



The Monumental Brasses of Berkshire.

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AT Streatley are the brasses of Thomas Clarke and wife, 1600, and of Thomas Buriton, esq., and wife, 1603; at Sparsholt, John Fettiplace, 1602; at Sandhurst, Richard Geale and wife, 1608; at Langford, Walter Prunes and wife, 1609; at Stanford Dingley, John Lyford, 1610. At Bray is another example of a quadrangular plate to Arthur Page and wife, with a child lying between them, 1610. The last of the fine series of late brasses at Hanney is Oliver Ayshcombe and wife, 1611. At Lambourne is Thomas Garrard and wife, 1619. A very good brass at Old Windsor represents Humfrey Michell, esq., surveyor of Windsor Castle, and his wife, and their son, Samuel Mitchell, esq., servant and marshall of the palace to King James, 1621. At this period the adoption of quadrangular plates, or plates with arched tops, had become common, and the effigies are usually kneeling. Such are the three that follow: at Bray, a brass to a Master of Arts of Oxford (as its rhyming inscription implies), and his wife, traditionally said to be George Rixman, who is commemorated on a neighbouring stone, 1621; at Stanford Dingley, a small unknown figure, *cir.* 1620; and at Lockinge, Edward Keate and wife, 1624. Good brasses with the effigies cut out in the

usual manner are at Kintbury, John Gunter and wife (the latter buried at Cirencester, where a similar brass commemorates the pair), 1626; and at Ufton Nervet, William Smith and wife, 1627. Finally, at Winkfield, on a quadrangular plate, is the curious effigy of Thomas Mountague, yeoman of the guard, with a rose and crown upon his breast, holding in one hand the axe of his office, and with the other hand dealing out bread to two poor men, the date being 1630.

The brasses of ecclesiastics of this period represent them in the ordinary laymen's costume. Probably the Master of Arts at Bray, just mentioned, and possibly the nameless figure at Stanford Dingley, are of that character. But I am only aware of one effigy of this century in the county which is distinctly described as that of a clergyman. It is a second brass recently discovered at Remenham, of John Newman, "*hujus ecclesie quondam Pastoris, qui populum vera pavit pietate,*" etc., 1622.

Of brasses of ladies, the larger number has already been enumerated among the brasses of their husbands, of which they form part. The only examples of the 14th century are the two wives of Sir John Foxle, at Bray. There are three instances of ladies represented in separate brasses, near those of their husbands: these are—at Mortimer, Johanna Trevet (headless), 1441; at Little Wittenham, Cecilia Kidwelly, 1472; at Great Coxwell, Joan Morys, *cir.* 1500. There remain a few others to be noted, either commemorated separately, or belonging to brasses from which the male effigies are lost. The most important of all is the fine figure at Shottesbrooke, of Margaret, wife of Sir Fulk Pennebrygg, 1401. Her head rested on a cushion, and there is a marginal inscription, with the evangelistic symbols. At Letcombe Regis is a tiny effigy (headless), to Alice, the daughter of John and Agnes Estbury, *cir.* 1440; the father, no doubt, being one of those who are represented in the Lambourne brasses. At Stanford Dingley, is Margaret, wife of William Dyneley, esquire to the king, 1444; at White Waltham, Margaret, wife of John Hille (headless), 1445; at Swallowfield, Margery, wife of Thomas Letterford, esq., *cir.* 1450; at Tidmarsh, Margaret, wife of Thomas Wode, 1499; at White Waltham, a second, Joan, wife of Richard Decons, esq., 1506; at Sparsholt, a nameless lady, *cir.* 1510; at Longworth, a good figure of Elynor Goodolphyn, "gentylwoman," 1566; at Streatley, Margaret, wife of William Buryngton, 1570; at Sunning, Anne, wife of William Barker, esq., 1575, the husband being lost;

also Anne, apparently their daughter, wife of William Staverton, esq., 1589. At Cumnor there is one of the best specimens of the ornamental dress of this period in the brass of Katherine, wife of Henry Staverton, 1577. At Cookham there remains a good figure of the daughter of Edward Woodyore and his wife, whose effigies are lost, 1615. At Wantage only the lady remains of the brass of William Willmott and his wife Cecilia, 1619. At Fawley, on a quadrangular plate, is the kneeling figure of Mary, wife of Thomas Gunter, with her son, 1621. Two very late and curious examples remain. One is at Lockinge, Mary, daughter of Edward Nedham of Hoton, Leicester, esq., *et. 17*, 1628. The other is at Finchampstead, Elizabeth, wife of John Blighe, holding by the hand a little daughter, 1635. At Hurst, on a square plate, Alice, wife of Thomas Harrison, esq., is represented lying in a bed, *cir.* 1600.

