

# NORTHAMPTONSHIRE CHURCHES INSPIRE

## SCULPTURE TRAIL

**There is hardly a church in Northamptonshire that does not have good memorials. From medieval times onwards the county was dominated by landed estates whose owners commissioned tombs of often outstanding quality. These have been the subject of sculpture tours led by James Miller over the last decade and copies of his extensive notes are available by emailing [jamesmiller.art@gmail.com](mailto:jamesmiller.art@gmail.com)**

**Below you will find fourteen churches, divided between north and south, which contain the very best memorials and sculpture from medieval times to the twentieth century.**

### NORTHERN PART OF THE COUNTY

#### APETHORPE



The vast monument to Sir Anthony Mildmay (d.1617) dominates the south chapel. It is attributed to the royal sculptor Maximilian Colt. He was responsible for the extravagant tomb of Elizabeth I in Westminster Abbey. From a distance the Mildmay tomb looks like a great four poster bed with draperies falling from a central dome with lantern above. Here you find the areological figures of Faith, Hope and Charity. Standing at the four corners are the Cardinal Virtues - Prudence, Fortitude, Wisdom and Justice. In the centre there the recumbent figures of Mildmay and his wife lie on a large sarcophagus.

You will also find here a tablet to John Leigh attributed to William Wright and another Roland Woodward attributed Colt. The touching memorial to John Fane - an infant asleep on a couch is unattributed but dates circa 1816.

#### DEENE



St Peters, Deene was rebuilt by Thomas Henry Wyatt, 1668 - 9 in part as a memorial to the 7th Earl of Cardigan of Charge of the Light Brigade fame by his wife. In doing so the south chapel became a mausoleum to both him and his Brudenell ancestors. The centre piece is the Cardigan tomb which was conceived and made by Sir Joseph Boehm. On top of the large alabaster sarcophagus lie the beautiful white marble effigies of the Earl and Countess. Below bronze reliefs and bronze sea horses (the Brudenell crest) at the bottom corners. An outstanding Victorian memorial.

Also in this chapel you will find early alabaster effigies and brasses to 16th century members of the family, a fine English Renaissance tomb to Agnes, Lady Brudenell who died in 1583. The other noticeable work is the wall monument to Anne, Duchess of Richmond. The bust is by Guelphi for which the terracotta study is in the V & A. The carved marble frame designed by William Kent and carved by his favourite craftsman John Bossom.

#### EAST CARLTON



The south transept is in effect the memorial chapel to the Palmer family. There are over 18 memorials here on the walls and more beneath your feet. They date from the 17th to the 20th century.

The principle tomb is to Sir Geoffrey and Lady Palmer. He was the son of Thomas Palmer and his wife (Catherine Watson of Rockingham Castle). He was born in 1598, and became MP first for Peterborough and later for Stamford. In Parliament he was initially hostile to Charles I's minister and managed the impeachment of Strafford, however he was alarmed by Hampden's radicalism and joined the royalist cause during the Civil War. At the Restoration Charles II made him Attorney General and a Baronet. He married Margaret More of Fawley near Henley in Berkshire. Both of them are here standing upright in their alabaster shrouds against black open arched doors. The tomb went up circa 1673 and is attributed to Joshua Marshall.

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## EAST CARLTON

Marshall (1629-1678) succeeded his father as master mason to the Crown during Charles II's reign. In that capacity he provided a great deal of architectural work for the royal palaces and is responsible for the pedestal for the equestrian statue of Charles I now in Trafalgar Square. He was also responsible for a large amount of building following the Great Fire including the Monument. The Palmer tomb reflects his earlier tomb for Lord and Lady Noel, 1664, at Chipping Camden. This is the only tomb by him in Northamptonshire. An earlier tomb to John Watton is in Leicester Cathedral.

Of the other tombs the most notable are: The wall tomb to Catherine Watson, Mrs Palmer, 1628 with gilded laurelled skulls, Sir Thomas and Lady Palmer. She was born Jemima Harpur of Calke Abbey - elegant and chased, by Henry Westmacott.

Sir John Palmer, (1745-1815) the builder of the Church. Note the armorial cloth. Also by Henry Westmacott who also supplied fittings for royal houses, in his case Kensington Palace and Greenwich Palace. His other Northamptonshire tomb is to John Isham at Lamport.

