

NOTES ON AN EFFIGY ATTRIBUTED TO RICHARD
WELLESBORNE DE MONTFORT, AND OTHER SEPUL-
CHRAL MEMORIALS IN HUGHENDEN CHURCH,
BUCKINGHAMSHIRE.

BY ALBERT HARTSHORNE.

After the decisive victory at Evesham in 1265, in which Simon de Montfort, with his eldest son Henry, was slain, his widow Alianora, second daughter of King John and Isabella of Angoulême, with her only daughter Alianora, retired to a monastery at Montargis. His second son, Simon, after holding out for a time in Kenilworth Castle, and being excepted from taking any benefit under the *Dictum de Kenilworth*, fled finally to the Continent, and we hear of him in 1270 as taking part in the murder of Henry, eldest son of Richard, king of the Romans, at Viterbo. He was Count of Bigorre in France, where he founded a family bearing his patrimonial name. Almeric, the third son (Dugdale calls him the fourth), was first a priest in York; he embraced the military profession abroad, became a knight, and died shortly after 1283. Guy, the fourth son, (whom Dugdale calls the third) was taken prisoner at Evesham, and afterwards escaped into Italy, where he joined his brother Simon in the murder of his first cousin above mentioned.

“For scarcely mass was done
When Leicester’s offspring, Guy and Simon fierce,
Pierced his young heart with unrelenting swords.”

He was Count of Anglezia and progenitor of the Montforts of Tuscany. Of the fifth son, Richard, Dugdale makes no mention; and Brooke, in his *Catalogue of Nobility*, says that Edward and Richard, sons of Simon de Montfort, died young, a statement which has not been corrected by Vincent on Brooke.

In Nichols’ *History of Leicester*,¹ is the following deed, quoted as from Vincent’s MSS., p. 40 b:

(1) Vol. i., part ii, appendix, p. 39, Charters and Grants of the early Earls of Leicester, *paragraph 15*.

“Sciant presentes et futuri quod Ego Wellysborne filius comes Symonis de Monteforte unus filiorum domina Alianora filia Johannis Regis Angliæ dedi concessi et hac presenti carta mea et concessione Mariæ ux mei Ricardo de la Rosehulles, unum messuagium cum gardino et cum tilag’ et cum aliis pertin. supra Kingshull in parochia de Hugenden. Hiis testibus, Symone de Hugenden, Galfrido Tykfer, Ricardo Tere, Willielmo Brand et aliis.”

There are two seals appended to this document. The one represents a man in coif, hauberk and gambeson, holding a banner of St. George in his right hand, armed with a sword suspended in front, and carrying a shield on his left arm, slung by a gigue, and charged with a lion rampant, double queued, and holding a child in its mouth. On either side of the figure, on a lozengy ground, is a fleur-de-lis. The legend runs: + s WELLSBVRNE · BELLATOR · FIL · SIMONIS · DE · MONTEFORTE.

The other seal exhibits a shield within a cusped circle, sub-cusped at the sides, hanging from a bough of a tree and charged with the lion rampant, double queued, holding a child in its mouth, with the legend: WELLESBVRNE · DE · LA · MONTEFORTE. The reverse is a *secretum* representing a shield within a cusped circle, and charged with a griffin segreant, a chief chequy,

At *paragraph* 16 of Nichols, as above, the following deed is quoted:—

“Ricardus Dominus de Wellesburne, miles, nuper de villâ de Wellesburne Monteforte, in com’ Warwyke Dat’ apud Wellesburne in com’ War’, anno 1 Edw. II.

To this deed is attached a seal containing a shield displaying a griffin segreant, a chief chequy, over all a bendlet dexter, with the legend, s. RICARDI DE WELLESBVRNE MILITIS. All these seals are engraved in Nichols, (Plate xii, figs. 4, 5, and 6).

