

# THE BRASSES OF MIDDLESEX

BY H. K. CAMERON, PH.D.

## ACTON

*1. Humfrey Cavell, Esq., 1558, in civil dress, kneeling before a desk, with inscription and one shield; refixed and filled in, mural, North Aisle.*

This is the oldest surviving monument in the church and the only brass now remaining. When the church was rebuilt in 1865 a Dr. Nathaniel Rogers gave, among other things, the sum of £50 for the restoration and preservation of the monuments. Under this bequest the Cavell brass was re-set in a stone mounted on the north wall and the incised lines were filled or refilled with black wax or pitch.

Although not among the monuments mentioned by Weever<sup>1</sup> there can be no doubt that it was always in Acton church. Humfrey Cavell in his will<sup>2</sup> directs that an inscription in brass shall be placed on his grave and orders a Requiem Mass every week for a year by the Curate of Acton. He is described as of Acton in the County of Middlesex and in the Parish registers is a baptismal entry in the year 1555:—"Wenefryde Cavell y<sup>e</sup> Daughter of Humfrey Cavell bapt y<sup>e</sup> 111<sup>th</sup> of May."

There is little doubt, too, that the brass was always mural, both from the wording of the inscription and the type of brass. Lysons<sup>3</sup> mentions it and it was then on the wall of the north aisle of the church of that time, which unobtrusive position may have saved it from the depredations of the Cromwellian soldiers.

The brass comprises a four line English inscription in black letter on a plate  $14\frac{1}{2}$  inches wide and  $4\frac{1}{4}$  inches high, adjoining and above which is the kneeling effigy, which is  $10\frac{2}{3}$  inches high. Above this is the shield, measuring  $5\frac{3}{4}$  inches by  $4\frac{1}{2}$  inches.

The figure of the man is shown in three-quarter face view, kneeling before a prayer desk. He wears doublet, breeches and hose and a long fur-lined or fur-edged gown with false sleeves.

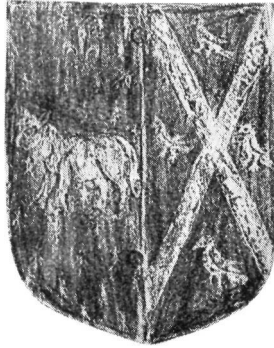
The ends of these false sleeves, like the edges of the gown, are trimmed or hemmed with fur or other ornamentation and the sleeve opening of the gown above the elbows is patterned. The sleeves of the doublet are close-fitting with small ruffed cuffs. The garment is buttoned in front and there is just visible under the beard a small lace or ruffed collar. The gown lies in folds on the floor and over the short-toed shoes, but is parted insufficiently in front to reveal much detail of the breeches and hose. He is kneeling on a tasselled cushion on a tessellated pavement on which stands the prayer desk. This is covered with a fringed cloth and has upon it the open Book, with clasps. The hair is cropped and the beard is forked.

Beneath is the following inscription in black letter:—

Here under fote before thys stone lyethe  
 buried the bodeye of Humfrey Cavell es =  
 =quyer who decessed the xvii<sup>th</sup> day of Novēb  
 in the yere of oure lord god m ccccc lviii<sup>th</sup>

Apart from the inference that the brass was placed originally upon the wall above his burial place the most interesting feature of this inscription is that Humfrey Cavell died on the same day as Queen Mary. This may account for the prosaic inscription, probably erected in Elizabeth's reign, which differs greatly from the instruction left by Humfrey in his will, in which he says:—"I will there be graven in brasse upon my grave these verses: Dormio nunc liber, dū vixi in carcer' carnis, servus, libertas non nisi morte venit."

