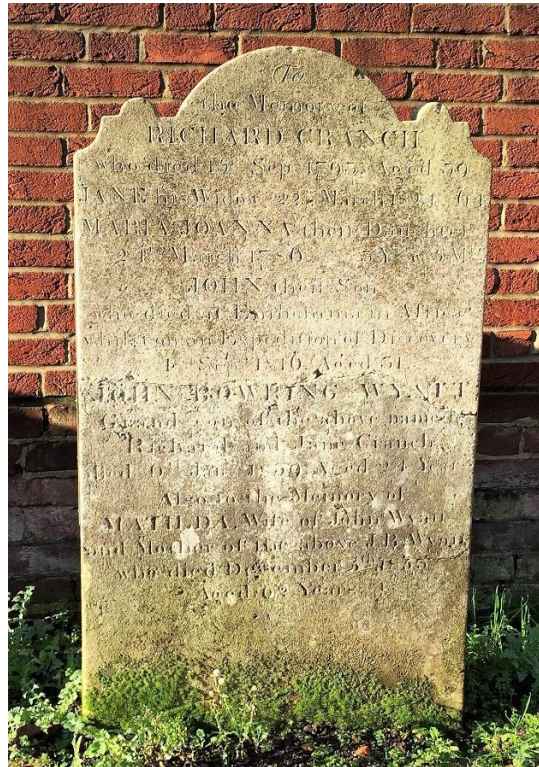


Memorial 11



To
The memory of
RICHARD CRANCH
who died 15th Sep^t 1793 Aged 39
JANE his Widow 22nd March 1824. 64
MARIA JOANNA their Daughter
24th March 1786 3Y^{rs} & 5 M^{ts}
JOHN their Son
who died at Embomma in Africa
whilst on an Expedition of Discovery
4th Sep^t 1816 Aged 31
JOHN BOWRING WYATT
Grandson of the above named
Richard and Jane Cranch
Died 6TH Jan 1839 Aged 24 Years

Also to the Memory of
MATILDA Wife of John Wyatt
and Mother of the above J.B. Wyatt
who died December 5TH 1853
Aged 62 Years

RICHARD CRANCH died 15th September 1793
JANE CRANCH died 22nd March 1824

Memorial 11

MARIA JOANNA CRANCH died 24th March 1786
JOHN BOWRING WYATT died 6th January 1839
MATILDA WYATT died 5th December 1853

and commemorated

JOHN CRANCH died 4th September 1816 (buried in Africa)

In the nineteenth century the two main Devon branches of the Cranch family were in Exeter and Kingsbridge. They were non-conformists and were related by marriage to both Sir John Bowring and to John Adams, the second President of the United States of America.¹

Several members of the Cranch family were buried in the Exeter Dissenters' graveyard including Andrew (d. 1787) and his son Christopher Cranch (d. 1809) together with both their wives and Christopher's daughter Juliet. It is likely that other infant children of Christopher and Jane (née Hutchings) were buried in the graveyard.²

A headstone in the graveyard commemorates the lives of six family members. Richard (b. c.1754) was one of five children born to Nathaniel and Joanna (née Denbow) of Kingsbridge. It is not known when he removed to Exeter, and he was described by Sir John Bowring as a journeyman fuller.³ He married Jane Bowring at Holy Trinity, Exeter, on 7th October 1781.⁴ Jane was the eldest of four children born to Margaret (née Hutchings of Moretonhampstead), wife of John Bowring (1736–1805), a successful fuller and the grandfather of Sir John Bowring (1792–1872). Richard was named as a cheesemonger in 1791, and John Bowring's will, dated 30th September 1796, bequeathed two hundred pounds to each of his four children plus the fixtures from hosiery and cheese shops in Exeter to be split amongst his three daughters, named as Jane Cranch, Betty Drewe and Ann Bowring, so presumably Richard worked in the family enterprise.⁵

Richard and Jane had four children – Maria Joanna (b. 1782), John (b. 1785), Charlotte (b. c.1787) and Matilda (b. 1791). Sadly, Maria Joanna died in March 1786 aged only 3½ years. John Bowring paid for a grave to be opened to receive her body.² Richard died in September 1793 in his fortieth year and Jane was left with three young children to support.

John Cranch (b. 1785) was apprenticed as a cordwainer but became a keen, even obsessive, naturalist and was appointed as the *Collector of Objects Natural History* on an ill-fated expedition funded by the British Government to chart the Congo River and discover its source and natural assets

¹ Cranch, A. **2021**. The origins, history and achievements of the Cranch family. ISBN 979-8777894816.

² DHC 3693D/B1 Dissenters Burial Ground. Reports, accounts etc. at the above from 1782-1832.

