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NOTE ON A PALIMPSEST BRASS AT TWYFORD.

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The fine and well-engraved brass to Thomas Giffard, 1550, in the church of Twyford, is a good example of its date, and is rendered doubly interesting from the fact of its being almost entirely made up of portions of earlier brasses, of which one can certainly be allocated to its original home. It will be the most convenient to treat the description of the brass under two heads, viz.: (1) The *obverse* or later side, *i.e.* the Giffard memorial; and (2) the *reverse*, or earlier side, *i.e.* the re-used pieces.

Obverse. This consists of the effigy of Thomas Giffard, who died on the 25th of November, 1550, a foot inscription and four shields of arms. The various pieces are inlaid in a massive slab of Sussex marble, $9 \times 3\frac{1}{2}$ feet, and about four inches in thickness. This slab is now in the south aisle upon a high tomb, partly made up of earlier work and partly built up with rubble. Owing to an old fracture across the slab, the figure had been broken into two pieces and was loose in its indent. On examination it proved to be palimpsest. As the inscription and one of the shields was also working loose, the Vicar, the Rev. Edmund Greaves, acting on the advice of the Monumental Brass Society, determined to have the brass securely refixed. The work was placed in the hands of Messrs. Gawthorp and Sons, and it was then found that the inscription and shield were also palimpsest. The three other shields were not examined, as they were securely held by their original rivets, and in consequence were not disturbed. There is every reason to suppose they are also palimpsest, as the metal is cut through in places where it has been hollowed out to receive the composition used to represent the heraldic colours. The figure of Thomas Giffard is 48 inches in length, and represents him in complete armour, bareheaded and without gauntlets, his head resting on a helmet, his feet on a greyhound. Small pieces are wanting from the elbows,

as is also the hilt of the sword and the handle of the dagger. The four shields, measuring $6\frac{1}{4} \times 5\frac{1}{4}$ inches, bear the arms of Giffard, twice repeated, Giffard impaling Staveley, and Staveley alone, Thomas Giffard having married Mary, a daughter of William Staveley, of Bignell. The inscription, $27\frac{3}{4} \times 5$ inches, reads thus:

here lyethe buried the bodies of Thomas
 Giffard of Twiffard in the Cou
 ntye of Buck' Esquier and Marie his wyffe
 daughter of Wylm Staveley
 of Bignell Esquier which Thomas decessyd
 the xxvth day of Nouember
 in the yere of o^r lorde god M CCCC L on
 whose soules Ihu habe merry amen.

Reverse. The figure of Thomas Giffard is made up of portions of two other figures, whilst numerous smaller pieces have been soldered on to make up corners and points, as, for instance, the dog's head, the elbows now lost, the points of the mail skirt, and one of the projections at the side of the knee pieces. The upper half of the figure, 22 inches in length, has been cut from the centre of an early priest robed in mass vestments. Portions of the hands are just visible, showing the edge of the cassock sleeves and the sleeves of the albe, with a single apparel on the upper side, the design being a large four-leaved flower. The chasuble has a narrow border ornamented with similar flowers enclosed in lozenges, with small circles between each lozenge, and has also an inner invected border. The fanon is richly worked, and terminates in a broad fringed end. This fragment may be dated about 1330, and may be compared with the well-known figure of Laurence St. Maur, 1337, at Higham Ferrers, Northants, but is of much finer work. A closer parallel is afforded by the palimpsest fragments in the church of St. John Maddermarket, Norwich,

conjectured to be spoil from the abbey of St. Benet Hulme, re-used to build up the brass of Robert Rugge in 1558.¹ The lower part of the figure, 26 inches in length, is composed of about two-thirds of the lower portion of a figure of an ecclesiastic in academics, of date about 1440-50, wearing a cassock and a shorter gown with fur-lined sleeves, the lower edges of which just appear. This may be compared with the figure of Geoffrey Hargreve, 1447, at New College, Oxford.² Some of the numerous little bits soldered on to the various corners may have belonged to this figure, but they are too small and too much smothered in solder to tell anything definite. The inscription is made up of two fragments of figures and another almost complete inscription. These fragments respectively measure 3 inches, 15 inches, and $9\frac{3}{4}$ inches in length, by 5 inches in width. The smallest, or left-hand, portion shows a few lines of drapery only, being cut out of the centre of some figure, possibly a fragment from the same figure as the right-hand piece, which shows a portion of the hands and the wrists of a figure of a monk in cassock and gown, and may be dated to the middle of the fifteenth century. It may be compared with the figures of monks in the abbey church of St. Alban, all of which have the curious little **v**-shaped slit in the cassock sleeves. The most interesting piece is the centre portion, which consists of an almost complete inscription to Master William Stortefford, who died on the 4th of November, 1416, and reads thus:

hic iacet magist' Willms Stortefford q
 Canonic' t Residanciari' p'sentis Ecclie ac . . .
 midd' qui obiit iiii die mens' Nouembr
 dni M° CCCC° rbi° cui' aie ppicietur de

This can be no other than the William Stortford who was treasurer of St. Paul's from 1387 to 1393; in the latter year he was appointed Archdeacon of

¹ *Trans. Mon. Brass Soc.*, iv., 226-230, illustration at p. 229.

² Engraved in J. G. and L. A. B. Wallers' *Series of Monumental Brasses*.

