

# THE BRASSES OF MIDDLESEX

## *Part 18: HORNSEY (including Highgate)*

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### HORNSEY

There is at present no parish church of St. Mary at Hornsey. The tower of a church rebuilt at the beginning of the 16th century remains, though now closed as a protection against vandals. The church itself was demolished and replaced in 1832 by one built in white brick to a design by G. Smith. The original tower was heightened and became part of the new church. This church in turn became too small to serve the parish needs of the late 19th century and a 'new' church was built further to the east to a design of James Brooks in 1889. A west porch was added in 1911, but the intended new spire could not be put up because of the unstable nature of the soil. Smith's church was left to decay, being finally pulled down in 1927. After much structural trouble the 'new' church had to be demolished in 1969/70. A new church is to be built, but there have been long delays in accepting the new designs and the consequential escalated cost has meant yet further delay. Meanwhile the brasses have been moved from church to church and finally to the Rectory, where they are now preserved.

I. Richard Ruggenale and wives Isabella and Alice; inscription only.

An inscription plate, 15 3/4 inches wide and 2 1/2 inches high is engraved with two lines of blackletter, reading:-

Hic iacent Ricūs Ruggenale et Isabella ac

Alicia uxores eius quor aiābs ppicietur deus Amē

The style of the script suggests a date in the first half of the 15th century; Mill Stephenson has put it about 1420. The name has not been found in any references or records so far examined.



Fig. 1 — Richard Ruggenale and wives; mid 15th century. Hornsey.

II. John Skevington, a child in chrysom robes with inscription; shield lost; c.1520.

The small figure, seven inches high, is a good example of this type of portrayal of children



Fig. 2 — John Skevington c.1520. Hornsey

in which a newly-baptised infant was swathed in a chrysom robe and in which it was buried if it died within the month. The face on this example appears disproportionately small. On the inscription plate, 10  $\frac{3}{4}$  inches wide and 2 inches high, is the following in two lines of blackletter:-

Jhū criste mari is son have  
mci o the soul of Johū Skevington

Lysons<sup>1</sup> has no more to say of the brass, but adds that the Skevyngtons were an ancient family, settled at Bromfield in this parish. In the copy of Lysons in the Guildhall Library there is bound in a drawing by Fisher of this brass showing a shield below the inscription.

There is no indication of parentage on the brass. The most likely descent is from Sir John Skevyngton who held property in the County of Middlesex, as well as in Staffordshire, Holderness in Yorkshire, Skevington in Leicestershire and in the City of London. In his will<sup>2</sup> made on the last day of December, 1524 he describes himself as knight and citizen and alderman of the City of London and merchant of the Staple at the Town of Calais. He asks for his body to be buried in the high quire of the conventuall church of the Crossed Friars beside the Tower of London 'in such a convenient place there as my right trusty frends Benjamyn Digbe mercer Richard Farmer merchant of the Staple aforesaid Robert Shethes and Guy Rawlynson mchaunt tayllours citizens of London', whom he appoints his executors, shall think most expedient; provided that he dies within the city or within a circuit of ten miles of the same. He divides his total wealth into three equal parts 'according to the ancient laudable custom of this City of London.' One part goes to Dame Elizabeth his wife. A second part goes to his son William 'forasmore as Elizabeth my daughter hath her preferment before the day of making this my present testament by reason that I married her unto George Griffith sonne and heire apparaunt of Sir Walter Griffith knyght.' If William should die before reaching the age of 21 his portion is to be distributed 'in good and charitable deeds most acceptable to God for the profit of my soul, the souls of my fater and mother, my childrens souls and all christian souls.' The third and last part is to be 'reserved to myself' for accomplishing his many bequests of which the following are pertinent. He leaves £50 to the Prior and convent of the Crossed Friars for their new building and he 'wills that my said executors shall cause to be made over the place of my sepulture a convenient tombe of marble for me w<sup>th</sup> myn ymage or pictur and w<sup>th</sup> the picture of my saide wife if it shall like her to have her corps there to be buried under the same Tombe with the pictures of our Children at our feet.' He leaves money to the church of St. Michael Cornhill where he was at one time a parishioner and to St. Mary Woolnoth where he now is a parishioner; also to five of his sisters and their children; to his nephew Mathewe Skevyngton £10 and to his nephew Leonard Skevyngton £5. He also leaves to his nephew Matthew 'oon of my best dubletts and jaketts both of black velvet' and to Anthony and Thomas his nephews, brothers of Matthew, a black gown each. To his apprentice Cristofer Vavasour he leaves £10 and 'at my cost and charge he shall be made free in Flaunders of the Feliship of merchaunt adventurers of England.' £5 goes to each of his other apprentices; £20 to his brother Thomas and twenty shillings to 'Maister Cristofer Skevyngton parish priest of St. Mary Woolnoth. To the parish church of Skevington (co. Leics.) 'where I was born' a vestment and 'myn armes to be sett on the crosse thereof.'

