

Nathaniel Morgan 1775 – 1854

Virginia Morgan



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1 Introduction

This account describes the life and achievements of Nathaniel Morgan. He lived all his life in Ross (now Ross-on-Wye) and boasted that he had never left the house of his birth.

He was a vigorous, kindly and astute man, but sometimes his abrupt manner upset his fellow citizens. He was proud to be a member of the Religious Society of Friends and supported their ideas of tolerance, pacifism and egalitarianism even in the face of outspoken opposition.

2 Family details

It is regretted that there is very little detail about the early life of this citizen of Ross. You may find it helpful to refer to the family tree in Appendix A. Nathaniel was the fifth child born to James and Rachel (nee Baker). He had two surviving older brothers – James and Caleb, the rest of the siblings dying in childhood.

Nathaniel Morgan had a long Quaker lineage. His great great grandfather, Thomas Morgan had suffered persecution in the reign of Charles II. In the words of a family member

'Thomas Morgan was one of the early followers of George Fox: having suffered persecution for conscience sake he left the city of Worcester and settled in Ross between 1660 and 1680. The family tradition is that, on reaching the Malvern Hills he was undecided as to where he should go, but he agreed with himself that his staff, in God's directing hand, should guide him. He placed it so that it might have fallen in the direction of either of the church spires visible from their summit of that hill. It fell towards Ross and thither he directed his steps and spent the remainder of his life there.'

His son James (1650–1754) married Alice Lodge of Walford (1660–1752). In 1686 he was worshipping with other Friends in their Meeting House at Ross when they were turned out by the Magistrates. According to his great grandson –

'The Friends, instead of obeying the order to disperse, brought out the seats and met in the streets: the persecuting Magistrates proceeded to distrain on their goods and sold the same'

Their eldest son James (1694–1754) married Mary Reece of Skenfrith and their third child James (1733– 1824) was born at Ross. He was a linen draper and married Rachel Baker (1738–1786) of Leominster. They had eight children but only three sons survived –

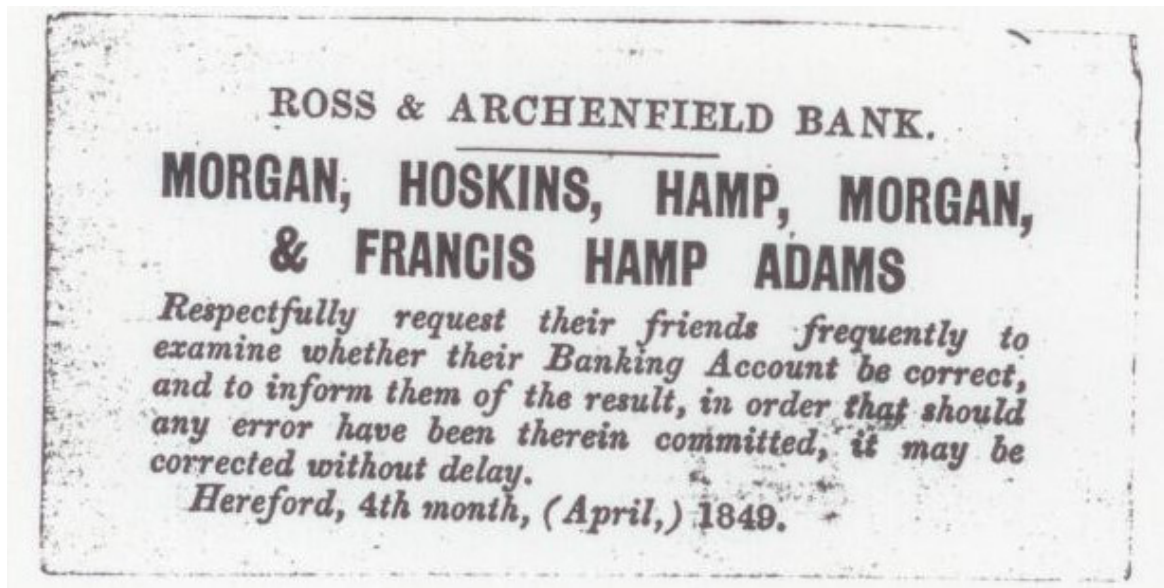
James 1768 – 1842, Caleb 1773–1847 and Nathaniel 1775 –1854

Nathaniel's mother died when he was nearly 11 and he constantly recalls her in his Journal entries as a very pious woman. He also frequently mentions his father's second wife Mary (nee Richards), he refers to her as his mother-in-law which was then the accepted term for stepmother.

3 Business Interests

Schooldays were spent in Ross and his master was William Hill –'my brother Caleb and myself were the first scholars he ever had, and I left his school in the 3rd month of 1789'. Mr Hill became master of the Walter Scott Charity School. Nathaniel then aged 14 entered the drapery business in the premises opposite the Market Hall, Ross. This was both the business and the family home. Later The Ross and Archenfield Bank opened there. On New Year's Eve 1819, Nathaniel records –

'Took J Jones into this concern which I hope will prosper ----- the firm to be John Jones, Richard Jones and myself.' On 8/3/1820 – 'opened the Ross and Archenfield Bank at my own house and removed to the house the late Turner & Co the day following.'



Five months later he laid the first stone of the New Bank next door to his own Dwelling Place and on the 7th September the entry reads—'laid the 1st Rough Comer Stone West End of the Door when my soul was alike affected'.

A later partner was Kedgwin Hoskins of Strickstenning. He was to become an MP for Herefordshire in May 1831 to 1847.

In later years the drapery business was run by Henry Southall of Leominster and later still it became Rayners. The main building facade has been renovated recently.

The local Friends disapproved of Nathaniel's venture; one Journal entry records that they regarded Sarah his wife and himself as 'Speckled Birds'. However, he was fortunate in his business friends during the financial crisis of 1825. There was general panic, with many provincial banks having to suspend payment. 'Ten Herefordshire persons of property' helped The Ross and Archenfield Bank and as Mr J. Sturge Stephens records – 'for the rest of his long life, Morgan continually thanked God for (this) single mercy'.

A tangible evidence of the Bank's stability was a beautifully carved model (28 inches long overall, 9 inches high and 10 inches wide) of a farm wagon which stood on the counter and was kept filled with sovereigns. The word got around – there was a

wagon load of gold at Morgan's bank. This model is now in the ownership of Nicholas Stephens – related through Nathaniel Morgan's niece Mary.

Printed by Samuel Etheridge, Printer, New-
port, Hereford, Independent

ROSS AND ARCHENFIELD BANK,

HEREFORDSHIRE.

IN consequence of Messrs. TURNER and Co. of GLOU-
CESTER, having unexpectedly suspended their payments,
and the now groundless panic in the Money Market, we, the
undersigned, being friends of

MESSRS. JONES & MORGAN,

And fully acquainted with their Responsibility and Property,
and, feeling it to be a duty we owe to the Country and the
Loaded Interest of this Neighbourhood, to step forward at this
 juncture, do hereby undertake and agree, (in order to satisfy any
persons doubting their responsibility), not only to take their
Notes as usual in the course of Payment, but jointly and severally
to be responsible to the Public, to the full amount of all Notes
issued by, and deposits now in the hands of the said Firm, of
JONES & MORGAN, to the depositors of the said Firm, and
holders of their Notes, for the space of Six Months from the date
hereof. As Witness our hands, this 17th day of December,
1825.

