries to breakfast on a Sunday and would show them the results of his efforts, namely, working children reading, writing, and behaving decently. People were impressed and the movement gathered pace.

Whilst living at the Southgate St house, Raikes had need of the services of a gardener and went to the St Catherine's St area to seek one out. He noticed a large group of raggedly dressed children playing in the street; the gardeners wife told Raikes that it was far worse on Sundays when the street was full of children cursing and swearing and spending their one day off a week letting off steam. The children worked long hours 6 days a week in pin factories and the like and this was their only

free time. From his work as a prison visitor Raikes realised that the gaols were full of unfortunate poor people whose lives had been shaped by such deprivation in childhood and resolved to do something about it.

RAIKES AND THOMAS STOCK, He sought the help and assistance of the Revd Thomas Stock, Rector of St Johns, Northgate who had already started along the path of educating the poor. Thomas Stock was born into a wealthy Gloucester family. His father was a well-to-do grocer, socially well connected with the Stock family of Harescombe, and the, well-known, Rich family. Thomas was educated at the Kings School and may have also attended the Crypt School; the family worshipped at St Mary de Crypt and Thomas was baptised there. It is possible that he was already acquainted with the city philanthropist and publisher, Robert Raikes, although Raikes was older than Stock. Thomas went on to Pembroke College, Oxford, and his days there were crowned with distinctions in classics. Having gained his MA, he was elected to a Fellowship in 1774 and then he felt called to the ministry.

Stock's first curacy was at the Church of St Mary the Virgin in Ashbury, Oxfordshire. He saw the need to offer some sort of Christian education for children in the village and his remedy was to create a Sunday School for them. Initially, the school was in the tiny chancel of his church but that soon proved to be too small such was the success of his scheme. A local landowner offered the use of a cottage which was ideal. The children received religious education but, crucially, they were taught reading, writing and arithmetic. Stock stayed at Ashbury for three years before moving to Gloucester.

Raikes and Stock set about identifying suitable children who could benefit and teachers who could do the necessary and in July 1780 the first school was established in a cottage in St Catherine's St, the home of Mrs James King. The second school was set up in Oxbody Lane, the third in St Aldgate's Square and a fourth in Hare Lane. Clearly this was an ambitious project and the costs were initially borne by Raikes and Stock between them.

OTHER SIMILAR SCHEMES A few other enlightened souls had trodden this path as well, the first such school was set up in 1751 at St Mary's Church, Nottingham, in 1769 Hannah Ball followed on in High Wycombe and William King of Dursley established a school for his workers in 1780. In America, Samuel Slater, originally from Derbyshire, opened a school for his workers in 1790. Slater was known as the 'Father of the American Industrial Revolution', a phrase coined by Andrew Jackson and 'Slater the Traitor' in the UK because he brought British textile technology to America.

EARLY LOCAL WORK AND NATIONAL PROGRESS The schools were initially opened for boys, but girls were soon admitted. Lessons began at 10.00am until noon and then an hour later, lessons resumed until 5.30pm. The afternoon session included a reading lesson and a visit to church. Rewards were given for good appearance, learning and good manners. The ultimate was the Sunday School Treat when Raikes would invite children to his house as a reward and they would be given Mrs Raikes famous plum pudding.

His cause was boosted immeasurably when he gained the endorsement of Queen Charlotte (May 1744-November 1818), the wife of King George III. She was Queen of the United Kingdom, Electress of Hannover, and Queen Consort of Hannover when her husband became King of Hannover in 1814. The education of women was of great importance to her and she saw to it that her daughters were better educated than was usual for the day. She also founded orphanages and became patron of a hospital for expectant mothers in 1809. The Queen knew of the pioneering work of a Mrs Sarah Trimmer (1741 -1810, leading writer and critic and educational reformer) and of Raikes's work in Sunday Schools and having interviewed Sarah Trimmer in November 1786, she decided to establish a Sunday School at Windsor. On learning that Raikes was in London at the time, the Queen summoned Raikes for an interview with her at Christmas 1786 at Windsor Park Lodge to 'know by what accident a thought which promised so much benefit to the lower order of people was suggested to his mind'

THOSE FOR AND AGAINST The whole scheme was put in jeopardy by the French Revolution and the execution, in October 1793, of Queen Marie Antoinette (previously Archduchess of Austria), who was a close friend of Queen Charlotte. There was a widespread public outcry against educating the lower classes as a result of actions in France such as the execution and 'mob rule' where the established way things were done was turned upside down. In response to this phenomena, public libraries were closed and some Sunday Schools suspended. Although high ranking clergy such as Bishop Porteous of Chester and Dr Shute Barrington, Bishop of Salisbury, as well as the Bishop of Gloucester and other prelates of the Church of England, spoke in high approval of the movement, there was a fair amount of disapproval from the established church as well. Some clergy could find no precedent for universal education in the Book of Common Prayer, and Bishop Horsley opposed them on the grounds that they could lead to political subversion. Personal attacks on Raikes were commonplace; for example, he was accused of being a prolific Sabbath breaker. This was because he used his small typesetter on a Sunday to prepare for his newspaper that was published in the days following. More personal attacks on his lifestyle were quite common.

