

No Memorial

James MURCH buried 8th March 1854

James Murch was listed in the Exeter George's Meeting Burial Register as being buried on 8th March 1854, aged 54 years.¹ The 1851 Census stated that he was a Wine Merchant and had been born in Honiton, Devon.² It is believed that he was born on 11 May 1800 and his parents were John and Amelia Murch.³ This has not yet (March 2024) been confirmed.

On 2nd May 1833 at St Martin, Exeter, James married Sarah Mardon when James's occupation was given as Accountant and Sarah's as Confectioner.⁴ Sarah Mardon was born on 31st December 1795 at Moretonhampstead, Devon and baptized on 31st January 1796. Her parents were George Mardon, a sergemaker, and Mary his wife.⁵

In 1829 Sarah had taken ownership of a property on the corner of Broadgate, Cathedral Yard, Exeter. It



had been a Confectionery establishment as far back as 1793, and prior to that date it was occupied by a watch maker named James Upjohn.⁶ Sarah Mardon was the occupier from 1829 and Besley's Exeter Directory of 1835 listed Sarah Murch as a Confectioner at Broadgate Place, Cathedral Yard. There was no mention of James in the General Directory but he was shown as an Accountant in the List of Voters.⁷

The property stayed in the Murch family until the early years of the twentieth century when it later (1930) became Tinley's – a well-known destination for Exeter residents until 1992, and from 2017, Pizza Express. Historic buildings archaeologist Richard Parker produced a sketch of how the building (known

as 2, Broadgate) appeared in 1825, shortly after the demolition of Broadgate.⁸

Tinley's was a tea-room and café that operated at 2, Broadgate for over 60 years. Photograph dated 2020 from [benjaminjborley.tumblr.com](https://www.tumblr.com/benjaminjborley).



Although they married in 1833, it has not been possible to state for sure where James and Sarah resided though they are most likely to have lived above Sarah's confectionery business. From there Sarah made and sold her pastries and cakes, including Wedding cakes and often dressed a Turtle for "soup of which she can recommend". It is likely that James carried out his Accountancy business from there, too, as he did not begin his Wine, Spirits and Ales business at 87 South Street until after 1835. This address had been King John's Tavern, said to have been a house in the reign of Henry VII. In 1902, it was mentioned to be, "*opposite Little Stile in the part of South Street formerly called Cook's Row. One of the finest houses in England being of early Tudor date*". At some point (possibly at the beginning of the Hanoverian dynasty) the Tavern's name was changed to King George's Tavern and continued as such until the reign of King George III when it reverted to King John's Tavern. It appears to have been closed from 1775 until 1818 when it became known as Wood's King John's Tavern.⁹ In 1830 the front of the Tavern was removed for road widening but continued to be used for the purposes of "*refreshment for man and beast*". It was a Mr John Steel who lived on the premises at that time and until his death on 27th November 1834.¹⁰

A "Tavern and Coffee House to let" notice appeared in the *Exeter & Plymouth Gazette* on 3rd October 1835. It is not known whether James Murch moved to this address in 1835 as he and his business partner, John Bear, had a warehouse in Holloway Street in 1839. It was in April 1839 that the partnership was dissolved by mutual consent and, possibly, James moved his business to King John's Tavern.¹¹ A 'To Let' advertisement appeared in the newspaper in September of that year followed by a further one on 19th September 1840, in the *Exeter & Plymouth Gazette*:

TO BE LET

Situate in South Street, being one of the most central situations in the City. The Property comprises an excellently arranged Coffee Room, Parlour, Bar, Larder, Kitchens, and Offices; a spacious Dining Room, Commercial Room, and small Sitting Room, on the First Floor. Also, Fifteen Bed Rooms. Behind in a spacious Yard, Tap Room, Stabling, Brew House, etc.etc. with excellent Beer and Wine Cellars, in the basement of the House.

The House is replete with Fixtures, and with the Brewing Copper, and Pipes to the Cellar, Beer Engine, Gas and Water Pipes now on the premises, and a transfer of the Licence. An immediate possession may be had, and the Business renewed.

There is a back approach for Horses etc. from the new Market.

