



Ross-on-Wye Town Council

Nathaniel Morgan 1775-1854



Nathaniel Morgan, born in 1775, succeeded his father in the house and draper's shop opposite the Market House, until recently known as "Friends' Place" and commemorated by a plaque which was removed in the 1950s.

On these premises Nathaniel Morgan opened the Ross and Archenfield Bank in 1819. During the serious crisis in 1825/6 when many county banks had to suspend payment, the Ross Bank was only saved from disaster by the timely and generous help of "10 Herefordshire persons of property". This kind of help would not have been forthcoming without the complete trust and confidence which Nathaniel Morgan had won from his neighbours and which in the result proved to be completely justified.

Nathaniel Morgan was deeply concerned for the education of the children of the town. He had with Thomas Pritchard promoted the small pioneer school in the old Market House which was so successful that a larger building was soon required.

Though education was perhaps his main interest, Nathaniel Morgan was a man of wide views and had many other concerns. He was a radical reformer in politics, an enthusiast for the abolition of slavery, a lifelong pacifist, and was far ahead of his day and generation in striving for mutual understanding and tolerance between all religious denominations.

Nathaniel Morgan was three times Mayor of Ross. He was responsible for the introduction of gas lighting and for an important diversion in the road between Ross and Hereford in order to avoid a steep hill which had caused much suffering to horses and driven cattle. Through his efforts also Ross had obtained a town clock, a fire escape and a brigade engine and a sundial on Wilton Bridge.

His sterling character and lifelong concern for his fellowmen were known to all. His neighbours might not agree with his views, but no one could doubt his goodness and sincerity. When he died in 1854, 'The Hereford Times' noted "the significant proof of his esteem in which he was held; the shops were closed and business suspended. Many along the route of the procession shed tears and we observed men of all shades of religion and politics in the funeral group".

Nathaniel Morgan is buried in the Quakers' Burial Ground at Ross.