

**Memorial 40**

**In Memory of**  
**W                      who died**  
**April 11 1773 aged 9? Years**  
**Also of El        TREMLETT**  
**who died Nov 1.. 1781**  
**aged 93**

**who died Oct 19 1798**  
**aged 3.. Years**  
**Also of Eli.....**  
**Mother of W.....**  
**Who died Nov 3? 1818**  
**aged 88 Years**

**WILLIAM NATION**, died 1773

**Memorial 40**

**SAMUEL KELLOW NATION**, died 18 April 1773

**ELIZABETH NATION (née Codrington)**, died 19 October 1798

**ELIZABETH NATION (née Tremlett)**, died 3 November 1818

William Nation was born in Devon in c.1695 and married Anne Sharp, a Cornishwoman (b. abt. 1695), on 28 November 1721 in Luxulyan, near St Austell. They had four children, Kellow (b. c.1722 in Luxulyan), John (b. 22 December 1727 in Puddington, near Tiverton, Devon), Elizabeth (b. 3 November 1730 in Puddington) and William (b. c.1732 in Fowey, Cornwall).<sup>1</sup> William (hereafter William Snr) was a Presbyterian minister and in September 1731, whilst at Puddington Village, he preached a sermon to the Exeter Assembly in terms that criticized the teachings of the Exeter ministers.<sup>2</sup> It is not known when or if William Snr and his family moved to Exeter but the baptisms of John (b. 1727) and Elizabeth (b. 1730) are recorded in the Bow Meeting House register.<sup>3</sup>



William Snr and Ann's eldest son, Kellow, became a successful tobacconist and snuff manufacturer in Exeter who owned land close to the North Gate in Exeter as well as properties elsewhere, at least one of which was jointly owned with his father.<sup>4</sup>

Kellow married Elizabeth Tremlett (b. 29 February 1731/2)<sup>5</sup>, the daughter of a prosperous Exeter merchant, on 19 March 1757 and they had two children, William (born 27 January 1763) and Samuel Kellow (born 24 June 1764). Samuel died, aged 9 of an "uncommon nervous condition" and was buried in a single grave on Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> April

<sup>1</sup> [www.nationstudy.com](http://www.nationstudy.com). William's and Ann's birth and/or baptism records have not been confirmed, and Kellow's baptism does not appear in the *Luxulyan Parish Register of Baptisms and Burials 1594-1837 W. Martin Furze (1936)* (Devon Heritage Centre). Other baptisms from [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk).

<sup>2</sup> The Committee of Thirteen took umbrage, and on 14<sup>th</sup> February 1732 addressed a letter to its four ministers designed to remove all shadow of suspicion from them. In it they said: "...As in the choice of our Ministers (ever since the Arian controversy broke out among us) we have had nothing more at heart than the electing such for our Pastors who gave us satisfaction of their soundness in the doctrine of the Trinity and Assurance of defending it, so there is nothing hath more endeared you to us than your defence thereof....(we) earnestly request the continuance of your care to fortify the minds of your people against the dangerous errors of those who deny the true & proper Deity of Jesus Christ and of the Holy Ghost as well as from all other attempts to subvert the truths and duties of the Gospel..." Brockett (1962) posited, "It was not the accusation of Antinomianism which worried the Committee as much as the suggestion given in the address of William Nation that many of the subscribers of the Exeter churches were of the same mind as himself, a suggestion which was indignantly repudiated in this same letter". For more details see Brockett, A. (1962) *Non-conformity in Exeter 1650-1875*. The University of Exeter and Manchester University Press, 252pp.

<sup>3</sup> [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk) RG4>Devon>Presbyterian>Piece 0965 Exeter, Bow Meeting (Presbyterian) 1687-1823.

<sup>4</sup> Exeter Archaeology Report 05.23; Project No. 5401, June 2005.

<sup>5</sup> Prior to 1752 the Julian calendar was in use. William Nation states she was born on "February 29<sup>th</sup> 1731" – which would not have been a Leap Year. February 29 1731 (old style) is February 29 1732 (new style), so she was in her 87<sup>th</sup> year (aged 86 at death).