There is no direct evidence from this will that Sir John had property in Hornsey, but the name is unusual. Evidently only two children were living at the time the will was made and the surviving son was not called after his father. How unfortunate that the Crossed Friars church and its monuments have not survived, for there the children were 'pictured' at the feet of their parents.

The link with the baby John seems reasonably assured from the arms depicted in Fisher's drawing and Lysons own tricking of the shield in the margin of the Guildhall copy of his book. Both drawings show a quartered shield. The first quarter is shown by Lysons as *argent three bulls' heads erased sable* (Skevington); Fisher's bulls' heads are very indistinct and look more like demi-crabs! The second quarter is *azure a bend cotised between six mullets or*, for Oldbeiffe, correctly shown in the Lysons margin; the Fisher drawing has no cotise to the bend while the field appears to be black rather than blue, perhaps a change of the paint with time.

Both drawings show *argent three Cornish choughs sable*, which is the third quartering in the Lysons margin, but the fourth on Fisher's shield. Lysons fourth quarter is three spades ends; the Fisher third quarter does not appear to show spades, but could be *sable three garbs or*.

The pedigree of Skevington is to be found twice in the Visitation of the County of Leicester made by William Camden in 1619.<sup>3</sup> These two, while in agreement with one another, are clearly in considerable error on the evidence of Sir John Skevington's will quoted above. According to the Visitation Sir John was second son to Sir William Skevyngton who was Master of the Ordnance and Viceroy in Ireland in Henry VIII's reign and he (Sir John) is said to have died without issue; Thomas the third son is credited with two children, Elizabeth who married George Griffith and William. In the will however Elizabeth and William are clearly the children of John, who among other bequests leaves money to his brother Thomas. Sir John moreover appoints as overseer of his will his *brother* Sir William. Bequests to sisters, nephews and others confirm that John was indeed brother and not son to this Sir William. The Visitation describes thirteen components of the arms of Skevington in one of the pedigrees and eight in the other. Four of these are quartered on the shield formerly at Hornsey: 1. Skevington, 2 Oldbeiffe, 3 *Sable three garbs or* (Cambridge), 4 *Argent 3 Cornish choughs sable* (Jenney).

The pedigree shows that Sir John's son William, who was not of age when the will was made, ultimately married Joan Leveson and had seven children, of whom the second son James appears to have lived at Hornsey.

Later in the century there is record in Chesters London Marriage Licences that James Skevington of Hornsey married Anne Cockeram of Hampstead, widow of William Cockeram, on 28th August 1588. Also there was in the church of St. Stephen Coleman Street on the south side of the chancel 'a fair gravestone with epitaph in brass' to George Skevyngton who died in 1581. He too is described as a merchant of the staple (see Stowe/Strype; also his will: P.C.C. 28 Darcy).

III. Thomas and Thomas Priestley, children, 1615; inscription only; palimpsest, on reverse, parts of three civilians, c.1600.

It is recorded in the Appendix to Mill Stephenson's List (1939) that this inscription was found in the crypt of the 'old' church in 1926. A rubbing of both sides in the Cambridge collection made on 4th September 1936 indicates that the brass was then on the wall on the north side of the old tower arch.

