

A DISCOVERY AT THORNTON

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BEFORE the altar in the church at Thornton, on the floor of the eastern bay of the nave which now forms the sanctuary, lies the brass of Robert Ingilton and his three wives, six sons, and ten daughters, distinguished by its unique quadruple canopy which has caused it to be many times illustrated in books and journals devoted to the subject of monumental brasses.¹ Robert Ingilton was Chancellor of the Exchequer to Edward IV, acquired the manor and advowson of Thornton in 1464, and died in 1472.

When Browne Willis was writing his *Hundred of Buckingham*, 1755, he examined and described this brass: "in the middle of the Area of the Chancel stands a very handsome Altar Tomb of Stone, the Top of grey Marble, and inlaid with Brass; and thereon under four several Arches these Arms and Portraitures. . . ." His description agrees with what we now see, except that he mistook the Wandesford lion for a griffin in the second quarter of the Ingilton shield, and the sword of Kilpeck for a dagger in the shield of Dymock; he also calls the flaming tuns of Ingilton "fire balls," and he failed to note that the lis on the Cantilupe cheveron sprouted from leopards' faces. He copies the inscription "on a Brass Tablet," which still remains, extending the Latin contractions, but failing to recognize the 7 in the Arabic numerals of the date 1472, and he adds another inscription, now missing, "round the Verge, in Brass, in good Part defaced." As he professes to cite it as "it was when entire," he must have seen some earlier record of it. Its value for us is that it describes Ingilton as a lawyer, "juris peritus," and includes the Christian names and order of his three wives—Margaret, Clements, and Isabella.

Willis then goes on to describe the table-tomb on which the slab with its brasses rested, beginning at the west end and going to south, east, and north. Each face had arched niches with figures holding shields, two at each end, seven on each side. Willis calls them "children," "a female child," "a male child," "a man," "a woman"; he blazons the arms on the eighteen shields, except three "defaced," and adds to each a name which in some instances he asserts to be "subscribed" over the head of the figure or on the shield.

WEST-END: "Two children," with shields.

1. Quarterly 1st and 4th, *Ingilton*; 2nd and 3rd, *Three griffins heads erased*.

2. Defaced.

As the brass shows, the quartering represents a second coat of Ingilton, *crusilly fitchy with three griffins' heads*.

¹ Stephenson, *List of Monumental Brasses*, p. 50.

SOUTH SIDE:

1. Female child with *Semée de crescents a lion rampant*, Margaret Ingilton.
2. Male child with *Argent a cross voided between four crosslets fitch gules*, Thomas Billyng.
3. Female child with *Three lions passant. Over all a bend gules*, Katerny Billyng.
4. Male child with *Vaire a fess gules*, Thomas Dinton.
5. Male child with *Argent three wolves passant sable, quartering Ermine a bordure sable*, Thomas Lovet.
6. Male child with *Three lions passant guardant*, Robert Dymock.
7. Male child with *Ingilton quarterly with a label gules*, John Ingilton.

The Lovet quartering is for Turville.

EAST END: "Man and woman," with shields.

1. Defaced, "Sir R—."
2. "Ingilton's arms," "M.I."

Presumably the initials refer to Margaret, first wife of Robert Ingilton.

NORTH SIDE:

1. Male child with (defaced,) Bernard Brokas.
2. Male child with *Within a bordure a cheveron, quartering Within a bordure two bars engrailed*, Thomas FitzWilliam.
3. Female child with quarterly 1st, *A cross gules*¹; 2nd, *A bend*; 3rd, *A bend*, 4th, *A chief indented*. Anne Lovet.
4. Male child with *A bend between six fleurs de lis*, Robard Tillet.
5. Male child with *Checque argent and gules a canton ermine*, John Reynes.
6. Male child with *Checque or and azure a fess frette*, John Cheyne.
7. Male child with *Ermine on a chevron gules three fleurs de lis*, Clemens Ingilton.

By 1806, when Lysons published the first volume of *Magna Britannia*, the tomb and the chancel containing it had alike been pulled down. A writer in *The Gentleman's Magazine* of 1801 implies that this was done when the dilapidated building was restored a few years previously by Thomas Sheppard, who had married, in 1774, Elizabeth, only child of the Rev. Dr. Cotton by Hester Maria, daughter and heir of Sir Charles Tyrell, Bt., of Thornton, and had come into the estate and advowson on the death of her mother in 1778.

