

THE BRASSES OF MIDDLESEX

PART XIII

BY H. K. CAMERON, PH.D., F.S.A.

HARLINGTON

I. *John Monemouthe, rector, ob. 1419. Half effigy, mass vestments, relaid, mural, in chancel.*

The original stone (5 ft. x 2½ ft.) in which this brass was inlaid still lies on the nave floor and the clear indent shows the two plates, one with a half effigy and the other with the inscription, juxtaposed as in the illustration here given. The plates are now mounted in a new stone on the north wall of the chancel and a gap of some inches has been left between the two. They have been subject at some time in recent years to a liberal treatment of Brasso which has left the metal bright and worn.

The figure is of a typical early 15th century priest in mass vestments, with simple quatrefoil pattern on the amice, maniple, and the cuffs of the alb. The half effigy is 11 inches high.

The two line inscription in Latin in blackletter is on a rectangular plate measuring 2½ in. x 15¾ in. and reads:

Hic iacet Johes Monemouthe quondā Rector
istius Eccleie (cuius aīe ppicietur deus) Amen.

The words in parenthesis have been erased with a chisel by protestants, no doubt at the accession of Elizabeth when similar erasures were made on the Lovell brass.¹

II. *Gregory Lovell esq., lord of the manor & patron of the church, 1545, in armour, and wife Anne, daughter of David Bellyngham, esq., with 1 daughter (lost), inscription and 4 shields. Once on tomb chest, slab now mural in chancel.*

All palimpsest: on reverse of effigies, portions of a lady, 15th century; on reverse of inscription, another inscription to George Barlee, 1513; various fragments on reverse of shields. 1 of the shields stolen in 1906.

This brass was part of one of the most interesting monuments remaining in the county.

There is a coloured drawing in the possession of the Society of Antiquaries which shows the monument in its original state against the north wall of the chancel. A tomb chest projected from the wall into the church and upon it was the stone cover now upright against the S. wall. On this stone can be clearly seen the brass memorial, comprising 4 shields at the corners, the effigy of Gregory Lovell and his wife, with an inscription below and three small plates below that (two and a half being apparently missing at that time).

At the back, against the wall, was an arched canopy of good Tudor style, and the entablature above being decorated with quatrefoil and vine patterns. Under the arch and in the wall was a smaller arched recess, flanked on either side by a brass shield, and with another inscription on a rectangular brass plate beneath. This tomb was not only a memorial to Gregory Lovell and his family, but served as an Easter sepulchre. The number of such Easter sepulchres that survived Puritan iconoclasm is very few and this interesting example was itself altered and mutilated by Victorian restoration. In January 1857, a lecture on the Village of Harlington by H. O. Myers included the following description: 'On the North side of the Communion Table is an altar tomb in a very dilapidated condition. It is surmounted with a stone canopy under which is a recess in the wall . . . this aperture has been closed. On either side of this

recess are coats of arms'. The recess of the Easter Sepulchre had no doubt been closed much earlier. Its ceremonial use was abandoned not long after the erection of this fine tomb. At some time after 1857 the tomb chest of the Lovell monument was destroyed. The top slab, with the brasses therein, was placed upright in the South wall of the chancel and the canopy was put away where the organ now stands, and behind the high backs of wooden pews. Later it was again moved back to the North wall of the chancel, but at a lower level than when it was placed above the original tomb chest.²

The tomb slab, now mounted in the South wall, has upon it two shields at the upper corners and the effigies of Gregory Lovell and his wife. At the time of the move the stone was broken and this revealed that the inscription was palimpsest. This is now mounted in a brass frame on two hinges at the upper corners so that both sides may be seen. Beneath the inscription are indents for three small plates, of height 6 in., 8½ in. and 6½ in. respectively from the dexter side. The centre plate had upon it the figure of one daughter, the upper half alone remaining early in the 19th century, according to a rubbing from that time now in the Society of Antiquaries Collection. This also appears to be the condition shown in the coloured drawing referred to above. One could have surmised from the shape of the indents that the other two plates were also of children were it not stated in the inscription that they had only one daughter. Unfortunately neither the early drawing nor the rubbing throw any light on this as these two plates had already disappeared. The two shields at the lower corners of the stone are now missing.

The figure of Gregory Lovell is in plate armour with a skirt of mail. His head is uncovered and is resting on his helmet. The hands too are bare. Both sword and dagger are worn and the figure is standing upon a grass mound. The overall height is 18½ in.