A rectangular plate, 16 1/2 inches wide and 6 1/4 inches high, has upon it the following six lines in Roman capitals:-

THOMAS PRIESTLEY THE ELDER BORNE Y<sup>E</sup> 11<sup>TH</sup>  
MARCH 1611 AND BURIED THE 23<sup>TH</sup> IVNE 1613  
THOMAS PRIESTLEY (sic!) YOUNGER BORNE THE 4<sup>TH</sup>  
APRILL 1614 AND BVRIED Y<sup>E</sup> 23<sup>TH</sup> IVNE 1615  
BEINGE Y<sup>E</sup> SONNES OF W<sup>M</sup>PRIESTLEY CITTI=  
ZEN AND MARCHANT TAYLOR OF LONDON

So factual and brief a memorial to two young children, dying soon after one another at the age of two and one, promotes a sympathetic curiosity at the circumstances surrounding their parentage and whether they were the only children of the marriage. That William Priestley the father, identified as a citizen and merchant tailor of London, was a man of some substance is evident from his will made on 2nd May, 1620.<sup>4</sup> He asks to be buried in 'Allhallowes

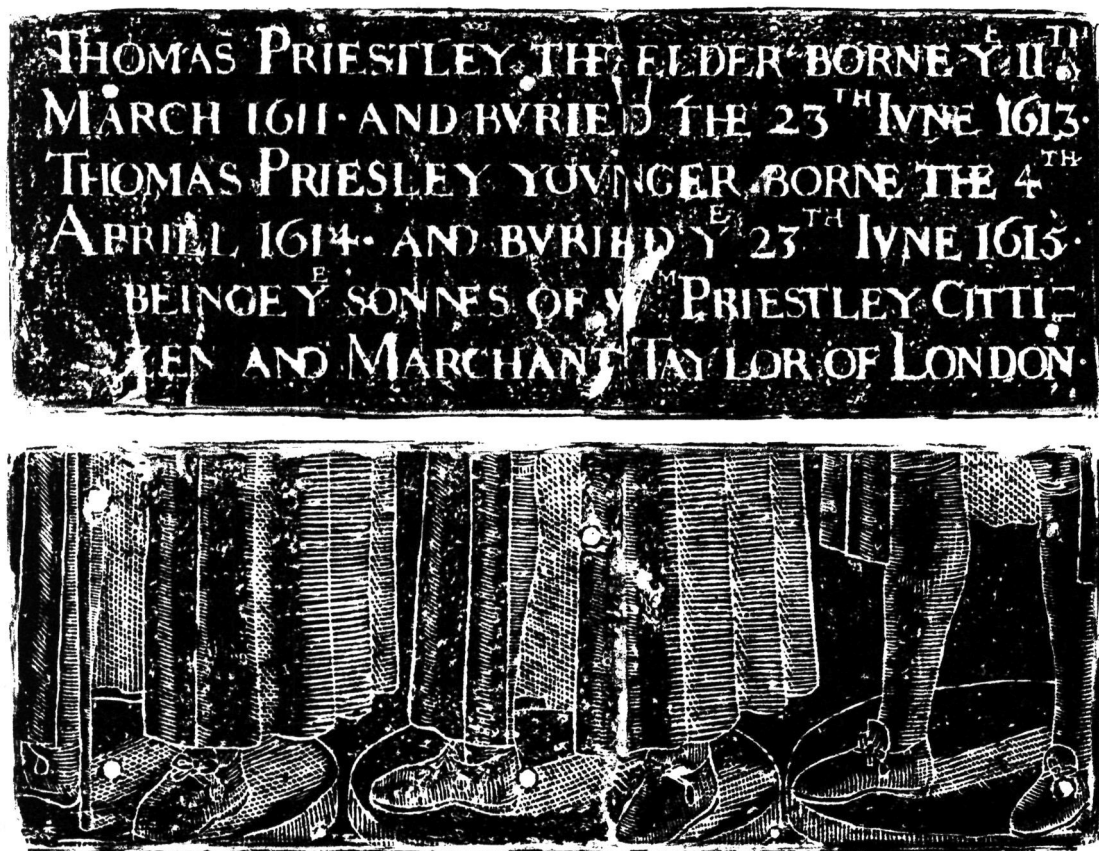


Fig. 3 — Thomas and Thomas Priestley, 1615 with lower part of three civilians, c.1600, on reverse. Hornsey.