The shield above, like the rest of the brass, has been filled with black wax, probably at the restoration in 1865, with the exception of the calf and fleur-de-lys of the dexter coat which is coloured red. The two coats would therefore appear to be:—*Ermine a calf passant gules with a fleur-de-lys in centre chief of the second for différence*, impaling *argent a saltire between four birds sable*. The arms of Cavell of Trehaverock in Cornwall were given by Vivian<sup>4</sup> as *Ermine a calf passant gules* agreeing with the dexter coat on the brass, which has in addition the fleur-de-lys in chief for difference. In the pedigree given in this visitation there is no mention of a Humfrey, though there is a younger son Richard Cavell mentioned, of appropriate date to have been Humfrey's father. This may be significant, as



Here under this he fore this stone lyeth  
buried the body of Humfrey Cavell es-  
quire who decessed the xij day of Marche  
in the yere of our lord god M<sup>o</sup> cccc lviij

Humfrey Cavell, 1558.  
ACTON.

Humfrey appoints among the "overseers" (executors) of his will "my naturall father Richarde Cavell."

The sinister coat of the shield is less easy to identify. It is conjectural whether the saltire and birds are indeed *sable*, as the wax filling would indicate, or whether at the restoration in 1865 the same filling was used as on the figure and inscription through lack of traces of colour remaining on the shield or other evidence to identify the coat. The identity of the birds is in some doubt, too; they have feet which the conventional heraldic martlet did not.

Humfrey Cavell married Alice Nasshe of London on 12th August, 1546,<sup>5</sup> but no known arms of Nash, or Ash, are remotely like those on this brass. However, the maiden name of this lady is uncertain; she appears to have been married before from a bequest in Humfrey's will. He makes provision not only for his own children, John his son and heir, Francis, Richard, Humfrey, Dorothy and Winifred; he also leaves "to Elizabeth and Marye my wifs daughters such sums of money as I am bound to pay to theym at the dayes of their marriage if they be marryed by the assent there Mother."

No connection has been traced between Humfrey Cavell and any name likely to have been the bearer of arms similar to those of the sinister coat of the shield.

Humfrey Cavell appears to have been a man of some substance, owning lands and tenements in Acton and "Elinge" in Middlesex, at "Pyrleey" in Surrey and "Iclesham" in Sussex. He also bequeathed to his wife Alice the occupation and profit of his parsonage of Heston. From the "Bench Book" of the Middle Temple it appears that Humfrey Cavell was called to the Bench in 1558, was steward at Christmas, 1557, and Reader in the autumn of 1558, the year of his death.<sup>6</sup> The exact date of his entry to the Inn is uncertain, being between 1525 and 1550, for which period the records are lost.

Of brasses formerly existing at Acton Bowacke<sup>7</sup> says that "in the year 1642 much havoc occurred here as elsewhere, there being scarce a brass plate left upon a gravestone or an effigy of value but what is torn off." Shortly before this misfortune Weever<sup>1</sup> recorded a number of inscriptions in the church. That one at least was a brass has been recorded by Lysons<sup>3</sup> and this one survived the plunders of Cromwell, only to be lost in the 19th century. Lysons says: "Within the rails of the communion table is a brass plate with English verses to the memory

of John Byrde. . . ." The following are the verses, quoted from Weever:—

Al yow this way by me sal pas,  
 Considyr what I am, and who I was.  
*Bird* I was first, *Iohn* by name;  
 Here in Acton Preest and Parson of the same  
 Fifty yere and three gouerne did I here,  
 And fynisht my liff in the two and fortyth yere,  
 Aftyr a thowsand CCCCC of owr Lords first commyng,  
 In erth me to redeme by sore peyne sufferyng:  
 And now I have peyd the stipend of this lyff,  
 Yeldyng my flesh to wormes wythout eny stryff.  
 For my soul intercede that glory it may opteyne,  
 Where with the blessyd Trinity eternally it may reyne.  
 And for yow ageyn prey by whos cherite I am relevyd  
 To sweet Iesu with whos blood I am redemyd.