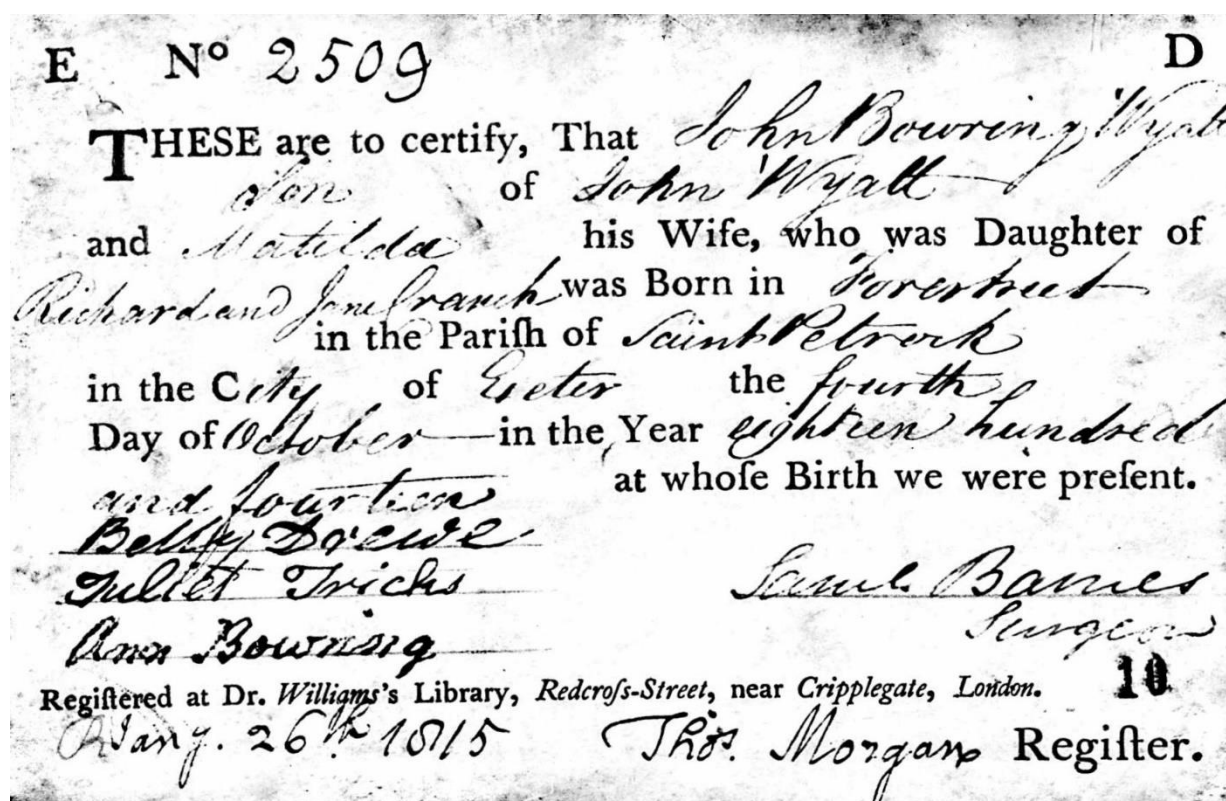
³ Bowring, J. **1872**. Ancient Exeter and its Trade. *Rep. Trans Devon. Assoc. Advmt Sci.*, **5**, 90–106.

⁴ Dates of births, marriages, burials and census information throughout this work have been obtained from www.ancestry.co.uk and www.findmypast.co.uk at various times (2017-2023).

⁵ Records of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury PROB 11/1687/396. Also *Exeter Pocket Journal*, 1791.

by Sir Joseph Banks, then President of the Royal Society of London. This expedition and John Cranch's role has been well documented.^{6,7,8,9} He died in 1816 and was buried in Africa, but his achievement was commemorated on the gravestone (see above).

Richard and Jane's youngest child, Matilda, married John Wyatt (b. c.1786), an accomptant (accountant), at St Petrock on 17th November 1813. They had one son, John Bowring Wyatt, who was born on 4th October 1814 and his birth was registered in January 1815 (see below). The certificate of his birth was witnessed by his aunts Betty Drewe and Ann Bowring as well as by Juliet Tricks (née Cranch).



A daughter, Matilda (jnr), was baptised at George's Meeting House on 25th July 1821. The family moved to St Leonards in Exeter as some point and were neighbours of Charles Bowring who lived at Larkbeare House on the Topsham Road. John Bowring Wyatt died on 6th January 1839 aged 24 years and was buried in the Dissenters' graveyard on 12th January. He was recorded as an accountant – the same profession as his father.

⁶ Anonymous. 1818. Biographical memoir of Prof. Smith and Mr. Cranch. *Annals of Philosophy*, 321–329.

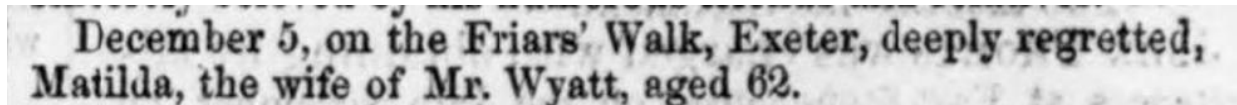
⁷ Baring-Gould, S. 1925. *Cornish characters and strange events*. (John Lane The Bodley Head Ltd., London).

⁸ Monod, T. 1970. John Cranch Zoologiste de l'Expédition du Congo (1816). *Bulletin of the British Museum Natural History Historical Series*, 4, 1–81.

⁹ Varndell, I.M. 2019. John and Jane Cranch of Kingsbridge. *The role of natural history in a Georgian domestic crisis*. *Rep. Trans Devon. Assoc. Advmt Sci.*, 151, 219–244.

At the time of the 1841 Census Matilda (jnr) was recorded to be of independent means living in Fore Street Kingsbridge with her aunt, Charlotte, who was the postmistress. Matilda married Henry Lemon, an accountant and son of an Exeter grocer, at St Leonards Church on 16th September 1847.

The final person commemorated on the gravestone was Matilda Wyatt, wife of John. She died on 5th December 1853 at their residence at Friars Walk, Exeter, aged 62 years and was one of the last people buried in the Dissenters' graveyard before it closed in 1854. John, her husband, died in 1858 at the Friars aged 72 and was buried at Holy Trinity, Exeter.

A black and white photograph of a newspaper clipping. The text is a death notice for Matilda Wyatt, dated December 5, 1853. The notice is set in a serif font and is enclosed in a rectangular border.

December 5, on the Friars' Walk, Exeter, deeply regretted,
Matilda, the wife of Mr. Wyatt, aged 62.

Exeter Flying Post, Thursday 8th December 1853.

Ian M. Varndell

April 2023