1773 in the Exeter Dissenters' graveyard.<sup>6</sup> In the same year William Snr, Kellow's father, died (aged about 78 years) and was also buried in the Dissenters' graveyard.

In keeping with many Exeter merchants, Kellow Nation was a benefactor to a number of worthy causes. He is known to have been a subscriber to several publications<sup>7</sup> and was a Steward at the Devon and Exeter Hospital.<sup>8</sup> His charitable actions included the subscription in 1786 of two guineas to the erection of a statue to John Howard, a Calvinist, philanthropist and prison reformer.<sup>9</sup>

In 1780 Kellow, Elizabeth and William Jnr, then aged about 17, were sketched by John Downman, a renowned portraitist of the time whose clients included Queen Charlotte, Admiral Lord Nelson and Hugh, Lord Percy, as well as many notable Devon worthies, including his relative Dr Hugh Downman M.D. who practiced medicine in Exeter. It has not yet been established whether Downman was a close friend of the Nations, or whether the sketches were privately commissioned by the family.



*"Old Mr Nation made on the battleship Koenigsberg"  
by John Downman ARA. Image courtesy of the Syndics  
of the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge.*



*"Elizabeth Nation. Old Mrs Nation" by John  
Downman ARA. Image courtesy of the Syndics of the  
Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge.*

<sup>6</sup> The nature of Samuel Kellow Nation's 'nervous disorder' is not known, but his death appears to have been anticipated as 5/- was paid for his grave to be dug in EDG some 13 days before his death was recorded.

<sup>7</sup> Mathematics. With Eleven Copper-Plates. Rev. Mr. Wm. West of Exeter. Revised by John Rowe. 1762. J. Kippax, London. | A Review of Risdon's Survey of Devon. William Chapple of Exeter. 1785. R. Thorn, Exeter. | Antiquity; or the Wise Instructor. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. J. Brooks (Ed.). 1773. N. Nickson, York.

<sup>8</sup> A Sermon preached before the Governors of the Devon and Exeter Hospital on Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> August 1770. George Moore MA. 1770. B. Thorn and E. Score, Exeter.

<sup>9</sup> A statue to John Howard was created by John Bacon in 1795 and installed in St Paul's Cathedral, London. This was the first statue commemorating a civilian to be installed in the Cathedral. The triumph of benevolence: occasioned by the national design of erecting a monument to John Howard, Esq. Samuel J. Pratt. 1786. J. Nichols, London.

Kellow Nation died on 23<sup>rd</sup> December 1787 and was buried in Bath. His will was proved in London on the 29<sup>th</sup> January 1788. He left bequests to family and friends as well as to two non-conformist Ministers.

Kellow and Elizabeth's son William (b. 17 January 1763) was to become a prominent figure in Georgian Exeter. As well as being a partner in the City Bank and Treasurer of the Devon and Exeter Savings Bank,<sup>10</sup> he was closely involved with the Devon and Exeter Hospital.<sup>11</sup> A trustee of Exeter's Mint Meeting House,<sup>12</sup> William Nation Jnr was a staunch Unitarian and whig and, like his parents, known for his charity.<sup>13</sup> Interestingly, William Nation kept a private journal from 1776 until his death in 1831 and parts of this have been published.<sup>14,15</sup>

As previously mentioned, William Jnr was sketched by John Downman in 1780 with his parents and it is assumed that the three portraits of the family were accomplished at the same time (they are all black, white and red chalk on paper). The sketch shows William with a pen in his hand and paper on the desk, alluding to his interest in writing.



William married Elizabeth Codrington, eldest daughter of John Codrington of Exeter, apothecary, on 20<sup>th</sup> October 1785 at St Paul, Exeter.<sup>16</sup> They had two children – Eliza (b. 23<sup>rd</sup> January 1787) and William (b. 29 March 1791). Sadly, Elizabeth died at the young age of 32 on the eve of their thirteenth wedding anniversary.

