



## Soulbury Church, Bucks, with its Monuments.

*By R. J. Arden Lovett.*

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**T**HE Church of All Saints, chiefly of the decorative period, with perpendicular alterations and additions, consists of a nave, aisles, south porch, western tower, about 56 feet high, containing a peal of six bells—the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 6th of which are modern, the 4th and 5th ancient, having respectively the inscriptions round the verge: “Sea Martine ora pro nobis,” and “Sea Margareta ora pro nobis.” The 5th bell was cast in 1529. The largest weighs 18 cwt., on which a clock strikes—and a fine chancel in the east window of which are the Lovett arms—three wolves passant in pale sa. It was restored under the direction of the late G. E. Street, R.A., in 1863, by Phillips Cosby Lovett, J.P., D.L., of Liscombe Park, Lord of the Manor and patron of the living. There is a monument on the north wall bearing the following inscription:—

“To the glory of God, and in memory of Elizabeth Ann Lovett, eldest daughter of Sir Jonathan Lovett, Bart.

“This chancel was restored in 1863 by her grateful kinsman Phillips Cosby Lovett. This tablet also commemorates her father, mother, brothers and sisters, viz., Robert Turville Jonathan, Edward William, John, Letitia and Arabella.

“All buried in this chancel.”

On the same wall there is a 15th century brass in perfect preservation to the memory of Thomas Lovett, of Astwell Manor, Northamptonshire, High Sheriff of that county, 1492, and one of the Privy Council to King Edward IV. He was the son of Simon Lovett, of Liscombe, and younger brother of William Lovett, of Liscombe, Bucks.

The part of the inscription which sets forth how William the Conqueror appointed William Lovett, son of Richardus de Louvet,

Master of the Wolfhounds over all England, and how in consequence he took for his arms Arg. three wolves passant in pale sa., is taken from the Harleian MSS. No. 38, page 119, and is interesting.

“Familia Lovettorum sane antiquissima peculiare stemma a quodum Gulielmo Viro Bellico qui in conquestu Normanorum, Anno Dom. 1066, sub Gulielmo Duce Stipendia merebat bona sine explicata iste Gulielmus inter nobiles Normanies Generes qui cum Duce ad conquestum Angliae venerunt; vir primarius fuit et ad eo fortitur se jessit ut Rex ei terras multas donavit cumque canum luperum quibus ea tunc insula non parum infestabitur majestrum per totam Angliam constituit, ratione cujus arma gentilesia respondente (scilicet tres lupes incedentes Sab. in campo Arg.) sibi appropriavit suisque reliquit, relinquens tres luperum capites Or. in campo Sab. Arma patris Richardi de Lovet Normaniae.”

The Will of Thomas Lovett was proved January 2nd, 1492. In it he appoints to be buried in Biddlesdon Abbey, by his wife.

Underneath is another brass with the inscription:—

“The above Plate was originally placed in the Turville Chapel in Biddlesdon Abbey from where it was removed when the Abbey was destroyed in 1704.

“The Turville Chapel was founded in the reign of Henry II. by Sir William de Turville, of Helmdon, in Northamptonshire, he was succeeded by Sir Simon, he by Sir William, and he by Sir Nicholas, upon whose death, 1309, it came to the Lovetts, his only daughter and heir, Sarah, having in 1304 married Robert Lovett of Liscombe, in Bucks, son of Sir Robert Lovett of Newton, in Warwick and Rushton, Northamptonshire.”

There is also a brass to Colonel John Lovett, M.P., ob. 1710 and his wife Mary Verney ob. 1769. She was a daughter of Viscount Fermanagh of Middle Claydon, Bucks, sister of Ralph Earl Verney and of Margaret Verney married to Sir Thomas Cave, Bart., of Stanford Hall, Leicestershire, from whom the present Lord Braye is descended. There are two marble monuments on the same side—one to the memory of Major Verney Lovett, M.P. for Wendover. It is a pyramid of black marble to which is affixed a shield with the arms of Lovett, and below:—

“Gratitude and Affection erected this Monument to the memory of Major Verney Lovett. He was the son of Col.

John Lovett and the Hon. Mary Verney. He departed this life the 10th day of December, 1771, aged 66 years."

