

More Norfolk Palimpsest Brasses.

COMMUNICATED BY

H. O. CLARK.

In gathering materials for a "Catalogue of Norfolk Brasses" for the Norwich Castle Museum a number of hitherto unnoticed palimpsests have been recently discovered. These will be described in the following notes and are additional to those previously noted by the writer.¹

SHELTON.

The first was discovered in the Church of St. Mary at Shelton on the occasion of the Society's visit on June 9th, 1921. The brass itself is mentioned in Farrer's list,² but not as a palimpsest. It was discovered some time since loose in an outhouse at the Rectory. It has now been neatly framed and hangs on the north wall of the Church, where it is now very portable and should be more securely fixed for safety.

¹ *Norfolk Archæology*, vol. xxi., p. 52.

² *A List of Norfolk Monumental Brasses*, Rev. E. Farrer, 1890.

The brass scales $14\frac{1}{4}$ ins. by $3\frac{1}{8}$ ins., and is, unfortunately broken across the middle. The obverse, or later

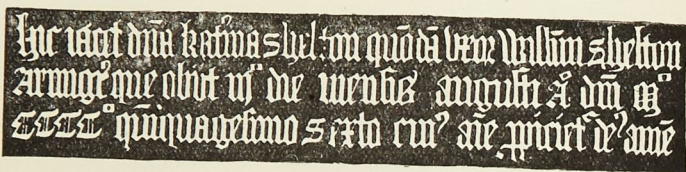


FIG. 1.

side (Fig. 1), bears the following very good inscription in Latin black letter:—

“Hic iacet dñā Kat'ina Shelton quōdā uxor Willim Shelton
Armige' que obiit 111º die mensis augusti Aº dñi Mº
CCCCº quinquagesimo sexto cui' aīe ppiciet' de' amē'.”

(Here lies the Lady Katherine Shelton late the wife of William Shelton Esq. who died the 3rd day of the month August A.D. 1456. On whose soul Lord have mercy. Amen.)

This lady was a daughter of Simon Barrett of the adjacent village, Hardwick, and her husband was the younger brother of Sir Ralph Shelton, of Great Snoring, whose much mutilated monumental brass still remains in the chancel of that Church. This lady's grandson was another Sir Ralph Shelton and was the builder of most of the present Shelton Church.¹ The brass fits a matrix on a large altar tomb in the Church, and this memorial is considerably earlier in date than the building which now contains it.

The reverse (Fig. 2) shews part of a large brass of English workmanship but of Continental style, in that

¹ Blomefield, vol. v. p. 266; *Norf. Arch.*, vol. xii., p. 234.

the whole plate is engraved and the background is not cut away. Apparently a piece of one of the side shafts

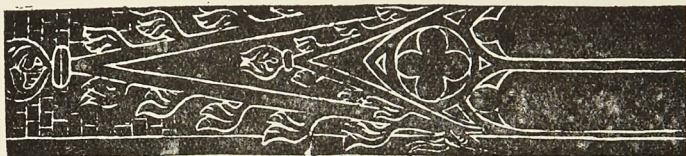


FIG. 2.

of a much larger brass has been re-used and shews an acutely pointed canopy over another canopy, both being heavily crocketted. Beneath the canopies appears a window of two lights cusped and with a quatrefoiled head. The background is engraved to simulate brick-work. There is nothing to shew whence the original came—it may have been a workshop reject, and the date would be about 1375—1400, or possibly earlier. This side of the brass was much corroded and covered with pitch, but this has now been remedied.

HONINGHAM.

I.

At the Church of St. Andrew, Honingham, is a brass now screwed to the seating curb on the north side of the middle aisle. It measures $15\frac{3}{4}$ ins. by 3 ins., and is mentioned in Farrer's list,¹ though not as a palimpsest.