It was said by old people in the neighbourhood that parts of the destroyed building had been set up in the grounds of the manor house, as was done when the old church at Nuneham, Oxon., was pulled down at about the same time. The Mother Superior of the Convent now occupying the premises having given permission, a search was made last year, and in a remote corner of the gardens, in a shrubbery overgrown with thorns and briars like the domain of the Sleeping Princess, was discovered a ruinous grotto, built under a hollow pyramid of rubble, paved with medieval encaustic tiles from the church, and, inset in its walls, the ends and sides of a stone table-tomb, its arched niches still containing their shield-bearing figures. The arms on four or five of the shields were still partly legible, and this, with their number, two at each end and seven on each side, made it clear that here, in this Shenstonian retreat, which more than most of its kind justified Dr. Johnson's sarcasm that "a grotto is a very pleasant place—for a toad," was the "very handsome Altar Tomb" described by Browne Willis.

The figures, each about fifteen inches tall, stand on low pedestals with Perpendicular mouldings under ogee canopies with finials, between thin buttresses on high bases, capped with tall finials, like those on the contemporary tomb of the Duchess

¹ Should be a cross engrailed, Drayton, quartering Prayers and Cranford; Thomas Lovett married Anne Drayton.

of Suffolk at Ewelme. But besides the shield-bearers, there are at each end of the tomb two narrower niches with images of saints: St. Peter, with book and keys, and a female saint, St. Catherine, at one end (Plate 27), St. Margaret, with staff and dragon (Plate 28), and a fourth saint, possibly the Baptist,¹ at the other. Willis failed to recognize their character and supposed them to represent the persons commemorated by the monument, even going so far as to supply their names. The shield-bearers are certainly not "children," and their sex is indeterminate, for they are uniformly dressed in a long garment like a surplice or alb, covering the feet, with a round cap or a fillet, from beneath which long curly hair floats horizontally, like sprays of foliage. But that they have neither wings nor amices they would be taken for the shield-bearing angels that stand in uniform series around so many tombs of the period, e.g. at Ewelme and Tong. They are possibly to be regarded as bedesmen, though they have no beads or other indications of their character. There are no traces of the names that Willis implies accompanied the figures on the tomb, and there is no obvious space upon it where such an unusual feature could possibly have been inscribed. It rather looks as if Willis were writing at second hand from information given him by someone who had added the names to his description or sketch of the tomb.

On a shield at the end of one side the fretty fesse of Cheyne is clearly discernible; next it is a shield with a red fesse, apparently that of Marmion, which Willis labels "Thomas Dinton," and next again a shield with a red chevron, no doubt that of Cantilupe, once bearing leopards' faces flowering (Plate 26). At one end of the other side is a shield with faint traces of a cross, Billing, and next to it clear traces of the checkers and quarter of Reynes. Unfortunately, these positions, as will be observed, do not correspond in any instance with the order in Willis's account. And, while most of the names that he gives agree with the arms and with the genealogical evidence, some of them are either inaccurate or inexplicable; Robard Tillet, for example, is obviously Robert Fisseles or FitzEllis of Waterperry (died 1470), whose daughter and heir, Margery, married Thomas Billing and was mother of Sibyl, wife of George Ingilton, son and heir of Robert; Thomas Dinton does not occur in any of the pedigrees, and the arms ascribed to him are those of Marmion, which, as a quartering of Dymock, representing the Championship of England, might be expected to appear on the tomb; if the "M" of Marmion were obliterated the name in black letter could easily be read as "dinton." The name and arms of Thomas FitzWilliam are alike inexplicable on the heraldic and genealogical evidence available, the arms resemble the coats quartered in the shield of Empson, though that name could not well be confused with FitzWilliam; and, lastly, it is not clear why the Giffard lions in the shield of Katherine Giffard of Twyford, wife of Sir Thomas Billing, C.J., and mother of Thomas, should be debruised by a bendlet, nor why Robert Dymock should be given three uncrowned leopards instead of his two crowned lions passant. However, as the accompanying pedigree will show, almost all the shields recorded by Willis are those of families connected with the Ingiltons by marriage, and which might naturally be represented on the tomb of Robert. They refer to his three wives, Margaret Dymock, Clements Beaumont, and Isabel Cantilupe; his daughter, Margaret Cheyne; his grand-children, Agnes Reynes and Robert Ingilton, who married Anne Empson; his daughter-in-law, Sibyl Billing, wife of his son George; her sister Joan, second wife of Thomas Lovett; his first wife, Anne Drayton; his father-in-law Thomas Billing's two wives; Margery FitzEllis and Margaret Brocas, and his (Billing's) mother, Katherine Gifford, wife of Sir Thomas Billing.