Four brasses of children still demand notice. The first is at Sunning, Elizabeth, daughter of Sir George Chute, aged three years, 1627, but in this instance a full-grown lady is represented. At St. George's, Windsor, are two brasses to Dorothy and William, the children of John King, D.D., prebendary. They are dated respectively 1630 and 1633. The children are represented in their cradles. At Little Wittenham is a small badly-drawn figure of a woman, representing Anne, daughter of Henry and Anne Dunch, aged ten months, 1683.

Of effigies represented in graveclothes, the examples in this county are at Longworth, Richard Yate and wife, 1500, and at Appleton, John Goodryngton, 1518. Also at Childrey, William Feteplace, esq., and his wife, 1516, are represented in graveclothes, rising from tombs; and Jone, daughter of Thomas Walrond, and wife of Robert Strangbon, lying upon a tomb, 1507.

At Childrey are three representations of the Holy Trinity, an aged figure holding a crucifix, on which rests a dove, though the dove is frequently omitted. The finest is in the brass of Jone Strangbon, 1507; the others are in the brasses of John Kyngeston, 1514, and Thomas Walrond, *cir.* 1520. Another example is at Cookham, in the brass of Robert Pecke, esq., 1510.

A good example of a brass consisting of a cross, instead of an effigy of the deceased person, was once at St. Mary's, Reading, and a considerable portion of it existed until within the last few years. It was a plain cross, with *fleur-de-lys* at the extremities, and an inscription at the foot to William Baron, 1416. Several small

scrolls, bearing the words "Jesus" and "Mercy" were scattered over the slab, and a large scroll was entwined round the stem of the cross. The oldest brass known was a cross of this character, in Winchester Cathedral, to Bishop Godfrey de Lucy, 1204, where the holes in which the cross was rivetted may still be seen upon the plain raised tomb, though the brass was not inlaid in the stone. In Berkshire some early crosses have disappeared. The indent of a beautiful floriated design may be seen at Buckland, where the name of Dame Felice de Blorde (?) may be traced along the edge of the slab, the separate brass letters being lost. At Little Wittenham (now outside the chancel door) a slab has had a cross composed of a circle with *fleur-de-lys*, surrounding a small head, probably of a priest. At Hurley, also, the outline of a very similar early cross is to be seen.

Canopied brasses remain only at Shottesbrooke and Childrey. At Bray, the side supports of the canopy alone remain. These brasses have already been described. At St. George's, Windsor, is the upper part of a fine canopy, 1380; the effigy of the first Warden, William Mugge, in cope, has disappeared.

It would be endless to enumerate all the various accessories with which brasses are embellished. The evangelistic symbols have already been noticed, and the curious devices on the Newbury brass. The two merchant brothers at East Hendred have shields, bearing their merchants' marks, a peculiar device in which a cross is combined. Examples of this are very frequent in other counties. In connection with these may be noticed a brass at Sunning, to Thomas Frognall, M.A., 1612, where the whole design consists of an inscription surmounted by a shield which bears a frog and the initials T. F.

For the language of the inscriptions, Latin is most commonly used. But up to the year 1410, Norman-French is frequent, of which there are three examples in this county. At Binfield, 1361:—

Water de Annefordhe gist icy.
dieu de sa alme eit mercy.

At Shottesbrooke, 1401, was the following, of which only portions remain:—

+ Icy gist [dame Margāt que fust la femme Monsir Fulk] Pennebrygg Cheva [ler. priez pur lui a dieu quil salme eit pitie et mercy. Amen.]

At Cholsey is the following, without an effigy:—

Ici gist John Barfoot de Chelseye que morust le viii. jō Doctob' lan de grace m^occc^olxj^o lalme de qi dieu eit mcy.

English is very rare in early brasses. In the 14th century only two instances are known, one at Brightwell Baldwin, Oxon, *cir.* 1370; the other at Wanlip, Leicestershire, 1393. (Both may be seen in Mr HAINES'S work, pp. cxli and 243.) The earliest instance in Berkshire is at Great Faringdon, 1443, where the Latin inscription of Thomas Faryndon, esq., has the following words appended:—

We p'y you i y^e Worchip of y^e T'nite for ou' souli^s sei p'r & ave.