It would be interesting to know who designed the brass and enamel plaque to Hon. Mary Watson, wife of Sir John Palmer to the left which is dated 1853.

## LOWICK



The tombs in the church lie in two distinct areas, in a chapel on the south side and another to the north of the high altar. All the tombs are to the owners of Drayton, beginning with the Greenes, then the Mordaunts, then the Germaines and finally the Sackvilles. The only exception to this is that of the Earl of Wiltshire, but he was the main Greene heir in the late 15th century.

### In chronological order:

Ralph Greene and his wife Katherine Mallory. This has recently been transported to London and back as it was included in the V&A gothic exhibition. It is by Thomas Pentys and Robert Sutton of Chellaston in Derbyshire and when it was delivered in 1420, three years after Ralph Greene's death, it cost £40, no mean sum. It is a sumptuous altar tomb and was originally topped by an arched framework, the stumps of which can be seen. The other changes of course, the disappearance of the painting and gilding which would have covered its surface. Like a number of Nottingham alabaster tombs Sir Ralph and his wife are touchingly holding hands.

Henry Greene and his wife, Margaret. This is a tomb chest, topped not with recumbent figures but with an engraved brass. This too would have been coloured originally with enamels set in and parts gilded of which there are still traces. His enamelled heraldic tabard must have been spectacular. Don't miss his flowing locks!

Nearby stands the tomb of Sir Edward Stafford, 2nd Earl of Wiltshire, (1470 - 1499). As a young man he bore the Queen's crown at the Coronation of Richard III but he managed to adroitly change tack and entertained Henry VII at Drayton in 1498. The chapel on the south side is the Chantry Chapel set up following his early death. He lies in Nottingham alabaster on his chest tomb with charming bedesmen with their rosaries perching on the muzzled bear's back beneath the soles of his feet remind one that this was a chapel where Masses for his soul would have been said till the Reformation. Originally coloured and gilded, perhaps even his flowing locks! To the side of the chest are his armorials alternating with the Stafford knot.

In the chapel beside the altar are further tombs to Lord William Mordaunt, (d.1625) a curious architectural composition. He was the infant son of the 1st Earl of Peterborough. It looks like a door case, and is set with a most beautiful piece of stone. It would be interesting to know what this is. Nearby the great tomb of Lady Mary Mordaunt, Duchess of Norfolk, and after her divorce Lady Germaine, although she seems to have kept her ducal title (1658-1705). She inherited Drayton from her father, the 2nd Earl of Peterborough and carried out the great improvements there to the design of Talman. She left the Duke of Norfolk for William II's possible half-brother, Sir John Germaine, who is commemorated alongside. Her tomb, which is attributed to

William Woodman of London (1654-1731) shows her resting on a cushion with a skull beneath it rather surprisingly given her life, she holds a martyr's palm, note the equally surprising bare feet. Woodman provided marble decoration for Drayton during her lifetime. If you care to stretch, there are two interesting panels to either side. One a landscape with skulls and cherubs rising into the sky, the other a vanitas still life - you will need a torch.

Her second husband, Sir John's tomb, was raised by his redoubtable second wife, Lady Elizabeth Berkeley, daughter of Charles, Earl of Berkeley of Cranford, an estate now lost under the runways of Heathrow. He is shown as a military figure in armour and holding an almost medieval helmet. Beneath is a slab memorial to his three children by his second marriage, who predeceased him. He died in 1718 and this great monument is attributed to Edward Stanton of Holborn in London. His wife, who lived until 1769 ruling and improving Drayton, is only commemorated by the finely engraved coffin brass on the adjacent wall.

The final tomb of note in the south chapel is to Charles Sackville, 5th Duke of Dorset (1766-1843). By Westmacott junior, signed on the marble book, this is a wonderfully theatrical tomb in a vaguely gothic style with a recording angel to the right and the ducal robes and painted armorial shield to the left. Just so that there can be no doubt as to the grandeur of the invisible figure who is commemorated here, his ducal cushion, resplendent with its strawberry leaves, sits on the cushion beneath.





