



York Civic Trust
Promoting Heritage - Shaping Tomorrow

PRESS RELEASE

York Civic Trust

announce the unveiling of a **blue plaque** in honour of

SAMUEL TUKE

(1784-1857)

**Prominent Quaker and social campaigner,
Pioneer in the treatment of mental health,
Manager of York Retreat**

The unveiling ceremony will take place

THURSDAY 24 AUGUST 2017 at 11AM

**TUKE HOUSE, Former Working Man Club (Under development
as S. Harrison Student Accommodation)
Lawrence Street, YORK, YO10 3BP**

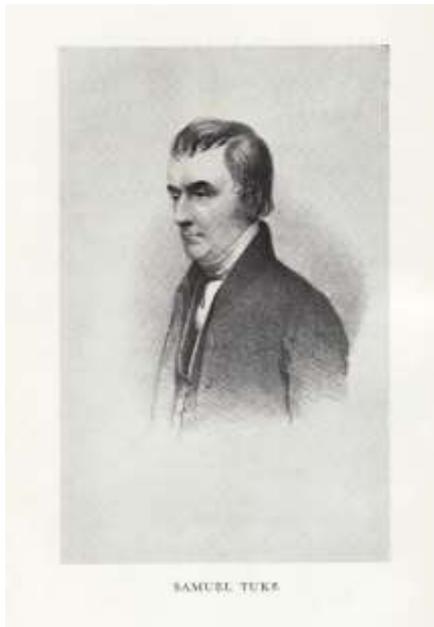


Image of SAMUEL TUKE
Courtesy www.wakefieldasylum.co.uk
(copyright to Stanley Royd hospital)

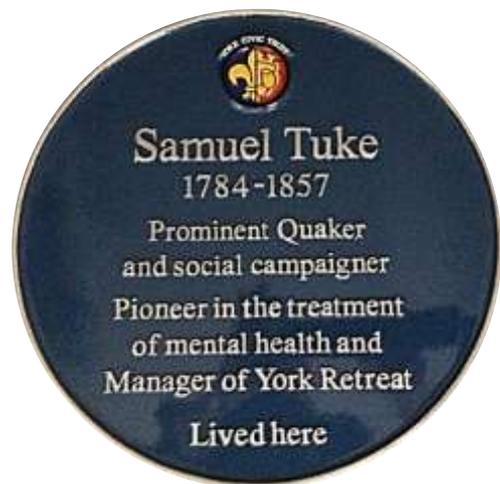


IMAGE OF BLUE PLAQUE
Credit – York Civic Trust

York Civic Trust

York Civic Trust is a membership organisation open to all who wish to protect and enhance York's architectural and cultural heritage, to champion good design and to advance the high place which York holds amongst the cities of the world. Founded in 1946, it has the key objectives of “Promoting Heritage—Shaping Tomorrow” at the heart of its work. Over the years the York Civic Trust has put up over a hundred information plaques to the places and people of York and continues to do so today in collaboration with its City Enhancement Fund, with the aims to preserve, restore, enrich, enhance and sustain the centre of York.

For further details, contact

David Fraser Chief Executive York Civic Trust

davidfraser@yorkcivictrust.co.uk

01904 655543 or 07860 706282

Biography of Samuel Tuke & the Tuke Family

By Dr Susan Grace (York Civic Trust Historian)

Samuel Tuke, a well-known Quaker philanthropist in nineteenth-century York, is widely acknowledged to have made significant contributions to national and even international debates about the treatment of mentally ill patients.

Samuel Tuke (1784-1857) was born in York and was part of the dynasty that was the Tuke family. He was the grandson of William Tuke, and the son of Henry Tuke. William had founded The Retreat in York in 1796. The Retreat was a home for “Friends (Quakers) deprived of their use of reason.” A number of members of the Tuke family contributed to changed thinking about the treatment of mental health patients. This was a legacy that lasted well into the twentieth century. It is therefore difficult to talk of Samuel without first summarising the work of his grandfather, William, for it was his work that laid the ground for Samuel’s contribution.

William Tuke was born in York on 24th March 1732. His family was a leading Quaker family in the City and ran a successful tea and coffee business which had been started by his mother Mary a few years prior to his birth. In 1755 William took over the sole running of this business from her but he was also very heavily involved in philanthropic work within the City. William married Elizabeth Hoyland at twenty and had five children by his first wife and three children by his second wife, Esther Maud.

