

Appendix 3 – Pen portrait of Sir Robert Peel

Sir Robert Peel, 2nd Baronet

(5 February 1788 – 2 July 1850)

Peel was a British Conservative statesman who served twice as Prime Minister of the United Kingdom (1834–35 and 1841–46) and twice as Home Secretary (1822–27 and 1828–30). He is regarded as the father of modern British policing, owing to his founding of the Metropolitan Police Service leading to a new type of officer known in tribute to him as "bobbies" and "peelers". Peel was one of the founders of the modern Conservative Party.

He played a central role in making free trade a reality and set up a modern banking system. His government's major legislation included the Mines and Collieries Act 1842, the Income Tax Act 1842, the Factories Act 1844 and the Railway Regulation Act 1844 join with Whigs and Radicals to repeal the Corn Laws led to his resignation as Prime Minister in 1846.

In the 20th century Peel was idealized in heroic terms. - *The Great Conservative patriot... a conciliator who put nation before party and established consensus politics.*

The Sir Robert Peel Statue

Peel Park, Bradford 3, Grade II listed, Bronze, Sculptor- William Behnes

Background

Peel was popular with local industrialists for encouraging free trade which benefited the textile industry. In 1850 funding was raised from Sir Robert Milligan, Sir Titus Salt, Forbes and Company and by numerous other private subscriptions to create Peel Park.

Created in 1855, the Peel statue was the first public statue erected in Bradford and was originally located in what was Peel Place on Leeds Road, but re-erected post 1926 in Peel Park.

The Statue Today

Following the Black Lives Matter campaign and the call to remove statues linked with slavery, such as the statue depicting slave-trader, Edward Colston, the focus shifted to Sir Robert Peel and a petition emerged to remove the statue celebrating him in Peel Park.

The initial petition also called for Peel Park itself to be renamed. But a counter-petition, to keep the statue, was quickly created in response . There were 125 signatures on the petition to remove the statue, while 1,308 people signed to say they want to keep it, as of 5pm on Thursday, June 11. The initial petition was then removed and the petitioner said: "I've decided to delete the petition and come up with another way to make a change."

In fact, Sir Robert Peel (second baronet) is often confused with his father (first baronet), who shared the same name and benefited (through the use of cotton in his textile mills) from the slave trade. The first baronet raised a petition in opposition to the Foreign Slave Trade Abolition Bill which he saw as a threat to the cotton industry and merchants' trade interests.

Whilst Peel's father campaigned fervently against ending of slavery, it is not evident what his son's view was. However, it is clear that the younger Sir Robert Peel's education privilege,

power and position as an MP were funded by cash generated through his father's businesses which benefited from slavery.