

ALICE DAVIS died 25th December 1774

Memorial 49

LUCIA DAVIS died 1773/4

FRANCES ELIZABETH MORGAN died 25th February 1802

ELIZABETH DAVIS died 25th March 1801

RICHARD E DAVIS died 11th March 1802

This memorial commemorates Richard E Davis, his wife Elizabeth, two daughters who died young, and a granddaughter. Richard was born circa 1735/6, the son of another Richard, a woolcomber of Tiverton. He married Elizabeth Tozer on Christmas day in 1761 at St Stephen's church, Exeter. Richard had been the apprentice of John Tozer, mercer, almost certainly Elizabeth's father, and was made a freeman of the city on 23rd March 1761.¹ Elizabeth was born on 1st November 1734 and baptised at one of the non-conformist meeting houses in Exeter on 24th November. Richard was a mercer, woollen-draper and sometime undertaker, recorded at The Golden Ball, near the fish market, in 1789.

Richard and Elizabeth had nine children. Alice was the second child, baptised on 10th June 1764 at one of the non-conformist meeting houses in Exeter. She died on 20th December 1774 at the age of ten. After her death their last child, another daughter, was named Alice and baptised in February 1776. Lucia, who was baptised on 5th September 1773, "died in infancy", which must have been before the birth of the next daughter, who was also named Lucia, and baptised on 16th October 1774.

The second Lucia was married on 4th September 1799 at St Stephen's, Exeter to Bennet Stevenson Morgan, who was born in Bath. The following month this notice appeared in Trewman's Flying Post:

"RICHARD DAVIS, Mercer and Woollen-Draper, respectfully informs his friends and the Public, that having taken into Partnership his Son-in-Law, MR BENNET STEVENSON MORGAN, the business is now carried on under the Firm of DAVIS & MORGAN, by whom all favors will be gratefully acknowledged. Exeter, 23rd October, 1799"

Frances Elizabeth Morgan, who is also commemorated on the memorial, was the first child of Bennet and Lucia, born on 29th October 1800, and baptised at a meeting house in Exeter. She died on 25th February 1802.

¹ Rowe, M M and Jackson, A M (1973) Exeter Freeman 1266 – 1967, p 289.

Elizabeth, Richard's wife, died in March 1801, and Richard died a year later in March 1802. In his will he left bequests to his elder son Richard, including an estate in Ottery St Mary, and to his son John, "now residing in Copenhagen, Denmark". Elizabeth and Alice, his unmarried daughters, were provided for, and there were also bequests for the married daughters, Anne, Sarah and Lucia. Money was also left to his unmarried sister Elizabeth and his other sister Agness, and her children. Bequests were made to various other people, including his servants.

Bennet and Lucia's next child, Henry Lloyd Morgan, was born in November 1801, and baptised at St Paul's church in Exeter in June 1802. Within a short time Bennet and Lucia moved to London. We can track their movements by the births of subsequent children. They were living in Highbury Grove, Islington when another daughter they named Frances Elizabeth was born in 1804, followed by Clara in 1805 and Caroline in 1806. The family had moved to Bethnal Green by the time Alfred was born in 1808. The second Frances Elizabeth seems to have died too, because a daughter born in 1810 was named Frances Stephenson. She was followed by Sidney in 1811, Charlotte Eliza in 1814 and Eleanor Tozer in 1817. The youngest four children were baptised at the Goodman's Fields Presbyterian Meeting in Somerset Street, Stepney.

Moving to London was not an unqualified success for Bennet. He was in a partnership with two others as Merchants, Dealers and Chapmen, but they were made bankrupt in 1807,² which may have precipitated the move from Highbury Grove to Bethnal Green. "Thoughts on Suicide: in a Letter to a Friend", written by Bennet Morgan, was published in 1819.³

Bennet Stevenson Morgan died in 1839 in Newington, Surrey. In his will he is described as Gentleman, Dry Salter of Rodney Buildings, New Kent Road, Surrey. A dry salter produced materials for making dyes, products that would have been used for dyeing cloth, etc.

In the 1841 census Lucia was living in Apollo Buildings in Newington, Lambeth, with her unmarried daughter Clara. They were described as of independent means. A married daughter, Frances Green, was also there, with her son George, aged 1 month. Lucia died in Newington in 1847.

² London Gazette: 2 Jan 1808.

³ Printed for Payne & Foss & J Hunter (1819).