

THE MONUMENTS OF St MARY'S CHURCH, FAIRFORD - 23

THE MORGAN FAMILY (1715-1772)

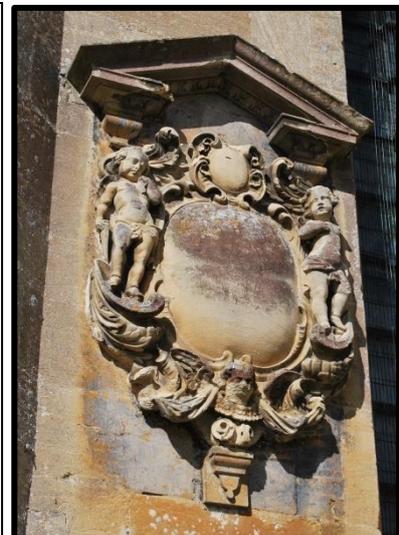


Like the Bettertons the Morgan family lived in Fairford from the 16th Century. Unlike the Bettertons, who were mostly yeoman farmers, the Morgans were landed gentry and therefore occupied a different social position in the town and in the county. According to Peter Bartrum's 'Welsh Genealogies', the Morgan family can trace its ancestry back to the 8th Century. The branch of the Morgans which lived in Fairford came from Bassaleg in Monmouthshire, one of whom was a Member of Parliament during Queen Elizabeth I's reign. John Morgan, who died shortly after 1568, bought property in Fairford and his grandson Edmund is recorded as having died in Fairford in 1649. It is not known exactly when the Morgan family took up residence in Morgan Hall off London Road. The house was built in the late 16th Century and was known as Bakers in 1590. It was refaced and extended sometime in the 18th Century, almost certainly by the Morgans.

The two external wall monuments on the east end of St Mary's commemorate three of the Morgan family who died in the early 18th Century. Unfortunately the inscriptions on the monuments have suffered very badly from erosion over the years. The Baroque monument on the east wall of the Corpus Christie Chapel (facing the High Street) is virtually unreadable, only the last three sentences still being visible. This is the monument to Mary (1682-1715) the wife of Edmund Morgan. The other monument is on the south side of the eastern end of the church (facing the Community Centre) and has totally degraded to the extent that no lettering now remains. This is the monument to Charles Morgan (1715-1754) and his wife Elizabeth (1714-1772).

Edmund Morgan married Mary the daughter of Avery and Mary Tirrell at West Hagbourne in Berkshire on 28 May 1713. Mary died on 19 March 1715 at the age of 32, probably due to complications during childbirth as her only child, Charles, was born in 1715 although there is no record of his baptism in the Fairford parish register so may have been born elsewhere. After Mary's death Edmund did not remarry and died 17 years later and was buried just below his wife's monument.

To the pious Memory of MARY,
the Dearly beloved Wife of
EDMUND MORGAN, Gent.
of Fairford in Gloucestershire,
and Daughter of
AVERY TIRREL, Gent.
and MARY his Wife,
of West Hagbourn in Berkshire.
She was an ingenious and virtuous
Woman, a most excellent Wife,
a kind Mistress,
a good Neighbour,
and charitable to the Poor.
She died on 18th March, 1715,
in the 33rd Year of her Age,
and in the 2nd of Wedlock,
leaving issue one Son.
This MONUMENT was erected by
Her most loving and sorrowful
Husband.





In Memory of
 CHARLES MORGAN, Gent.
 of this Parish,
 who departed this Life
 the 18th day of August 1754,
 in the Fortieth Year of his Age.
 He was the only surviving Descendant
 of a very ancient Family,
 whose Virtues, together with their
 Possessions, he inherited;
 by the uniform and unaffected
 Practice of the one as well as by a
 liberal use of the other,
 he truly merited and universally
 obtained the distinguishing Character
 of a faithful Friend,
 a good Neighbour,
 and a worthy honest Man.

Also of ELIZABETH his Wife,
 who exchanged this Life for a better
 the 12th day of October 1772,
 aged 58 Years.
 She succeeded her Consort
 in the Care and Education
 of a numerous family of Children,
 a Charge which she most
 affectionately undertook
 and happily lived to accomplish,
 and at her departure she left them,
 as the best Rule of their future
 Conduct, the amiable pattern of
 her own Life and Manners.
 In grateful Testimony of so
 much maternal excellence
 they here unite their
 Common Tribute of
 filial Regard and Veneration
 to the best of Mothers.

Much plainer than Mary Morgan's Baroque monument is the wall tablet which commemorates her son Charles and his wife Elizabeth. Charles grew up without a mother and was still a teenager when his father died so presumably his Morgan or other relatives had a hand in his upbringing. Charles married Elizabeth the daughter of Henry and Elizabeth Browne in St Mary's on 23 August 1733. Charles is recorded in the Fairford parish register as a church warden during the 1740s. Charles and Elizabeth had a total of 11 children, four of whom died as infants and another at the age of six. In 1774 their son Charles Tyrell Morgan, a solicitor, married Britannia Raymond, the sister of John Raymond (later Raymond Barker of Fairford Park) and another son, Robert, became a Captain in the East India Company. Charles Morgan died on 18 August 1854 at the age of 39. His wife survived him by 18 years, dying on 12 October 1772. The transcriptions are taken from Bigland's 'Collections'.

Situated immediately below the wall monuments are three Grade II* listed tombs to other members of the Morgan family who died within five years of each other. Each tomb is decorated with a version of the Morgan coat of arms with crest. Mary the wife of Charles Morgan (1656-1738) is buried under a 'bale' tomb. These tombs (almost unique to the Cotswolds) are distinguished by a decorative semi-cylindrical stone which sits on top of a chest tomb. St Mary's churchyard has three of about 110 tombs of this style that have survived. Mary, whose maiden name was Swell and whose family came from Eastleach, died on 8 January 1732 aged 63. Her husband, who died in 1738, may well be buried in the same grave but the inscription is impossible to read.

Next to Mary's 'bale' tomb is the chest tomb of Edmund Morgan, the son of Robert and Elizabeth and the brother to Mary's husband Charles. Edmund was baptised in St Mary's on 11 February 1684 and he was married to Mary Tirrell who is commemorated on the Baroque tablet on the wall above Edmund's tomb. Edmund died on 19 March 1732 at the age of 48.

Tucked in the corner is the chest tomb of Robert Morgan, the father of the above mentioned Edmund. Robert was baptised in St Mary's on 2 July 1651 the son of an earlier Edmund who had served in the King's Army during the Civil War. Robert married Elizabeth the daughter of Richard Holford and they had five children between 1680 and 1688. Robert died on 6 June 1728 at the age of 76, Elizabeth having died in 1688. It fell to Robert to receive the Heralds during their visitation to Gloucestershire in 1682/83 when drawing up genealogies of county gentry. The Morgans of Fairford must have been regarded as minor gentry, as the family does not appear in the resulting manuscript which was eventually printed in a volume in 1884. Even so the family is remembered in Fairford by the survival of Morgan Hall and their monuments in St Mary's churchyard.