

# Catherine Gurney

Photo credit: St George's Police Trust

Plaque number 67, at the St Andrew's Police Treatment Centre on Harlow Moor Road.



It is to **Catherine Gurney**. She was born in 1848 and was a member of the wider wealthy and influential Gurney family of Quakers. In 1883 she founded the Christian Police Association and opened London's first Police Institute as a drop-in centre. It is this work for which she is noted, although she was also a prominent campaigner in the cause of temperance. She established police convalescent homes and orphanages, paid for through her fund-raising efforts. Here in Harrogate, an orphanage was established in a former private school as the Northern Police Orphanage in 1898. The convalescent home was in the same property until St Andrew's opened in 1903. In 1911, the year of the census, St Andrew's was looking after seventeen police officers, almost all of them from big city forces and all a little older and married. They were cared for by thirteen staff. At the orphanage were seventy-five boys and girls looked after by eleven staff. Those of school-age walked down to Western School on Cold Bath Road every day, whilst the older girls trained in housework. Among the boys it was recorded that sixteen-year-old Joseph Lowe had tuberculosis.

Gurney served as World Superintendent of Work Among Police and was Honorary Secretary of the International Police Christian Association. The Gurney Fund still provides for the children of deceased or medically retired officers. The Harrogate orphanage, later known as St George's House, closed and was demolished in 1976 but St Andrew's has continued its work. She was awarded the OBE for her charitable services. She died in 1930 and was buried at All Saints, Harlow Hill.

Acknowledgements: St George's Police Trust

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