At some point between April 1839 and the latter part of 1842, James entered into a Wine Merchants' business partnership with Joseph Francis Kilner. This arrangement was dissolved by mutual consent in December 1842 and would be carried on by James alone.¹²

Some evidence to show that James was living with his wife in Broadgate in 1841 can be found in a newspaper advertisement in 1841 when, clearer, he did not need the upper floors of the premises at 87 South Street:

To Be Let with immediate possession, if required, the UPPER PART of the HOUSE No.87 South Street (7 doors only from the High Street) consisting of 2 Spacious Rooms, and 1 smaller ditto on the first floor, 7 rooms above ditto, and 8 rooms above ditto. RENT MODERATE Apply to James Murch 87 South Street.¹³

The 1841 census showed him residing with Sarah his wife at Broadgate along with Sarah's mother, Mary, their one year old son, Frederic, three servants and a young man, George Mardon, aged 18, who was an Apprentice.

Whilst James lived in Broadgate with his wife, he continued with his business in South Street and, in 1843, this advertisement (amusing in this day and age) appeared in the *Exeter & Plymouth Gazette*:

BAVARIAN PALE STOUT

Malt Liquer – described by men scientifically as well as practically conversant with the subject, as remarkable for its purity and agreeable flavor, and produces a grateful and cheering effect, without exciting any irregular action in the stomachs of persons even of the most delicate constitution, or inducing the least drowsiness on those of sedentary or studies habits.¹⁴

FOREIGN WINES AT REDUCED PRICES

PORT Good, Old & Fruity £80. per Hhd., £16. 15s. per Qr. Cask.
Superior, £36. to £40. ditto; £18. 18s. to £21. ditto.

SHERRY, good Pale or Brown, £32. per Hhd. £16. 16s. per Qr. Cask.
Superior Old, £38. to £42. ditto; £18. 18s. to £24. ditto.

MARSALA, Finest Qualities, £10. 10s. to £12. 12s. per Qr. Cask.

ALSO,
PORT and SHERRY from the Wood, 12s. 13s. 14s. per Gallon.
26s. 28s. 30s. per Dozen.

MARSALA, Superior Quality, 24s. per Dozen.

MADEIRA, CLARETS, CHAMPAIGNE, HERMITAGE, HOCK, and MOSELLES,
Of the Finest Qualities, at equally Low Prices, for **READY MONEY** only, at

JAMES MURCH's,
87, ——— **SOUTH-STREET, EXETER,** ——— 87,
BRITISH HOLLANDS,
Full Strength, equal to Foreign, 14s. 6d. per Gallon.

Advertisement for Murch's 'foreign wines' that appeared in the *Exeter Flying Post* on 22nd February 1844.

James and Sarah's first child, James, was born in 1837. His birth was registered in the third quarter of that year in Exeter. Their other two children Frederic and Sarah were born, respectively, in 1840 and 1842. (See more about these three children in the Addendum).

A few days before Christmas Day in 1848, Exeter's weather was extremely cold. The *Western Times* of 30th December reported that, "*The frost set last Friday and Saturday with great intensity; Mrs. Murch of the Cathedral Yard, took advantage of it to store her ice house with about 150 cart loads of ice, some of which were two inches thick.*"

In 1851, James and Sarah were still residing in Broadgate, presumably above Sarah's Confectionery shop, with their three children and two servants, Ann Steer and Susan Thorne.²

James died on 2nd March 1854 and as stated above was buried in the Exeter Dissenters' Graveyard on 8th March.¹

In 1875, Sarah was living in Southernhay Place and died in 1877 aged 81. Her death was registered in the district of St Thomas, Exeter in the 1st quarter of that year.

James Murch left a brief Last Will and Testament¹⁵:

This is the last Will and Testament of me James Murch of the City of Exeter Merchant I confirm the Settlement made on my Marriage with my dear wife Sarah Murch dated the first day of May one thousand & eight hundred and thirty three and I direct that the sum of one thousand pounds expressed to be settled thereby shall be set apart and of my property hereinafter bequeathed I give devise and bequeath all my goods and personal Estate and Property of every description unto and to the use of my said dear wife Sarah Murch her heirs, executors and administrators and assigns absolutely for her his and their own use and benefit thus I appoint my said dear wife Sarah Murch and my friend John Dinham Osborn of this City of Exeter Esquire Executrix and Executor of this ...