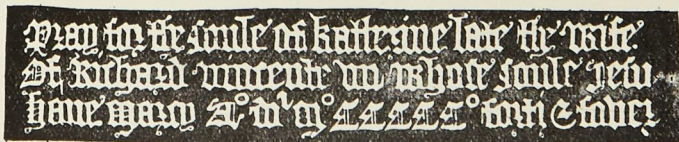


FIG. 3.

¹ *A List of Norfolk Monumental Brasses*, p. 42.

It bears on the obverse (Fig. 3) the following inscription in English black letter:—

“Pray for the soule of Katherine late the wife
Of Richard Vincente on whose soule Jesu
haue mercy A^o doⁱ M^oCCCC^o forti & fober.”

The engraving is of only average merit and is in a form typical of the period. The date is given in a curious manner, being partly in Roman numerals and finished in written English.

The reverse (Fig. 4) shews it to have been cut from a large figure of a female, and a portion of the lower part of the skirt, decorated with stars, appears. From the large amount of shading adopted it may safely be

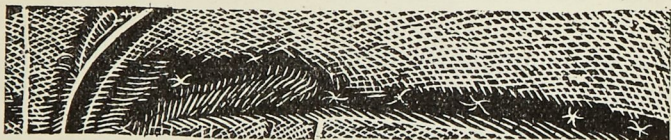


FIG. 4.

attributed to a date very little anterior to the inscription. There is nothing to shew whence this brass came originally, but from the date on the obverse side it appears more than likely to have been spoil from one of the religious houses destroyed by Henry VIII. only a few years previously.

II.

In the same Church and adjacent to the foregoing is another brass plate, measuring $16\frac{1}{2}$ ins. by $2\frac{3}{8}$ ins. It



FIG. 5.

bears on the obverse side (Fig. 5) the following black letter inscription in Latin:—

“Orate p̄ aīa Thome Vyncent q̄ obiit tricesi^o die
mesis Julii A^o dñi M^o V^o lvi^o cui’ aīe ppiciet’ deus.”

(Pray for the soul of Thomas Vyncent who died the 30th day of the month July A.D. 1556. On whose soul Lord have mercy.)

This brass is also mentioned in Farrer’s list,¹ but not as a palimpsest. It is of a common type known as an “Orate,” and very numerous in Norfolk. This is a good specimen, well designed and cut.



FIG. 6 .

The reverse side (Fig. 6) shews the following inscription in English black letter:—

“.....Pray for The Soule of Elizabeth Arden sōtyme
.....ospital the wyche dyed In A^o dñi M^oV^oXXX^o.”

The inscription is incomplete, a portion being lost from the commencement, and the engraver did not take the trouble to square up the jagged edge. Most probably it started thus:—“Of your charity pray,” etc. The engraving is very well done—the lettering being most clearly and legibly cut.

It should be noted that the original side of this brass only lasted twenty-six years.

Undoubtedly this was due to the suppression and destruction of most of the religious houses between

¹ *A List of Monumental Brasses*, p. 42.

1536 and 1539, when any useful material such as brass would find a ready sale as scrap to be again worked up and resold in the manner shewn above.

This brass was almost certainly made at Norwich, which was the school or centre whence most of our local brasses came. Which hospital is referred to it is impossible to say. At the Dissolution no fewer than forty-eight of this class of house were involved, and most of the brass from these would naturally gravitate to Norwich. Who Elizabeth Arden was and what her position was is not known. In establishments of this character ladies were commonly either sisters or, less frequently, wardenesses. It is quite certain, however, that she was not a native of Honingham.

Little is known about the family of Vincent. Adjoining these two brasses is a third dated 1544 and commemorating Rychard Vensent and husband of Katherine above. Thomas may have been a son of these, but it is not certain. The family were at one time very numerous here. In 1561 (the earliest date in the register) there were apparently two families of this name, and a number of entries appear till the last in 1617 recording the death of Eli the servant of Philip Vincent. In 1593 one Richard Vincent had land in the adjacent parishes of Colton and Marlingford. Most likely they were of the tenant-farmer class.