The other, which is within the altar rails, is very handsome, reaching from the floor to the roof. It is surmounted by the Lovett and Pigott arms, and bears the inscription:—

"Here lyeth the Body of Robert Lovett, of Liscombe, in the Parish of Soulbury, in the County of Bucks, Esq. who departed this life, August 9th, 1699, in the 76 year of his age. He married Penelope, daughter and sole heiress of Thomas Aylet of Hovels in the County of Essex Esq. who departed this life, March 21. 1688, in the 52nd. year of her age. By her he had issue 4 children: Anne, his eldest daughter, who died young, and lyeth in this vault; Robert, his only son, who married Theodosia, daughter of Sir John Halsey, of Great Gaddesden, in Hertfordshire, Knight who died without issue, November 29th, 1683, in the 26th. year of his age, and lyeth buried in this vault; Lettice, his 2nd daughter, now living, married to Thomas Pigott, of Diddershall, in the County of Bucks, Esq. by whom she hath had 2 sons, Richard, the eldest, who died young, and is buried in this vault; and Penelope, his youngest daughter now living, and married to Edw. Bate, of Midsmorton, in this County, Esq. by whom she hath two daughters, both alive. He also married a second wife, now living, Elizabeth widow of John Bradshaw, of Darford, in the County of Surrey, Esq. by whom he had no issue.

"Here also lyeth interred in this vault, Lawrence Lovett younger brother of the said Robert Lovett, who departed this life the 2nd. day of October 1698, in the 65th year of his age.

"This Monument was erected at the sole charge of Lettice Pigott, wife of Thomas Pigott aforesaid, in Memory of her dear Father and Mother, in the year 1701."

Opposite, on the south side, also within the altar rails, is a very handsome Mural Monument, with a recess between pilasters, having the figures of Sir Robert Lovett and his first wife, Susan, daughter of Richard Brooke and heiress of her grandfather, Richard Pate, of Marston, Gloucestershire,—she was the widow of Sir Ambrose Willoughby de Parham—and affixed to the pediment above, three shields of arms, the centre one bearing the arms of Lovett quartering de Turville, and the other two the arms of Pate and

Brooke. Sir Robert Lovett, of Liscombe, was High Sheriff of Bucks, 1608.

On the left hand is the inscription :—

“Rob. Lovett Miles Posuit hoc Memoriae Sacru annog. perpetui Testimoniū conjux posuit maestissimus euende ut corporis in Terra sic Spiritus in Coelo Locu simul expectans et expectas.

“Sta meditare, time, gaude lachrymare Viator  
 Quisquis es, ecce meus te docet ista Civis.  
 Sta Index Deus est, mors Lictor, Spiritus erro  
 Sistitur, en jacet ut carcere Corpus humo.  
 Stando tuas meditare vices ; Cito sic eris ut sum :  
 Nunc mihi ; cras tibi ; sors omnibus aequa venit  
 Ergo time, meditaus, ne non te parca paratum  
 Poseat ; ut hic vivas et moriare feres.  
 Multiplicisq ; timeris lachrymare Piacula Culpa  
 Ne quid agat proesens Vita futura luat  
 Te lachrymas prome, gaude cui Christus ocellos  
 Absternit sordes, abluit, Astra dedit.”

On the right hand :—

“Susan Brooke, late wife of Sir Robert Lovett, Knight.  
 She deceased the 2nd. of July 1609.

An Enigrame  
 Susan Lovett.  
 Now all's At Rest.

“If Wisdom, true Repentance, and Religion,  
 Birth, Beautie, Worth, Youth, Wealth, Friends, Prayers, or  
 Praise,

Could have preserved a Bodye from corruption,  
 This Lady might have lived yet endlesse days.  
 But those were wings whereon her Spirit fled hence,  
 Christ thought her fitter for His glorious presence.  
 Her soule, altho' her Body sleeps in dust,  
 Attends like Angels, on Great GOD above.  
 Now free from Pain, Sin, Feare, or fleshy Lust,  
 Yet filled with heavenly joys and saints pure Love.  
 Then praise wee GOD for her, I pray likewise,  
 That we may live, die, rise, and reign in Blisse.”

Sir Robert Lovett was not buried at Soulbury, he died on his journey home from visiting his son, Edward Lovett, of Tawstock, Devon, and was interred at Sparsholt, Berkshire, in 1645.

