

**LOCAL CELEBRATIONS AT GRIFFYDAM
FOR THE CENTENARY OF
SUNDAY SCHOOLS FOUNDED BY
ROBERT RAIKES (1735-1811) IN 1780**

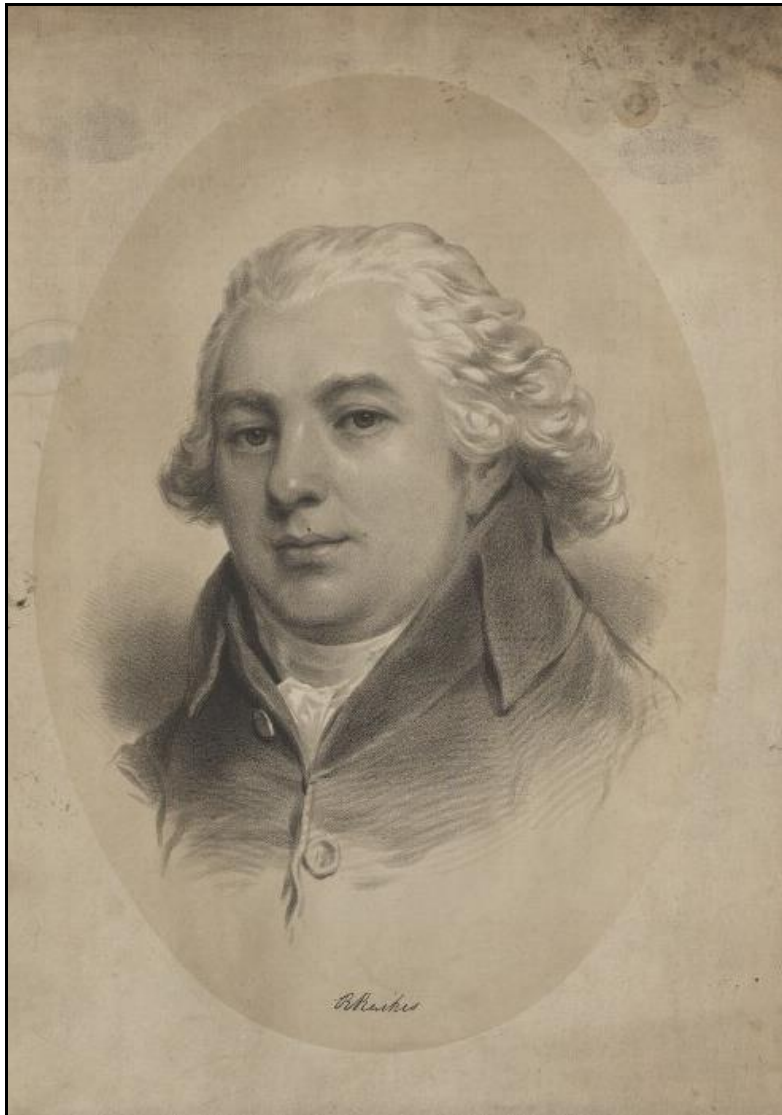


**EXAMPLES OF VARIOUS CENTENARY MEDALS MADE FOR
THE SUNDAY SCHOOL PUPILS**

BY SAMUEL T STEWART - OCTOBER 2024

PREFACE

1880 was the centenary year of the formal Sunday school movement started by Robert Raikes (1735-1811) in 1780. Celebrations took place all over the country and a selection of medals, flags and banners were made for the event, some of which are shown on the front page. Sunday schools from the following local chapels and Day school came together for this remarkable event which is described later.

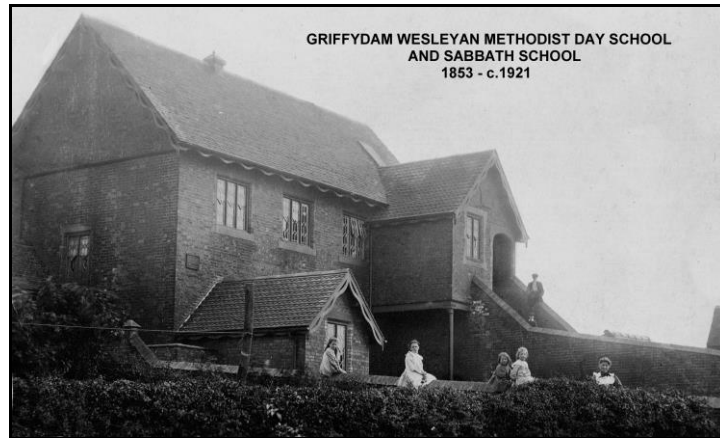


ROBERT RAIKES 1735 - 1811

© Samuel T Stewart - OCTOBER 2024

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by means, electronic, mechanical or otherwise without first seeking the written permission of the author.

Sunday schools from the following local chapels and Day school came together for the following remarkable event which is described later - Worthington Wesleyan Methodist chapel (bottom) ; Griffydam Wesleyan Reform Chapel (top) ; Griffydam Wesleyan Methodist Day and Sabbath School at Pegg's Green (middle).