It is a pleasure to note that the Vicar, the Rev. Parry Okeden is having all three brasses removed from their present lowly position and fixed on a suitable oak tablet with facility for examining both sides of the two palimpsests.

HOLM-NEXT-THE-SEA.

In the Church of St. Mary at Holm-next-the-Sea is a brass, now neatly mounted on an oak tablet, on the

east wall of the nave. It measures $24\frac{3}{4}$ ins. by $3\frac{7}{8}$ ins., and is made up of three pieces, two of which are palimpsest, the other being a modern completion of the inscription. It is not mentioned in Farrer's list, but is incorrectly given in *Blomefield*, vol. x., p. 331.

In hope of Joyefull Resurreccion here vnder lyeth y^e body of Barbara Strickland the wife of William Strickland of London grocer, & daughter of Richard Stone of Holm & Element his wife. And sonnes and on daughter and decessed the 15 day of December 1582.

FIG. 7.

The obverse (Fig. 7) bears the following inscription in English black letter:—

"In hope of Joyefull Resurreccion here vnder lyeth y^e body of Barbara Strickland the wife of William Strickland of London grocer, & daughter of Richard Stone of Holm & Element his wife. And t..... sonnes and on daughter and decessed the 15 day of December 1582."

A mural monument to this lady's parents still remains in the Church, with an inscription recording children thirteen and grandchildren seventy-two!

With regard to the reverse of this inscription, the larger of the two pieces appears to have been cut from a large foreign brass. It is so much worn as to be almost indecipherable. Apparently it was cut from the side of the brass, and there are visible remains of three small canopies with here and there traces of small figures in civil (?) costume, and below them the tops of three other small canopies. The state of this plate is too bad to permit of illustration.

The other fragment is also cut from a large foreign brass, and this time a portion of the marginal inscription appears. It is mutilated in places and encrusted with solder, but the design is easily made out and is shewn

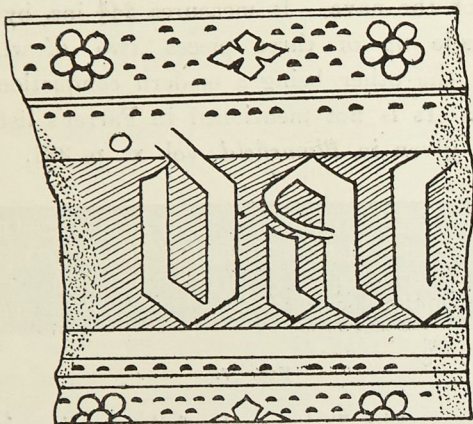


FIG. 8.

on the accompanying sketch (Fig. 8). The lettering is bold, and the letters *da* appear with the down stroke of another letter.

From the similarity of ornament, thickness, colour and quality of the metal it is more likely that both these plates were cut from the same brass, and that of a similar character to the large foreign brasses at Lynn St. Margaret and elsewhere. The smaller piece has been cut from the margin of the plate and the larger from one of the side shafts and including several "weepers."

WOODTON.

At All Saints' Church, Woodton, on the east wall of the north porch is a square plate, measuring 7 ins. by $8\frac{1}{2}$ ins. It was formerly on the west wall of the porch but has been moved in recent years to its present position owing to the building of a new vestry. During the alterations the original matrix for the brass was found and proved to be of oak, a most unusual material. Unfortunately it was too badly decayed to preserve.

The obverse of the brass (Fig. 9) shews the following inscription in a cursive hand:—

“ My Grace is sufficient for thee Saith the Almightye
 Euey one that heere Pas by
 Remember that you are to die
 And therefore see that you liue heere
 So as when Pale death Shall appeere
 May bringe you to eternall Bliss
 Vshred to Heauenly Paradiçe
 Such Ioyes there are prepard for you
 Surpassing thoughts or Human view
 This Portions Your if You each houre
 Allwaies obey Gods Mighty Powre
 Neuer declineing from his Word
 Honring the King—feareing the Lord
 And thus farwell my Counsaile take
 Which doubtless will you happy make

Erasmus Stanhaw Inter^d is Heere The 1 of october the 78 year.”