There is no notice of Richard de Montfort in any of the Calendars of Inquisitions or Patent Rolls, but there is mention in a Close Roll of 49 Henry III. (1264), of a grant by the king to Richard de Montfort, son of Simon, Earl of Leicester, of fifteen head of deer in Sherwood Forest to stock his park, *where* is not mentioned.

The following entry appears in one of the old parish

registers of Hughenden: "Memorandum, Nov. 1690, y^t in the Isle of the Chancel of Hitchenden Church was a brass Inscription taken off one of the tombstones, which certified y^t two children of Richard Wellesbourne of Kingshall were buried there above three hundred years agoe, whose names were formerly Montforts as ye Inscription specifieth. The brass was stolen away in October, 1690. Witness my hande, John Jenkins, Vicar."

A copy of Vincent's deed in Cotton MSS.¹ has the following note, signed "W. Camden Clar."

"It is thought to be a forged deed by reason of the false Latin, the character new and the style absurd both in deed and seal."

Camden was no doubt the earliest writer on heraldry whose works are of real value, but whatever force his remarks may have as regards the wording of this document, it does not appear that he ever compared the heraldry of the seals with that on the effigy in the church. Since the genuineness of this remarkable figure is unquestionable, the joint evidence thus afforded must have due consideration, and in regard to Camden's scruples, the remarks of Langley, in his History of Desborough Hundred, himself no mean authority, are not without significance. He says: "No one would forge a grant from persons who did not possess the property granted; it at least shows that a son of Simon de Montfort and his wife Mary possessed lands in this parish, and it is remarkable that *true seals* were annexed to the deed."

Making allowance for the inferior work of Nichols' engravings there is certainly nothing in the style of the seals which is not of the period to which they pretend to belong. The only differences in the armorial bearings are that the griffin on the surcoat of the effigy holds a child in its paws which that of the *secretum* does not, and the lion rampant with a child in its mouth on the shield

¹ Nic. Charles Collectanea genealogica e cartis et registris cum sigill, delineat, *Julius C* vii, Plut. xviii, D. fol. 141.

We have not been able to find the deed quoted by Nichols among Vincent's MSS. at the College of Arms; the reference

appears to be inaccurate. The copy by Nicholas Charles varies slightly in the orthography, but *his* drawings of the seals appear to have been exactly followed by Nichols' engraver.

of the effigy is contained within an orle of crosses, treffleés fitcheés, which does not appear upon either of the seals. The effigy being of course of a later date than the deed, these charges may have been subsequently assumed. It is not so easy to explain the non-appearance of the child in the griffin's paws in the seal to the deed dated 1 Edward II. The authenticity of this seal has, however, never been questioned, and it will be shown that this singular addition occurs in every sculptured example of this coat exhibited on and about the effigies in the church. It would seem that Langley cannot have compared the "true seals" with the effigy, because he says it represents Henry de Montfort, a Knight Templar, which he was not, and who certainly belonged to the family of the Montforts of Beaudesert who bore arms Bendy of ten or and az. With some inconsistency he goes on to say that the posterity of Richard, son of Simon de Montfort, are said to have assumed the name of Wellesborne, and to have lived at Wreck Hall in Hughenden.

Stothard says that Richard, fifth and youngest son of Simon de Montfort, did not fly the country after the battle of Evesham, but retired to Hughenden and assumed the name of Wellesborne. He confidently appropriates the effigy to this personage, and adds that the faulty Latin of Vincent's deed is "perhaps no proof of its being fictitious."

Lipscombe gets over the difficulty of the number of Simon de Montfort's sons by considering that Almeric and Richard were the same person; and we accordingly find that Almeric was banished after the battle of Evesham, that he returned to England, probably after having been to the Holy Land—for which there is not the slightest evidence—and assuming the name and arms of Wellesborne, lived at Hughenden.