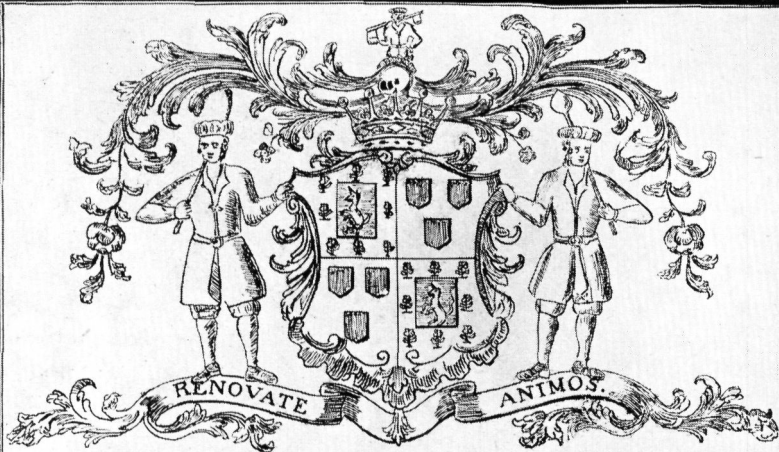
The two other inscriptions mentioned by Weever, which in all probability were brasses, were to Henry Gosse and Alice his wife, 1485, and to Sir Thomas Cornwall, 1537.

## ASHFORD

*I. Edward Goode of Ashford, 1522, in civil dress, and wife Agnes, with 6 sons and 2 daughters, mural, South Aisle.*

This brass is now mural on the south side of the western-most pier on the south side of the main arcade. It has been in this position since 1923, according to information given me by Mr. F. A. Greenhill. In respect of location the description given in Mill Stephenson<sup>8</sup> is incorrect, but that in the Royal Commission Inventory of Historical Monuments for the County of Middlesex (1937) is correct, though the Christian name is there wrongly given as William.

The church was entirely rebuilt in 1858 on a new site to the west of the old church and it appears unlikely that the original slab has ever been in the new church. The brass may indeed have become detached at an earlier rebuilding of the chapel in 1796, recorded by Lysons. He describes the brass as then on the floor. The present arrangement of the pieces is extremely unlikely; it would be more usual for the inscription to come below the two main figures and the children to be placed below the inscription. Indeed, an old rubbing of this brass in the vestry shows the components in this order.



THE RIGHT HON.<sup>BLE</sup>  
GEORGE HAY EARL OF KINNOULL  
VISCOUNT DUPPLIN, AND  
BARON HAY OF PEDWARDEN.  
DIED 28<sup>TH</sup> OF JULY 1758.  
AGED 70 YEARS.

George Hay, Earl of Kinnoull, 1758.  
ASHFORD.



man for the soules of Edward Goode of Ashford & Agnes  
his wyf whiche Edward decessed the v day of february the  
yere of o' lord m<sup>c</sup> xxxi on whose soules ihu haue mercy amē

Edward Goode and wife, 1522.  
ASHFORD.

The metal is of good quality and is in good condition despite the various moves. The engraving is bold and still clear, though it is to be feared that over-zealous polishing may wear it down. As at present arranged the two principal figures are above, the man on the dexter side. The male effigy is  $19\frac{1}{2}$  inches in height; the female effigy is about  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch shorter. These figures are shown standing on grass-covered mounds and are half-turned towards one another, with the hands forward in the attitude of prayer. The costume is typical of the period. The man's robe or gown is fur-lined, or edged, where it is turned back in front and over the shoulders; round the mouth of the wide sleeves it appears only as edging. Considerable shading is shown in the folds of these sleeves. The tight-fitting undergarment is shown at the neck and wrists. The gown itself appears to be loose and not confined by a belt at the waist. The shoes are broad-toed and clumsy in appearance.

