

David Cook 56-63 on Newcastle upon Tyne and Wesley College.

Looking through the achievements of past scholars I am able to add three persons from Wesley College I came across during my time as Lord Mayor of Newcastle upon Tyne.

Firstly, **Thomas Bowman Stephenson 1839 -1912**, a Wesleyan Methodist minister and philanthropist who founded children's homes and the charity now called Action for Children. He also founded an order of deaconesses.

He was born in Newcastle upon Tyne, and attended King Edward VI Grammar School, Louth and Wesley College, Sheffield. He founded what was to become the National Children's Home in 1869. He later founded the Wesleyan Deaconesses in 1890. In 1891 he was elected President of the Methodist Conference. He was a member of the London School Board. From 1902 to 1907 he was warden of the Methodist Deaconess Training College at Ilkley, West Yorkshire.

He retired in 1907 and died in London on 6 July 1912 and is buried in City of London



*David Cook unveiling plaque to TB Stephenson, Newcastle upon Tyne 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2019*

I unveiled a commemorative plaque to Thomas Bowman at The Brunswick Methodist Chapel in Central Newcastle where he was baptised. Had I known at the time he was a pupil of Wesley College, my speech would have been somewhat different!

Secondly, Sir **William Haswell Stephenson 1836-1918**, was an English industrialist, politician, philanthropist, and Lord Mayor of Newcastle upon Tyne several times.

Stephenson was born at Throckley, near Newcastle upon Tyne, on 15 May 1836. His family were Methodists and his ancestors had been involved in John Wesley's first establishment of Methodism in the north east of England in the 1740s. He was educated at Wesley

College in Sheffield. He became a Methodist local preacher in 1859, and was a supporter of the Local Preachers' Mutual Aid Association.

During his earlier life as well as during his time as Mayor of Newcastle Upon Tyne, Stephenson lived in the manor house Throckley Hall with his wife and two daughters. Stephenson was born in the same house, then known as Throckley House, prior to its expansion in c.1850 and renaming to Throckley Hall, as it continues to stand to this day.

Stephenson was involved in his family's business, the Throckley Coal Company, and later in other local businesses including John Spencer and sons, steel manufacturers, and Airedale Mills.

He was Mayor of Newcastle upon Tyne in 1875, 1884, and 1894; Lord Mayor in 1902, 1909, 1910, and 1911; and sheriff (Deputy Lord Mayor) in 1886.



Together with his wife he endowed several early public libraries in Newcastle. In 1896 the Stephenson Library at Elswick was the first branch library in the city, built at a cost of £4,000. It became West End Leisure and Learning in 1984, later a housing office, and then West End Woman and Girls Centre. The Victoria Library in Heaton was opened in 1898; by 2001 it was no longer in use as a library and the council had proposed selling the building but after local objections it was agreed to use it as a centre for the local Muslim community. After his wife's death in 1901 Stephenson built the Lady Stephenson Library in Walker; opened in 1908 it was still in use as a library, also known as Walker Library, until it closed on 29 June 2013 and was refurbished in 2014 to form the premises of Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

In 1903, Stephenson gave the city a bronze statue of Queen Victoria by Alfred Gilbert, to commemorate 500 years of the office of Sheriff of Newcastle upon Tyne. It stands in St Nicholas Square, near Newcastle Cathedral in the city centre and is Grade II\* listed.

Stephenson was knighted on 30 June 1900 at Windsor Castle.

In October 1910, Stephenson was awarded with Newcastle upon Tyne's **Freedom of the City** award.

He was no relation to Thomas Bowman Stephenson.

Finally, **Henry Perlee Parker 1795-1873**. In 1841 Parker became drawing master at Wesley College in Sheffield, where he worked until 1847. He was a portrait and genre painter. His first work as an artist followed a brief period as tailor and coach maker and consisted of portraits and of drawings for his father's pupils to copy. Parker established himself in Plymouth as a portrait painter. He moved to Newcastle in 1815, where he became one of the region's best-known artists.



During my time as Lord Mayor, I noticed two of his works in the Mansion House, Newcastle on Tyne but I was not then aware of his connection to Wesley College!



Many thanks to David Cook for this wonderful story!

## Fancy Dress Ball in The Mansion House, Coronation of William IV

[https://artuk.org/discover/artworks/fancy-dress-ball-in-the-mansion-house-coronation-of-william-iv-57850/search/venue:the-mansion-house-newcastle-upon-tyne-4697/page/1/view\\_as/grid](https://artuk.org/discover/artworks/fancy-dress-ball-in-the-mansion-house-coronation-of-william-iv-57850/search/venue:the-mansion-house-newcastle-upon-tyne-4697/page/1/view_as/grid)

## Sandhill Wine Pant, Coronation of George IV

[https://artuk.org/discover/artworks/sandhill-wine-pant-coronation-of-george-iv-57855/search/venue:the-mansion-house-newcastle-upon-tyne-4697/page/1/view\\_as/grid](https://artuk.org/discover/artworks/sandhill-wine-pant-coronation-of-george-iv-57855/search/venue:the-mansion-house-newcastle-upon-tyne-4697/page/1/view_as/grid)