In 1790 Hannah Mills died in the York Lunatic Asylum in appalling conditions. For the next four years William Tuke and other Quakers, including his son Henry and, the then well-known grammarian, Lindley Murray, set about trying to redress this situation. William collected donations, debated the way forward, and with local Quakers and doctors set up the York Retreat in 1796. The Retreat pioneered the removal of “inmates” chains; provided decent food and offered what we would now call therapeutic regimes: the mentally ill were treated as equal human beings to whom respect and humanity should be accorded. William Tuke was suspicious of the medical profession of the day but was sufficiently open minded to investigate their claims for treating mental illness. With his encouragement, the first visiting physician to the Retreat, Dr Fowler and his successors, made a trial of the various medical treatments available and found them sorely lacking in success. The resultant approach was known as ‘Moral Treatment’ and was seen, in the UK, to be revolutionary at the time (although Pinel in Paris and others in England were contemporaneously working along the same lines).

Initially reaction was cynical to this alternative form of treatment for the mentally ill. Nonetheless, within two years a French physician, de la Rive, brought attention to the Retreat on the Continent and it eventually become famous as a model of good treatment. William’s son, Henry (1755- 1814) and his grandson Samuel (1784-1857), continued the work. Samuel’s *Description of the Retreat*, (1813) written at William’s request, was critical in contemporary debates on the reforms of “madhouses” at the time. His great grandson, Daniel Hack Tuke (1827-1895), went on to write *A Manual of Psychological Medicine* in 1858. The work of William and his

dynasty was cited in psychiatric training into the twentieth century and the Retreat continues as a mental hospital today.

In 1823 a memorial of William Tuke was produced by the York publisher, W.Alexander and Son. This gives us a valuable insight into the immense contribution of William into charitable activity in York and the wider world. It begins by saying that such testimonies are not customary but the death of William Tuke was worthy of such an honour. The author says that William's early life was unremarkable but that by 25 years old he was "deeply humbled under a sense of his transgressions." The account remarks upon his increased commitment to the Society of Friends and his activities within that organisation. We are told that he expressed himself with firmness but having stated his views he would concur with the Society's judgement with cheerfulness.

We are told that his house was open and that he approached his friends for charitable donations where they could afford it and that he set a good example in this himself. He was interested in promoting schools; the Retreat; the abolition of the slave trade and the spread of the scriptures both at home and abroad. We are told that he was sympathetic, a useful member of society and a comfort to relation and friends. He was, according to the author exemplary in his conduct in both private and public. We are told that even in blindness and frailness he continued to attend religious meetings. The Memorial is signed by a considerable number of York Quakers. We must, of course, interpret this Memorial within the context and purpose for which it was written, but its very existence is evidence of William Tuke's good name amongst this particular group. This prodigious charity work was continued by Samuel and other members of the Tuke family.

William's son Henry continued to develop the family tea and coffee business and wrote a large number of Quaker books. He set up book shops and a printers' company, publishing over 200 Quaker works. He died in 1814 at the age of 59 and when Samuel was only 30.

From a young age, Henry's son, Samuel worked with his grandfather, William, in multiple charitable activities to consolidate and continue the work. Samuel had been enrolled in a Quaker girl's school initially but went to the Quaker school, Ackworth in 1792. He was then educated at George Blaxland's School in 1797 in Hitchin, Hertfordshire. After finishing there Samuel worked as a "Tea Merchant of York & London" in the family firm which he saw develop well into the middle of the nineteenth century. He lived at St. Saviourgate, York and then in Lawrence Street, York. In 1810 Samuel married Priscilla Hack and they had 13 children.

Samuel took "vigorous action" to raise local subscriptions for the new Retreat in 1813. He worked as its Manager and continued the work of his grandfather and father, helping to publicise the term 'moral treatment,' and, in particular, became known for his *Description of the Retreat* published in 1813.

In 1841 *The Statistics of the Retreat; consisting of A Report and Tables exhibiting the experience of that Institution for the Insane; from its establishment in 1796 to 1840* was published in Samuel Tuke's name when he was Treasurer and a member of the Management Committee. Samuel was Treasurer between 1820 and 1852. His preface finishes by saying that he hopes this publication will promote the exchange of this type of information from similar institutions. What would now be called 'data sharing' was a popular pre-occupation at this time and according to historian Anne Digby Samuel helped open up the state of asylums to public scrutiny. A similar

exercise of his was the publication of a volume about another asylum, Wakefield. (*Plans, elevations, sections and a description of the pauper lunatic asylum erected at Wakefield, 1819*). It is evident that he was involved at every level in the running of these institutions.