By 1831 Sunday Schools in Great Britain were teaching 1, 250,000 children, approximately 25% of the population and are the forerunner of the state school system. The 1876 Education Act finally put in place a system of education that Raikes and Stock had organised and brought to public prominence.

RAIKES AND PRISON REFORM The next stage of the tour takes us around the corner to Ladybellgate House where Raikes was born in 1736. The family moved here in 1725 or 1732, no specific date suggests as to when this took place exactly, they leased the house from the widow of its owner Henry Wagstaffe, son of John Wagstaffe, a Royalist sympathiser who prospered after the Restoration. Henry spent a lot of money on the house incurring considerable debt. His death and monetary misfortune left his widow, Margaret in dire straits. She apprenticed her sons to local businessmen, rented the house to the Raikes family and sold off whatever she could to raise funds. For example, it is thought that she sold the pediment from the roof of the house to a third party and it can be seen adorning the roof of Bearland Lodge,

just down the road. It depicts a half-size effigy of Pallas Athena with the head of the Gorgon on her shield; the work is identical in style and craftsmanship to other works inside Ladybellgate House.

Although the visitor can no longer easily see the site of the former Gloucester Gaol (closed 2013) because of recent building work, if you and your group walk down Longsmith St, past Bearland Lodge to the old Fire Station, and turn left it is unmissable. Visiting the unfortunates incarcerated inside was Robert Raikes other great passion and prison reform became an abiding issue for him.

In his role as a prison visitor, he took food and hope (often monetary) to the prisoners who were held in dreadful conditions. Gloucester Gaol was built out of the ruins of the mediaeval castle, it was simply awful; more people died of gaol fever than died on the gallows. Raikes, together with John Howard (see the Howard League for Penal Reform) and Sir George Onesiphorous Paul, the High Sheriff of Gloucester put together the basis of a new Penal Code based on Howard's work of 1777, State of Prisons in England, and Wales. Sir George urged action and in 1785 an Act was passed empowering the County authorities to build a new gaol that was completed in 1791. The model used for the new prison was considered to be the most humane way of incarcerating wrongdoers and was adopted throughout the country.

BLACKFRIARS, ADDISONS' FOLLY AND DE CRYPT. Retrace your steps to visit Blackfriars to where Robert Raikes senior moved the Gloucester Journal printing apparatus from Northgate St in 1743. If time permits elaborate on Blackfriars. In 1758 Robert junior moved the press to the Raikes House where we started the tour. Walk around to St Mary de Crypt and visit Addison's Folly.

Addison's Folly was built by Thomas Fenn Addison in 1864 is said to be built on the former site of Robert Raikes last house, Crypt House, Bell Lane (Number 5?) Robert retired in 1802 having sold his newspaper. Addison was a solicitor and admirer of Raikes's work; he built the Folly as a lasting memorial.

Addison's sister Catharine left her previous home in Middlesex to live in Gloucester after marrying into the Washbourne family of Gloucester wine merchants.

Thomas soon followed her to Gloucester and became an Attorney. His name appears on legal documentation for Bristol / Gloucester / Birmingham railway projects concerning manufacture and maintenance. He was very much involved in local affairs, was a regular churchgoer, and worshipped at St Mary de Crypt.

In 1839 he married Hannah Sheldon (in Exeter). On return to Gloucester they settled in Bell Lane – possibly in the house that Robert Raikes had lived in until his death in 1811.

Thomas and Hannah had a large family of 8 girls and 2 boys. One daughter Emily is recorded as being christened in Mary de Crypt in 1845. Sadly, Hannah died in 1856, aged about 40, and was buried in Hempsted churchyard.

Six years later, when the Crypt school was moving from Southgate Street to a temporary home in Barton Street (and then on to Friar's Orchard) Thomas bought

some land at the rear of De Crypt churchyard for £57, and started to build the tower in 1864.

There were complaints that the 3-story tower would block the access along the pathway from Greyfriars to Southgate Street (part of the Marylone). In his defence, he did say that when the tower was completed it would be dedicated as a memorial to Robert Raikes.

On completion there was an original memorial plaque to Raikes fixed to the building, but it would have required a ladder to read it – being so small and so high up the wall! Thomas used to climb the Tower and gain spiritual comfort by being able to see his wife's grave across at Hempsted church with his telescope. Within a year Thomas also passed away, so although Addison's Tower is dedicated to Robert Raikes maybe the true memorial in Thomas' mind was to his dear wife Hannah.

Take your party into St Mary de Crypt church but, before entering, note that the exterior wall was re-clad in 1880 to mark the centenary of the founding of Sunday Schools. This was Robert Raikes parish church; he was baptised in the font here, as was George Whitefield, and was educated to the age of about 12 in the Crypt School. Show the visitors the schoolroom and then take them to the Raikes memorial chapel where Raikes is interred.

Robert died on 5th April 1811 of a heart attack in his final home, Crypt House, Bell Lane, All the Sunday School children that attended his funeral received one shilling and one of Mrs Raikes celebrated plum cakes.

There is a lot more to tell about Robert Raikes and his work and, to do the story of the Sunday School movement justice, a tour should include a visit to St John's Northgate where there are memorials to Robert Raikes and Thomas Stock including the East window memorial.

The paragraphs on Addison's Folly were researched by our colleague Ray Cayless as part of his Civic Trust guide training. Grateful thanks to him.