

JOHN BOWRING died 19 March 1774

Memorial 67

MARY BOWRING died 27 July 1802

BENJAMIN BOWRING died 9 September 1836

SARAH BOWRING died 30 October 1817

Very few records have been found for the four members of the Bowring family commemorated on this memorial. According to Arthur C Wardle, John Bowring was born in Chulmleigh in 1706 the son of John and Joan Bowring (nee Cocke).¹ This is up to two years before the date suggested by the memorial which says that John Bowring died in 1774 aged 66. The family were non-conformists. John's Grandfather, John Bowring, "...held strong dissenting views, and was one of the first persons in England permitted to hold Nonconformist religious worship within his household..."² John (born 1706) married Mary Manning in Chulmleigh on 2 May 1733.³ John died in 1774 aged 66 while Mary lived to be 92 years old. She was buried on 1 August 1802.⁴

John and Mary had at least three children - John, Samuel and Benjamin who, as adults, traded with the American colonies. John is said to have married, Ramsene, a daughter of an Indian chief after his ship was wrecked off the Georgian coast. She is reported to have died in Chulmleigh in 1783 while he was drowned in the Bay of Honduras.⁵

Samuel Bowring married Sarah Pope on 27 October 1772 at St Leonards Church in Exeter. She was a minor and married with the consent of her guardian Robert Kennaway.⁶ After their marriage they moved to London and Samuel ran his business from there. "He owned the ship *Indian Chief*, 230 tons, built in Nova Scotia, 1789, and employed in the North American trade."⁷ Samuel died, aged 82, on 5 February 1829 in Stockwell, Surrey. He was buried on 14 February at New Gravel Pit Meeting House, Paradise Fields, Hackney, London.⁸

Benjamin, the youngest son, married Sarah Bown at St Mary Major in Exeter on 5 November 1775.⁹ Their first son, James, was baptised privately at St Mary Major on 20 August 1776 and was received into the church on 29 April 1777.¹⁰ Their second son, Valentine was baptised privately at St Mary Major in Exeter on 22 February 1778 and then received into the

¹ Wardle Arthur C (1938) "Benjamin Bowring and his Descendants" Hodder & Stoughton, London, Page 24.

² Wardle Arthur C (1938) "Benjamin Bowring and his Descendants" Hodder & Stoughton, London, Page 23.

³ Chulmleigh Parish Register, accessed on findmypast.co.uk on 1.9.2017

⁴ RG4/965 Exeter, Bow Meeting (Presbyterians): Births, Baptisms & Burials accessed on

⁵ Wardle Arthur C (1938) "Benjamin Bowring and his Descendants" Hodder & Stoughton, London, Page 24.

⁶ Devon Marriages, South West Heritage Trust, accessed on findmypast.co.uk on 2.9.2017

⁷ Wardle Arthur C (1938) "Benjamin Bowring and his Descendants" Hodder & Stoughton, London, Page 24 - 25.

⁸ RG/4/4244 England and Wales Non-Conformist Burials, accessed on findmypast.co.uk on 02.09.2017

⁹ St Mary Major, Exeter, South West Heritage Trust, Devon Marriages, accessed on findmypast.co.uk on 02.09.2017.

¹⁰ 2945A/PR/1/4 St Mary Major Register, South West Heritage Trust accessed on findmypast.co.uk on 02.09.2017

church on 5 September 1779 when his sister Sarah was baptised.¹¹ William Bell Bowring was baptised on 20 February 1781 in Exeter.¹² Sarah Bowring was buried on 4 November 1817 following her death on 30 October.¹³

Benjamin died on 9 September 1836 and was buried six days later. At the time of his death he was living in Holy Trinity Parish and his occupation was Limner - a painter especially of portraits or miniatures. The Royal Academy of Arts was founded in 1768 as a centre for teaching and exhibiting. In the 1770s records show that a Benjamin Bowring exhibited small portraits in their exhibitions. In 1775, for example, there is a small portrait (in oils) exhibited.¹⁴ The Universal Magazine in 1773 said "This being the anniversary of the institution of the Royal Academy; a general assembly of the academicians was held at Somerset-house; ... After which the premium of a Silver medal for the best drawing of an academy figure was adjudged and given to Mr Benjamin Bowring."¹⁵ Little more is known of Benjamin's work and so it has not been possible to confirm that the Benjamin Bowring on this memorial did exhibit at the Royal Academy of Arts.

Tessa Varndell (September 2017)
based on original version by B.G. Coe (2014)

¹¹ 2945A/PR/1/4 St Mary Major Register, South West Heritage Trust accessed on findmypast.co.uk on 02.09.2017

¹² England, Births & Baptisms 1538 - 1975, accessed on findmypast.co.uk on 02.09.2017

¹³ RG4/965, Exeter, Bow Meeting (Presbyterian): Births, Baptisms & Burials accessed on findmypast.co.uk 3.09.2017

¹⁴ Arnold M "Library of the Fine Arts; or Repertory of painting, Sculpture, Architecture & Engraving" (1832) Vol III, London, Page 81

¹⁵ The Universal Magazine, Volumes 52 - 53, December 10 1773, Page 330, accessed online 02.09.2017