

The name on this memorial is no longer fully legible and only shows Jane Cran____. The 1894 transcription gives the full name and date - Jane Cranch 3 February 1787, 50 years. The burial records show that Jane was buried on 6 February.¹ The Exeter Flying Post reported the death on 8 February 1787 and confirmed that Jane was the wife of Christopher Cranch. Jane Hutchings had married Christopher Cranch on 18 April 1765 at St John's Church in Exeter.²

No record for a baptism in Exeter has been found for Jane Hutchings. It is possible that she was born in Moretonhampstead the daughter of Walter Hutchings and baptised at Cross Meeting House in the town on 18 April 1736.³ She would then be the niece of Honor Hutchings who married William Gifford (see Memorial Number 1) and the sister of Margaret Hutchings who married John Bowring (see Memorial number 19). Another link with Moretonhampstead is that Susanna Bowring was one of the witnesses at Christopher and Jane's wedding. The other witness was Christopher's father, Andrew Cranch. Susanna Bowring may have been Nathaniel Bowring's wife who was baptised Susanna White on 9 February 1735 in Moretonhampstead.⁴ If this was the case Susanna and Jane may have grown up together in Moretonhampstead and been friends there before moving to Exeter.

Christopher Cranch was the cousin of Richard Cranch (see Memorial 11). Christopher and Jane were married on 18th April 1765 at St John's Church in Exeter. This was Jane's parish church and Christopher, who was working as a Fuller, was living in Holy Trinity Parish.⁵ The Cranch family were related by marriage to Abigail (Smith) Adams the wife of the second president of the United States of America, John Adams, who visited the family in Exeter during the summer of 1787. This visit is described in a letter written by Abigail Adams to her sister Mary Smith Cranch. John and Abigail Adams stayed in Exeter from Saturday until Monday afternoon. Abigail describes meeting Christopher's father, Andrew "*...the old Gentleman came, with some difficulty, for he is very lame and infirm... I think he must have had a paralytic stroke as his Speach is thick. He has not been able to do any business for a Number of years, and I believe he is chiefly supported by his son, who is in the clothiers business with Mr Bowering.*"⁶ Andrew died in December 1787 aged 75 years, the same age as his son, Christopher, when he died in 1808. Both are buried in the Dissenters Graveyard.⁷

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¹ RG4/965 Exeter, Bow Meeting (Presbyterian) Births, Baptisms & Burials accessed on findmypast.co.uk on 4.9.2017

² Exeter St John, Devon Marriages accessed on findmypast.co.uk on 18 May 2017

³ RG4/444 Moretonhampstead Cross Meeting (Presbyterian) Baptisms accessed on findmypast.co.uk on 04.09.2017

⁴ moretonhampsted.org.uk accessed on 30.08.2017

⁵ Devon Marriages, Exeter, St John, South West Heritage Trust, accessed on findmypast.co.uk on 23.12.2017

⁶ founders.archives.gov; Abigail Adams to Mary Smith Cranch, 15 September 1787

⁷ RG4/0965; Exeter, Bow Meeting (Presbyterian), 1687-1823 accessed on ancestry.co.uk on 29.12.2017