I do not know another instance in this county earlier than the year 1500. As an instance of a ridiculous inscription of a later date, about 1600, the following from Clewer may be quoted:—

He that liethe under this stone
Shott with a hundred men himselfe alone
This is trew that I doe saye
The matche was shott in ould felde at Bray
I will tell you before you go hence
That his name was Martine Expençe.

The following inscriptions without effigies deserve notice. In some cases an effigy existed originally. At Cholsey, John Bate, vicar, 1394. At Hagbourne, Claricia Wyndsore, "*domina de Westhakburn et uxor Johis York que fieri fecit istā capellā*," 1403; also John York, founder of the aisle, 1413; and John York and his wife Johanna, both of whom died Sep. 5, 1445. At Faringdon, Richard Lenton, vicar, who procured many benefits for the church, 1410. At St. Lawrence, Reading, John Andrew, 1428; from which a good effigy in eucharistic vestments is lost, but engravings of it are in existence. At Compton Beauchamp, William Framton, Rector, *cir.* 1430. At Bray, of the same period, Thomas Attelude, chaplain; also William Dyer, 1440; the effigies of both being lost. At Streatley, Elizabeth, daughter of Richard Osborn, and wife of John Prout, merchant, 1440. At Childrey, Agnes, wife of John Fynderne, 1441. At East Hendred, William Whitwey, clothier and woolman, 1479. At Hurley, John Doyly, esq., 1492, from which two small half-effigies are lost; remarkable as an early instance of the use of Arabic numerals; also in the same church, three scrolls belonging to another brass of the same period. At Denchworth, William Say (his effigy lost), 1498. At Blewbury, John Bouldre, 1499; and John Casberde, a benefactor of the church, of the same period. At Sulhamstead Abbots, some Latin lines to Ralph Eyer, rector, placed in his lifetime, 1521. At Bisham, Cristover Gray and his wife Willmott 1525. At Shottesbrooke, William Throkmarton, LL.D., Warden

of the Collegiate Church, 1535. At Cookham, Agnes, wife of William Mylles of London, formerly wife of William Pywayle of London, 1550. At St. Helen's, Abingdon, a late inscription, undated and much worn, but well engraved, to Frances wife of Thomas Godwin of Brightwell. [This has unfortunately disappeared from the church.] At East Ilsley, Margaret, wife of William Hildsley, who survived her husband 30 years, 1606; the effigy, now lost, is engraved in HEWETT'S *Hundred of Compton*. The husband was buried at Crowmarsh, Oxon, 1576, where the inscription still exists, but the mutilated effigy has lately disappeared. Inscriptions have disappeared in recent years from St. Lawrence, Reading, William Hunt, Mayor, and wives, 1463; North Moreton, Thomas Mayne, yeoman, 1479 [this is preserved at the Vicarage]; Newbury, Hugh Shepley, Rector, 1596; and Francis Trenchard, esq., 1635; also an interesting fragment at Hungerford, with the Holy Trinity represented.

Notices of two brasses in Berkshire that have long disappeared are given by Mr. HAINES, p. 19, as follows: "The brass of Wm. Carter, Gent., 1586, formerly at Beenham, is engraved in *Views of Reading Abbey, &c.*, vol. i, p. 30. In a MS. given to the British Museum by George IV (case vii, 64 b), is a drawing of the effigy and inscription of Sir Robt. Corbet de Haddley, 1403, with w. Beatrix (effigy lost), lately at Marcham." Another of special interest was that of John of Blewbury at Shillingford, 1372, of which the inscription is recorded by *Ashmole*, thus:—

De terre fu feat et fourme
Johan de Bleobury jadys nome
Et en tere su retourne
Lan de grace bien accompte
Mil trois cent septante seconde
En mois de Marz qui bien lesponde
Le vint et septisme jour prove
Que Dieu de salme eit pitee. Amen.

