

JOHN BOWRING died 8th May 1805

Memorial 19

MARGARET BOWRING died 27th January

North face

ANN BOWRING died 8th March 1839

John Bowring was the eldest son of Benjamin Bowring, and Elizabeth, nee Drewe, a widow, formerly Hole. He was born 1736 in Exeter, and married Margaret Hutchings of Moretonhampstead, daughter of Walter, who was baptised 8th April 1734 at the Cross Street Presbyterian church. They had four surviving children: Jane, who was born in 1759, Elizabeth, born 1762, Ann, born 1766, and Charles born 1769. John was apprenticed to his father, a fuller, and admitted a freeman of Exeter on 7th February 1761. He continued the family business of trading and exporting in wool. He was a staunch supporter of the American colonists, and particularly those held prisoner in Exeter during the time of the War of Independence.

JOHN HUTCHINGS died September 1816

East face

John Hutchings was a banker with the City Bank in Exeter. It seems likely that he was related to Margaret Bowring, whose maiden name was Hutchings. He left his entire estate to his nephew, Charles Hutchings.

SARAH JANE ANN BOWRING died October 1828

South face

MARY ANN BOWRING died ?

EDWIN BOWRING died May 1807

EMILY BOWRING died 1812

JOHN BOWRING died ?

Sarah Jane Ann Bowring was the wife of Charles, the son of John and Margaret. She was the daughter of Rev Thomas Lane, who was the Vicar of St Ives in Cornwall when she was born in 1770, and his wife Margaret. Charles was a fuller, involved in the making of cloth, like most of his family before him. He lived at Little Larkbeare in Holloway Street, a property attached to workshops, with rack fields adjoining, that he rented from the Barings of Larkbeare House. He became a freeman of Exeter by succession from his father, after he had died, in 1806. Sir Thomas Baring purchased the St Leonard's estate of his cousin Sir John Baring in 1817. In 1822 Charles Bowring purchased Little Larkbeare from him.

Charles and Sarah had a large family of nine children. Two of their four sons and two of their five daughters died young. Sarah and is buried here, with two of their children - Edwin, an infant, the twin of Charles junior, and Emily who died aged 10.

Their daughter Margaret married Dr George Kenrick, a son of Rev Timothy Kenrick, one time minister of George's Meeting, in 1822. Sadly she died in September 1824, aged only 31, and is also buried at the burial ground.

On the 1841 census Charles Bowring is recorded as aged 72, living at Little Larkbeare with his unmarried children Ann, Lucy Jane and Charles junior. Charles died in 1856, after the closure of the burial ground, so sadly was not buried with his wife. It is interesting that vaults were not apparently re-opened to inter additional family members after the yard was closed in 1854.

The Mary Ann and John who are commemorated on the south face of the monument cannot be identified because their dates are missing.

John, the eldest son of Charles and Sarah, was born at Little Larkbeare in St Leonard's, Exeter in 1792. His early education was at the Unitarian School in Moretonhampstead. He went to work as a clerk for Milford & Co, bankers, in London. He was an extremely gifted man who travelled widely abroad, and had a very distinguished career. He was a gifted linguist who spoke a wide range of languages, was an expert in European poetry, and a writer of poetry and hymns himself. He was also an economist, who first contributed to The Westminster Review, then became the editor in 1825. He campaigned for parliamentary reform, Catholic emancipation, and education for the masses. In 1832 he became the Foreign Secretary of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association. He was MP for Kilmarnock from 1835 - 37, then for Bolton from 1841- 9, and in 1836 investigated the state of commerce in various European countries for the Government. He published the Collected Works of Jeremy Bentham in 1843, having been his Literary Executor. In 1845/6 he led a group of entrepreneurs in establishing an iron works at Maesteg in Glamorgan to provide employment. He was interested in decimalisation, and influential in the issue of the florin coin from 1849. In 1849 he became British Consul in Canton, then Governor of Hong Kong in 1854, and was knighted in 1854. He was married twice, having a large family with his first wife. He died in 1872 at Claremont, his house in Exeter, very near to where he was born.

Some sources:

Bowring, Sir J & Bowring, L B (1877) Autobiographical Recollections of Sir John Bowring.

Oxford Dictionary of National Biography online (2004 – 14).

Rowe, M M & Jackson, A M (1973) Exeter Freemen 1266 – 1967.

Wardle. A A, (1938) Benjamin Bowring and his Descendants.

B G Coe December 2014