H. Hoskyns, Bart. Hereford Mary Westfaling, Rudhall
K. Hoskyns, Stricksteping Thomas Taylor, Marston
Harry Williams, Vicar of John Powell, Fawley
Goodrich John Stratford Collins, Ross
Matthew H. Jones, Goodrich John Bennett, Sen. Old Bough
House Daniel Hughes, Trebandy.

ROSS AND ARCHENFIELD BANK.

JOHN JONES and NATHANIEL MORGAN take
the earliest opportunity of publicly returning their best
Thanks to their Friends, who, during the late general though
groundless alarm, have continued to repose in their Responsibility
that confidence to which they trust they are entitled.
But their most grateful Acknowledgments are due more par-
ticularly to those respectable, wealthy, disinterested, and very
kind Friends, who at the time now referred to, came forward, un-
solicited by them, and made themselves responsible to the Pub-
lic; not only for the Deposits in the hands of Jones and Morgan,
but also for the Notes issued by them.

The generosity of such conduct is unprecedented, and merits
from those towards whom it was shown, the sincerest gratitude.
It was an act of friendship which cannot soon be forgotten; nor
are Jones and Morgan the less sensible of the obligation, because,
as the event proved, they had in their possession sums more than
sufficient to answer every demand made upon them, independent
of their recent supplies from London.

Ross, 26th of 12th (December), 1825.

ROSS BANKS.

IN testimony of the confidence felt in the Banking Es-
tablishments of the Town of ROSS, and as a tribute of in-
dividual respect to the Bankers themselves, the Gentlemen,
Tradesmen, and Yeomen of the Town and Neighbourhood, have
requested their company at a PUBLIC DINNER, on WED-
NESDAY, the 4th of January next, at the SWAN HOTEL, ROSS.
The Gentlemen of the several Firms having accepted the above
invitation, their Friends are requested to meet them on the oc-
casion, of which KINGSMILL EVANS, Esq. President.

KEDGWIN HOSKINS, Esq. Vice-President.

Dinner on the Table at Four o'clock.—Ticket, including De-
sert and Waiters, 8s. 6d.

Gentlemen are requested to send their Names to Mr. Barrett,
of the Swan, at least two days previous to the Dinner.



The bank continued trading after Nathaniel's death and closed in 1863. His branch in Hereford, with Joseph Morgan – the 'Old bank', opened in 1826 and also closed in 1863.

A sad letter from Joseph Morgan (James' son and Nathaniel's nephew) recalls the collapse. He is writing to his niece Elizabeth Stephens on 9th June 1863:

'it is needless to say that I could not feel a more acute punishment for any delinquency than that of inability to meet every just demand, nor can any Creditor possibly feel more desirous of receiving the uttermost farthing than I do, to pay it. Of this, I believe the public are aware for I have received one uniform expression of sympathy, kindness and forbearance from those of every station in Society, and the creditors have decided all but unanimously at both meetings [Hereford and Ross] to supersede the Bankruptcy. We expect therefore to be discharged from that unamiable Court in about 10 days' time.'

4 More of Nathaniel's Family

Nathaniel's elder brothers James and Caleb both married outside of the Society of Friends and were thus expelled. Caleb married Ann Taylor of Ruxton Court, Llangarron in 1796 and they had eight children. In his Journal, Nathaniel notes that he had first – 'been acquainted with Ann's sister, Sarah on 21st June 1796'. On an earlier occasion he had been ill with threatened consumption – the cure was to eat a particular species of snail, large ones. While convalescing at his brother's wife's home Sarah nursed him and he fell in love with her. He eulogises her in many pages of the Journals, but she was in no hurry to get married. Mrs Sefton-Jones remarks, 'she thought she would do better and delayed until an elderly Friend took the matter in hand and hurried them up'. Sarah joined the Society of Friends and they were married in 1806.

A letter from Deborah Darby (wife of Abraham Darby of Coalbrookdale) congratulates them. Written on '11th Mo 13th 1806' she writes –

'I am glad to find by my Friend Nathaniel Morgan's letter that you are not only united in the ties of Marriage – but in that of tender affection – whereby I trust you will not only be one another's Joy – in the Lord – but strengthen each other – in the work of your Day – for it is not a Day – to live at ease in ceiled houses – while the House of God lyes waste'.



Sarah Morgan nee Taylor

Sadly, they had no children. Nathaniel's eldest brother James had a son, Joseph, born in 1796. When Joseph's mother died in 1799, he was taken to the home of Nathaniel's parents – '& carefully brought up by them & myself & conducted himself so well as to be removed to take care of our own bank at Hereford 29/5mo. 1829 and where he now resides'.

Caleb's eldest son Nathaniel was born in 1799 and his death through diabetes in 1823 much affected his Uncle Nathaniel. Another nephew Samuel, son of James, lived in Alabama and fleetingly visited England. His uncle complained that he had hoped to have had support from him in his old age.

Caleb's daughters Mary (1801–1872) and Ann (1802–1887) came to live with Nathaniel and Sarah to help with the household chores. It seems that Sarah was rather a martinet, for after a week's trial Mary ran home and refused to return. Ann took her place and stayed the course. In later years Nathaniel recalls how glad they were to have her help and company (from around 1814). In his will he left her 'my best house Chevenhall' and a moiety of his estate after the legacies had been met.

She never married and is remembered as a kindly, calm lady. Joseph Morgan, his nephew, inherited the other moiety.

5 Interests and Achievements

Nathaniel Morgan was a devout Friend and proud to be the Clerk to the Ross Meeting for nearly twenty years. He was Treasurer from 1834. His faith was tested on several occasions, but particularly in 1837 when his beloved nephew Joseph married Elizabeth, Caleb's fourth daughter. As first cousins this was a 'disownable' offence within the Society and they were married at Dixon Church, Monmouth.

Nathaniel accused those that condemned this union – 'I humbly hope & trust that the aforesaid marriage although not countenanced by those who ought to be lights in the World instead of whited Sepulchres may be blest by the Most High & that they may become Shining lights in the earth –'.

This ruling was rescinded at the Friends yearly meeting of 1883.

Always true to Quaker principles, Nathaniel refused to take the oath in Public Assizes in Hereford (1819) when he was called to give evidence. In 1834 he was critical of the levy of a 'Church rate of 6d in the pound to pay the Church expenses'. At a vestry meeting in Ross where many present objected to this levy, he spoke up – 'I wished to know why a Farmer was to pay 8 or 10 times more for Preaching and Teaching than a Banker, Merchant or Lawyer – had they more sin – were they sinners above all others'. He did not make any plea for relief of himself or other Dissenters but his speech provoked 'two young men just set up in the Law – Thomas and Joseph Edwards appeared as supporters of this unjust cause & endeavoured to insult me'. Joseph Edwards was to challenge Nathaniel Morgan again on another matter.

The Ross Preparative Meeting Minutes Books for the period 1820 to 1867 reveal the decline in attendance. Regular subscriptions were received at the quarterly Meetings and many causes were supported. These included the Quaker School at Ackworth and notes were made when the sons of local Friends were sent there. Collections were made and sent to London bankers towards a fund for the 'Poor and distressed

and Starving Irish'. Other funds were sent for 'assistance to Africans in educating them etc'. The Quakers supported an African Civilisation Society and had financed an expedition up the Niger in 1842.

Nathaniel was a strong believer in the Society of Friends' ideals of pacifism and during times of war refused to pay Income Tax. As a result his goods were distrained. At the Peace Proclamation on 23rd June 1814 (The Peace of Paris) he

'went to the steps on the Platform or Terrace before the Market House where the Mayor, Constables and People were and when the speech was ended by William Hill, Schoolmaster, I shouted and loudly exclaimed "May it last for ever and ever" if there is such a time'.

