

Richard Grainger and Graingertown



Grainger portraits

Your sources

Three pictures of Grainger and one of Rachel Grainger

Read this: Richard Grainger lived to be 63 years old. We know from portraits what he looked like at different stages of his life.

Your task

1. Put the pictures of Grainger in chronological order. Guess roughly when they were painted.

2. Check these facts. Then review your choice:

Richard was born in October 1797.

He started his own building firm in 1816.

He married Rachel Arundale in 1821.

He oversaw the building of the town centre from 1830-37.

Rachel died in 1842 while giving birth to their thirteenth child.

John died in July 1861.

3. Look at the portrait of Rachel Grainger then answer this question:

If this was one of a pair, which portrait of Richard would it go with?

Richard Grainger and Graingertown



Richard Grainger's childhood home

Your sources

Engraving, photograph and map

Read this: Richard Grainger was the son of a poor widow. He grew up on High Friar Lane just inside the high walls that enclosed the old town.

Your task

1. Look at the map and find the line of the old town wall. See if you recognise any streets where it used to be.
2. Look at the two images on your sheet. Then answer these questions:
 - What did High Friar Lane look like when Richard was growing up?
 - What would you find in this area now?

Richard Grainger and Graingertown

Richard Grainger's work

Your sources

Artefacts (chisels, planes, ruler) and images

Read this: Richard left school at 14 to train as a carpenter. Once he had learned his trade he set up a builder's business with his brother and started getting orders to build new houses. Sadly his brother died young, but Richard carried on the business and became very successful.

Your task

Look at tools Grainger would have used and the images of builders from his time and answer these questions:

- How were these tools used?
- What else might have been used by builders?



Richard Grainger and Graingertown

Richard Grainger's town centre



Your sources

Maps and images

Read this: When Richard Grainger was starting his building business two hundred years ago, Newcastle was very different. In the area where our city centre is now, there was a convent and a grand house called Anderson Place. Richard found an opportunity to buy up this area of land. He persuaded the town council to let him clear it for housing, businesses and leisure facilities. Then he employed architects to design buildings and used his own firm to build a whole new town centre. It took less than 10 years!

Your tasks

1. Look at the map of 19th century Newcastle. Then look at the drawings of Grainger Market, Grey's Monument and the Theatre Royal, all built by Grainger.
2. Find these places on the map.
3. Compare them with the photos of the same places now. Then answer this question:
What's the same, what's different about this area now?
4. Spot other buildings around them that must have been built by Grainger (look for similar ones).

Richard Grainger and Graingertown

Grainger Market



Your sources

Painting of The Banquet for the Opening of the Grainger Market, 1835; Photograph of a present day stall in Grainger Market.

Read this:

Richard Grainger's plan for a new town centre included a covered market, with separate areas for meat and for fruit and vegetables. He knew people would like to shop under one roof inside a beautiful building.

Your task

1. Look at the painting carefully. Then answer these questions:

- How many guests do you think were at the banquet?
- Why was the opening of a market such an important occasion?
- Who would have been invited? Richard and Rachel must have been there – try and spot them.

2. Grainger Market is still going strong. Look at the photograph of a modern market stall. Share what you know about the market nowadays. Is it a good place to go to? How would shopping at this stall be different from the experience in Richard's time?

Richard Grainger and Graingertown

Walking through Graingertown



1. **Old Eldon Square** is very close to where Richard Grainger was born in 1797, in High Friar Lane. High Friar Lane has disappeared but you can still find the name inside Eldon Square shopping centre. Richard built the square when his business started to go well. There were houses on each side then, but only one row of houses is left now.
2. **Higham Place** has some of the first houses built by Grainger's building firm. This was before he started on his grand project to give Newcastle a new town centre.
3. **The Theatre Royal** was built by Grainger and so was the whole of **Grey Street**. At the top of the street is a monument to Earl Grey, who was a famous prime minister in Richard's time. Nearby is the **Central Arcade**. It links Grey Street and Market Street.
4. **Grainger Market** was one of the first parts of the new town centre to be finished. On the pavement outside is a huge plaque reminding everyone of what Grainger did.
5. No prizes for guessing who **Grainger Street** is named after! St John's Church has a special memorial to Richard inside.
6. On **Waterloo Street** there is a fountain, paid for by Richard's daughter Rachel, in memory of her parents.
7. **Clayton Street** is named after Richard's good friend John Clayton, who helped him plan the new town centre. John also helped when Richard had money troubles and could not afford to live in Elswick Hall. Richard then moved his family and his business to this street, where he died in July 1861.

Thanks, Richard, for leaving us 'a city of palaces' (as one impressed visitor described our city).



Richard Grainger and Graingertown

Grainger and St James'

Your sources

Pictures of St James'

Read this:

In 1830 it was decided to build a new church in Benwell, to be called St James'. John Buddle gave some of his land for the church to be built on. One of Newcastle's best architects, John Dobson, designed it. The church was opened as a place of worship in 1833. As more and more people came to live in Benwell, Scotswood and Elswick, this became the parish church for thousands of people, some of them rich like the Grainger and Sowerby families, and some very poor, like the Ryans. The graveyard was often chosen as the burial place of important people in the city.

Your task

Look at the pictures of what the church looked like in 1833 and in later years, when more parts were added to it. Then answer these questions:

- How is it different from nowadays?
- Why do you think it was made bigger?
- Why was a spire added?

Richard Grainger and Graingertown



Grainger's later life

Your sources

Drawing, photographs and maps

Read this:

Richard was a land developer as well as a builder. After developing the town centre he decided to buy Elswick Hall and the land around it. This was just outside Newcastle in his time. He brought his wife Rachel and his children to live there in 1839. Richard had lots of ideas for developing Elswick but he ran into money problems before he could make them happen. Then soon after, his wife Rachel died along with their thirteenth child.

He gave up his plans for Elswick and moved back into Newcastle, to Clayton Street which was one of the streets he had built earlier in his career. He had his office there too. He continued to run a building business until he died from a heart attack in July 1861, very soon after the 1861 census had been taken.

Your task

Look at the early drawing and the aerial photograph of Elswick Hall (taken when it was in a bad state and about to be pulled down). Then look at the maps showing where it was. Look at the photographs of Clayton Street and the map showing where it still is. Then answer these questions:

- Why do you think Richard wanted to live at Elswick Hall?
- How would it have been different living in Clayton Street from Elswick Hall? Which house would you prefer to live in?