



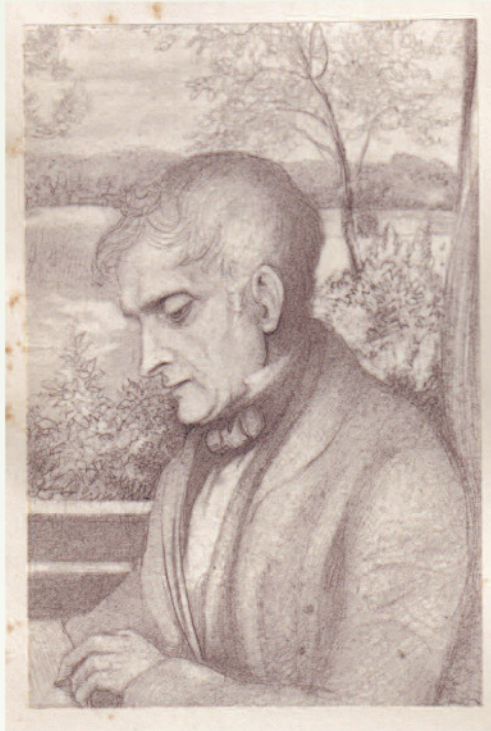
open up Milton Keynes

Tours, Trails and Trailblazers

The Wiffen Brothers of Woburn



Jeremiah Holmes Wiffen, 1792-1836
(Painting by G Hayter, 1824)



Benjamin Barron Wiffen, 1794-1867

Jeremiah and Benjamin Wiffen were born to Quaker parents in Woburn.

After attending the Friends Public School in Ackworth, Yorkshire, both returned to Woburn - Jeremiah setting up his own school and becoming Woburn Abbey's Official Librarian (1821), whilst Benjamin assisted his widowed mother with the family ironmongery business (the site of Woburn's War Memorial).

Jeremiah learnt seven languages, translated poetic works, composed songs, wrote *The Historical Memoirs of the House of Russell*, and published many poems from 1812, one of which was locally based:

*The breath of Spring is on thee, Aspley Wood!
Each shoot of thine is vigorous, from the green,
Low-drooping larch, and full unfolded bud
Of sycamore, and beech, majestic queen!...*

Aspley Wood (from
*Aonian Hours and other
Poems*, 1819)

Benjamin pursued his literary career after Jeremiah died in 1836. A campaigner against the slave trade, he collaborated with Don Luis de Usóz y Río, translating over 20 works of early Spanish reformation writers – provoking Catholic spies to visit Benjamin's home (then in Aspley Guise) to uncover who his Spanish publishing partner was! Spending 30 years in ironmongery, and a further 30 in literature, Benjamin died at the age of 73. The brothers lie side by side in the Friends' Burial Ground at Woburn Sands.

(Information collated by Paul Cox on www.mkheritage.co.uk/wsc)