On the right is this, below a winged hour glass over a skull and cross bones:—

“ My breath is stopt
 My Glass is run
 My Life is cropt
 And I haue done.”

and on the left of the inscription this, reading vertically:—

“ In Wodton Porch amonge those Stones
 I Craued Leaue to Lay my Bones.”

This inscription is a very poor piece of work indeed, the engraving being very superficial; in fact, the plate is merely scratched. For this reason the illustration

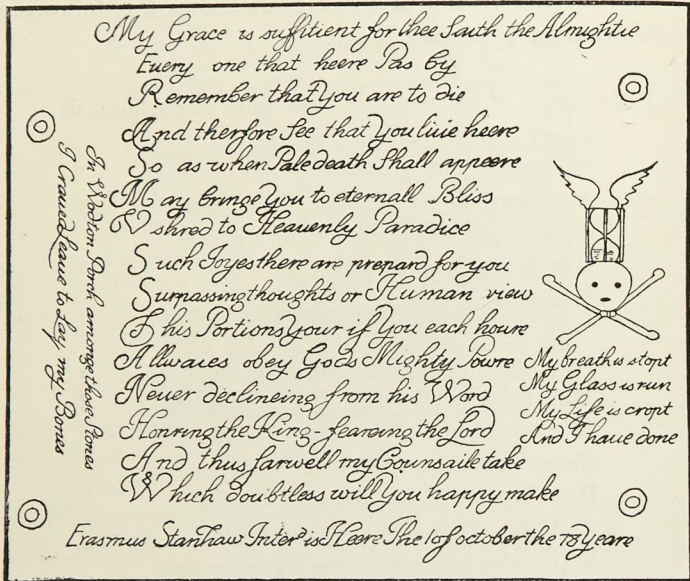


FIG. 9.

has had to be made from a drawing made as nearly as possible a facsimile of the original. This brass is not mentioned in Farrer's list, nor by Blomefield.

The Stanhaws (or Stanhowe, Stannowe, Stanow, Stanhow, Stanhagh, etc.) were an ancient family, long domiciled in this district. At Bedingham, the neighbouring parish, Thos. Stanhow in A.D. 1414 willed to be buried in the Church, and Ralph Stanhagh sold the Lordship in 1652. Blomefield records a brass to John and Alice Stanow, but this is now lost. This family also occurs at Stoke Holy Cross, Arminghall, and other parishes.

At Woodton, from the constant occurrence of the name in the registers, it is evident that this family was numerous and of considerable standing.

In 1643 in a list of a number of land owners three of this family appear:—

Robert Stanhaw	land to the value of	£30.
Mr. (?) Stanhaw	„ „ „	of £1.
William Stanhaw	„ „ „	of £4.

In the 38th of Elizabeth, at an inquiry into the Church Lands, it appears that one parcel of glebe abutted on the north side on Erasmus Stanhaw's land called Sprunts. From the register it appears that this man was the son of Robert Stanhaw and Dorothy his wife, and was christened February 28th, 1619, and the following appears under date 1678:—

“Erasmus Stanhaw of St. Margarets in Suffolk was buried here on Oct. ye 1st, 1678.” Stanhaw left his native place and died at South Elmham St. Margaret and desired to be buried near the rest of his family. The interior of the Church not being available he chose the next best thing—the porch.

The reverse of this plate (Fig. 10) shews a very good and complete heraldic achievement, comprising coat of arms, helmet, wreath, crest, and mantling.

The arms are:—Gules, a saltire argent between twelve crosses pattée or, with a crescent sable for difference.

The crest is:—An arm grasping a bunch of wheat ears.

These are the arms of the ancient family of Denny from which the Irish Baronets of this name are directly descended.