*“William Nation” by John Downman ARA. Image courtesy of the Syndics of the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge.*

Nation's journal entry describing the death of his wife, is both poignant and critical of the way she had been treated by her family.<sup>14</sup> Elizabeth was buried in the Dissenters' graveyard on 24<sup>th</sup> October 1798, leaving William and their two young children then aged 11 and 7.

On the death of his mother in 1818 William's journal records: *“Nov. 3 Elizabeth Nation, the venerable Mother of this Journalist died in her 88<sup>th</sup> year having been born February 29<sup>th</sup> 1731”*,<sup>5</sup> whilst Trewman's

<sup>10</sup> NatWest Group Archives/corporate affairs/D4267; *EFP* 20 March 1800; *Exeter Pocket Journal 1801* (Trewman and Son, Exeter, 1801), p. 12; Mr Capper (ed.), *The British Imperial Calendar for 1810* (Winchester and Son et al, London, 1810), p. 261; J. Ryton, *Banks and Banknotes of Exeter 1769-1906* (J. Ryton, Exeter, 1984), pp. 29, 31, 90, 110-11.

<sup>11</sup> Harris, J.D. *The Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital* (Eland Brothers, Exeter, 1922), p. 72.

<sup>12</sup> Devon Record Office (DRO) 61/10/1/13-14.

<sup>13</sup> *Exeter Flying Post* 27 December 1787; *Exeter and Plymouth Gazette* 7 November 1818; *Western Times* 9 July 1831. William Nation's father was the Exeter tobacconist, Kellow Nation.

<sup>14</sup> Bhanji, S. A broken-hearted daughter. *Devon and Cornwall Notes and Queries*: **38**, 234-237, 2000.

<sup>15</sup> Bhanji, S. Extreme meteorological and tidal events as recorded in the personal journal of William Nation, a merchant of Georgian Exeter. *Rep. Trans Devon. Assoc. Advmnt Sci.*, **147**, 45-72, 2015.

<sup>16</sup> A large white marble memorial stone in the form of a Roman altar commemorating John and Maria Codrington and two of their children can be seen in Exeter St Paul parish church.



Exeter Flying Post reported her life in touching terms, *"Yesterday morning at her house, in this city, full of faith, and rich in good works, Mrs Nation, relict of the late Kellowe Nation Esq. aged eighty eight years – To a vigorous mind and cultivated understanding, was added a most benevolent and humane heart; and many are there in this city left, to deplore the loss of a most kind benefactress."*<sup>17</sup> Elizabeth was buried in the Dissenters' graveyard on 11<sup>th</sup> November 1818.

W.H. Hamilton Rogers recorded the inscriptions on the memorial stones in the Dissenters' graveyard in 1894 and for the Nation ledger stone he wrote,<sup>18</sup>

**Samuel Nation, April 11 1773 aged 9 years**

**Elizabeth Tremlett, May 12 1781 aged 93**<sup>19</sup>

**Elizabeth Nation wife of Wm. Nation, Oct 19 1798 aged 33 years**

**Elizabeth Nation mother of William Nation, Nov 13 1818 aged 88 years**<sup>5</sup>

Part of the inscription on the stone covering the tomb remains visible today.

Ian M. Varndell  
September 2020

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<sup>17</sup> *Trewman's Exeter Flying Post*, Thursday 5 November 1818.

<sup>18</sup> DCRS, Parish Information Files, Copy inscriptions of Unitarian Burial Grounds, 1894. Held at Devon Heritage Centre. Hand-written notes by historian W.H. Hamilton Rogers includes many, but not all, memorial inscriptions at several burial grounds in Exeter.

<sup>19</sup> Elizabeth was the widow of Samuel Tremlett, an Exeter merchant. There is some doubt as to when she was buried – the register shows her interment in the Dissenters' burial ground, but the date was not entered - [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk) RG4>Devon>Presbyterian>Piece 0336 Exeter Mint (Presbyterian) 1719-1810. She was probably the mother of Elizabeth, Kellow Nation's wife.