Dugdale implies that Almeric died in Italy; and the one point in favour of his claim to be the founder of the family which continued at Hughenden until the time of Henry VI, is the peculiarity of the armorial bearings, the child in the lion's mouth. This has a certain foreign appearance, calling to mind the arms of the Visconti of Milan—a serpent with a female child in its mouth—so admirably exemplified in the fine equestrian statue of Bernabo Visconti, in the church of St. Giovanni in Conca,

in Milan, who died in 1385; this resemblance, however, may well be fortuitous.

Now, supposing for a moment that the deed is fictitious, we still have the Close Roll entry, showing not only that Simon de Montfort had a son Richard, whose existence Dugdale ignores, but that he was in favour with the king at a time when his father and brothers were in open war against the crown, for the year before the battle of Evesham fifteen head of deer were granted to him from a royal forest. Whether he at once settled quietly at Hughenden, or was one of the 120 knights—the *cruce signati*—who received the cross at the hands of Ottoboni at Northampton in 1268, with the view of accompanying Prince Edward to the Holy Land, in 1270, it is needless to speculate much. The cross-legged attitude of the effigy is of course of itself no proof of such a voyage having been taken, but the intention may possibly be thus signified, and the addition of the crescent, thrice repeated at the feet, has appeared to certain authors to lend some colour to the belief.

If, on the other hand, we put faith in the deed and seals, we have to consider why the grantor used a *secretum* with the arms of Wellesburne. Langley thinks that the subject of the effigy took the name and arms of Wellesborne, from a place in Warwickshire belonging to the Montforts of Beldesert, called by Dugdale "Wellesborne Montfort." This is reasonable enough as far as it goes, and is corroborated by the heraldry of the effigy, but there does not appear to be the same confirmatory evidence to support him in his conjecture that Richard de Montfort married a Bishopsden, of which family one of the coats was, Bendy of six arg. and sa. a canton erm.—for it will be noticed that Bendy of ten, a canton, occurs only upon the scabbard of the sword, and it is unlikely that the arms of the wife would be placed in such a minor position.

Again, we may utterly ignore both the deed and the *secretum*, and we still have the authentic evidence of the effigy, which exhibits on the surcote the arms of Wellesborne. The not unreasonable inference to be drawn from this is, that Richard de Montfort married a Wellesborne heiress, who brought him lands there and probably the property in Hughenden. As regards this property we

may for the moment recall the wording of the deed, where the consent of the wife was thought necessary.

It will be further shown that the coat of Bishopsden occurs only upon minor shields in connection with the effigies in the church, while the arms of Montfort of Beldesert are quartered with those of Wellesborne upon the principal shield of an effigy of an early period, probably of Richard's son; upon the jupon of a later effigy, and upon the shield of a figure of a still more recent date.

Juliana, a daughter of Henry de Montfort of Beldesert, (also called Peter,) was married to William de Bishopsden, who was enfeoffed by Henry with lands in Wellesborne; it is an open question whether Richard's wife was not also a daughter of Henry de Montfort, and thus possessed of property in Wellesborne and elsewhere. It is not easy otherwise to account for the appearance of the Beldesert Montfort coat in so conspicuous a manner on the later effigies, for it represents quite a different family. Against this theory it may be urged that the Beldesert Montfort coat does not appear at all on the effigy of Richard, where it might be expected. The date of the figure would partly account for this omission, marshalling by quartering being then quite in its infancy, and the arms of Wellesborne alone would have the preference as representing the property.