There is a pedigree of Ingilton in *Miscellanea Genealogica et Heraldica*, 5th

¹ More probably of St. Bartholomew with knife; but this figure is damaged.—ED.



PLATE 20. SHALSTONE. Elizabeth Purefoy by MICHAEL BATCHELOR

IN Memory
of ELIZABETH PUREFOY, Widow, and Heiress of
HENRY PUREFOY Esq; late of this Parish, deceased,
by whom she had two Sons,
the present HENRY PUREFOY Esq; born
the 22^d day of February 1693,
and M^r FISH PUREFOY, born the 15th of February 1698
and deceased the 18th of August 1711,
having continued in Her State of widowhood 61 Years.
She was Daughter and Coheir of LEONARD BISHOP,
Citizen of London, of the Ancient Family of the BISHOPS
of Bath, in the Parish of North-Messing, in the County of Hertford,
and departed this Life the 8th day of January
1763, in the 93^d Year of Her AGE.
Having caused this MONUMENT to be Erected in Her Life-time.

She was a Woman of excellent Understanding,
Prudent and frugal,
As well as a true Friend to the Family she married into,
and was likewise assist'd
With all those Graces and Virtues,
which distinguish and adorn
The good Wife, the good Mother, and the good Christian.
In Gratitude to her Memory
her Kinman G. H. PUREFOY Esq;
caused this Inscription to be added.



PLATE 22. WING. Sir Robert Dormer



PLATE 23. WING. Sir William Dormer by (?) GERALD JOHNSON



PLATE 24. WING. Robert, Lord Dormer by (?) NICHOLAS JOHNSON



PLATE 25. WING. Lady Anne Sophia Dormer



PLATE 26. THORNTON. One side of the base of the Ingilton tomb



PLATE 27. THORNTON. One end of the Ingilton tomb



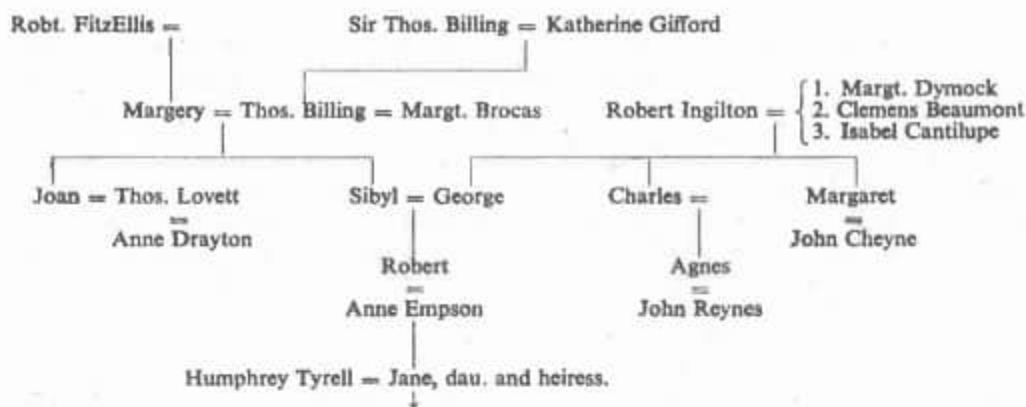
PLATE 28. THORNTON, Half of one end of the Ingilton tomb

Series, vol. IX, p. 98, September 1935, corrected and supplemented by evidence in the *History of Parliament*, vol. I, p. 76, and Parker's *Architectural Guide*, p. 260; of Billing and Lovett in Chester Waters's *Chesters of Chicheley*, vol. I, pp. 42, 48; of Cheyne in the *Visitations of Bucks.*¹; of Reynes in *Lipscomb*, vol. IV, p. 104, and of Dymock in *D.N.B.* and the *Visitation of Lincolnshire*,² though these do not affiliate Margaret Dymock, first wife of Robert Ingilton. A short pedigree of Robert's third wife, Isabel Cantilupe, is given in *Miscellanea, Genealogica et Heraldica*; of his second wife, Clemens, nothing is known. The arms on her shield are those of Beaumont of Yorkshire, borne also by the family of Lister, through a marriage with Beaumont of Whitley.³

It is unfortunate that the surveyors of the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments failed to unearth these relics forty years ago when the grotto and its contents must have been in a much better state with more of the shields legible.

Now that they have been discovered and identified, their preservation is an immediate problem for all concerned: the roof of the grotto is falling in on them and its door is off its hinges. The present owners are willing that they should be restored to the church, if the Diocesan Authorities so desire, or preserved in their present situation if funds can be raised for its repair—for, as a corporate body, they cannot themselves devote trust money to such a purpose. This account is written in the hope that the vicissitudes of these interesting relics will appeal not only to local readers but to those officially connected with organizations that exist for the purpose of safeguarding and preserving our historical monuments.