In the 1841 volume we are told that the Retreat had been opened 44 years at this point and that it was situated half a mile out of the city, “affording excellent air and water.” In the days of cholera and beliefs about ‘miasma’ this was seen as important.

The site was, we are told, 28 acres. Samuel Tuke clearly had a practical input into the Retreat. At its design stage he recommended a provision of adjacent day rooms so that the patients had somewhere to go, other than their bedrooms, in the day time. This was a therapeutic desire but according to Anne Digby was also a “tool of moral management” which, according to Samuel Tuke, helped separate violent patients from others. He, in a letter of 1814, speaks of “as complete a system of espionage as possible” under the officer who was a “sort of head spy”, in order to control the patients.

Samuel Tuke was not slow to criticise his predecessors where he thought there had been “imperfect” treatment. But he was also sensitive to the immense difficulties of this work and in a description of the attributes of a new attendant he says they will require a good deal of “self-command and patience” and he even comments that cleaning up after patients was “frequently a very disagreeable office.”

He was practical in that he ensured inhabitants were good payers if they were not Society of Friends members and that this group was kept as a low ratio of the whole. Tuke’s driver in his work was quite clearly religious and he speaks of healing as a “divine art.” He was also a governor of the York Asylum. There is no doubt that Samuel Tuke contributed hugely to the development of mental health services, in York and the wider world, in the nineteenth century. The Retreat still provides mental healthcare for the population of York and the wider community today.

Samuel Tuke contributed to a host of other Yorkshire charitable activities. Along with Joseph Rowntree, he founded the Friends Provident Institution in 1832 in Bradford. This was a friendly society for members of the Religious Society of Friends and continues to this day with the name ‘Friends Life.’ In 1845 it became a mutual life assurance company but there is no formal link between ‘Friends Life’ and the Religious Society of Friends today.

He was heavily involved in the development of York schools. He worked as a co-founder of Lawrence Street and Hope Street schools in 1829 in York. He founded the schools with the idea of “providing bible classes and moral guidance to the young men.” He also helped start a school for untried prisoners in York Castle. Samuel visited Newgate with Elizabeth Fry and she visited the Retreat, his interests were not confined simply to York.

He was involved in extending the York Meeting House; on the Management Committees of York Gas Light company and of York Savings Bank and on various committees of York City Council. He declined an invitation to stand as MP in 1833. In his last ten years he withdrew from public life because of ill health but he had contributed massively to many institutions in York and Yorkshire and to the debate about mental ill health at a national level.

Samuel Tuke is buried in the Quaker cemetery within the hospital grounds of The Retreat in York.

Sources

William Bynum, 'Rationales for Therapy in British Psychiatry: 1780 -1835' *Medical History*,18, 1974. P.323.

A. Digby, *Madness, morality and medicine: a study of the York Retreat 1796-1914* (Cambridge University Press, 1985).

MR Glover, *The Retreat, York: an early Quaker experiment in the treatment of mental illness* (Sessions, 1984)

Andrew T. Scull, *Museums of Madness: the social organization of insanity in 19th century England* (Allen Lane, 1979).

W.K. & E.M. Sessions, *The Tukes of York* (Sessions, 1971).

Tuke, D.H. (1855) 'William Tuke, the Founder of the York Retreat.' *Journal of Psychological Medicine and Mental Pathology*, 8, 507-536.

Tuke, Samuel. *Description of the Retreat* (London: Process Press, [1813], 1996).

Tuke, Samuel, *The Statistics of the Retreat; consisting of A Report and Tables exhibiting the experience of that Institution for the Insane; from its establishment in 1796 to 1840*, (York, 1841).

K.A. Stewart, *The York Retreat in the light of the Quaker way* (Sessions, 1992).

A memorial of the York Monthly Meeting held 14th of 5th month 1823, concerning William Tuke. York 1823.

Tuke Papers, Borthwick Institute, University of York.

Sheila Wright, *Friends in York: The Dynamics of Quaker Revival 1780 -1860* (Keele University Press, 1995).

<http://www.rowntreesociety.org.uk/samuel-tuke/#sthash.i0V5EJBf.dpuf>

<http://www.rowntreesociety.org.uk/retreat-the/#sthash.WdVmTh3Q.dpuf>

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Samuel_Tuke_\(reformer\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Samuel_Tuke_(reformer))