As regards the differences exhibited in the heraldry of the effigies, taking the deed of 1 Edward II, quoted by Nichols, we find on the seal the coat of Wellesborne without the child, and differenced with a bendlet dexter, like that of Henry of Lancaster (the arms of England differenced in the same way). On applying this to the effigy, which probably represents this second Richard, we find a quartered shield exhibiting—1, Montfort (much defaced); 2, Montfort of Beldesert; 3, defaced; 4, Wellesborne without the bendlet. On the effigy of the end of the fourteenth century we have Wellesborne without the bendlet, and Wellesborne without the chief; coming later still, an effigy apparently of the time of Henry V, exhibits a quartered shield of Montfort with the child, Montfort of Beldesert, and Wellesborne, differenced with an inescutcheon; lastly an effigy of the time of Henry VI presents a shield with the arms of Wellesborne, differenced with a

bendlet, which is again differenced with three crosses, pattées fitchées.¹ As regards the differences of the Montfort coat, the orle of crosses treffiées fitchées appears only on the shield of the earliest effigy. The lion of Montfort is invariably shown with the child in its mouth, and the child in the Wellesborne griffin's paws is similarly a constant feature. The crescent occurring upon the slabs of three of these effigies is very noticeable. It was no doubt originally assumed as a badge with some significant allusion.

Thus, we have at Hughenden, in addition to the historical points which are involved, a most interesting display of heraldry, heraldic differences and devices; and it is probable that no five effigies in any parish church in the kingdom exhibit such valuable illustrations of cadency. Since these authentic memorials have suffered not a little from the inaccurate descriptions of historians, and the careless work of engravers; and, as Weever says, "such is the despatch not so much of time, as of malevolent people, to all antiquities, especially of this kind,"² it may be well to place on record the information which is still afforded, both as regards the heraldry and the costume of the figures.

These sepulchral monuments appear to have remained undisturbed until 1818, when they were "cleaned" and placed much in the positions they now occupy by the late Mr. Norris.

"What call unknown, what charms presume,
To break the quiet of the tomb?
Who is he with voice unblessed,
That calls me from the bed of rest?"

Taking them in chronological order, No. I is the effigy attributed to Richard Wellesborne de Montfort. It lay, in the time of Langley, under an arched recess in the north wall of the chapel. Mr. Norris placed it on a new tomb in the midst of the chapel, where it now remains.

The figure represents a man in the usual military costume of the end of the thirteenth century, viz.: in a coif,

¹ One of eight shields of arms, painted on paper and fixed on the cap of a shaft supporting the arcade that divides the chapel from the chancel, exhibits the coat of Wellesborne with the dexter bendlet

with three crosses pattées fitchées, which are each again differenced with an ermine spot. These shields were apparently put up by Mr. Norris.

² *Ancient Funeral Monuments*, p. 661.

hauberk and chausses of mail, a gambeson, and a surcote, confined at the waist by a cingulum. On the forehead, the coif is arranged in a most unusual way. An oblong opening is shown over the temples, closed on the right side by a lace threaded at intervals through a band of mail of two rows, with the links set in the same direction, like the mail on the effigy of Peter, Earl of Richmond, in the church of Aquabella, in Savoy, who died in 1267. The lower edge of the lining of the coif is shown, and the object of this contrivance was to enable the wearer to put off the coif when he chose. The lace being unfastened, this hood would fall backwards upon the shoulders, in the same manner as we see it represented in the effigy of a De Ros, in the Temple Church; in that of Brian Fitz Alan, at Bedale, and in the effigy of Robert, son of St. Louis, formerly in the church of the Jacobins, at Paris. This arrangement answered the same purpose as that shown in a different manner in a knightly figure at Pershore.

In this opening is shown the cerveliere or scull cap of iron. Joinville in his Memoirs, speaking of St. Louis, says, "he raised the helmet from his head, on which I gave him my chapelle de fer, which was much lighter."¹ The gambeson, here represented in the usual manner, calls for no special remark; it was a hot substantial garment, padded with cotton or tow, and quilted, as in this example, in parallel lines. The knight wears a ponderous broad-bladed sword with seven shields on the scabbard, viz:—1, defaced; 2, bendy of ten, a canton, Bishopsden; 3, a chevron, Stafford (?); 4, a cross, Bigod, Earl of Norfolk (?); 5, chequy, Warrenne (?); 6, quarterly, Mandeville, Earl of Essex (?); 7, a pale, Grantmesnil (?). In his right hand he grasps a dagger, slung from the cingulum by a thin cord. The figure is considered by Meyrick to exhibit the earliest example of a dagger worn with the sword. He puts the date as about 1275.