At Fyfield, a large mural monument of the sixteenth century, shows the matrices of two kneeling figures, these being Sir Christopher Ashton, lord of the manor, and his wife, the lady Katharine Gordon, daughter of the Earl of Huntly, known as the "White Rose of Scotland," who had been previously married in 1496, to Perkin Warbeck, and afterwards to Sir Matthew Cradock of Swansea, and thirdly to James Strangwis, Esq., of Fyfield. In one of the north chapels of St. Helen's, Abingdon, is a slab which had a fine brass of the fifteenth century, with mitre and crozier,

presumably an Abbot of Abingdon, and worthy of note as being probably the only example which the county affords of an ecclesiastic in episcopal vesture. Lastly, Mr. KERRY, in his *History of St. Lawrence's Church, Reading*, describes the interesting matrices in that church, including that of Henry Kelsall, donor of the "Bell of Jesus," in 1493, in which a bell was represented between the effigies.

Something must be said upon the palimpsest brasses, *i.e.* those which have been engraved a second time to serve for the memorial of other persons than those who were first commemorated. Sometimes the character of the effigies was altered, and a new inscription was added; but I know of no example of this in Berkshire. More frequently the plates were reversed and sometimes also cut up, and then engraved on the back. Our county contains two of the most valuable examples of this mode of treatment. One is at St. Lawrence's, Reading, where Mr. KERRY noticed that in the brass of Walter Barton the lines had in some places been cut entirely through the plate. He at once detected a sign of palimpsest work, and on removing the brass, he found on the reverse of the inscription another to Sir John Popham, 1463, and on the reverse of the effigy (which consists of two portions soldered together), the feet of a large knight, and a portion of the tabard bearing the arms of Popham. Sir John was buried in the Charterhouse, London, which was dissolved in 1536, just before the date of the Reading monument. It is evident that the engraver had obtained the brass from the dismantled church, and had used it for his own purposes. A palimpsest of even greater interest is to be seen at Denchworth. There the brasses were removed from their slabs in order to be affixed to the wall, and on the reverse of the inscription of William Hyde, esq., 1562, was found the following:—

Edward Roy Danglet'e qe fist le siege devant la cite de Berewyk & cōquyst la bataille illcoqs & la dite cite la veille Sainte Margarete lan de g'ce m.ccc.xxiii. mist ceste pere a la requeste Sire William de Mountagu foundour de ceste mesoun.

These are the known facts of the foundation of Bisham Abbey, where Edward III. laid the stone at the time, and under the circumstances, here described; and to that stone the inscription, now at Denchworth, had doubtless been shortly afterwards affixed, until it came back again into the hands of a brass-worker after the dissolution. It is now fixed to the wall with thumb-screws, so that both sides of it can be seen.

I would conclude with a few words on the preservation of brasses. And I would submit that our churches are primarily places of divine worship, though they must very frequently partake of the character of historical museums also. An historical monument ought to be very important before it can claim the right to interfere with the primary purpose of the church. On this ground, the disfigurement (as I must call it) of the church walls with brasses is *prima facie* objectionable; and where it is the only means of preserving them from injury they should be placed where they will not unduly attract the attention of the worshippers. But obviously the right place for any monument is that in which it was originally set, where there is no urgent reason for its removal; and when brasses can be left upon the floor without being exposed to much wear and tear of feet, it is their best position. Nothing (certainly not modern tiles) can be more ornamental. When I visited Sunning Church, I was struck with the care with which the brasses had been polished and re-laid in marble slabs. The re-laying was carelessly performed, and mischief was done by confusing the figures and inscriptions; but the result was a far worthier chancel floor than can usually be produced by tiles. The architect evidently knew the value of good materials. I could wish that his spirit had ruled the treatment of similar materials in Reading. Here, at St. Mary's, the very interesting brass was hidden in a corner, and is plundered. At St. Giles', which has been re-built and lavishly adorned, the walls are disfigured with tablets of every degree of ugliness, but the modest brass (mentioned above), the oldest memorial which the old church contained, was nowhere to be seen for several years, until it was lately affixed to the wall; and an inscription of somewhat later date, formerly in the chancel, is lost. Of this inscription I regret that I have no record. At St. Lawrence's, great credit is due to the custodians of the church for the care with which the palimpsest has been fixed into a metal frame, and placed on hinges; but it is set in front of the worshippers beside the chancel arch in an unsuitable position, and the other brasses on the chancel walls are not ornamental. It is scarcely necessary to add that these instances are only quoted in order to give clear illustrations of my meaning, and in the hope that they may lead others to look at the question all round, before deciding what to do with brasses.