He also notes he made a 'fine present' to about 100 widows residing in the neighbourhood of Ross – this was on the Thanksgiving Day which followed.



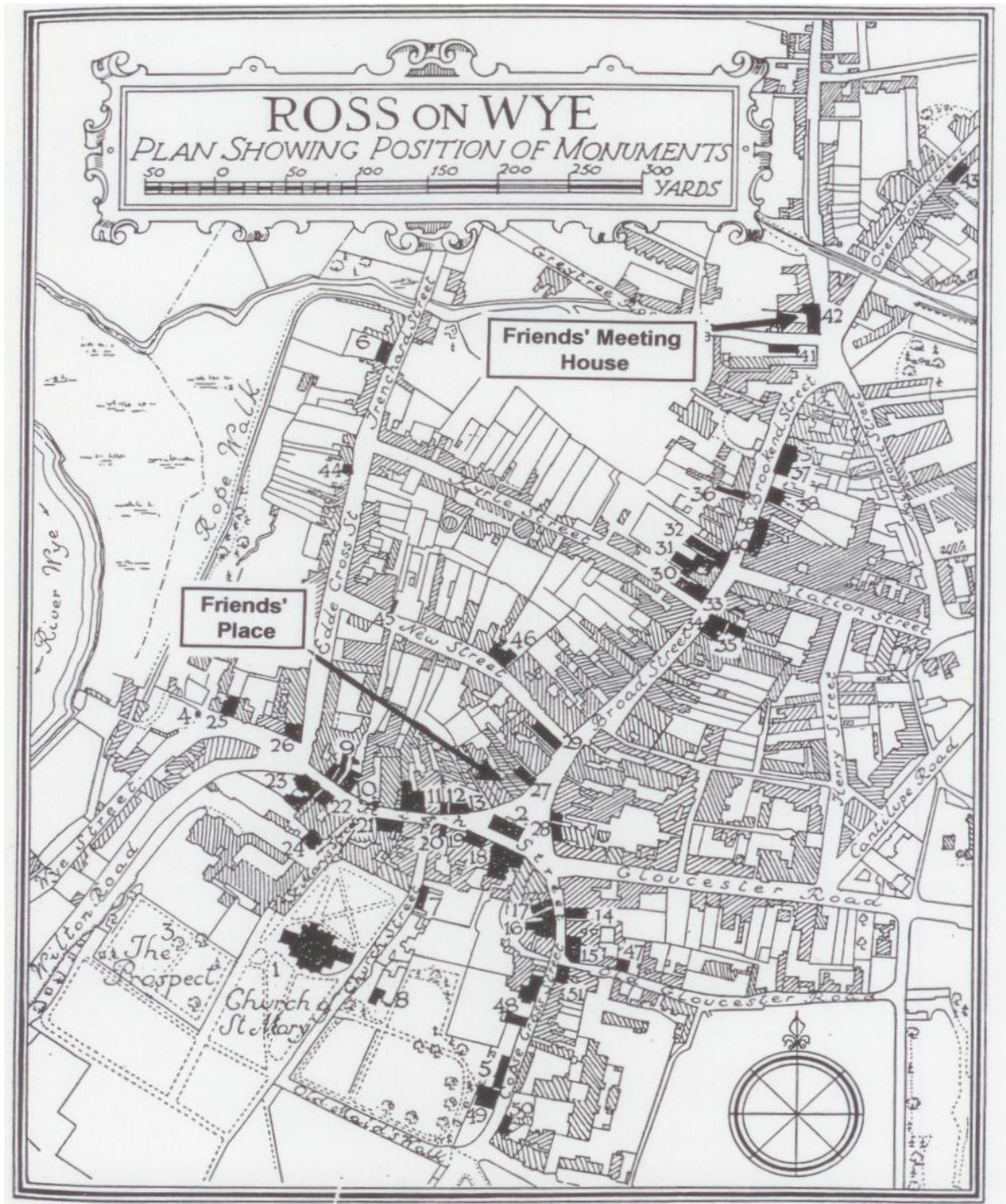
Friends' Place, Market Square (c. 1967), Ross

He founded a Peace Society in Ross. Another lifelong ideal was to uplift the poor and oppressed and he was a vigorous supporter of the British and Foreign anti-Slavery Society.

With his wife, Sarah, he attended many of their London meetings. He reported on the discussions with enthusiasm and often stood up and stated his opinion.

As a great supporter of women's rights he was very indignant when a party of women delegates from USA were allowed only to listen to the debate and had to sit outside a bar which divided them from the Council. This was the first World anti-Slavery Convention of 1848 and many notable speakers contributed.

Nathaniel lived all his life in the house at Friends' Place, opposite the Market Hall, Ross. In the 1841 and 1851 Census Returns he and Sarah are recorded there, with two female servants on each occasion. In 1851 Ann, his niece, is also there.



Plan of Ross (1932) showing the location of the Meeting Houses (RCHM - England - Volume II East Herefordshire - An inventory of Historical monuments.

Friends' Place has a long association with the Quakers. In 1663 George Fox worshipped there, when the house was owned by James Merrick. Regular meetings continued there from 1653 to 1676 until a Meeting House was built at Brampton

Street, Ross with funds endowed by his will c1675. There was a burial ground behind the Market Place building, used from 1663 until 1823. In that year a note in the Minute Book, in Nathaniel Morgan's handwriting, states that his nephew, Nathaniel, was planning the layout of a graveyard for the Friends behind the Meeting House. It is in this new graveyard that many of Nathaniel senior's relatives are buried and he frequently lists the plot numbers and details in his journals. He himself is buried in Row I, Plot 4, under the same headstone as Sarah.

A trust was set up to maintain the Meeting House, Burial Ground and adjoining cottage; the latter was let to a caretaker, normally a Friend. The rent of the cottage was added to the funds of this trust, the Merrick Trust, and in 1882 Nathaniel Morgan donated £100 to be expended in planting roses and other – 'ornamental trees, shrubs and flowers of various sorts'. This was in memory of his beloved wife who died in January 1852. He wrote a most moving tribute to her in the Minute Book and in the Journal. This trust is now entitled the "Merrick and Morgan Trust". It has recently been augmented by a generous donation towards the refurbishment of the large Meeting Room, and a Grant to help with repairs to the Meeting House roof has been made by the Herefordshire Historic Churches Trust (October 1995).

A man of energy and industry, Nathaniel invested in property. In 1818 he bought the freehold of part of the Chevenhall estate where his father and 'mother-in-law' lived. His father, James, had been the Copyholder since 1792. This comprised 9 acres, 3 roods and 25 perches and he paid £960.



South Elevation – Chisenhall, Walford Road, Ross-on-Wye. By kind permission of Mr & Mrs Ormesher.

In 1852 he sold the land, or part of it, for £1,500. His will reveals that he owned several other properties. Some opposite Friends' Place, also 'messuages shop & premises' in the Market Place and two dwelling houses with stables, coach house and garden in Dock Pitch (Wye Street) – one formerly called the Mitre.

Out of Ross he owned property at Marstow and Llangarren and in Gloucestershire he owned Hagloe Estates (with a Mansion House), Poulton Court, Poulton and Bliddisloe Manors and a moiety share in the Bailiwick of Blakeney.

