

RESTORATION OF THE INGYLTON TOMB AT THORNTON, BUCKS.

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THE following note is really a supplement or postscript to Mr. Greening Lamborn's article on the Ingylton tomb, in a previous number of the *Records*.¹ In that article the discovery of the tomb fragments built into a grotto, and their identification with the monument of Robert Ingylton, whose brass in its slab, 1472, remained in the nave of the church, was described. The part taken in the discovery and identification of the fragments by Major Owen Evans, of Oxford, and Mr. P. S. Spokes, as well as our Vice-President, Mr. A. K. Wickham, should also be mentioned. Mr. Lamborn also there expressed the hope that some day the remnants might be salvaged and restored. It is pleasing to be able to record that this has now been done with complete success and spectacular effect.

Not long after the discovery, the Bucks. Archaeological Society sent a letter to all the newspapers in North Bucks., and to some of its members, appealing for small funds to repair the roof and windows of the grotto as a temporary measure to keep out the next winter's weather. This met with almost no response. And after the winter it was clear to me, following an inspection, that it was essential to move the tomb if it was to be preserved at all.

After prolonged negotiations, the Reverend Mother of Thornton College (who afforded every possible assistance) agreed, most generously, to give up the tomb. Our member, Major J. D. Young (whose help on the spot, throughout, was invaluable), then secured the services of a builder and skilled mason, and after I had attended a conference on the site and decided what should be done, an estimate was obtained. Meanwhile the Rector, the Rev. C. L. G. Hutchings, was approached, and a possible site for the tomb in the church was agreed upon, and the necessary faculty obtained for rebuilding it there, moving the slab and brass and replacing it on top, and for the necessary making good of diamond stone paving.

An appeal was made to the Morris fund of the Society of Antiquaries, who made an immediate grant, sufficient for the removal of the tomb from the grotto. After the removal had been successfully accomplished, and the tomb-chest found, on examination, to be substantially complete, it was possible to estimate more closely for the work; and the Morris fund, on my application, generously made another grant to cover the complete cost, which was not light.

The slab and brass (weighing over half a ton) was successfully excavated from the floor and replaced on the rebuilt tomb under the supervision of Mr. W. Betts, of

¹ *Records of Bucks.*, vol. XV, No. 1, pp. 46-50. Notices have also appeared in *Trans. Mon. Brass Soc.*, vol. VIII, part V, pp. 186-191; and in *Notes and Queries*, vol. 191, No. 12, 14th December, 1946, pp. 244-246.



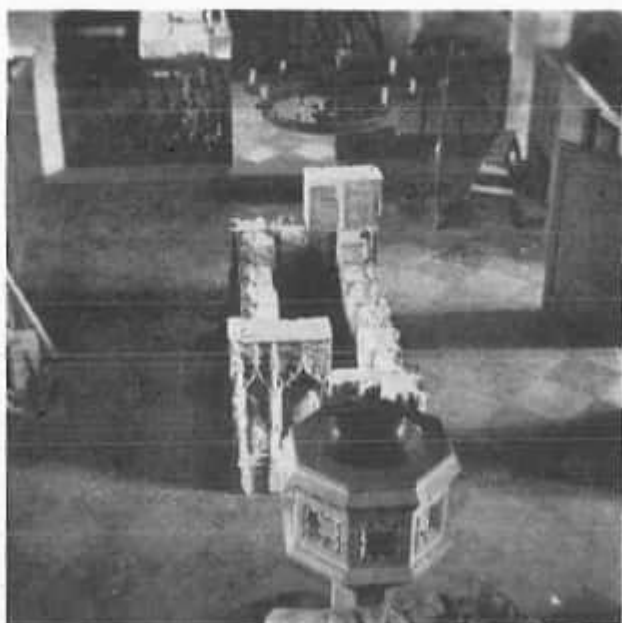
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PLATE 4a. THORNTON, *Bucks.* The Ingylton tomb
as re-erected, from the West



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PLATE 4b. THORNTON, *Bucks.* The Ingylton tomb
as re-erected, from the East



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PLATE 5a. THORNTON, *Bucks.* The Ingylton tomb partly reconstructed to show the building up of the component parts. The joints in the sides are clearly seen, and one section of the canopy-work has been placed on two of the corners



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PLATE 5b. THORNTON, *Bucks.* South side of the Ingylton tomb from the East, showing detail of shield-bearing angels before the replacing of the buttresses between each and the canopies above

Messrs. Betts & Faulkner, of Stony Stratford. The absence of the brass marginal inscription mentioned by Willis, and mutilation of the slab edges when it was sunk in the floor, rendered some making good necessary. But apart from this, the tomb appears almost in its original condition. (Plates 4*a* and *b*.)

Certain points emerged in the course of the work which seem worth recording, since it is not often that an opportunity occurs of studying the actual details of construction of a tomb in all its component parts.

The material is a freestone, not positively identified, but a type of limestone, while the slab appears to be of Purbeck. The slab in its present state measures 7 feet 7 inches \times 3 feet \times 5 inches, and obviously had an overhanging chamfer of some inches' width to accommodate the vanished brass marginal inscription.²

This mutilation has somewhat changed the appearance of the tomb, as the slab lying on top now has a square section, instead of tapering outwards.