The lady wears a gown of the period, with tight-fitting sleeves, fur cuffs and fur hem and collar with an opening in front from a high square-cut neck down to the waist; a costume simple, almost austere by comparison with other periods, but nevertheless dignified and effective. The chief ornamentation is a broad girdle from which hangs in front a long pendant almost touching the ground. The shoes are round or square-toed like those of her husband. A characteristic of the period is the pedimental headdress, so named from the appearance in elevation of the band or frontlet of material framing the face and falling to the shoulders. It is sometimes ornamented, but is shown plain on this brass. Owing to the half-turned stance an excellent view of the headdress is seen in this good example, in which the back point of the frame is lifted rather more than in many brasses and more in accordance with contemporary illustrations.

Although this period of brass engraving is much decried for its poor design, these figures, though stiff and repulsive in facial characteristics, are quite satisfying and pleasing.

Below the male effigy is a group of six sons. In costume and appearance they are generally similar to the father, but without evidence of fur. This plate is about 6 inches high and  $6\frac{1}{2}$  inches wide. Beneath the mother are two daughters, with similar gowns to the mother, but without girdle or headdress. The hair is shown long and flowing, the convention for unmarried girls. This plate is  $5\frac{3}{4}$  inches high and about  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inches wide.



Under the children is now the inscription plate, 4 inches × 22 inches, on which are three lines of English inscription well cut in a clear black-letter, reading as follows:—

Pray for the soules of Edward Goode of Assheford & Agnes  
hys wyf whiche Edward decessed the V day of february the  
yere of o<sup>r</sup> lord m<sup>v</sup><sup>c</sup> XXII on whose soules ihũ have mercy amē

This brass is earlier in date than any parish records at Ashford.

II. *Hon. George Hay, Earl of Kinnoull, 1758, arms and inscription, mural, Nave.*

On the south side of the western-most pillar on the north side of the main arcade is a brass coffin plate, recorded in the Victoria County History (Middlesex, Vol. II, p. 308, publ. 1911) but not mentioned in the Royal Commission Inventory nor by Mill Stephenson. It is rectangular, 16 inches high and 12½ inches wide. As might be expected from the date it is very lightly engraved; parts of the arms and achievements are already almost worn away and the present polished appearance threatens a rapid wear of the remaining pattern. In six lines of bold Roman capitals the inscription reads:—

THE RIGHT HON.<sup>BLE</sup>  
GEORGE HAY EARL OF KINNOULL,  
VISCOUNT DUPPLIN, AND  
BARON HAY OF PEDWARDEN.  
DIED 28TH OF JULY 1758.  
AGED 70 YEARS.

Above this is a shield of arms with supporters, coronet, helm, crest and mantling and motto scroll. The arms are those of Hay, namely:—Quarterly 1 and 4, *Azure a unicorn rampant argent, armed, maned and unguled or., within a bordure of the last charged with eight half thistles vert impaled with as many half roses gules*, for augmentation; 2 and 3, *Argent, 3 escutcheons gules*.

Above the shield is an Earl's coronet with a helmet above it on which is the crest. This conforms with the description given in Burke: *An aged Lowland Scots countryman couped at the Knees, vested in grey, waistcoat gules bonnet azure bearing on his shoulder an ox-yoke proper*. The supporters on either side of the shield are likewise: *Two young Lowland Scots countrymen habited as the crest, the dexter holding over his shoulder the coulter of a plough, the sinister a paddle, both proper*. The mantling from the helm falls around these supporters who appear standing on the motto scroll on which is:—"RENOVATE ANIMOS."

A full description of the life of this Earl is given in the Dictionary of National Biography.

### BEDFONT (or East Bedfont)

*I. Mathew Page, gent., 1631/32 and Mother, Isabell Page, 1629/30, kneeling figures of man in civil dress and woman, with inscription, now mural on the north wall of Chancel.*

When seen by the Rev. Daniel Lysons<sup>9</sup> this brass was on the chancel floor. It was apparently removed to its present position during a restoration of the church in 1865, when it was reset in a cement slab  $31\frac{1}{2}$  inches high and 24 inches wide. The whereabouts of the original stone is now unknown.