In the *Statutes* of William the Lion, King of Scotland, (1165—1214) a knight is thus spoken of:—"Habeat equum, habergeon, capitium è ferro, ensem et cutellum, qui dicitur dagger."² Again, St. Gelais, in his *Viridario Honoris*, says, "à son costé chascun la courte dague,"

¹ *Meyrick's Ancient Armour*, v. i, p. 102.

² *Meyrick*, v. 1, p. 139.



Effigy in Hughenden Church

and, with regard to the sword, "à leur coste l'espee longue et large."¹

On the dexter side of the head of the effigy is a coat, bendy of ten, a chief, Betun (?).² The principal shield is of large size, as in all early effigies, and is charged with the following arms:—Within an orle of crosses trefflées fitchés, a lion rampant double queued, preying on a child. Three crescents are sculptured on a block at the feet. The effigy is executed in a light red stone, and represents a powerful and life-like figure. There is no departure from the usual manner of representing the deceased at this period, but there is an amount of repose and vigour about the statue which is extremely striking, and we may justly admire the dignity which it presents.

No. II represents a figure in low relief, carved in Purbeck marble upon a greatly disintegrated slab, narrowing to the feet, and probably originally placed level with the pavement as the lid of a coffin. It is now placed upon a low modern tomb in the arched recess from which the effigy No. I was ejected by Mr. Norris.

A man is here shown in a plain coif and chausses, and a "cote gamboisiée." Meyrick tells us³ that these gamboised coats were made more ornamental than ordinary gambesons, and this is confirmed by the present example which has a collar ornamented with roundels, similar decorations occurring on the lower edge of the skirt. It is perhaps a unique instance of the representation of such a garment on a military effigy. Upon the body is a large shield covering the arms of the figure and exhibiting the coats of Montfort with the child, Montfort of Beldesert, and Welllesborne; the third quarter was entirely defaced in Langley's time (before 1798). The knight holds up in his right hand a naked sword and in his left a staff with a cross on the top. In front of the right leg is a second sword, not suspended in any way, and piercing the neck of a mutilated lion. Lipscombe compares this beast to an owl, and his engraver has turned it into a cherub. On the slab, at the dexter side of the face, are two small shields, one charged with a chevron.

¹ Vol. i, p. 139.

² The bends being only just out of the vertical direction it is impossible to

say whether these charges or pales are intended.

³ Vol. i, p. 139.

the other showing bendy. On the sinister side are two similar shields, the one with a cross, the other with a saltire. On the breast is a heart, and close by it a small shield entirely defaced.

No. III is an effigy in the well known military costume of the time of the Black Prince, consisting of a bascinet, camail, and jupon, a skirt of mail and the usual defenses of plate for the arms and legs, the latter resting upon a lion with a shield on its chest, charged with the arms of Wellesborne. The original fore-arms and gauntlets had been broken away before the time of Langley and rudely re-carved, partly out of the upper portion of the body. On the jupon, below the waist, are the arms of Montfort of Beldesert, Wellesborne without the chief, and Montfort with the child. On the breast below the camail is a heart. The head reposes upon two couchant griffins, much mutilated, and each holding a child within its outstretched paws. On the slab at either side of the camail are shields bearing the arms of Montfort with the child. Opposite the waist on the dexter side is a shield with bendy of four, a canton sinister, and on the other side bendy of six.



Quarter Full Size.

Opposite the legs, on the dexter and sinister sides are very peculiar crescents containing lions' faces. Opposite the heels, on shields, are the arms of Wellesborne, on the dexter side and on the sinister, the same bearing without the chief. The effigy is carved in limestone, and now lies on the sill of the east window of the chapel.