The whole structure, whose extreme measurements are 8 feet \times 3 feet 6 inches \times 3 feet (high), was built up of a large number of separate parts, throwing most interesting light on the methods of manufacture and construction. The article was clearly a mass-produced or at any rate a prefabricated one made partly at the quarry and partly in the masons' 'lodge' or workshop, no doubt.³ There were no masons' marks apparent; but most of the component parts were numbered in Roman numerals for reference or ease of assembly. It is just possible that this was done when the tomb was removed from the destroyed chancel and re-erected in separate parts in the grotto in the 1780's. But I think it unlikely. The humbler workmen would have been responsible for the simple mouldings, like the buttresses and the plinth which was doubtless done at so much per foot run, and cut into the required lengths. A more skilled mason would have done the more elaborate parts such as the bases of the buttresses and the pedestals on which the angels stand, and the actual panels at the back of the figures; while the master mason himself would have been responsible for the carving of the actual figures and the elaborate canopy work.

The buttresses are all separate (five out of the fourteen are missing). The canopies to the niches are done in groups, or bays, of two, two, and three on each side, the corners accounting for the larger section, each being approximately 1 foot ten inches and 2 feet 9 inches in length, respectively. The ends are similarly divided into two sections of one large and one small canopy each (Plate 5*a*). The plinth, as I have said, is again divided: and each of the figures is separately carved and mounted on its little pedestal in front of a panel, with the wings carved in low relief. The figures are shield-bearing angels of perfectly normal late-fifteenth-century type, almost a stock figure, with rather flat wings on which the feathers were no doubt painted, a point not apparently observed by Mr. Lamborn. This can be well seen in Plate 5*b*, showing the tomb in its partly erected condition. Close observation in the dim light of the grotto was difficult; and no doubt there was hesitation to disturb the robin which had its nest behind the head of one of the angels when I first saw it! Four of the eighteen angels' heads are missing, and several of the shields are slightly damaged.

² See Browne Willis, *History and Antiquities of the Town, Hundred and Deanery of Buckingham*, p. 304.

³ Work in connexion with the screens of Sir John Schorne's Chapel or Shrine in St. George's Chapel, Windsor (whether of wood or stone is not clear), was certainly produced at so much per length. See the accounts quoted in *Records of Bucks.*, vol. II, p. 65. 'For making and carving thirty feet of crests, thirty feet of trays, eight lintels, for the enterclose of the Chapel of Master John Schorne' in 1478.

The selection of saints (two at each end) is unusual—St. Peter, St. Catherine, St. Margaret, and I think St. Bartholomew with flaying knife, though the emblem is mutilated. One may hazard the guess that they represent the patron saints, or at least the saints to whom they had a particular devotion, of Robert Ingylton and his three wives, one of whom is named Margaret.⁴

It was most fortunate that the corners of the tomb were found complete and buried in the walls of the grotto when they came to be excavated. On these portions much of the original colouring and even a speck or two of gilt remained to give some hint of the original sumptuousness of this monument, which, as re-erected in the central space of the nave, is one of the most impressive things of its kind in Bucks.

The splendid brass itself is too well known to need comment, and in any case I am not competent to discuss it. Two points may, however, be mentioned. It is illustrated in an excellent paper by R. H. Russell in the *Records of Bucks.*,⁵ to which Mr. Lamborn does not refer. In that paper the existence of some carving from the old chancel, 'in a grotto or fernery' in the grounds of Thornton Hall, is referred to (p. 53), thought to be the sedilia. In the rubbing of the brass there reproduced (opp. p. 56) the shields have clearly been rubbed separately, cut out and stuck on in mounting, and the Beaumont and Cantilupe shields have been changed over. (See the rubbing in the possession of our society, displayed on the end wall of the large room.)

The author refers to only one other quadruple canopy brass in England, at Wyvenhoe, Essex—but I believe this is an error, the Wyvenhoe example being a triple canopy, though at Charwelton, Northants., the brass of Thomas Andrews and wife, c. 1490, has a quadruple canopy. He further notes that in the figure of the third wife, and in the group of her daughters, the brass plate has not been cut away between the arms and bodies. It is perhaps worth remarking on the quite extraordinary similarity of this brass to that of John Croston Esquire, 1470, and his three wives at Swinbrook, Oxon.⁶ In the latter case there are no canopies: and the male figure has a helm under the head, and a dog at the feet, with slight differences in the armour (elbow and shoulder pieces): otherwise the figures might have been cut from precisely the same pattern.⁷

It is a matter for satisfaction that this splendid monument should have been recovered, and reassembled in the church at Thornton.

⁴ Contracts for the construction of medieval tombs, showing their mode of manufacture, etc., are quoted by F. H. Crossley, in *English Church Monuments*, pp. 29–33.

⁵ *Records of Bucks.*, vol. VII, pp. 52–60 (1891).

⁶ Illustrated on p. 246 of F. H. Crossley's *English Church Monuments*.

⁷ Mr. R. H. D'Elboux kindly points out that Mr. P. C. Kent has recently been working on the Schools of English Latoners, and has identified a series of military figures all emanating from the same workshop, listed by him as workshop D. Both these brasses are so classified by him. Robert Watton, 1470, at Addington, Kent, more closely resembles Swinbrook than the latter does Thornton. Brasses of 1470 at Morley, Derbyshire, and Ulcombe, Kent, are also from the same shop.