UNITED LOCAL SUNDAY SCHOOLS CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS

THE LOCAL UNITED SCHOOLS FETE

On Sunday the 23rd of August, the Griffydam Wesleyan Methodist Day and Sabbath Sunday school, and the Griffydam Wesleyan Reform Sunday school who were joined by the Worthington Wesleyan Chapel Sunday school, held their *fete* in the Griffydam Wesleyan Methodist Day School at Pegg's-Green in celebration of the centenary of Sunday Schools.

The children assembled at about 12 o'clock, and after a short time, they were formed in procession, and walked off to Swannington Common. There they were joined by the 'Snibston Colliery Brass Band. They then marched through the villages of Coleorton, Griffydam and Pegg's Green.

The youngsters, who were not able to walk were provided for by mean's of a farmer's carriage and pair. The children were supplied with flags and banners, made by teachers and friends **and wore the Raikes Centenary Medal**. It was a very pretty sight to see them with their flags, banners, and smiling faces, wending their way so merrily.

On returning to the Day school, the children who numbered nearly 300, were provided with tea, plum cake &c., to which they did ample justice. A public tea was afterwards provided, when upwards of 220 persons sat down. The teachers and all those who waited on did all in their power for the accommodation and comfort of all.

After tea various games were indulged in. The band playing in good style some favourite airs and sacred pieces. The day was beautifully fine, and the receipts were no doubt satisfactory.

The above was transcribed from the Loughborough Herald & North Leicestershire Gazette - Thursday 26th August 1880



SUNDAY SCHOOL CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS IN AUSTRALIA

Not only was the centenary celebrated at home but in Australia also. There follows a small extract from the two column extensive report which appeared in the Sydney Morning Herald on Monday June 28th 1880:-

The centenary of Robert Raikes, the founder of Sunday schools, has been commemorated in Sydney, in a manner probably not less demonstrative than that which has marked its celebration in any other part of the British Empire. One hundred years ago, when Robert Raikes began the instruction of the Young in Sunday schools in Gloucester, it never entered his mind how far the movement would spread, and how this land not then known, except as the abode of the savage aboriginal, would be established in the esteem of the people to an extent even greater than in the country in which it originated, and even some years afterwards, when the colony was founded as a penal settlement for the worst class of criminals from Great Britain, nay one who had predicted that Sunday schools would within 92 years be more prized here than in the mother country Saturday morning proved unusually fine and mild for midwinter, and before 1 o'clock the Sunday schools, under the charge of the superintendents and teachers begun to gather on the southern side of Hyde Park and at half-past 1 o'clock, the appointed hour, the children of no less than sixty one schools were in the place assigned to them decorated with rosettes, and carrying banners and bannerettes and including children only over seven years of age..... The youthful army of 11,900 children with about 1,000 teachers presented a pretty site, and whilst awaiting the order to march, 4 abreast, they pleased the onlookers by singing some of their school hymns.....

Continued over page

THE NON SABBATH DAYS

It should be remembered that on the other six working days, even very small children were working long hours in industries like coal mining, brick making, and the ceramic industry such that attending their Sunday-school was not a priority on their one day off.

Here are two examples relating to that:-

COAL MINING

TAKEN FROM THE CHILD EMPLOYMENT COMMISSION 1841 / 1842 REPORT WHITWICK AND SNIBSTON COLLIERIES

The following questions were put to **William Stenson** (No.80):-

You are an engineer and have the management of the Whitwick colliery?

- Yes.

We have 110 boys under 10. We support a day-school, to which the children under 10 go, and we have a Sunday-School also. Men who act together as butties (similar to agents who employ several men to whom the men are responsible) get great wages, as much as 28s. a week. We do not put the boys to push or draw the trains. We employ horses and asses. We do not use iron chains but flat ropes, which we consider much safer. Ropes will tell a tale before breaking. Our people begin work about seven, and leave about seven at night.

Seven year old Thomas Straw of Ilkeston

I have worked for about 2 months at Messrs Potters Bowswell and Piewit Pits, from six to eight, helping to drive wagons. He feels very tired when he comes out and gets his tea and goes to bed. They would not let him sleep in the pit or stand still. He feels tired and sleepy on Sunday morning and had rather be in bed than at school.

CERAMICS INDUSTRY

The following is taken from Charles Scriven's report on child labour in the 1840's.