He was a man of great attainments and had an extensive

correspondence with some of the leading personages at the court, and in the cabinet of King James I. and King Charles I. Many letters passed between him and Sir Edward Nicholas, one of the Ministers of State to King Charles I. In one of them he writes to Sir Robert Lovett as his old friend, asking him to go to London.

On the south wall there is a monument in white stone, having a female figure reclining over an urn, inscribed, "A filial offering to Maternal worth." Lower down, on trefoil headed panels, are many inscriptions and the following on a tablet :—

"Sir Jonathan Lovett, Bart. erected this Monument to the memory of his dear and beloved Mother Eleanor Lovett, who departed this life December 2. 1786, in the 66th year of her age.

"By her Father, Daniel Mansergh Esqre. of the County of Cork, she was descended from the Manserghs of Cumberland, and the Wentworths of York ; and by her Mother Mary, eldest daughter and co-heiress of Nicholas Southcote, Esq. from the Southcotes of Devon. She married Jonathan Lovett, Esq. of Liscombe House, Lord of this Manor, by whom she had Robert and Elizabeth, who died infants, and the under-named, who lived to maturity.

"Jonathan married Sarah, daughter of Jonathan Darby, Esq. of Leap Castle and has issue.

"Verney, Chaplin to His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, married Frances daughter of Henry Gervais, D.D. and has issue, Mary, Eleanor, married to John Darby, jun. Esq. of Leap Castle, and has issue.

Susanna, married to Willam Henn, Master in Chancery.

"Elizabeth married to John Pigott, Esq. of the Queen's County, and has issue."

On it are emblazoned the Arms of Lovett, impaling, Arg. a bend raguly gu. betw. three arrows or. for Mansergh, of Cumberland.

On the same side of the chancel are monuments to Jonathan Lovett, father of Sir Jonathan Lovett, Bart.

"This Monument is erected by the Rev. Verney Lovett, A.M. to record his own gratitude and the Virtues of his father, Jonathan Lovett, Esq. of Liscombe, in this parish, and of Kingswell near Tipperary, Ireland, where he died, August 24th. 1770, aged 48."

It bears the arms of Lovett and the Motto Spe. A handsome marble one, with the inscription :—

“Near this place lies interred the Body of Robert Lovett, late of Liscombe, in this County, Esq., who died June the 26, in the year 1740, and in the twenty-first year of his age.

“This Monument is erected by his sorrowful Mother, Sarah Lovett, in memory of the best and most dutiful of sons.”

And a marble tablet with the Lovett arms, to a younger branch of the Lovett family, Phillips Cosby Lovett, father of the late Capt. Cosby Lovett, and grandfather of Percival Cosby Ernest Lovett, now of Liscombe Park, Lord of the Manor, and Patron of the living.

There is also a beautifully carved white marble cross near the south porch in the churchyard with the inscription, “In loving memory of William Gough Gubbins Lovett, born Sep. 1871 died 10. January 1893.”

Under the altar is a large vault, the burial place of the Lovett family for many generations.

In 1301, Robert Lovett, of Liscombe, being the Lord of the Manors of Soulbury, Liscombe, Chelmscote and Hollenden, obtained a grant from the Bishop of Lincoln, that he might add a chantry to the Church of Liscombe.

“Robto' Lovet D'no de Liscombe Epus concessit here Cantuariam in Eccliam de Liscombe.”

He appointed as rector of Soulbury Hugh de Walcot, 16th June, 1313, and Sir John Lovett, Hugh Darrant, 2nd July, 1341.

In 1535, 15th June, Alice Mallett willed to be buried in the Church, and gave to the building £5, making Richard Lovett her executor.

In 1528, March 6th, Percival Duval, Vicar of Soulbury, willed to be buried in the chancel before the Image of our Lady, on the right hand of the high altar, and gave legacies to the Sepulchre Light and the Rood Light, making Richard Lovett overseer of his will, and ordered a yearly obit to be said for him.

In a deed dated the 3rd of June, 1698, it was arranged between Robert Lovett, son of Sir Robert Lovett, and Edward Lovett, of Tawstock, Devon, that £30, with the advantage of living at Liscombe, or £40 without this advantage, should be the vicar's stipend.

There is also at Soulbury what is called the Lovett Charity, Robert Lovett having in his will, dated 27th November, 1710, left a sum of money, which now produces £102 yearly, for the benefit of the poor of the Parish.