Proved in London 18th April 1854.

ADDENDUM

The children of James Murch and Sarah (née Mardon)

James Murch was born in 1837 and registered in Exeter in the 3rd Quarter of that year. In 1861 James was still living at home with his parents and his occupation was given as Confectioner.¹⁶ The 1871 census indicated that James had married an Exmouth woman called Anne Setter who was born circa 1834 but it has not been possible to find a certificate or report of the marriage to date. James died on 19th September 1873 at Broadgate aged 36. He was buried in St. Bartholomew, Exeter (Grave id 236687, Image 9).¹⁷ In 1876, Anne married James Charles Goff in Exeter¹⁵ and the Confectionery business became known as Murch, Goff & Company.

Frederic was born circa 1840 in Exeter. In 1861, he was apprenticed to an Ironmonger and remained living at the home of his parents in Broadgate.¹⁶ Frederic died unmarried at Winslade Farm, Clyst St Mary on 6th April 1866 aged 25 years. An Inquest was held the following day and it was confirmed that Frederic(k) had fallen from his horse and that his head had, possibly, come into contact with a stone. He suffered a hemorrhage on the surface of the brain.¹⁸ Probate appears not to have been dealt with until 1875 when administration of his effects was granted to his mother, Sarah, who was living in Southernhay Place, Exeter.¹⁹

Sarah was born on 27th July 1842 and, as with the other two children, was still living with her family in 1861.¹⁵ At that time, she was employed as a Shop Assistant. In 1876, Sarah married William Godfrey Palmer, a Coal Merchant. The marriage was registered in the 2nd quarter of that year. They lived in St Sidwell in Exeter but by 1891 had moved to 25 New North Road. They had three children, Frederick, Dorothy, and Godfrey. William died on 21st February 1896 and was buried on 26th February at St David's, Exeter.²⁰ Sarah died on 29th October 1937; her residence still being 25 New North Road, Exeter. Probate was granted to her son, Frederic Murch Palmer, a retired Civil Servant, and her daughter, Dorothy Sarah Palmer, spinster²¹ who was still living at 25 New North Road in 1939 and who gave her occupation as Chartered Masseuse.²²

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References

- ¹ George's Meeting burial register 1837-1882 (DHC3693D/R1)
- ² 1851 Census for Exeter St Martin (HO107/1868) accessed at www.ancestry.co.uk
- ³ [Geni - James John Murch \(1800-1854\)](#) accessed March 2024.
- ⁴ Western Times 11th May 1833
- ⁵ England & Wales, Non-Conformist and non-Parochial Registers 1567-1936
- ⁶ Exeter Memories (David Cornforth) www.exetermemories.co.uk
- ⁷ Besley's Exeter Directory 1835
- ⁸ Richard Parker's illustration appeared in Gray, T. and Jackson, S. (2017) *St Martin's Island, An introductory history of forty-two Exeter buildings*. The Mint Press, Exeter, pp. 112-113.
- ⁹ Western Times 14th April 1902
- ¹⁰ Exeter & Plymouth Gazette 6th December 1834
- ¹¹ Western Times 13th April 1839
- ¹² Woolmer's Exeter and Plymouth Gazette 3rd December 1842
- ¹³ The Western Times 11th May 1841
- ¹⁴ Woolmer's Exeter and Plymouth Gazette 1st July 1843
- ¹⁵ England & Wales Prerogative Court of Canterbury Wills, 1384-1858 Prob 11 Piece 2190 Quire 301-350.
- ¹⁶ 1861 Census for Exeter St Martin (RG9/1395) accessed at www.ancestry.co.uk
- ¹⁷ www.gravestonephotos.com
- ¹⁸ Western Times 13th April 1866
- ¹⁹ England & Wales Probate Death Index 1858-2019
- ²⁰ Devon, England, Church of England Deaths and Burials 1813-1920
- ²¹ England & Wales, National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills and Administrations 1858-1955)
- ²² 1939 Register