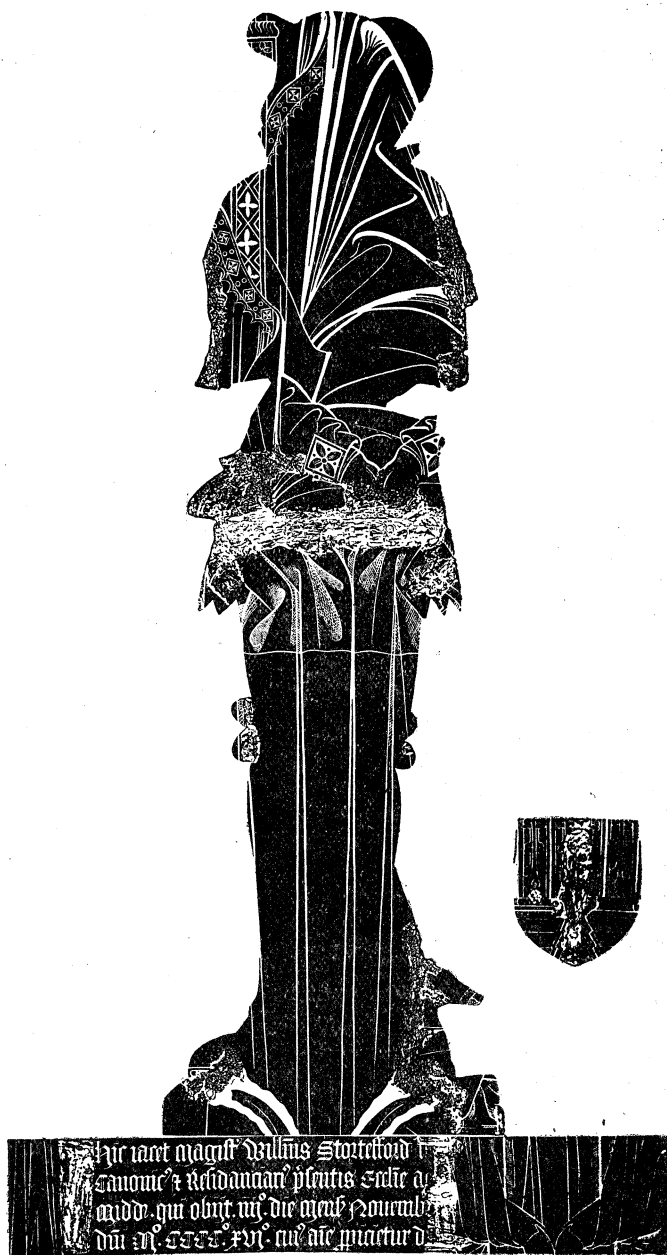


Here we the buried the bodnes of Thomas Giffard of Twyford in the Countie of Buck Shyre and gear his wyffe daughter of William Stavelen of Symell Elmyer which Thomas decessed the xxv day of November in the year of our lorde God m cccc l i on whose soules Jhu have mercy amen

TWYFORD, BUCKS.

THOMAS GIFFARD, 1550.

N.B.—In the original the top shields are eleven inches above the head, and the bottom shields twenty inches below the inscription.



TWYFORD, BUCKS.
PALIMPSEST REVERSES OF GIFFARD BRASS

Middlesex, and in 1399 Prebendary of Islington, both which offices he held at the time of his death in 1416.¹ In his will, dated 1st August, 1416, and proved 4th November following, he desires to be buried in the great crypt of St. Paul's at the altar of St. Mary, where a lamp hangs. On this evidence it may fairly be inferred that this plate was spoil from the destruction of the chantries in the cathedral church of St. Paul in the year 1547. It is of great interest to be able to allocate a palimpsest inscription to its original home. A few examples have been so identified, as, for instance, a brass at Reading, date 1538, which is made up of a portion of the figure and the complete inscription to Sir John Popham, who died in 1463, and was buried in the Charterhouse, London.² At Denchworth, Berks, is a plate recording the laying of a foundation stone of Bisham Abbey in 1333, re-used in 1562 for an inscription to William Hyde.³ At Walkern, Herts, an inscription to John Lovekyn, Lord Mayor of London, who was buried in the church of St. Michael, Crooked Lane, is now doing duty as a memorial to Richard Humberstone, who died in 1581.⁴

The only shield examined, being the lower dexter bearing the arms of Giffard, has on its reverse a small portion of canopy work of fifteenth century date.

In the neighbouring church of Middle Claydon is a large brass to another member of the Giffard family, dated 1542, a portion of which is also palimpsest, and has been described in the Society's RECORDS⁵ by Mr. A. H. Cocks.

The writer desires to thank the Vicar, the Rev. Edmund Greaves, for his kindness in allowing the brasses to be examined, and for the courteous manner in which he received the suggestions as to their refixing. Thanks are also due to Mr. Wilfrid J. Hemp for much assistance, both in the examination of the brasses and in making rubbings of the results.

¹ *Novum Repertorium Ecclesiasticum Londinense*, by Rev. George Hennessy, pp. 8, 11, 33.

² *Trans. Mon. Brass Soc.*, iv., p. 7.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

⁴ *Ibid.*, iv., p. 131.

⁵ Vol. vii., p. 529.