The earliest mention of this family is one John Denny in the reign of Henry V. It is interesting to note that a member of this family gave Norwich the distinction of its sole appearance as a title of nobility when Sir Edward Denny was made Earl of Norwich in 1626, but the honour was short-lived as the earldom became extinct in 1670.

Memorials to this family are numerous and may be seen at—amongst other places—Thurlton, Burgh-Apton, Kirby Bedon, Raveningham; and other parishes with

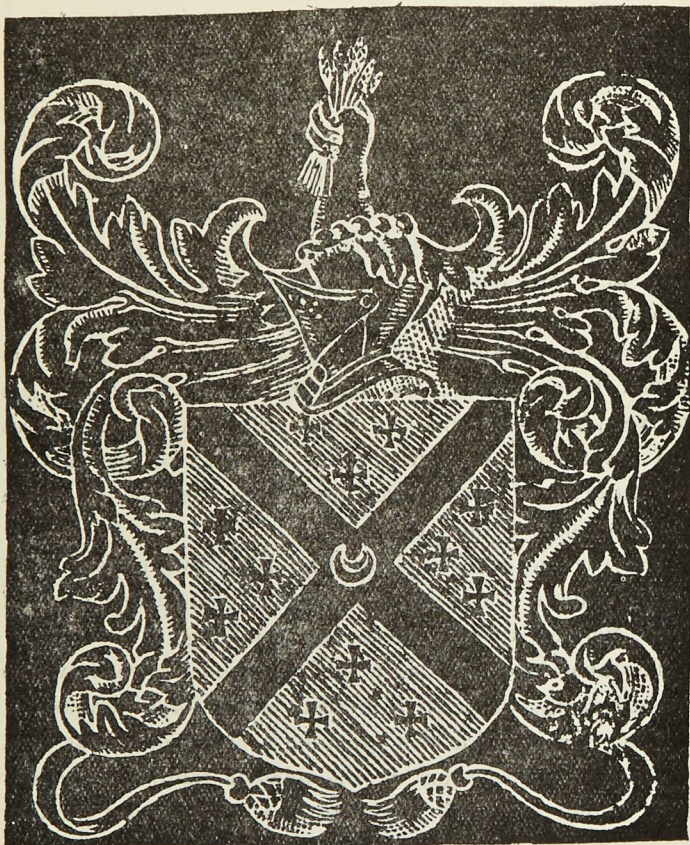


FIG. 10.

which they were intimately connected are—Aldeby, Heckingham, Howe, Norton Subcourse, etc.

The crescent denotes that the brass is for a junior branch of the family. Its date would be about 1550—1600, and it is impossible to say for whom it was made.

In none of the churches connected with this family is there a stone remaining with a suitable matrix. The engraving of the obverse is so poor that it could not have been done by the established makers at Norwich. Almost certainly it is the work of a local artizan, and he probably appropriated a plate from a neighbouring church.

REEDHAM.

At Reedham is a palimpsest inscription now mounted on an oak tablet fixed to the east wall of the south chancel aisle. It measures 18½ ins. by 2½ ins., and a small piece is missing from one end but not sufficient to prevent both inscriptions being clearly read.

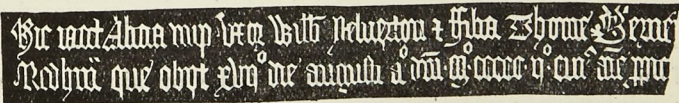


FIG. 11.

The obverse (Fig. 11) bears the following in Latin black letter:—

“Hic iacet Alicia nup vxor Willi Yelverton & filia Thome Berney.....
Redham que obiit xvij die augusti a no dñi MCCCCIIo cui aie ppic...”

(Here lies Alicia late the wife of William Yelverton and daughter of Thomas Berney of Reedham who died the 17th day of August A.D. 1502. On whose soul Lord have mercy.)

This inscription is a fair specimen of a very common form.

