

1 Henry Gibbes



2 Sir James Russell



4 John & Martha Noble 5 Robert, Earl of Gloucester



3 Thomas Jones



St James Priory • Memorials

As you might expect in an important and historic city church, those remembered on the wall and window memorials at St James were leading local merchants, business people and politicians.

There are monuments to no less than six former mayors of the city. Men like **Henry Gibbes(1)** who was mayor in 1624. A little later, Charles 1 was short of money and 44 citizens of Bristol were invited to become knights, an expensive business. Gibbes refused and was fined £8 13s 4d. His memorial at the east end of the south aisle has an engraving of him, his wife Anne and his four sons and four daughters.

Sir James Russell(2) was Governor of St Nevis in the West Indies. He was one of the first colonisers of the island and owned slave plantations. Russell organised its defence against, at various times, the Spanish, French, Dutch and Carib Indians. His monument is adorned with cannon and the weapons of war.

The main produce imported into Bristol from the West Indies was sugar and a number of those remembered on the memorials were involved in processing or trading sugar. One of the most notorious was **Thomas Jones(3)** who has a modest memorial at the east end of the south aisle. He made a fortune through trading slaves from modern-day Nigeria in Africa to the West Indies. This was a barbaric business and on one voyage alone 73 of the 283 men, women and children on his ship died during the crossing.

Between the windows of the south aisle is the memorial to **John and Martha Noble(4)**. His monument claims he was the first merchant to import goods directly from Turkey in the eastern Mediterranean. What the monument does not mention was his extensive involvement in privateering. In times of war, and with the agreement of the Admiralty, men like Noble would equip ships to raid enemy merchantmen and seize their cargoes.

Close by and lower down is the earliest monument in the church, a figure of a man lying in a niche in the wall. This was once thought to be of **Robert, First Earl of Gloucester(5)**, the Priory's founder, but from his dress it is more likely to be of a now unknown thirteenth century merchant.

In the seventeenth century brewing was a very profitable business and two of the church's finest monuments are to brewers, those to **Andrew Hooke(10)** and **Henry Dighton(6)** on the west wall.

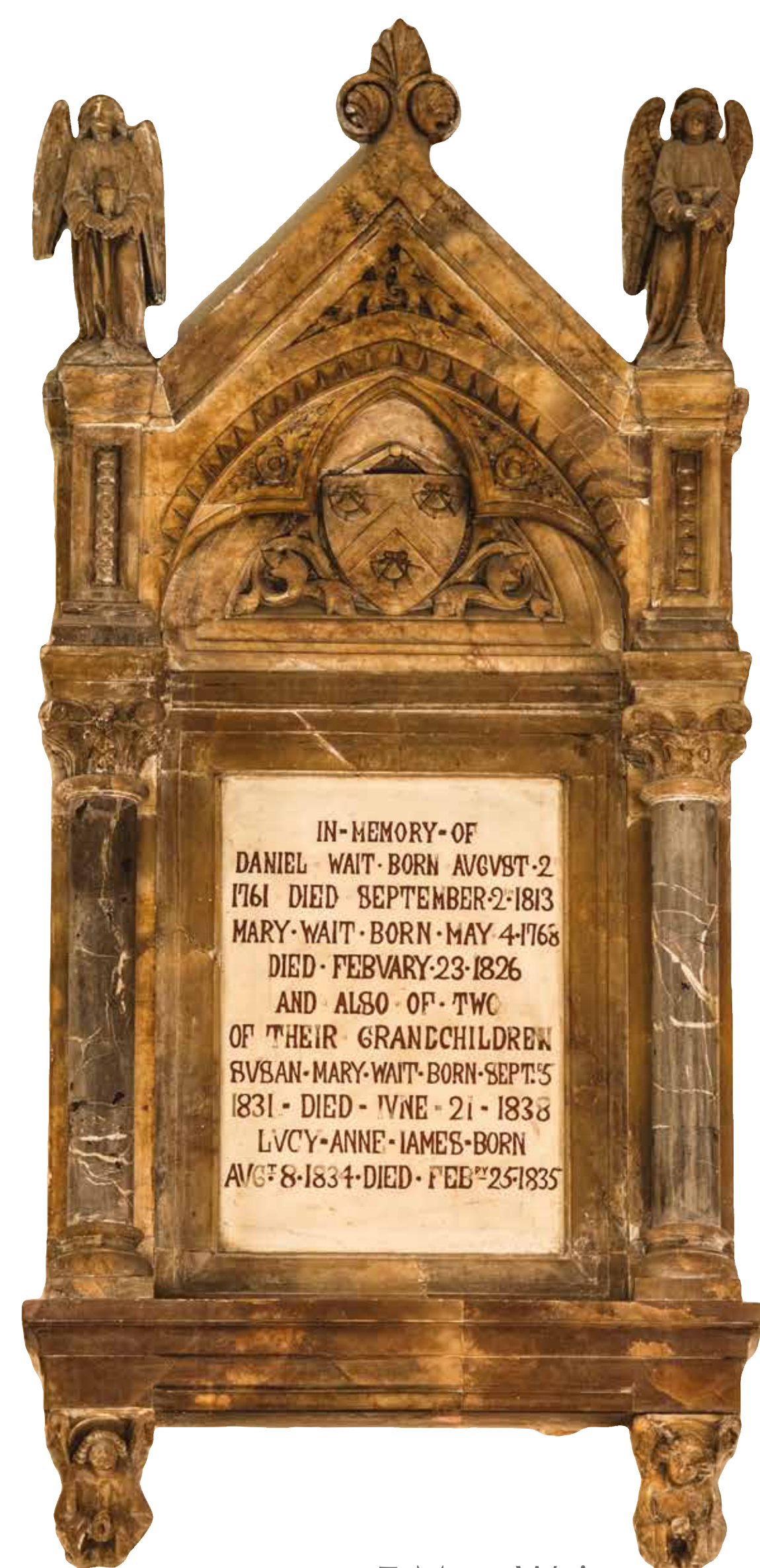
Many of the business people who are remembered are men but one important woman is commemorated on the east wall of the south aisle. **Mary Wait(7)** succeeded her husband as a partner of the Castle Bank in 1813, becoming only the second woman in Bristol to hold this position.

The wall (9) and window memorials are testament to the skill of local craftsmen and changing fashions in design. One of the most beautiful stained glass windows, that to the west end of the north aisle, is to **William Trull(8)**, a wealthy local butcher. The window was made by the firm of Joseph Bell and Son, a famous firm of stained glass artists based in Bristol.

You can find out more about the memorials in the church and who made them by going to: www.stjamesprioryproject.org.uk/history/familyhistoryresearch



6 Henry Dighton



7 Mary Wait

8 William Trull stained glass



9 William Trull wall memorial



10 Martha Hooke

