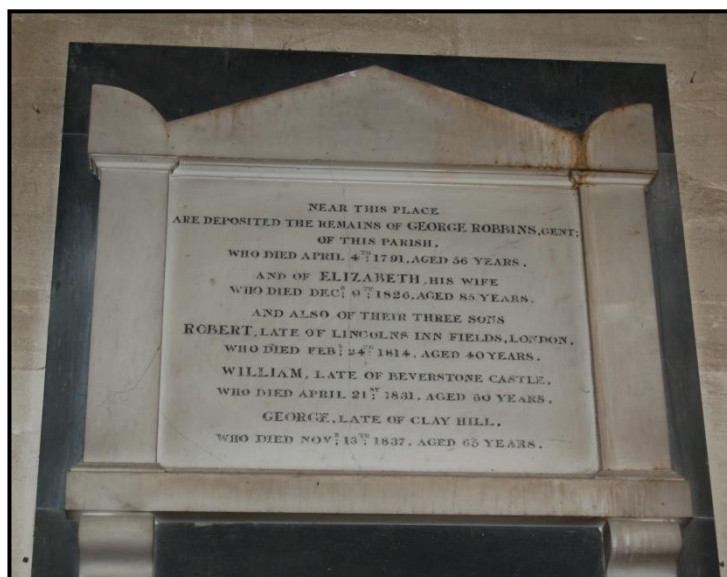


THE MONUMENTS OF St MARY'S CHURCH, FAIRFORD - 17

GEORGE ROBBINS (1735-1791) AND FAMILY



The Robbins family moved to Fairford from Didmarton, probably in 1771 or 1772. George Robbins was one of the eight children of William and Mary Robbins and was baptised at Didmarton on 19 July 1736. William died in 1763 and described himself as a yeoman in his will and owned (or leased) one of the large farms in either Didmarton itself or nearby Oldbury-on-the-Hill. George married Elizabeth White at Didmarton on 25 January 1767 and their three sons William, George and Robert were born in 1771, 1772 and 1774 respectively. William was baptised at Didmarton on 28 April 1771 but his two younger brothers were both baptised in Fairford, George on 11 August 1772 and Robert on 18 April 1774.

The wording on the monument is as follows:

NEAR THIS PLACE
ARE DEPOSITED THE REMAINS OF GEORGE ROBBINS, GENT;
OF THIS PARISH,
WHO DIED APRIL 4TH; 1791, AGED 56 YEARS.
AND OF ELIZABETH, HIS WIFE
WHO DIED DEC^R; 9TH; 1826, AGED 85 YEARS.
AND ALSO OF THEIR THREE SONS
ROBERT, LATE OF LINCOLNS INN FIELDS, LONDON,
WHO DIED FEB^Y; 24TH; 1814, AGED 40 YEARS.
WILLIAM, LATE OF BEVERSTONE CASTLE,
WHO DIED APRIL 21ST; 1831, AGED 60 YEARS.
GEORGE, LATE OF CLAY HILL,
WHO DIED NOV^R; 13TH; 1837, AGED 65 YEARS.

George's son William is described on the monument and in the Fairford burial register as being "of Beverstone Castle" near Tetbury. Following the family tradition William managed a large farm but he suffered a minor setback in November 1830 when his new threshing machine was smashed by a mob during the so-called 'Swing Riots'. One of the ring leaders of the riot was transported to Australia after being prosecuted by William Robbins and sentenced at the Gloucester Quarter Sessions in January 1831.

William's brother George was also a farmer and he owned the Clay Hill estate mid-way between Fairford and Lechlade. George married Sarah Cullimore at Didmarton on 20 December 1808. It would appear that neither William nor his brother George had any children, or at least if they did, they do not appear in any of the Gloucestershire parish baptismal registers nor are any mentioned in George's will (he left all his wealth to his wife and his nephews). An advertisement in Jackson's Oxford Journal of 8 March 1834 announced an auction of sheep and agricultural implements as George Robbins was leaving his farm, presumably marking his retirement which was cut short by his death in 1837.

Robert, the youngest of George and Elizabeth's sons was sent to Oriel College, Oxford and became a solicitor at Lincoln's Inn Fields. He and his wife Ann Eliza had five children including Spencer Percival who became a Queen's Foreign Service Messenger; William Pitt who became a Major-General in the Indian Army; and George Augustus who took over the Clay Hill estate from his uncle George.

The Robbins family grave is situated just outside the west end of the church, overlooked by the great west window and is covered by a very plain raised ledger tomb. The ledger stone is marked very simply with the initials and year of death of Elizabeth Robbins and her three sons but her husband George is not listed although he was buried in the churchyard on 8 April 1791 and is almost certainly buried in the same plot as the rest of his family.



There are several other memorials in the Cotswolds relating to the Robbins family including brass plaques in St Lawrence's Church in Lechlade to both Spencer Percival Robbins and George Augustus Robbins. A wall monument to Cornelius Robbins, the eldest brother of George Robbins senior, can be found in Didmarton church. Cornelius Robbins's only daughter Mary was married in Fairford church on 9 August 1786 to Joseph Pitt, Member of Parliament for Cirencester and founder of the Pittville Pump Room in Cheltenham. Both their son and grandson served as Rectors at Rendcomb.