church, Breadstreete in the Isle where my two wives lye buried.' After payment of all his debts he leaves to his son William and daughter Elisabeth 'accordinge to the custome of London one moity and halfe parte of all my goodes, chattells, wares and debts equally to be devided between them.' From the other moity many bequests are made, some of small amounts up to £10, often for the purchase of a ring; £2 to the poor children in Brydewell; £50 to the children of Christchurch hospitall in London. The more important bequests are £200 to his brother Robert Priestley; £50 to his sister Marye Gomes Davela; and £1000 to his daughter Martha Cutler 'to be payde to the handes of her husband within a yeare and a half,' putting it in security with the executors 'to leave it to the use of his wife and their children after his decease equally to be divided between them at their dayes of marriage or one and twentie yeares of age.' He also leaves 'to William Cutler the younger and Edward Cutler sonnes of my daughter Cutler, each of them £100 to be paid to William Cutler the father upon security given to my executors. He shall enjoy the benefit until they come to the age of 21.' To the Master and Wardens of the Merchant Taylors Company he leaves £250 in trust for the maintenance of 8 poor men for ever 'allowing each of them fower nobles a yeare'

to be paid quarterly. Four of these men are to be chosen by the Master and Wardens 'of the poore of the said Company'; the other four to be of the parish of Hornesey in the Countie of Middlesex, to be appointed at the discretion of the parson and churchwardens. He also leaves to the Wardens and Company of Merchant Taylors 'one peece of Plate, beinge a Shippe Bason and Ewer of silver and gilt and Mother of pearle, to remaine in the said Company as a perpetual remembrance of me amongst them, and I give unto them the £5 I put into their sayde Hall for provision of corne according to the use.' He also gives £30 'to be bestowed for a dynner for them.'

Other bequests are £30 to two preachers of Godsword to be distributed by them to poor preachers about the City of London 'who want meanes and living'; £15 to the overseers of his will for discharge of small debts among the prisoners in the two prisons of the courts of London; and to Mr. Oswald Moseley and Francis Moseley his brother £10 'to distribute to the poore of the Towne of Manchester where I was brought uppe.'

To his daughter Elisabeth he leaves the lease and term of years 'of the house I now dwell in at Hornesey, two Tenements and the feilds belonging' and the lease and term of yeares 'I have of the groundes which I hold of Mr. Lake in the said parish of Hornesey' with all the household stuff and implements of all sorts in the house at Hornsey. He also bequeaths her the lease and term of years 'which I have and hould of the Company of Goldsmiths in Breadstreet London for term of her natural life' and after that it is to go to his son William. William is to inherit his father's two messuages and tenements in the city of Bristol and at Wyldhill in Hertfordshire and property near to Brewham in the parish of Waltham Abbey in Essex 'and all others in the Realm of England'.

The executors appointed are his son William and 'my brother John Cason of London Grocer.' The latter is entrusted with the care and upbringing of Elisabeth for which a sum of £60 is allocated and John Cason gets £50 for his pains. As overseers of his will he 'desires, entreates and appointe my beloved kinsman Sir Edward Prestley knight and Richard Stocke preacher.'

In the Survey of London (Stow/Strype, 1720) there is no mention of William Priestley's benefactions to the Merchant Taylors Company, nor any mention of a monument in All Hallows, Breadstreet. The account of this church does describe the monument erected there to the memory 'of that worthy and faithfull Minister of Christ, Master Richard Stocke, who after 32 Yeeeres spent in the Ministry . . . deceased April 20, 1626.'

On the reverse of this inscription plate is part of an engraving of three civilian figures, each standing on a circular pediment. The two dexter figures both wear long gowns reaching to the ankles; the third figure wears a shorter coat and the legs in hose are exposed from the knees down. The feet of all three are shown in shoes with tied bows. The style of this engraving suggests a date not much earlier than that of the Priestley inscription on the obverse.