No. IV is the effigy of a man of the time of Henry VI. This represents a bare-headed figure wearing a close garment with a collar, and skirts in vertical folds. It is much abraded and no armour is visible. He holds up a sword in his right hand and on his breast is a shield quartering:—1, Montfort with the child; 2 and 3, Montfort of Beldesert; 4, Wellesborne. Above the head on the slab are two shields with the charges entirely defaced and between them a crescent. The feet are clear of a greyhound courant. It is carved

in limestone, and is now reared up against the wall on the north side of the east window of the chapel.

No. V represents a man in a costume of a slightly later date than No. IV. It is similarly carved in limestone, in low relief, and formerly lay on the floor of the chancel. It is now placed in a vertical position against the wall, on the south side of the east window of the chapel. Here we have a knight wearing a helm for the *combat à l'outrance*, with a single cleft, and perforations for breathing in the upper part. On his body he has a shield with the coat of Wellesborne, debriused by a bendlet dexter, charged with three crosses, pattées fitchées. He wears tassets reaching to the middle of the thighs and a skirt of ring mail. In his upraised right hand he carries a mace or *masuel*, perhaps the only instance of such a weapon occurring upon a monumental effigy in this country. It reminds us of the *martel* or horseman's hammer, borne by a figure of an earlier period, at Great Malvern. The example at Hughenden is no doubt a mace for the tournament of which the herald in Chaucer's *Knight's Tale* thus speaks :

“ God speed you goth and layeth on fast,
With swords and long mases fighten your fill.”¹

It was the special weapon of the sergeant-at-arms, and as such is represented in an incised figure now in the church of St. Denis. On the dexter side of the slab, which is 6 ft. 3 in. long, 2 ft. 1 in. wide, and 9 in. thick, the following arms are sculptured upon shields:—1, a saltire and a cross, pattée grady; 2, a cross of St. George, and an inescutcheon; 3, on a chief three pellets; 4, Montfort of Beldesert; 5, a chevron, between three crosses pattées, Berkeley (?); 6, bendy of 10, a chief chequy; a coat of Wellesbourne (?). On the sinister side are these coats:—7 as 3, 8 as 2, 9 as 4, 10 as 1, 11 as 5. The effigy probably represents John Wellesborne, whose name occurs among the gentry of the county in 12 Henry VI. (1433), and who was Member for Wycombe in several sessions during that reign. The costume is of the latter part of the time of Henry VI.

Upon a high tomb, in an arched recess in the south

¹ Edit. 1597.

wall of the chapel, is a ghastly representation of a full sized corpse, stretched upon a winding sheet or shroud, which partly envelops it. The *sternum* or breast bone is hollowed out in the shape of "a mystic oval," containing a little figure, with the hands elevated. This represents the departed soul, and may be compared with a similar object in the hands of a knight of the fifteenth century in the church of Minster, Isle of Sheppey;¹ On the breast are eight incised crosses.

The figure shows considerable power of sculpture and knowledge of anatomy, and is of a kind not unusually found in most cathedral churches. Here, as elsewhere, the foolish legend is attached that the deceased endeavoured to fast for forty days. These repulsive memorials were no doubt intended to convey a salutary lesson to the living, and are striking instances of the terrors with which death was associated in the minds of our forefathers.² We happily live in a more rational age, and "the lively picture of death" merely appears at the present day as a strange ensample of the religious teaching of the fifteenth century.

It is a matter for congratulation that these valuable memorials of an ancient family are now under the enlightened protection of the noble owner of Hughenden; and that, in this instance at least, we cannot say with Weever:—"Alas! our own noble monuments and precyouses antiquyties wych are the great bewtie of our lande, we as little regarde as the parynges of our nayles."

¹ See *Archæological Journal*, vol. vi, p. 354.

² A similar figure at Tewkesbury has lizards and other reptiles creeping about the body.