Chevenhall (or Chubbs Hall as it was sometimes called) was the place where the family met, particularly on the anniversary of his father's death. He is said to have made several alterations, but his unusual addition is a skylight above the stairwell, which illustrates his egalitarian outlook. Nathaniel was very proud of this colourful window and, it is reported by Margaret Sefton-Jones, he was deeply disgusted when

his nephew Samuel's wife, a Virginian heiress, remarked when she saw it – 'A man and a brother, I should think not indeed!'. He and Sarah never lived there, but after his father's death in 1824 and his (James) widow's death in 1845, the house was occupied by the widow, Ann, of Nathaniel's brother Caleb.



Skylight at Chevenhall, Walford Road. Ross-on-Wye 'AM I NOT A MAN AND A BROTHER' by kind permission of Mr & Mrs Ormesher

By his will Nathaniel bequeathed the house and land adjoining to his niece Ann Morgan. She never married and in due course she left the house to her niece Mary Hughes (daughter of her sister Mary Jones, nee Morgan). The house went out of the family's ownership in 1923.

Education was another great interest. An admirer of Joseph Lancaster, the Quaker pioneer in education, he visited one of his schools and – 'very soon after commenced a School in Ross in 1799 in the Town Hall, adopting some of his plans, and all at my own expense'.

Sarah and he were patrons of the non-denominational British and Foreign School and he had the stone on the West Front of the fine school building erected at his own expense and inscribed:

THE ROYAL ROSS AND ARCHENFIELD BRITISH AND
FOREIGN SCHOOL ESTABLISHED UNDER THE
PATRONAGE OF HER ROYAL HIGHNESS THE
PRINCESS VICTORIA – 7th OCTOBER 1836

The Boys' School opened first and in July 1840 the Girls' School followed. On this occasion he modestly remarks – 'many attended with their children, when for want of any other person I was elected to be their Chairman'. Captain George Adams opened the School and Nathaniel Morgan addressed the children with many exhortations to hard work.

The Walter Scott Charity School also had his energetic support. Despite its affiliation with the Church of England he subscribed to it for over twenty years. He criticised the terms – 'This institution cannot be called FREE because no poor child can participate in its benefits, unless it conforms to the rules and bonds of the National Church'. He was a Governor and Treasurer of the School, known as the Blue School and later became a Trustee. In a printed address to the children (April 1823) he advises – "Although many of you are very poor as to the things of this world, be not discouraged on that account, for you are as much the object of God's love and care as the children of princes."

However, this broad-minded view was not shared by the Rector of Ross. There had been several disagreements, but matters became particularly heated in 1840 when the newly appointed Rector, the Reverend Charles Ogilvie, objected to the election of Nathaniel as Trustee of the Walter Scott Charity – 'The Rector was most impudent to all and most furious against all dissenters as unfit to have anything to do with such charities'. Only three of those attending supported the Rector; the Chairman (Sir Hungerford Hoskyns) and seven others were on Nathaniel Morgan's side. The aggrieved man spoke his mind in 'a most solemn manner' and in his Journal beseeched the Lord to preserve him in patience whenever he had to contend with

such 'intemperate & uncharitable & unchristian like characters as this poor Puffed-up Priest'.

EXTRACTED FROM THE HEREFORD TIMES
OF SATURDAY, 20th FEB., 1841.

ROSS.

WALTER SCOTT'S CHARITY.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE HEREFORD TIMES.

SIR,—The strenuous opposition given by the Rector of this parish to the election of Mr. N. Morgan to the office of Chairman to Scott's School, would appear to originate with his objection to him as a *Dissenter*; this seems a slender ground of objection to one who has for nearly 20 years been a useful and an active governor, and it is well known, or *should* be, that those of the Society of Friends never ask the aid of other Religious Societies in their educational, or other purposes, but, as is always the case, they lend their assistance towards the education of the public.

It is obvious that a more determined hostility could hardly have been shewn, had the Rev. C. A. Ogilvie acted on behalf of one of the most obtuse bigots of his day, who had declared by will that no Dissenter should ever be a recipient or a dispenser of his charity.

But the will of the benevolent founder, free alike from bigotry and ostentation, breathes more Catholicity. It is evident that all he wished was an education adapted to the humbler classes from whence he sprang; an education embracing reading, writing, and arithmetic, without reference to creed or dogma. Nor was it till ten years after the decease of this truly NOBLE man, that the decree of the Lord Chancellor specified that the children are to be educated in the principles of the Church of England; and it may be safely asserted that from the time Mr. N. Morgan became a governor,* 19 years ago to September last, not the smallest innovation on the system was ever attempted by himself or by the Rev. Messrs. Underwood, Mr. J. S. Collins, or any other governor or treasurer; nor was there during that period the least contention as to who *should*, or who *should not*, be Chairman. Previous to the arrival of the present incumbent, all was peace on these points, and it is much to be desired that such a state of things may be speedily restored in conducting the affairs of this praiseworthy institution.

VERAX.

The Reverend Ogilvie threatened to annul the Deed of Trust, after Nathaniel had been elected, by refusing to sign it unless compelled by the court of Chancery: the ongoing dispute is recorded in The Hereford Times between 1846 and 1848.

6 Achievements and Controversies

This was not the only controversy Nathaniel Morgan became involved in. Always eager to better the condition of the people of Ross or 'this place', he initiated many of the improvements in the Town, but his ideas were often opposed.

He was elected Mayor for three consecutive years – 1821 until 1823. The nominations were considered by a jury which met at the Nag's Head in Ross, usually during October. For the last period Nathaniel records that, as he was ill, he could not attend but sent his return – 'of three persons viz John Stratford Collins, Wm Hooper and Charles Sharp for them to elect one of them in my stead'. His letter went on to thank them for the trust they had 'reposed' in him and described the efforts he had made to 'try to find our long lost Charter¹. The letter ended with a heartfelt plea for unity – 'finally my friends and fellow townsmen my heart's desire for you is that Brotherly love may more & more abound amongst us, & so prevail in this town and neighbourhood till every schism cease & every heart & mind unite in doing good'. The jury re-elected him for a third term.

Joseph Hume (1775–1855) MP for Aberdeen, (a Philosophical Radical politician and active reformer) visited Ross in December 1821 – the Mayor rode up to his carriage 'a little beyond Smallbrook Hili' and shook hands with him, welcoming him. The entry (6/12/1821) continues –

'he looking out of the front of the carriage said he never expected such honour as was then conferred upon him the horses having been taken off the carriage & men about to draw him along by Pantile Barn & up the town to Nag's Head & from thence to the Swan accompanied with vast numbers when he spake to them from a window upstairs for about 20 minutes amidst great applause'.

At the dinner that followed the diarist notes – 'spent a very sober & happy hour – drinking nothing but water'. Joseph Hume became a very good friend and often stayed with Sarah and Nathaniel in later years.

In 1829 living conditions for many were very grim and Nathaniel was exercised by the exploitation of the poor. Hearing of a proposed meeting at the Vestry room to discuss the continuance of the 'disgraceful practice of farming the Poor' he had printed and circulated a hand-bill to inform the townspeople. The meeting was adjourned, and he attended the next one. He writes simply –

'they dropped the idea of farming the poor & proceeded to elect an Assistant Overseer to manage the affairs of the Parish for the ensuing year'.

However, his action was unpopular with some and he had to listen to 'insults in manner the most shameful and disgraceful'.

Pamphlet printing was a powerful weapon. As an Improvement Commissioner Nathaniel Morgan wanted gas lighting for Ross. Other members of the Commission thought that oil lighting would be preferable. In 1831 a printed 'Address to the Commissioners' [but effectively to the ratepayers] appeared with arguments on both sides outlined. Some Commissioners thought that gas lighting would be like money thrown in the river! Back came the robust rejoinder from Nathaniel and his supporters – 'would that be better than lighting the town with gas? Surely light is better than darkness and something better than nothing!'. Gas lighting was installed in about 40 streetlamps from 1832 and was very successful until superseded by electric lighting in 1902.