## HIGHGATE

In the Survey of London (Stow/Strype, 1720 edition) on page 134 of Appendix 1 we read: "A little farther stands the pleasant town of Highgate, very loftily situated, according to the Import of its Name . . . It hath a Chapel belonging to the Parish of Hornesey: In which are Monuments for divers Persons." Seventy five years later Lysons writes that 'This was built

as a chapel of ease for the inhabitants of Highgate and was adjoining the school . . . On floor of the nave are the tombs of Elizabeth, widow of John Jaques Esq., 1624; . . . This 'tomb' was an inscription plate in brass, long since lost. In the library of the Society of Antiquaries is a rubbing of it on which is written in ink 'Highgate 1833', the year in which the chapel was pulled down<sup>5</sup> (Cansick). The rubbing is of a rectangular plate, 10 3/4 inches high and 23 1/4 inches wide on which in eleven lines of Roman capitals is engraved:

HERE LYETH INTERRED (IN ASSURED HOPE OF A IOYFVLL  
RESVRRECTION) ELIZABETH IAQUES WIDDOWE LATE  
WIFE OF IOHN IAQUES ESQ. SHE HAD YSSVE BY HIM FIVE  
SONNES & TWO DAUGHTERS & AFTER LIVED HIS SORROW  
FVLL WIDDOWE NINETEEN YEARES, CLOSING VP HER  
LATEST DAY OF LIFE IN THE 49 YEARE OF HER AGE  
THE 18 DAY OF IVNE AN<sup>o</sup>. DM'. 1624,  
NOE EPITAPH NEED MAKE THIS IVST ONE FAMED  
THE GOOD ARE PRAYSD' WHEN TH'ARE ONLY NAMED  
PIETATIS ERGO KATHARINA SMITH FILIA & THOMA IAQVES  
FILIUS NATV MINIMI MAERORIS POSVERE MATRI SVAE

John Jakes alias Jaques of London, gent. signed his will on 23 October 1605. He left his seal ring with his arms thereon, and also 'my picture in the hall' to his eldest son John, who also inherited the lands and tenements within the City of London and in the town and parish of Waltham Abbey. To his other four sons, Nicholas, Richard, William and Thomas he leaves £40 each and to his two daughters Elizabeth and Katherine £50 each, to be paid on reaching the age of 21 or on marriage. He also gave his youngest son Thomas his copyhold land in Essex and Hertfordshire. To his father-in-law, John Cowper (who also writes the will and signs as Notary and Witness) he grants on behalf of his wife a lease of his house for 21 years at an annual rent of £5. He left 20/- to Mr. Arnold parson of St. Christopher ('or to such as shall preach at my burial'), 40/- to be distributed by the churchwardens to the poor people of St. Christopher's parish; and 20/- each to the poor of the hospitals of Christchurch, St. Thomas in Southwark, and Bridewell. He appointed his wife Elizabeth his sole executrix 'requiring her to be kinde and carefull to my saide children as my truste is in her.' As overseers he appointed his brothers-in-law Richard Boone and John Tey.

1. Lysons, *Environs of London*, Vol. III, p.55 (1795)

2. P.C.C. 40 Bodfelde

3. Harleian Society, Vol. ii, p.7 and also pp.110-112 (1870).

4. P.C.C. 39 Soame

5. Cansick F.T. *Epitaphs of Middlesex*, Vol. 3 p.15 (1875)

#### NEW BOOKS

R. F. Hunnisett: *Editing Records for Publication*, (British Records Association — Archives and the User No. 4.), 1977, 73 pp.2 plates, £4.00.

Intended to replace the British Records Association's *Notes for the Guidance of Editors of Record Publications* (1946) this excellent little book attempts "to formulate and justify simple rules for presenting records in print and to establish from first principles the best ways of resolving the perennial problems involved in editing records". This is a most useful publication which, it is hoped, will lead to greater uniformity in editing practice.

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