The brass consists of three plates, one for each figure and one for the inscription. The two figure plates are not cut out in outline, but are straight sided, a feature not uncommon at this time, though it was more usual to engrave all the figures on one plate. This brass is indeed peculiar in this respect. It is surprising that an artist capable of engraving of this quality could not better match his figures to the size of the plates. As it now is, the figures are mutilated, certainly on the front of each effigy, probably at the bottom and possibly at the rear side bottom.

The male effigy plate is  $16\frac{1}{2}$  inches high, increasing in width from  $4\frac{5}{8}$  inches at the top to  $5\frac{1}{4}$  inches at 12 inches from the top and then more rapidly to 7 inches at the bottom. The female effigy is on a plate  $16\frac{3}{8}$  inches high tapering in width from  $4\frac{1}{2}$  inches at the top to  $6\frac{1}{2}$  inches at the bottom. The inscription below is on a rectangular plate  $9\frac{1}{8}$  inches high by  $18\frac{3}{8}$  inches wide.

The effigies are facing one another in three quarter full face. The man is shown in pointed doublet buttoning down the front only as far as the bow of a belt or girdle; the buttons do not appear to continue below this. The sleeves are close fitting with turned-back cuffs. The breeches, which may be slashed, are not very full, while the hose can be seen at the knees, the kneeling position obscuring the garters and feet. A long gown with false sleeves, now no more than strips, is worn and, around the neck, the Elizabethan ruff has given way to a collar which appears starched. He is shown with a moustache and pointed beard and the hair is cut quite short, though it is somewhat unruly. The cushion upon which he kneels shows beading at the edge and some slashing or puffing at the corners. It is

incomplete and the engraving along the whole bottom edge suggests that the plate may have been longer.

The lady's figure was clearly engraved at the same time, but the Mother kept to her ruff when the son had changed his fashion. A hat is worn, sometimes called an Elizabethan hat. The costume otherwise calls for no comment except on the debatable dexter side. While it appears to have been cut off it is difficult to see how the right wrist projected to an elbow would unite with the right shoulder as drawn, nor is any clear line drawn showing the lower edge of the pointed bodice on the right hand side. Again the feet are not shown and what is seen of the cushion under the knees is a much plainer affair than that of the son.

The inscription is in English and is cut in eight lines of Roman capitals. It reads as follows:—

HERE LYETH Y<sup>E</sup> BODY OF MATHEW PAGE  
 GĒNT WHO DECEASED Y<sup>E</sup> FIRST OF FEBR<sup>X</sup>  
 ANŌ. DNĪ: 1631. TOGETHER WITH HIS  
 LOVING MOTHER ISABELL PAGE WHO DYED  
 Y<sup>E</sup> 9<sup>TH</sup> OF IANV<sup>RY</sup> ANŌ: 1629. WHICH MATHEW  
 PAGE GAVE AT HIS DECEASE TO Y<sup>E</sup> POORE  
 OF THIS PARISHE Y<sup>E</sup> SVMME OF TWENTY  
 POVND FOR EVER. BEING AGED 37.

The F in OF in the second line is faultily engraved, otherwise the lettering is bold and clear.

The brass has been previously illustrated, as a line drawing (said to be photographed from a rubbing), in an article on the village and church of Bedfont by E. A. Ebbblewhite.<sup>10</sup> In this article the history and connections of the Page family are traced in some detail. Among the descendants was Dr. Walter Hines Page, United States Ambassador to this country from 1912 to 1918.

