

Walk along Grove Road and look into the park through the gap in the wall by the large tree behind Queen



Victoria House, at the top of Redland Hill, and you will see a grey stone obelisk. The large redbrick building, the subject of last month’s article, is currently the UK offices of the international consulting firm Parsons Brinckerhoff. Bristol entrepreneur Jacob Wilcox Ricketts, was an ardent admirer of Princess Charlotte and of her support for the Whig parliamentary party who opposed the Tories. Upon the Princess’s death in childbirth in 1817 he commissioned this memorial obelisk for the grounds of his house, St. Vincent Lodge. Although his house was demolished in 1886 by the new owner Rev Wilkinson to build his large redbrick school, the obelisk survived. It was designed by Turnbull & Rumley and built by Samuel Palmer for £520 which included engraving a memorial plaque. The ‘original’ inscription, as shown here complete with idiosyncratic capitalisation and the 18th century ‘long s’ (f)

reads as follows:

**“This Obelisk was erected by
JACOB WILCOX RICKETTS
to perpetuate the memory of
HER ROYAL HIGHNESS
The much lamented and beloved
PRINCESS CHARLOTTE
of WALES and SAXE COBOURG, Daughter of
HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS THE PRINCE REGENT
and Consort of his Serene Highness PRINCE LEOPOLD.
This most illustrious Princess, the brightness of whose
Character surpasses all transcript.
WAS BORN Jan 6th 1796 - Married May 2nd 1816 AND DIED Nov 6th 1817.
Thus were the Vine and Branch of true Whiggism, and
Britannia’s most blooming expectation by one irresistible stroke together cut off.”**

There the plaque and monument remained until the school and grounds were bought and donated by E P



Wills, to become Bristol’s first convalescent hospital. Opened and renamed by Queen Victoria during her 1899 Diamond Jubilee visit, Princess Charlotte’s memorial plaque was removed and replaced by one lauding Queen Victoria, where it remained until 1934 when Charlotte’s plaque was found in a Park street antique shop, (probably Dembo’s, Griffin’s or George’s). The plate matched the space and was refitted but I wonder what happened to Queen Victoria’s commemorative plaque, and what was the laudatory wording? Maybe now it in turn languishes in a dusty antique shop.