His wife is in contemporary dress but the elaboration of pattern and decoration of the upper parts, including puffed shoulders and a French hood or Queen Mary bonnet, are remarkable. The upper part of the figure was illustrated by Haines and compared with similar engravings at Croydon; Albury; All Hallows, Barking; and St. Mary's Islington. This figure is ½ in. shorter than that of the husband.

The inscription is on a rectangular plate, 5½ in. x 24 in., and is in English in six lines of blackletter:

Here lyeth Gregory Lovell Esquier late lorde of this Colone of Harlyngtō
and patorn of this Churche and Anne his wyffe Dowghter to Bawtyh Bel-
lynghtō Esquier who betwene them had Issue one dowghter before the sayd
Gregory decessyd y^e which Gregory deptyd this worlde w^tout heire of his body
the xxiith day of October in the lvi yere of his Age and in the yere of our lorde
God M^o CCCC^o xlv Amen

In the last line the clause containing prayers for the souls of the deceased has been erased, as on the other brass in this church.

As now arranged the upper dexter shield is the one which should be at the lower dexter corner (now empty). It bears the following arms: *Quarterly 1 & 4 argent a bugle horn sable stringed or*, for Bellingham, *2 & 3 argent three bendlets gules on a canton of the second a lion passant of the first*, for Burneshead, *with a crescent in fess point for difference*.

The original shield to occupy this position, which no doubt bore Lovell quartering Cornwall, has been missing for many years, as shown by the rubbing in the Society of Antiquaries collection.

The upper sinister shield bears: *Quarterly 1 & 4 gules three bars nebuly or a canton ermine, for Lovell, 2 & 3 argent a lion rampant gules crowned or debruised by a bend sable charged with 6 bezants, for Cornwall (?) impaling Bellingham quartering Burneshead as above.*

The lower sinister shield was also Lovell quartering Cornwall. This was stolen from the church in 1906. One other shield, similar to that in the upper sinister position, bearing Lovell quartering Cornwall impaling Bellingham and Burneshead is now (since June, 1918) in its original position on the wall at the back of the tomb on the sinister side of the Easter sepulchre.

The other shield and the inscription from the back of the tomb are now lost. Even at the time the coloured drawing of this monument was made a portion of the inscription plate on the dexter side was missing, but a rubbing in the Society of Antiquaries records what was left:

.. ye Soules of Gregory Lovell Esquier sutyne lord
 .. of this Church and Anne his wyffe at whois
 .. whych Gregory decessyd ye xxii day of Octobr
 .. d MCCCCxlv and ye said Anne decessyd
 .. or lorde God AM (whose Soules Jhu pardon)

This inscription was evidently prepared before the death of Anne, the date of which event was never filled in.

The now missing dexter shield was again Lovell quartering Cornwall.

When the stone with the principal brasses was moved in the nineteenth century it was broken and the inscription and one or more of the shields became detached. It was found that they were re-used metal with earlier engraving on the reverse side (called palimpsest by those interested in monumental brasses, although this word is more correctly applied to erasure and re-engraving or writing, as of manuscripts).

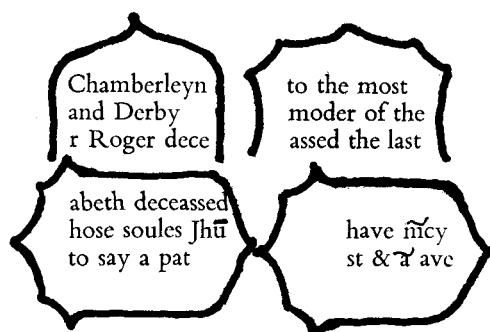
Mill Stephenson recorded the palimpsest nature of the inscription, although it had by then disappeared, at the beginning of this century.³

When the plates had become detached and were seen to be palimpsest they were hung upon rings to allow both sides to be seen, but in a few years the rings holding the inscription plate gave way and the plate was removed from the church and mislaid. It was found in 1905 and rehung, but again had to be properly repaired in 1909 by the late W. E. Gawthorp⁴ who mounted it in a bronze frame with pivots, since when it has been secure and both sides can be seen. It was known at this time that the shields were palimpsest, but one having been stolen the others were riveted to the stone so that the reverse is no longer visible. A further note on this lost shield was contributed by Mill Stephenson to the Transactions of the Monumental Brass Society.⁵

The reverse of the inscription shows that this was made up from two pieces of metal. The smaller, about 3 inches wide, has upon it part of the figure of a civilian engraved early in the 16th century. The larger piece is an almost complete inscription, about 21 inches long to George Barlee:

Here lyeth George Barlee the sone of Willm Barlee of th
 squyer whiche george whyle he lyved vowed hymself to
 seint John Jerlm in England and he decessed the xiiii d
 the yere of our lord god M^CXⁱⁱⁱ on whose soules Jhu

Rubbings by Mill Stephenson in the collection of the Society of Antiquaries show the engraving on the reverse of the four shields (including the one lost in 1906). Three of these are made up from a piece of inscription and part of a 16th century figure in female costume. The fourth shield has only inscription on the reverse. All four pieces are from the same original inscription which commemorates one Roger and Elizabeth his wife, the said Roger having been Chamberlain to Margaret Beaufort, Countess of Richmond and Derby, and mother of Henry VII. The parts of this inscription which remain, by juxtaposition of the four shields, bear the following legible wording:



There is some lettering which is illegible in the missing line above, and there is an unfilled blank for the date of Elizabeth's death.

Rubbings of the reverses of all these brasses were made by Mill Stephenson in 1918 and are now with the Society of Antiquaries. It was at this time that the suspected palimpsest use of the main effigies was confirmed. He records this in the R.C.H.M. volume on Middlesex. The two main effigies were made from part of a larger 15th century female figure.

Illustrations of the brasses in this church, including the reverse of the inscription and shields of the Lovell brass, appear in the book 'Eight Hundred Years of Harlington Parish Church', by the late Rev. Herbert Wilson, Rector, the second edition of which appeared in 1926.

No other brasses of any antiquity nor indents of former brasses are to be seen, nor does Lysons record any. However, on a rubbing of the Monemouth brass in the collection of the Society of Antiquaries which was taken upwards of one hundred years ago is written in pencil the following:

'In the chancel when this church was repaired and altered, a few years ago, by the late Doctor Gabriel (Rector) there were a great many brasses and inscriptions taken away and others covered by Pews'.

Gabriel was Rector from 1789 until 1805.

One of the many branches of the Lovell family took early root in Middlesex, Berkshire and Buckinghamshire, and continued there—in or about the same neighbourhood—for several centuries. They started from one Geoffrey Lovell, in the reign of Henry I, or from one Luvell of Bray, about the same period; they appear as hereditary Masters of the Royal Buckhounds from the time of Henry II to Edward III; some of them were grand Falconers to Royalties; one of them was *cocus reginae*, or Cook to Eleanor, Henry III's Queen. This 'Master Henry Lovell' as he was always termed, seems to have been an important personage, and received grants of various manors at Boveney, Dorney and Winkfield.

John Lovell of Dalley and Herdyngton was Sheriff of Middlesex in the time of Edward III. In 1357 his rents in Harlington were forfeited, as he was convicted of a felony, and delivered, as a convicted Clerk, to the Abbot of Westminster by the Justices of the King's Bench. His brothers Nicholas and William were also outlawed in the same year. In 1361 they were pardoned, at the request of the King of France, for good service rendered in France. There are records of Thomas Lovell of Dalley, 1380-1415; of John Lovell of Herdyngton and St. Clement Danes, 1450; of Thomas Lovell, Patron of the church at Harlington, his son being the Gregory Lovell commemorated in the brass. In looking through the list of Rectors it appears that no less than five Rectors of Harlington were appointed by Gregory within eight years.

In Merton church there is a beautiful tomb in memory of a Gregory Lovell, Cofferer to Queen Elizabeth, a contemporary (!) but no relation of the Harlington Gregory.

The manor of Herdyngton is described in the survey of Domesday, being then of annual value of 100s. It is probable, says Lysons, that this manor was at a very early period divided into two, which afterwards acquired the names of 'Hardington, otherwise Harlington, otherwise Lovells'; and 'Harlington cum Shepiston'. The first of these, to which the advowson of the church belonged, was in 1302 the property of William de Harpeden. Before the year 1474 this manor became vested in the Lovells, from whom it derived one of its names and continued in that family until 1558, thirteen years after the death of Gregory. One Thomas Lovell presented in 1476, George in 1510 and 1515, Gregory, as mentioned five times between 1525 and 1533, and Anne Lovell his widow in 1558. A year later a new rector was presented by William Roper who was then Lord of the Manor on the extinction of this branch of the Lovell family.

NOTES

- 1 *Previously illustrated* H. Wilson: Harlington Church, p. 32, R.C.H.M. (Middlesex), Pl. 8.
- 2 In its present form it is illustrated in R.C.H.M. (Middlesex), Pl. 141.
- 3 *Mon. Brass Soc. T. IV*, p. 196.
- 4 *ibid. VI*, p. 51.
- 5 *ibid. VI*, p. 77.