Further from home, he was the prime mover in achieving the turnpike road re-alignment between Ross and Hereford (at the Callow).

This required a Private Act of Parliament [passed 12th June, 1835] as a landowner refused to sell his land to permit the new road. The effort cost Nathaniel dear – 'many times I have been ready to sink under the task'. On the 2nd of May 1840 the road was opened – 'I therefore rejoice exceedingly'.

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 This is a copy of the original
 on 236-1-5 under Power's Estate
 Let to Public Auction 2/12 1840 to Mr. Morgan for 776 0 2
 but a few years ago for 4000 in Herefordshire, of 542 10 40
 in page 244

Hereford Times Paper 10th October 1835

Extraordinary Restoration.

CALLOW AND ACONBURY ROAD IMPROVEMENTS.

It is with unfeigned pleasure we announce the successful result of Mr. N. MORGAN's motion, on Wednesday last, at a very full meeting of the Commissioners of the Hereford Turnpike-Trust. Our readers will recollect that the motion was, "that instructions be given to the Surveyor and Clerk, to obtain from land-owners, particulars and prices of their land, and also to make the line of road according to Mr. PURVIS's survey, as agreed upon the 2nd of April, 1834, and that the Committee as then named be reappointed, and requested to carry it into effect without delay." This motion, we rejoice to state, was carried without a division; we, therefore, look forward to the speedy completion of one of the most extensive and important road improvements effected in the Hereford Trust for many years.

By this great improvement, an ascent of 167 feet will be avoided. In the new line, the ascent will not average an eighth of an inch per yard—in fact, it will be but nineteen feet in the distance of a mile and a half. At the meeting it was asserted, that the proposed alteration would preclude any further improvement in the Trust for several years. The fallacy of this assertion was shewn by a statement, which proved that, during the year ending 31st December, 1834, the Trust had expended in improvements upwards of 1050*l.*, paid 600*l.* of debt, and had then a balance in hand of 1300*l.*; so that, had it been deemed expedient, the Trust might have liquidated 1900*l.*, exclusive of the 1050*l.*; consequently, their debt of nearly 4000*l.* in 1833, might in 1834 have been reduced 1600*l.*, leaving an available balance in the Treasurer's hands, on the 31st of December, of more than 1300*l.* But the Trust have determined, and, we think, most wisely, that improvements in the great travelling roads repay the outlay, and ultimately increase the revenue. The sound policy of this course has been demonstrated, not only in the Hereford Turnpike Trust, but in all the neighbouring Trusts.

In offering our congratulations on the triumphant success of Mr. N. MORGAN's motion, it is but common justice to add, that both the friends of humanity, and the friends of the agricultural and commercial prosperity of the county, owe a debt of gratitude to that gentleman for his untiring zeal in following this object to a successful

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 issue. The pocket is a sure test of genuine patriotism. A man will energetically play the part of a patriot, to the point where his pocket is *untouchable*; but one line on the pocket-side of that point, and, alack! his patriotism "vanishes into thin air." Now we can ourselves bear testimony that Mr. MORGAN has been weighed in the balance and not found wanting; that his purse has been as ready as his personal exertions to consummate this improvement; and as this is a combination not very frequently met with, we are the more anxious to give it public recognition.

The following are the Committee, which the Meeting appointed to carry the improvement into effect:—Mr. Nathaniel Morgan, Mr. John Smyth Edwards, Mr. Richard Smyth, and Lieut.-Col. Weare.

LOCAL NEWS.

Marriages.

... at Ashford Bowdler, by the Rev.

On the 7th to the following persons
 attended in the Church of St. Andrew
 Those written in Red Ink
 It was expected would vote against
 the Improvement
 William Apperley Wotton
 Charles Burnester Weston
 Thomas Bird Allan Huxford
 Bonnor Brown Mayall Huxford
 Charles Ballinger Brampton
 Wm Bennett Grocer Huxford
 Beichendon Pinner Deane
 J E B Blair M.P.
 Wm A. Afford Poyrystone

Copy of an entry in Nathaniel Morgan's Journal including a cutting from the Hereford Times of 10th October 1835 (with reference to the Turnpike Road re-alignment).

Mrs Whiting remarks that he worked on the friendliest of terms with members of other religious bodies. In 1834 he gave the Wesleyans a site for their new chapel with the characteristic stipulation that any of the other dissenting bodies were to have the use of the chapel at convenient hours, free, while their meeting places were under repair.

These days members of the Society of Friends are respected for their liberal and charitable attitudes: Nathaniel Morgan displayed his ecumenical generosity of spirit in many ways. In August 1824 he agreed that the cornerstone of his improved and rebuilt house should be laid by the Freemasons of Ross – 'some of them having said they should like to lay the first stone. I wrote to John Stratford Collins, who was the Worshipful Master as they call them'. – in his letter he expresses his admiration of their care for each other – 'for this I admire you & I hope I ever shall, however you differ from me who am a Quaker but I humbly hope that I am no bigot' – he concludes his invitation with the request that there should be no 'pomp or parade as contrary to my disposition'. A 10" square inscribed copper plate was presented by the Free and Accepted Masons and placed 'face downwards on a large stone in the east end of the front about 3 feet below the level of the street next to the bank'.

Always involved in local affairs he was on the working committee set up to supervise the building of the new Ross Union Workhouse in 1837 and for several years was one of the elected Guardians of the Poor. The Minutes reveal his practical, constructive suggestions.

In 1838 he was proud to be associated with the installation of a – 'Public Pump at the Bull Ring in this town in front of the Market House' – this well was sunk by public subscriptions, myself 12 guineas, it being a most useful thing to the Neighbourhood' – 'water was first drawn from it on the third day 13th day of 3 Mo. 1838. None but myself subscribed more than one guinea'.

A realist, he was very much opposed to the reduction in the local Police Force from three to two but lost his argument in March 1839.

An unfortunate purchase of land near St Mary's Parish Churchyard, called Bishops Court, was the cause of strife and riot. In fact, he bought the remaining lease of a

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500 year lease taken out by John Kyrle the famous 'Man of Ross' in 1693. The owner of the freehold at that time was the Lord of the Manor, Lord Weymouth, but it seemed that this passed to Thomas Tovey. John Kyrle had sub-let to the owner of an old inn called the Pounds for 495 years, at the same rent – £5 pa which he had to pay to the freeholder. However, there were conditions whereby the townspeople of Ross had access to the land, later called The Prospect 'for their walking and diversion'. It is not clear when Nathaniel Morgan took over the lease, but in 1837 he sold it to James Barratt for £70 and nearby land which appears to have belonged to him for £80. James Barratt around the same time, bought the sublease and the freehold, pulled down the old inn and erected a grand hotel – the present Royal Hotel. In so doing he enclosed part of the prospect and planted vegetables in other parts, claiming that he owned most of it.

The townspeople reacted against this encroachment on their pleasure ground. Riots erupted and a public meeting was called in 1839. Censure was directed against Nathaniel Morgan and he publicly 'deplored the ill-advised step he had taken in signing the document'. He had made access for the public a condition of the sale, but it was restricted to a strip of land – 'of the length of eighty yards and twenty-two feet' and this land lay twenty feet from the viewing spot, the famous Prospect. He had also reserved the right to plant trees and shrubs if James Barratt did not do so, the public did not consider this adequate.