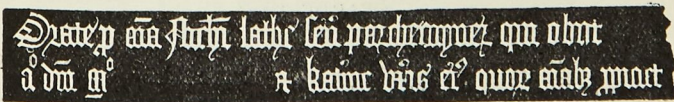


FIG. 12.

The reverse (Fig. 12) bears the following, also in Latin black letter:—

“Orate p̄ aīa Nich̄i Lathe sen’ parchemyner qui obiit.....
 A° dñi M° ... & Kat’ine u’xis ei’ quor aīabz ppiciet.....”

(Pray for the soul of Nicholas Lathe senior, parchment maker who died.....A.D.....and of Katherine his wife. On whose souls Lord have mercy.)

This again is a fair specimen of an extremely common type known as an “Orate.” This side of the brass may not have been used, as a brass of this description never has the date omitted. In some cases the date of death of the survivor is omitted, generally through carelessness, but the date of the earlier death is always recorded. Again, it may not have been to the liking of the Lathe family, or the mistake of putting the opening sentence in the singular instead of the plural may have condemned the brass, which would then become what is known as a workshop reject. The date would be only a little earlier than the obverse. The rubbing was given me by Mr. Johnson, who had it from Mr. F. L. Berney. It now has a brass plate below bearing the following:—

“The above brass of Alicia Berney was removed from and returned to the church at some unknown date. The slab to which it was originally attached now forms the step of the west door. A. D. 1916.”

The trade “parchemyner” is unique. Presumably it means “parchment maker,” as there appears to be no office in the legal profession connected with this material.

SWARDESTON.

A rubbing has come into the writer’s possession of the small brass at Swardeston Church which proves it to be palimpsest, as suspected. It is fixed to a wood

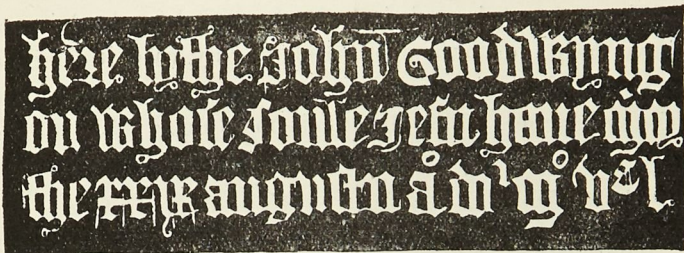


FIG. 13.

tablet on the south side of the nave. It measures $10\frac{1}{4}$ ins. by $3\frac{1}{2}$ ins., and bears on the obverse (Fig. 13) in English black letter:—

“Here lythe Johⁿ Goodwyrng
on whose soule Jesu haue my
the XXX augustii A do d' m' v' l.”

This inscription is well engraved, and it is curious to note that the engraver broke into Latin in the last line. The expression “on whose soul,” etc., is uncommon on post-Reformation brasses.



FIG. 14.

The reverse (Fig. 14) shews it to have been cut out of a large inscription in Latin black letter, of which the following can be read:—

“.....religiosus (?) erat
et quem castissima vita
...luolam qz canuit.
1503”

From the style and date (in Arabic characters) it may have been monastic spoil, and in any case it only had a short life, which accounts for the present sharpness of the engraving. The obverse is mentioned in *Blomefield*, vol. v., p. 54, and in Farrer's list, p. 94, but not as a palimpsest.

The writer's thanks are due to the Revs. Parry Okeden and F. Lee for valuable assistance in the preparation of these notes.

SALHOUSE.

It is a pleasure to record that the palimpsest inscription long lost from Salhouse Church has now been recovered. It is described and illustrated in *Norfolk Archaeology*, vol. xv., p. 86, where it states it was formerly in the church chest, and that only a rubbing was in existence.

During the visit of the Society to Swaffham in 1921 the writer found it to be in the possession of the late W. Cole Plowright, Esq. By the kindness of his brother, W. H. Plowright, Esq., the brass has now been restored to the Church and has been mounted by the writer in a similar manner to the brasses at Honingham, the cost being borne by the Society.