*II. Rev. John Goodwin, 1752, Ann Goodwin, 1745, and Matthew Goodwin, 1753, inscription, now mural, south wall of Chancel.*

This brass is mentioned by Lysons in 1800 as being on the east wall of the chancel and Ebbblewhite, writing in 1893, describes it as on the chancel wall near the altar. It is now mounted in a wooden frame high on the wall above the south door of the chancel. The plate measures 18½ inches high by



HERE LYETH Y<sup>E</sup> BODY OF MATHEW PAGE  
GENT WHO DECEASED Y<sup>E</sup> FIRST OI FEBR  
AN<sup>O</sup>. DNI. 1631 . TOGETHER WITH HIS  
LOVING MOTHER ISABEL PAGE WHO DYED  
Y<sup>E</sup> 9<sup>TH</sup> OF IANV<sup>RY</sup>. AN<sup>O</sup>: 1629 . WHICH MATHEW  
PAGE GAVE AT HIS DECEASE TO Y<sup>E</sup> POORE  
OF THIS PARISHE Y<sup>E</sup> SVME OF TWENTY  
POVND FOR EVER . BEING AGED 37

Mathew and Isabel Page, 1631.  
BEDFONT.

NEAR THIS PLACE LIES THE REMAINS  
OF THE REV.<sup>D</sup> JOHN GOODWIN  
WHO DIED MAY 15<sup>TH</sup> 1752.  
AGED 86 YEARS.

ALSO ANN HIS WIFE  
WHO DIED DEC<sup>R</sup>. 28<sup>TH</sup> 1745.  
AGED 70 YEARS.

AND MATTHEW GOODWIN GENT.  
SON OF JOHN AND ANN GOODWIN  
WHO DIED SEP<sup>R</sup>. 2<sup>D</sup> 1753.  
AGED 54 YEARS.

THIS PLATE IS PLACED HERE BY MARGARET  
THE DAUGHTER OF JOHN AND ANN GOODWIN  
WIFE TO FRANCIS SHERBORN  
AS A LASTING TESTAMONY OF RESPECT  
DUE TO THEIR MEMORY.

13 $\frac{7}{8}$  inches wide and has on it the following inscription in Roman capitals:—

NEAR THIS PLACE LIES THE REMAINS  
 OF THE REV<sup>P</sup>. JOHN GOODWIN,  
 WHO DIED MAY 13<sup>TH</sup> 1752.  
 AGED 86 YEARS.  
 ALSO ANN HIS WIFE,  
 WHO DIED DEC<sup>R</sup>. 28<sup>TH</sup> 1745,  
 AGED 70 YEARS.  
 AND MATTHEW GOODWIN GENT.  
 SON OF JOHN AND ANN GOODWIN  
 WHO DIED SEP<sup>R</sup>. 2<sup>P</sup>. 1753,  
 AGED 54 YEARS.  
 THIS PLATE IS PLACED HERE BY MARGARET  
 THE DAUGHTER OF JOHN AND ANN GOODWIN,  
 WIFE TO FRANCIS SHERBORN,  
 AS A LASTING TESTAMONY OF RESPECT  
 DUE TO THEIR MEMORY.

John Goodwin was vicar of Bedfont for the long period of 61 years, from 1691 to 1752.

This brass is not included in Mill Stephenson's List, nor is it mentioned in the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments Volume for Middlesex. By the courtesy of the vicar, it was taken down for cleaning in July, 1949, being bright green with corrosion. The plate is 1.27-1.78 mm. thick and has no engraving on the reverse side.

1. Weever, *Ancient Funerall Monuments* (1631, p. 531.)
2. P.C.C., 36 Welles.
3. Lysons, *Environs of London*, Vol. 2, 1795.
4. Vivian, *Visitations of Cornwall*, p. 81. In the visitation of Cornwall in 1620, Harl. Soc., Vol. 9, the name is given as Cavell of Trehonnack.
5. Chester's *London Marriage Licences*, p. 256.
6. From information kindly supplied by Mr. H. A. C. Sturgess, Librarian and Keeper of the Records.
7. Bowacke, *The Antiquities of Middlesex*, 1705.
8. Mill Stephenson, *A List of Monumental Brasses in the British Isles*, 1926.
9. *An Historical Account of Those Parishes in the County of Middlesex which are not described in the Environs of London*, 1800.
10. *Journal of the (British) Archæological Association*, Vol. 49 (1893), p. 120.