No. 5: Joseph Bevington, aged 10, looks very pale and phthisical

I have been at work 12 months in the handle room; father works there; I get 2s. a week, father takes it to me; I got 3 brothers and sisters; I come at 7 in the morning, and leave at 6 in the evening, I never work over-time. I get holidays at Michaelmas, Easter and Martilmas - about 4 or 5 weeks altogether; Can read; can't write have been to Jentvale Sunday School and a day school at Oakhill; handle making is very hard work; it never hurts my stomach or chest. I've got a cough and hoarseness. Father straps me sometimes, when I'm a bad boy, but he's good to me generally. I get beef and bacon, and tato's (potatoes) for dinner everyday. I live at Oakhill and sometimes go home to dinner, sometimes get it at the works. Get some play at dinner-hour in the yard with the rest of the boys, and at breakfast-time; leave work at 4 o'clock on Saturdays, and go to Sunday-School, now, at Jentvale

A BRIEF HISTORY OF ROBERT RAIKES

Sunday schools were not original to Robert Raikes, and date back to at least the 18th century. However, it was he who pioneered them and formalised the movement, thereby putting them on the map. His efforts gave huge momentum to the movement in Britain. In 1880 a statue which featured Robert Raikes was erected on Victoria Embankment in London to celebrate the centenary of the Sunday school movement.



Raikes was born at Ladybellegate House, Gloucester, in 1735, the eldest child of Mary Drew and Robert Raikes, a newspaper publisher. He married Anne Trigge and they had three sons and seven daughters.

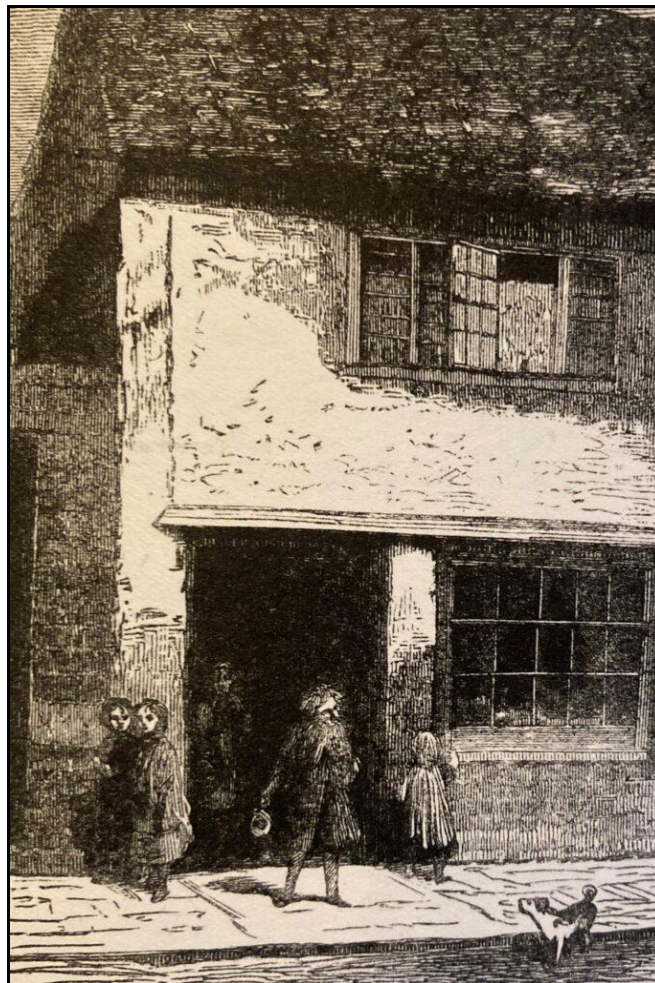
Robert Raikes was determined to provide some schooling in his native Gloucester for boys, '*ignorant, profane, filthy and disorderly in the extreme*', who spent their free time on Sunday creating nuisance and involved in petty crime.



What Raikes saw in Gloucester Streets – a woodcut taken from *Robert Raikes – The Man Who Founded The Sunday School* by J. Henry Harris

The Sunday School movement started with a school for boys in the slums of Gloucester. Raikes had become interested in prison reform and hospital care, specifically with the conditions in Gloucester gaol, and saw that vice would be better prevented than cured. He saw schooling as the best intervention. The best available time was Sunday, as the boys were often working in the factories the other six days. Raikes engaged in 1780 a number of women, to teach reading and the church catechism on Sundays, with lessons based on the bible.

Following a failed attempt to educate local ragamuffins in the grounds of Gloucester Cathedral, Raikes opened his first school in 1780, in the kitchen of a house in Sooty Alley, within the town's chimney sweep district. He hired a dame school teacher named Mrs Meredith to run the school, and give basic reading lessons using the Bible.



Raikes' first Sunday school from *Robert Raikes – The Man Who Founded The Sunday School* by J. Henry Harris

The original schedule for the schools, as written by Raikes was "*The children were to come after ten in the morning, and stay till twelve; they were then to go home and return at one; and after reading a lesson, they were to be conducted to Church. After Church, they were to be employed in repeating the*

catechism till after five, and then dismissed, with an injunction to go home without making a noise."

The movement blossomed and in 1788 there were 300,000 children attached to local Sunday Schools and by 1831 it was estimated that there were 1,250,000 Sunday School pupils in England. By 1910 there were over 5,500,000 Sunday Schools throughout the UK and by the middle of the century it is estimated that about two-thirds of working-class children were attending Sunday-school. As these schools preceded the first state funding of schools for the general public, they are seen as the forerunners of the current English school system