

The Streets of York

Do you live in Grey, Howick or George Streets?



Henry George Grey, Viscount Howick and 3rd Earl Grey (1892-1894), entered parliament in 1826. In 1830, when his father the 2nd Earl became prime minister, he was made Under-Secretary of State for War and the Colonies. This gave him responsibility for Britain's colonial possessions including Australia.

He shared the views of Edward Gibbon Wakefield on questions of land and emigration, and resigned in 1834 dissatisfied that slave emancipation was made gradual instead of immediate. In 1835 he entered Lord Melbourne's cabinet as Secretary at War, and effected some valuable administrative reforms, especially by improving conditions for British troops in India.

He became Earl Grey in 1844 on the death of his father and Colonial Secretary in 1846, successfully dealing with a series of arduous problems. He was the first minister to proclaim that the colonies were to be governed for their own benefit and not for the mother countries; the first to accord them limited self-government and the first to introduce free trade in relations with Great Britain and Ireland. Grey was a strong advocate for the transportation of convicts, and introduced the ticket of leave system, which gave York its workforce.

In 1848 Grey was elected to the New South Wales Legislative Council representing the City of Melbourne despite never visiting the colony; his seat was declared vacant in 1850 due to his non-attendance. This election was a protest against rule from Sydney and in 1850 Grey introduced the Australian Colonies Government Act which separated the district from New South Wales to become the colony of Victoria.

In 1832 Lord Grey married Maria, daughter of Sir Joseph Copley, 3rd Baronet of Sprotborough. They had no children. He was succeeded in the earldom by his nephew, Albert Grey (born 1851). His name was applied to both Howick Street and Grey Street and perhaps to George Street as well. Howick Street was once the site of the York Rechabite Hall (1878-1938), The York Engineering and Agricultural Instrument Company (Hasforth's & Smiths) which made stump jump ploughs, wagons and farm gates(1910s), and the Salvation Army Barracks.



Rechabite Hall 1930s

In the 1940s and 1950s it was proposed to resume Howick Street for educational purposes....the idea rejected due to costs and the close proximity of the school to local businesses.