

Dr Thomas Kirkland

To the right of the North Door of the church is a monument to Dr Thomas Kirkland.

Kirkland was born in 1722 at Ashbourne, Derbyshire, the son of Thomas Kirkland, solicitor, and his second wife Mary Allsop. After a grammar school education he was apprenticed to a surgeon in Loughborough.

Kirkland had set up practice in Ashby by 1747. He married Dorothy Palmer, whose mother was Elizabeth Bate, granddaughter of Thomas Bate, who founded the Bate Library, to become the Ashby Parish Library (see *Bate Library*). They had 12 children, 6 of whom died in infancy.

His father, also Thomas Kirkland, died in 1751 and is buried in the churchyard.

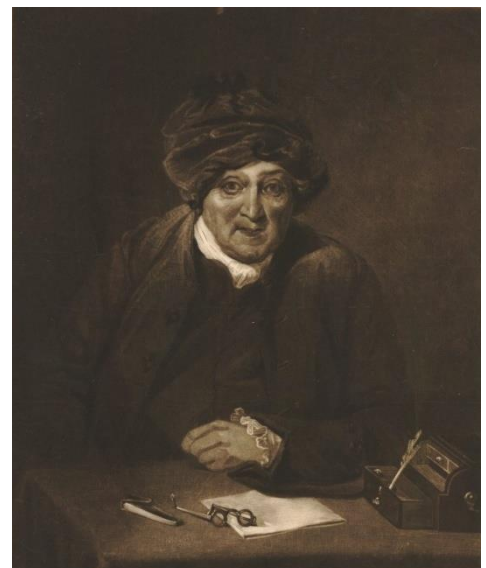
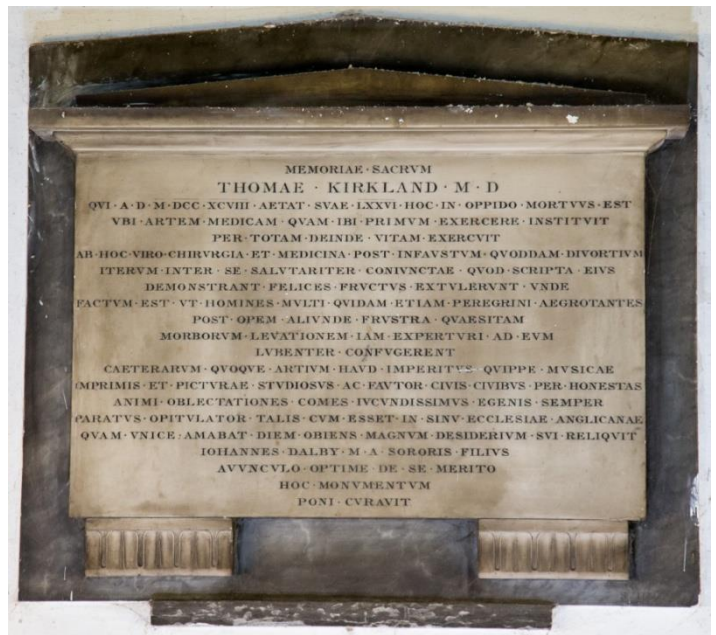
Amongst Kirkland's patients were Francis, 10th Earl of Huntingdon (son of Theophilus and Selina – see *Selina, Countess of Huntingdon*) and Laurence Shirley, 4th Earl Ferrers, of Staunton Harold Hall.

In January 1760 he became involved in the murder case concerning Earl Ferrers. He was called to Staunton Harold Hall to attend John Johnson, Lord Ferrers' steward, after he had been shot by his master. Kirkland, detained to dinner with the disturbed Earl, left the house covertly, returned with a magistrate and armed men, and removed the wounded steward, Johnson, who soon died.



EARL FERRERS.

Earl Ferrers



Thomas Kirkland

The Coroner's Jury returned a verdict of wilful murder on Earl Ferrers, who was committed to Leicester Gaol, causing much excitement. (His custodian was James Lambert, father of the giant Daniel Lambert.) As a nobleman, he could not be tried at an ordinary assizes, so he was transferred to the Tower of London to be tried by the House of Lords.

The trial was a *cause celebre*; no-one could remember an Earl being tried for murder. Dr Kirkland was a witness at the trial.

