

Samuel Johnson



The Samuel Johnson Museum stands in the centre of Lichfield, a town which remained close to Johnson's heart throughout his life. Best known for his Dictionary of the English Language, Johnson spent the first 27 years of his life in the large, imposing house which overlooks Market Square, frequently returning until shortly before his death in 1784.

Ce musée se trouve en centre-ville de Lichfield, une ville qui restait toujours dans les pensées de Dr Johnson pendant toute sa vie. Il est bien connue pour son dictionnaire de la langue anglaise et jusqu'à l'âge de 27 ans a vécu dans la grande maison qui donne sur la place du marché. Il y revenait souvent jusqu'à sa mort en 1784



The old building which houses the museum, contains a varied mix of displays, reconstructed rooms and audio-visual media. Visitors are taken through the colourful life and major achievements of Lichfield's most famous son, from troubled childhood, through literary obscurity and financial poverty, to world renown and success.

Dans le vieux bâtiment où se trouve le musée de la vie docteur Johnson, il y a toutes sortes d'expositions. Comme visiteur on passe par le vie multicolore du fils le plus connu de Lichfield. De son enfance difficile, et la pauvreté, jusqu'à son succès.

"I lately took my friend Boswell and showed him genuine civilised life in an English provincial town. I turned him loose at Lichfield."

Sam. Johnson

JOHNSON'S LIFE LA VIE DE JOHNSON



Samuel Johnson was born on 18th September, 1709 in his father's house in Breadmarket Street.

Il est né le 18 septembre, 1709 chez son père dans Breadmarket Street, à Lichfield.

His early years were difficult - his parents had by financial problems - but from the books in his father's shop he found comfort and instruction, preparing him for his role as the century's greatest man of letters.

Il y avait des problèmes pendant son enfance, ses parents avaient des ennuis financières, mais il a trouvé la sécurité et l'instruction dans les livres qu'il trouvait dans le magasin de son père.

His education at Lichfield and Stourbridge Grammar Schools gave him an excellent introduction to classical literature, but a brief period at Pembroke College, Oxford, was brought to a hurried conclusion by financial difficulties and increasing depression.

Son éducation aux lycées de Lichfield et de Stourbridge lui a introduit à la littérature classique, mais son temps à Pembroke College, Oxford, a été vite terminé à cause du manque d'argent, et de la dépression.

Unable to find schoolteaching work in the Midlands he drifted into a writing career in journalism and translation in Birmingham and London.

Il n'a pas pu trouvé un emploi comme professeur, donc il a commencé à écrire des articles pour les journaux, et aussi à faire les traductions à Birmingham et à Londres.

It was in Birmingham that he met Elizabeth Porter whom he was later to marry. She was twenty years older than Samuel, with three grown-up children from a previous marriage.

C'était à Birmingham qu'il a rencontré Elizabeth Porter, avec qui il s'est marié. Elle avait 20 ans de plus que Samuel et trois enfants de son premier mariage.



An attempt by Samuel and Elizabeth to set up a school outside Lichfield failed and led to the couple's removal to London.

Ils ont essayé d'ouvrir une école à Lichfield mais ils ont dû la fermer et ils ont déménagé à Londres.



Following several years of hack-work writing in London, Johnson was offered the major task of compiling an English Dictionary, a project which brought him fame though little financial reward. His years of struggle ended with the award of a government pension of £300 a year.

Alors il a fait toutes sortes de travaux à Londres, mais enfin on lui a offert le projet duquel il est bien connu. On lui a demandé d'écrire le premier dictionnaire anglais. Il a pu toucher une retraite de £300 par an.

In the later years of his life he became, to some extent, public property, being sought by the famous and the obscure for his advice on literary and worldly problems.



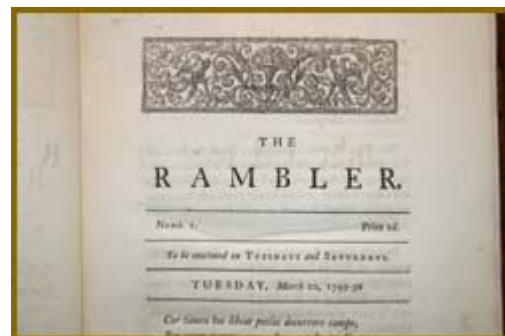
The backbone of these years was his friendship with Henry and Hester Thrale, in whose houses he found comfort and a family in whose affairs he could interest himself. The conviviality of this part of his life, however - reflected in his friendships with men and women like James Boswell, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Oliver Goldsmith, Fanny Burney - masked a fear of solitude and mental anguish.

His last years were sad, being characterised by illness, the death of his close friends, and the breakdown of his friendship with Hester Thrale. Although a profoundly religious man, he was fearful of his fate in the afterlife, and only on his death bed did he start to come to terms with his death. He died a national celebrity, and was buried in Westminster Abbey.

Ces dernières années étaient très tristes, il était souvent malade, et plusieurs de ses meilleurs amis son morts. Et il avait toujours peur de la mort. Il est mort célèbre et il a été enterré dans l'Abbaye de Westminster, à Londres.

"Characters should never be given by an historian, unless he knew the people whom he describes, or copies from those who knew them"

Sam: Johnson



His "Rambler" and "Idler" essays reflect a deep interest in life, especially the way in which men and women should behave towards each other. As a critic and a scholar, his work on Shakespeare and other writers has contributed to our understanding of their works and their lives.

Johnson's political journalism reflects his belief that moral values cannot be disassociated from political actions. His travel book on Scotland, "A Journey to the Western Isles" is a compassionate and informative account of the country after the Jacobite rebellions and their aftermath. His poetry covers a wide range of moods, from philosophical reflections to light hearted banter and parody.



His most famous book, "A Dictionary of the English Language" gives a profound insight into the language of his day and was the basis for later English dictionaries.

To many people, Johnson's personality is based on the biographies and memoirs of close friends like Boswell and Hester Thrale. Through their work we feel we know Johnson as well as we know our friends, with all their oddities, their irritating features, their charms.

Johnson is the most human of English writers, overcoming mental and physical problems , and containing within him contradictory features. Through his wisdom, his courage, his humour, he has become a secular saint for the millions of people throughout the English-speaking world who read his work and that of his biographers.

Sam: Johnson