PEDIGREE ACCOUNTING FOR THE ARMS ON THE INGILTON TOMB



THE MANOR HOUSE

The manor house of the Ingiltons, described by Browne Willis as an ancient quadrangular building, was modernized by Dr. Cotton, who had obtained it by his marriage in 1755 with Hester Maria, daughter and heir of Sir Charles Tyrell, and rebuilt in 1850 from the designs of John Tarring for the Hon. Richard Cavendish, second son of the Earl of Waterpark, who had married in 1841 Elizabeth Maria Margaret, daughter and heir of Thomas Hart by his wife Elizabeth, daughter and

¹ *Harleian Society*, LVIII, p. 153.

² *Genealogist*, IV, p. 19.

³ *Visitations of Yorks*, ed. Foster, p. 547.

heir of Sir Thomas Cotton Sheppard, who had obtained it with his wife Elizabeth, daughter and heir of Dr. Cotton. This descent is illustrated by modern armorial glass in the window of the great staircase, but the only vestige of the original house is an achievement of arms in a window of the present dining-hall.

The nine quarters of the shield (separately leaved in), the helmet, crest, and mantling are done mainly in enamel colours, and date, probably, from the last years of the reign of Elizabeth. The crest, mantling, and second, third, sixth, and ninth quarters are extensively cracked and repaired by leading. The quarterings of the straight-sided, bluntly pointed shield are as follows:

1. *Silver two cheverons azure in a border indented gules*, Tyrell.
2. *Paly silver and sable*, Borgate.
3. *Silver a cross between four scallop-shells sable*, Coggeshall.
4. *Quarterly silver and gules on a bend sable between two frets gold three scallop-shells silver*, Hawkwood.
5. *Azure a mill-cross gold*, Bruyn.
6. *Lozengy gules and ermine*, Rokele.
7. *Silver a cheveron sable between three tuns their bung-holes flaming*, Ingilton.
8. *Silver crusilly fitchy three griffins' heads rased azure*, Ingilton.
9. *Silver a bend between six fleurs de lis gules*, FitzEly.

Crest: *a boar's head erect silver with three ostrich plumes in the mouth.*

All the quarterings of the shield are accounted for in pedigrees of Tyrell in the *Visitations of Essex*, Harleian Society, XIII, and in Burke's *Extinct Baronetcies*. There is a pedigree of Coggeshall in the *Visitation of Essex*, 1558, of Bruyn and Rokele in the *Visitation of Dorset*, Harleian Society, XX, and of Ingilton in *Miscellanea Genealogica et Heraldica*, September 1935. The use of two coats by Ingilton has not been explained. The Tudor heralds often foisted new coats on people who already possessed an old one; the Northants. family of Boughton or Bukton were persuaded to discard their old simple coat of three crescents for a new canting one containing a roebuck and three bucks' faces. Ingilton's second coat may perhaps be accounted for as an early example of the kind.

The arms of Hawkwood, brought in, as the pedigrees show, by Coggeshall, are usually given with the field silver, and sometimes with the scallops on a cheveron. As painted here, they are identical with the spurious coat of Spencer, adopted, as Round showed in *Peerage Studies*, to bolster up a forged pedigree from Despenser. The Hawkwoods may well have used a shield with a quarterly field, for Chester Waters noted in *The Chesters of Chicheley*, I, 301, that they held their lands in Sibil Hedingham, Essex, from the Veres, Earls of Oxford, whose famous coat derived from the *quarterly gold and gules* of the Mandeville Earls of Essex. The Despenser shield, similarly, was based on that of Lacy, which also derived from Mandeville. The romantic story of Sir John Hawkwood, Captain of the White Company, whose daughter and eventual co-heir married Sir William Coggeshall, is told in the *Dictionary of National Biography*.

The paly coat of the Suffolk Borgates was also borne by the Swinfords of Essex, whose co-heir also married into the Tyrell family.

The boar's head of the Tyrell crest is usually shown with a peacock's tail in the mouth. J. H. Round in *Feudal England*, p. 468, showed that the Tyrell cheverons derived from those of Clare, Sir Walter Tyrell having married Adeliz, daughter of Richard de Clare.

The person represented by this achievement is either Sir Edward Tyrell, died 1605, grandson of Humphrey and the heiress of Ingleton, or his son, Sir Edward, before the creation of the baronetcy in 1627.