

Elizabeth Parminter (nee Bretland) died 1835

Elizabeth Parminter (c.1758-1835)^{1,2} was a cousin of the Reverend Joseph Bretland and was remembered in his Will ...

*"I also give and bequeath to my cousin Elizabeth Parminter widow of the late John Vowler Parminter of Bideford in the County of Devon 600 pounds ..."*³

John Vowler Parminter (1739-1792) was a prominent member of George's Meeting in Exeter⁴. Elizabeth was his second wife. They were married at St Martin, Exeter on 17th December 1777⁵. The marriage was recorded in the diary of a gentleman, Samuel Curwen, who was visiting the City at the time ...

December 18th 1777: *"Cloudy, moderate. City alarmed by unexpected marriage of a Mr Parminter of 40 years of age with Betsey Bretland my old landlady's younger Dau[gh]ter but 20 years old with scarce a gown to her back; this probably would cease after 7 days ..."*⁶

Contrary to expectation the marriage did last. The first child, Richard, was born in 1779 and baptised on 8th May by Rev.Micaiah Towgood.⁷

John's parents, Richard Parminter and Rebecca Vowler were both from wealthy families and he no doubt inherited from them in his turn. His career began with an apprenticeship to his Uncle, Samuel Parminter, in Samuel's Exeter grocery business⁸. By 1787 he and Elizabeth were living in Bideford where he was listed in the Universal British Directory of 1791 as *"Salt Officer"*. Two further children were born. John Bretland Parminter in 1787 and Sophia Parminter in 1789.

John Bretland and Sophia were baptised at the Great Independent Meeting at Bideford by the Rev Samuel Lavington. John Bretland on 22nd March 1787 and Sophia on 18th November 1789. The birth register entries describe their father John as a *"Gentleman"* of Bideford and there is a small note against the entry for John Bretland *"died"*⁹.

John Vowler Parminter died in Bideford in 1792 and was buried on 12th July¹⁰.

Elizabeth moved back to Exeter with Sophia where they entered into a partnership with Sarah Bretland as *"keepers of a boarding school"*. The partnership with Sarah was dissolved in 1813¹¹ but Elizabeth and Sophia continued the business and advertised their *"Ladies' Boarding and Day-School"* in the Exeter Flying Post of 6th January 1814.

An obituary notice published in the Western Times on 4th April 1835 records Elizabeth's death on Wednesday 1st April at her home in Magdalen Street. She was buried on 8th April 1835 and the funeral was conducted by Rev Henry Acton².

Sophia continued to live in Exeter and can be traced through the census records from 1841 to 1881 living in Fair Park, St Leonards. She had an independent income and employed a servant and later a servant and a cook. In 1881 she was described as a *"Landowner and*

*Holder of Bank Stock*¹². She died on 30th December 1883, aged 94. At that time she lived at 2, Fair Park and her personal estate was valued at £3,165 5s 6d¹³.

Sophia's older brother Richard died in India in 1819. His death was reported in the Exeter Flying Post of 1st June 1820 ..

“At Vizanagram, in the East Indies, on the 16th of October last, in his 41st year, Major R. Parminter, of the 6th Native Infantry, son of the late John Vowler Parminter, Esq. of this city.”

(all web pages below accessed March/April 2017)

1. Devon Record Office: DRO 3693D/B/1 Report and account book of Dissenters' Burial Ground, 1748-1832
2. Ancestry.co.uk - Non-Conformist and Non-Parochial Registers RG4: Piece 1085
3. TheGenealogist.com 2016 - Will of Joseph Bretland - Prerogative Court of Canterbury (PCC) Wills, 1384-1858
4. Nonconformity in Exeter, 1650-1875, by Allan Brockett, 1962
5. Familysearch.org - Exeter, St Martin Parish Records
6. Journal of Samuel Curwen, Loyalist. Harvard University Press, 1972. ISBN: 9780674483804
7. Ancestry.co.uk - Non-Conformist and Non-Parochial Registers - RG4: Piece 0965
8. Ancestry.co.uk - Devon: Exeter - Freeman 1266-1967
9. TheGenealogist.com - RG4: Piece 0515
10. TheGenealogist.com – transcript of burial record in the parish of Barnstaple
11. London Gazette, 1814
12. Ancestry.co.uk – census records
13. Ancestry.co.uk - National Probate Register