For some years the affair was quiescent, James Barratt allowing access without argument. After Barratt's death Thomas Blake, another Ross benefactor, bought the whole estate, subsequently selling the hotel. Through the Improvement Commissioners (c 1860) he presented to the townspeople, for ever, the 'best and longest portion of the Prospect'.

Another long running dispute was made public by a former adversary. The attorney, Joseph Edwards, an Improvement Commissioner and antagonist, accused Nathaniel Morgan of mishandling the funds of a charity (James Baker) and over-reaching his powers in deciding who should occupy almshouses in connection with a charity for which he, Nathaniel Morgan was the treasurer (Webbe's Hospital now Webbe's Almshouses). These acrimonious exchanges were mainly through the pages of The Hereford Times.

In 1836 the Charity Commissioners had summarised the Webbe's Hospital dispute succinctly, observing that the 'trustees and the treasurer were entitled to at least polite and respectful treatment'; furthermore, they supported Nathaniel's strict interpretation of the Trust terms and thus his actions. Again, the Reverend Ogilvie was at the centre of controversy, but Joseph Edwards stoked it up! As regards the James Baker Charity there was the embarrassment that Nathaniel Morgan was one of the three executors and trustee of this £25,000 benefaction to the poor of Ross in 1836. The three executors were left £100 each (£90 after duty) and Joseph Edwards directed this against him. A legal dispute arose in which a claim was made against the estate. Nathaniel Morgan tried to defend the case; it had to go to Chancery and cost money to fight. The claimant won and Nathaniel was upbraided for his delaying matters and for claiming expenses for travelling to London and back. Joseph Edwards accused his fellow townsmen of 'cant and evasion' and of being a 'Quaker Bashaw' (pasha). The accused answered in a reasonable tone and produced the accounts in the case of Webbe's Charity and the legal background in the James Baker case.

In his Journal, on resigning as Treasurer of the Webbe's Hospital Charity, the diarist notes that – 'for the particulars of my conduct in this and other Ross Charities see my Pamphlet 200 pages – of which I had 300 copies to deliver gratis to my friends and neighbours – these books etc cost about £75. May well prove useful in this place for a century or more',

This correspondence reveals that not only were the Webbe's Trust accounts always available for inspection, but they were all in order. The conduct of the Executors of James Baker's Estate was approved by the Vice-Chancellor at the legal inquiry. The impression is left that professional jealousy lay behind this public confrontation.

7 Other Interests, National and Local

This energetic man took a keen interest in national politics. In 1832 there was considerable unrest nationwide leading to the passing of the First Reform Act whereby franchise in England and Wales was considerably increased from approximately 435,000 to 652,000 out of a male adult population of about 3,000,000. Nathaniel Morgan gives a detailed account of the attempts of the House

of Lords to prevent this extension of the franchise and the subsequent dissolution of Parliament and general election with a strong Whig return to power.

During this uneasy time the Journal recalls the local scene –

'on the 11th of the 5th Mo I used my best efforts to have a Meeting of the Inhabitants of Ross & its vicinity called on the 14th at the Swan Inn in Ross at which Samuel Meyrick of Goodrich Court, Knight, Presided, who opened the Meeting and soon after Wm. Hooper of the Town in the warmth of his arguments – called the King a Traitor for not supporting his Exiled Ministers in the hour of need, when he was ordered to sit down by the Chairman, S. Meyrick, who was a Justice of the Peace – & no one appeared willing to support poor Hooper – I got up in his defence & spoke nearly as follows – in his justification.

"Friends & Neighbours – you are called together on a serious business – to address your lately beloved King – who but 7 days ago was almost adored by all his subjects, & had he changed not he might have lived and died full of such greatness of Glory that none of his Ancestors ever knew – But, alas, his late conduct has changed the Scene & covered the Kingdom with a universal gloom.

It is therefore now become the duty of every Englishman to unite with the voice of one man to speak the Truth whether he will hear or forbear. May the Almighty change his heart ere it be too late.

May he again resolve to bless his people with those rights it is Treason* to withhold, & whether or not, by a noble perseverance must be your Lot – therefore persevere patiently & you must succeed & generations yet unborn will rise up and call you blessed.

The King can confer Honours but it is the People alone that can confer Glory – he is Ours to Administer, to adorn, to Guard the State, but not to Warp or Charge it – beyond that mark is Treason".

Having said that I begged that Wm. Hooper might be allowed to go on, & he was accordingly allowed to do so , & well explained his Expression'.

“The accusation of Treason” resulted from the refusal of William IV to comply with the Whig leadership's constitutional requirement to create sufficient Peers to facilitate the passing of this Bill. The Lords, particularly the Bishops in the House of Lords, were resistant to the probable loss of their power. The King, faced with nationwide insurrection and financial sanctions, had to comply. Then the Bill passed both Houses.

The accession of Princess Alexandria Victoria was celebrated in style:

'when we gave a Public Dinner in Ross Churchyard to over 1,000 of Roast Beef and Plum Pudding the tables occupied the two walks in the Upper Churchyard & all along the other from East to West –1 carved for those at the top of the walk next the Vicarage.

It was a joyful day & 27 days after she became Queen of England, I caused the Union Jack flag to be hoisted over the Victoria School which she patronised'.

Natural events like the earthquake of 1852 were described: local tragedies like the drowning of a young Ross surgeon (in 1829) are reported – this was at the Goodrich Ferry crossing – on the point of landing from the boat side nearest Goodrich'.

In 1829 the diarist records the efforts made to rebuild the spire of Ross Church. This had been repaired in 1799, and the weather cock taken down in 1824 and 'fresh done'. On the 15th of April 1829, seven or eight feet of the spire was blown down with the stones lying some 10 feet from the church 'on the North side – it was a very high wind'. The operation on the 14th May, by John Cartwright of Old Castle, Dorrington, Leicestershire and others is described in detail:

'he did the work with a few very long & heavy ladders—when one was raised against the spire he fixed a pulley on the top round put a rope through it and brought the rope down and tied it to about the middle of the next ladder &

drew it up when that of course ascended up above 20 rounds higher than the pulley – they then well fastened the 2nd ladder to the first & so proceeded till they had raised a ladder considerably above the top of the spire'.

The Journals relate the difficulties and discomforts of the times with cholera rife and living standards poor. Medical help was primitive: his brother Caleb Morgan injured his foot in an accident on the farm and for eight years suffered constant pain.

Many of the entries enumerate his 'blessings' and there are devout reflections, with prayers. Family anniversaries are all recorded. He is nostalgic and almost morbid, with many accounts of ailments and deaths.

Nathaniel had many loyal friends and good neighbours. He describes his many visits to Goodrich Court, the magnificent home of Sir Samuel Meyrick, but equally valued the long friendship with his neighbours in Market Place. John Benbow, Mayor of Hereford in 1839 (a Quaker) was a long-term friend.

He mourned the death of his neighbour, Jonathan Lewis, Draper & Tailor in 1837 – 'I was very much attached to him because he was a harmless man & very well disposed with his fellow men which is the best criterion to judge one another by'.

Another friend, a former grocer, is praised as an 'honest kind good-hearted Christian very much beloved & respected by those who were acquainted with him'.

A local man died shortly after retiring from farming – 'he had saved himself a large Fortune to retire upon – he seems like most of us to have been too mindful of this world's goods'.

Nathaniel's health seems to have been good, although symptoms similar to tuberculosis are described in later years. In the Minute Book he apologises for the bad handwriting as he becomes nearly blind. Then the tone lifts – under the official Minute the Clerk notes – 'I was in London in ye 5th 6th & 7th month this year for an operation for my eyes under Alexander, the great oculist and returned well to Ross 14th of 7th month 1846!!!'

