



Young Heritage Hunters

Hymns and Lace



Students learn about the lace making industry



Year 1: Visit to the Cowper and Newton museum in Olney

On the town square of Olney stands The Cowper and Newton Museum. The building commemorates the life of Olney's greatest writers William Cowper (pronounced Cooper) and John Newton. The museum was originally William Cowper's house.

The museum has an extensive collection of lace to celebrate the town's lace making heritage. Lace makers were poor artisans who worked long hours. They were paid by the piece and would sing rhymes to help them keep up their work.

John Newton was famous for his hymn writing and his work campaigning against the slave trade.



John Newton writer of the Olney Hymns

During his time in Olney he wrote his most famous hymn 'Amazing Grace' which is still sung today. He lived from 24 July 1725 to 21 December 1807. In his early life he sailed on ships many of which were slave ships. He converted to Christianity in 1748 after he was caught in a violent storm and prayed for help. The storm died down and he arrived home in safety. He tried for many years to be accepted into the priesthood and was sent to Olney to be a curate. This is where he met Cowper and together they wrote many hymns. In 1779 he went to London to be a priest. It was there that he joined the campaign to abolish the slave trade.

To find out more about the Cowper and Newton museum visit:

www.cowperandnewtonmuseum.org.uk