The signature is always confident and flowing. He seems to have been an emotional, kindly man. His quaint habit of addressing correspondents with 'thou' and 'thee' may have accentuated the austerity of his image. In one tribute to friend he has a burst of self honesty – 'he was a very good natured man but like myself too fond of minding and mending other people's affairs'.

Nathaniel's judicious benevolence is displayed in many instances of kindness. He was asked to adjudicate in several complicated disputes: he recounts one where he had to examine several witnesses when to his surprise the defendant – 'against whom it might have been considered that I was Engaged – stepped forward & said to the Steward before me – "I don't know this gentleman but this I know, having seen enough of him that I will trust my life in his hands" (meaning me) – and the matter was left with me and was most happily settled. I returned home from this journey with much inward satisfaction'.

His benevolence was also practical: With others he pressed for the installation of a town clock on the Market House and c1852 he financed a life-saving innovation: that of a fire escape. This was installed under the Town Hall (Market House), costing about £50. He describes the scene – 'when it first came to Ross they brought it to the front of my house and raised it to a great height against my house and I and every person descended from our room most easily and rapidly to the great amusement of the beholder¹.

His niece Mary (Morgan) Jones kept a journal and she records, on 8th January, 1854 – 'My Uncle is now an invalid & obliged to keep to his bedroom the last 10 days'. Nathaniel's Journal was kept up until the last entry on the 12th of 10mo. 1854. He died on the 31st October, 1854.

The obituary in the Ross Preparative Minute Book is simple and factual 'The funeral was very largely attended and much exhortation flowed to the survivors'. The Hereford Times obituary was much more eloquent. The shops in Ross were closed and business suspended. The children of both the schools supported by the deceased attended the funeral. The reporter observed – 'men of all shades of religion and politics in the funeral group' – the general sentiment was that he would be greatly missed.

The will was proved in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury in a total value of £8,609. 10s. 1d Much of this value lay in real estate which his executors were empowered to sell. Chevenhall was left to his niece, Ann Morgan, there was a money legacy for his niece Mary Jones (nee Morgan) and two for bank employees. After all deductions the remainder of the estate was to be divided equally between his niece Ann Morgan and his nephew Joseph Morgan. His executors and Trustees were his nephew Joseph and Mary's husband Joseph Jones. It seems significant that there were no bequests to the town of Ross. He had contributed money, effort and time in his lifetime to help the townspeople.

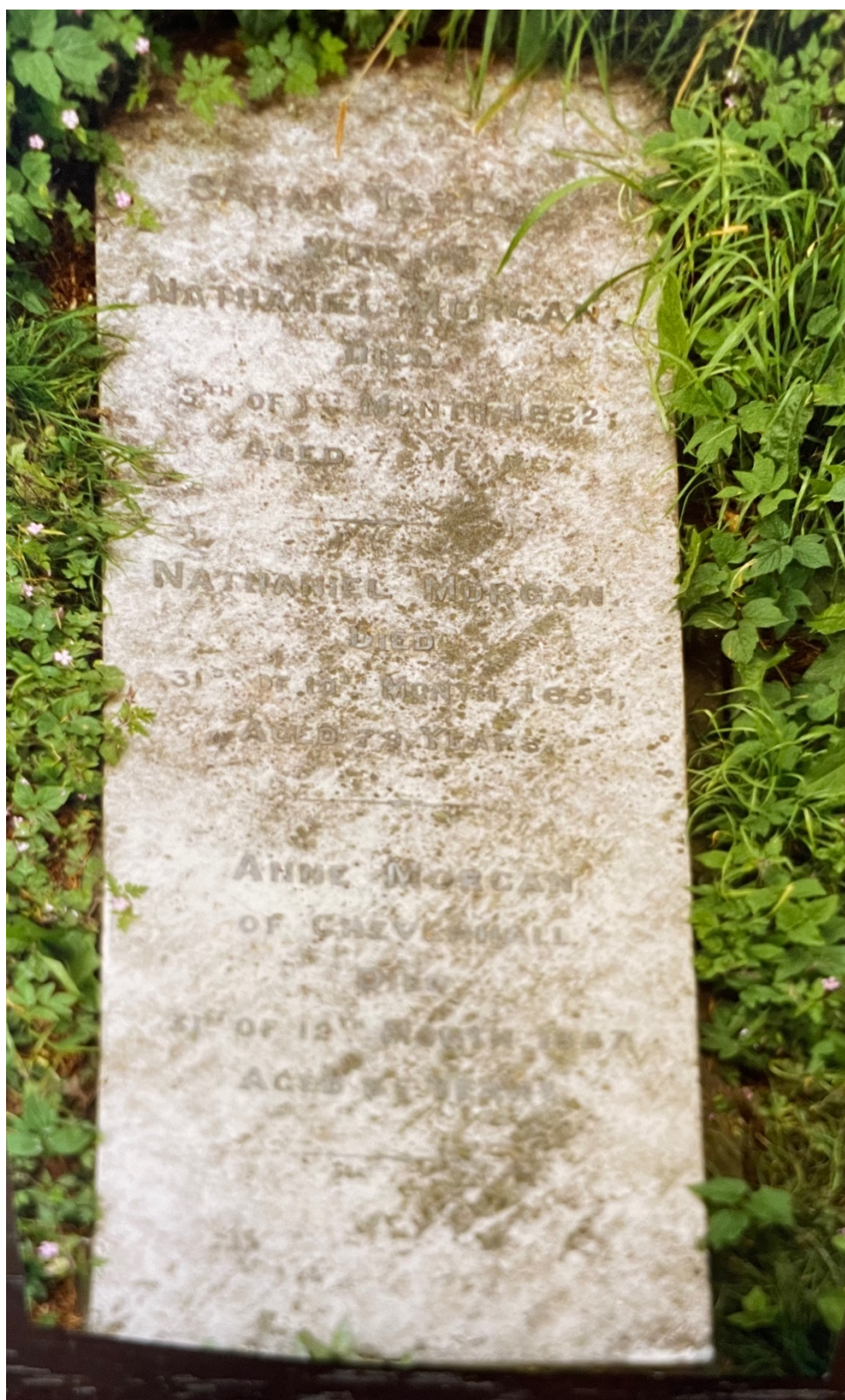
Nathaniel Morgan had antagonised some but helped many more. He was a dutiful son, a loving husband and a loyal friend, both within the Religious Society and among his many associates.

The Journals or Private Memorandum Books, reveal a courageous, idealistic man. His memory is respected within his family. His portrait (a water colour) hangs in the Town Council Chambers, Ross-on-Wye. It seems fitting that the people in and around Ross should know all that he did for 'this place'.

SARAH TAYLOR
WIFE OF
NATHANIEL MORGAN
DIED
5TH OF 1ST MONTH 1832;
AGED 78 YEARS

NATHANIEL MORGAN
DIED
31ST OF 10TH MONTH 1854;
AGED 79 YEARS

ANNE MORGAN
OF CHEVENHALL
DIED
21ST OF 12TH MONTH 1847
AGED 81 YEARS



Grave of Sarah, wife of Nathaniel Morgan (died 05/01/1852) and of Nathaniel Morgan (died 31/10/1954 and of Ann Morgan, Nathaniel' niece. In the garden to the rear of the Friends Meeting House.

8 Sources

The Sources consulted include the Quaker Archive at the HARC.

Considerable help and guidance was given by Sue Hubbard, the Assistant County Archivist (Hereford) there, and also by Marjorie Jelinek, the Custodian of Records for the Hereford and Mid-Wales Meeting of The Society of Friends.

Some notes were given, many years ago, by Mrs Winifred Leeds, a much respected Herefordshire historian.

The work on the Quakers of Ross (1655–1916) by Mrs Evelyn Southall

Whiting has been very useful, together with the articles by John Sturge Stephens.

The Truro Record Office reference DD.ST. proved very informative.

Among Mrs Leeds' notes there were references to Private Memorandum Books kept by Nathaniel Morgan from 1812 until his death.

The owner of volumes I to V, Rowena, Lady Northbrook, has generously allowed study of their contents and this has provided personal glimpses of this interesting man.

Additional information has been made available by Heather Hurley and also by the owners of Chevenhall, Walford Road, Ross, which was the home of Nathaniel Morgan's parents and later his property.

Family details have been made available by Mrs Elizabeth Hargreaves and Mrs Morwenna Stephens.

All these contributions to the biography are gratefully acknowledged.

Census records, directory entries, land tax payments and Tithe Map apportionment details have been noted.

Information was obtained from the Bank of England.

Museum and Historical Research Section. The Public Record Office Chancery Lane, London has details of the Will and Death Duty Register entries and these have been copied.

Newspapers and pamphlets of the time have been studied.

A plan of the Friends' Burial Ground was kindly provided by Maisie Murray. This was valuable in corroboration of the dates on the various family trees consulted. She and her husband were most helpful in allowing access to the Meeting Room and Burial Ground for photographs also for providing a photograph of Nathaniel Morgan.

9 Glossary

Distrain	seizure of goods to compel a person to pay money due
Moeity	one of two parts, often a half
Copyholder	a perpetual tenant under the Lord of the Manor (copyhold tenure was abolished in 1922)

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1 Article: University of Birmingham (Hereford Records Office AW 31/7)

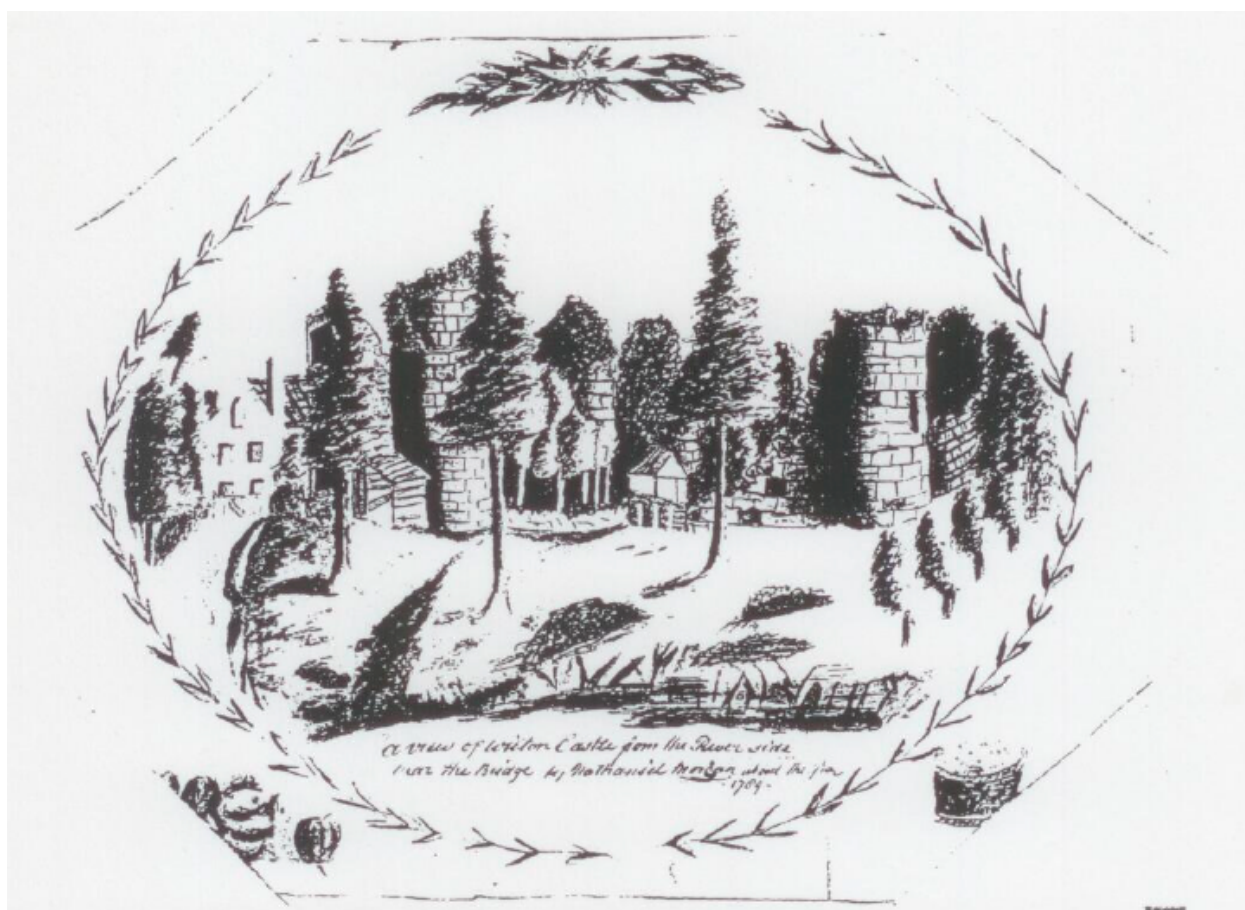
2 Article: Journal of the Friends’ Historical Society Vol 46 No 1 (Friends House, Euston Road, London)

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Article: The Story of the Quakers in Ross 1655–1916 (HARC)

Letters, notes, photographs and other material (Truro Record Office)





11 Other Pink Publications

- 1 Walter Scott's Charity School, Ross – by Kevin Brookes & Colin D Price (1993)
- 2 The Lime Kilns and Associated Quarries in Walford – by Virginia Morgan (1993)
- 3 A History of the River Crossing at Wilton-on-Wye – by Heather Hurley (1993)
- 4 A History of the Manor of Wilton and Parish of Bristow – by R A Hart (1994)
- 5 A Landscape History of Ganarew – by M A Howard (1994)
- 6 The Knights Templars and Hospitallers, Garway – by Joan Fleming-Yates (1995)
- 7 Nathaniel Morgan 1775–1854 of Ross-on-Wye – by C A Virginia Morgan (1995)
- 8 Thomas Blake 1825–1901, the Pious Benefactor of Ross – by Jon Hurley (1996)
- 9 Historic Harewood, Herefordshire – by Heather Hurley (1996)
- 10 River, Road & Rail in the Monnow Valley – by Joan Fleming-Yates (1997)
- 11 The Ross Union Workhouse – by C A Virginia Morgan & Joyce M Briffett (1998)

- 12 The Catholic Martyrs of the Monnow Valley – by Joan Fleming-Yates (1999)
- 13 The Beautification of Hoarwithy Church – by Philip Anderson (2002)
- 14 Domesday Book Entries for the District around Ross – by Ian Standing (2003)
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- 17 Henry Southall, 1826–1916 Ross-on-Wye – by John Powell (2005)
- 18 Dubricius – Celtic Saint of Herefordshire – by Margot Miller (2007)
- 19 Alton Court Brewery and its Ross-on-Wye Pubs – by Heather Hurley (2008)
- 20 James Cowles Prichard (1786–1848) – by John Powell (2009)