# NORTHAMPTONSHIRE CHURCHES INSPIRE

## ROCKINGHAM



The monuments are to members of the Watson family, later Earls of Rockingham, later Lords Sondes, ie. the owners of Rockingham Castle. Two are to be found in the rebuilt chancel on either side of the altar and it's worth having a good look at these before going in to the memorial chapel. The one to Anne, Lady Rockingham is by John Nost, 1695. The sculptor came from Mechelen (Malines) in Flanders. He was an assistant of Arnold Quelin, who came to England and worked in partnership with Grinling Gibbons on James II's Catholic chapel at Whitehall. After Quelin's death, Nost married his widow. He set up his stonemason's yard in the Haymarket, London, and became one of the most important sculptors working in this country at the end of the 17th century. In terms of garden statuary, his greatest work is at Melbourne in Derbyshire. He also did a good deal of work at the Royal palaces, most notably at Hampton Court. His monuments include the two magnificent baroque constructions to the Earl of Bristol, 1698 at Sherborne in Dorset and the Duke of Queensberry, 1711 at Durisdeer in Dumfries. Here at Rockingham the tomb is equally extravagant with the full length standing marble figure of Anne, Lady Rockingham, the second wife of the 2nd Lord Rockingham, daughter of the Earl of Strafford (Charles I's great minister who was executed in 1641). Around her are all the trappings of a great baroque tomb, cherubs, armorials, broken pediment, urns, gilt draperies, skull, crossed bones, bat wings and an hour glass.

Opposite stands the tomb of Lewis, 1st Earl of Rockingham and his wife, Catherine Sondes, an equally flamboyant baroque conception, this time by Laurent Delvaux (1696-1778) who was paid £400 for the

work in 1724. Delvaux, as his name would suggest, was also born in the Low Countries but came to London in 1717 working in turn for Francis Bird (sculptor of St. Paul's Cathedral) and Peter Scheemakers (together they worked on monuments for Stowe). After executing this memorial Delvaux left for the Continent having been appointed sculptor to the Archduchess Marie Elizabeth of Austria. Here the Earl and Countess stand, he as a Roman soldier, she as a Roman matron. This is an even grander conception incorporating cherubs with laurel circlets and gilt trumpets.

Now into the memorial chapel which is centred on the remains of the tomb fragments to Sir Edward Watson, (d. 1584) and his son Sir Edward Watson (d. 1616) all that remained after the Civil War of what must have been splendid Tudorbethan tombs. Fortunately both the full length alabaster figures have survived. Around them you will encounter Margaret Watson, again a full length figure with very abstracted use of draperies and an almost saint like pose, with a skull at her feet. She was the fourth daughter of Lord and Lady Rockingham and died in 1713. This is William Palmer's masterpiece. Palmer was another London based sculptor who worked alongside John Nost which may account for his appointment here. Locally he's also remembered as the sculptor who put together the Monnot tomb to Lord and Lady Exeter when it arrived in Rome and had to be incorporated into St Martin's Church in Stamford. Like many contemporaries he was equally happy producing chimney pieces and architectural details as well as memorials. His only other recorded work in the County is to William Games at Upton.

The full-length tomb to Lady Arabella Oxendon, (d.1734) daughter of Lord Rockingham and wife of Sir James is unattributed although in the past Rysbrack has been suggested. Across the chapel lies the neo-classical tomb of Grace Pelham, Lady Sondes who died in 1777. This is by James Paine (1745-1829) who was the son of James Paine the architect. This must account for the very architectural form of this tomb and all its classical references. Paine was in Rome in 1764 and again a decade later. This is one of the few monuments for which a drawing exists, now in the collection of the V&A. Also there are his drawings for contemporary chimney pieces for Broomfield Hall. (Interestingly, it was Paine who owned Nicholas Stone's account book which was sold in his deceased sale in 1830 and which is now in the John Soane Museum.

Other more minor monuments and wall plaques cover the remaining walls.

## STOKE DOYLE



It is here you will first encounter the work of John Michael Rysbrack (1694-1770). He, like Roubilliac, was an import coming to England in the 1720s. His bust of Lord Nottingham of circa 1730 made his reputation and from then on he was one of the principle sculptors working in England. His statues include Sir Hans Sloane in the Physick Garden in Chelsea, Queen Anne at Blenheim, Palladio and Inigo Jones at Chiswick and Bacchus and Hercules at Stourhead. He left a series of sumptuous monuments of which the one at Stoke Doyle to Chief Baron Ward, sculpted in the early 1720s is almost his first. It predates his celebrated tombs to Sir Isaac Newton in Westminster Abbey. The tomb lies to the north of the altar in a small chapel created for it.

Sir Edward Ward (1638-1714) was chief Baron of the Exchequer from 1694 until his death. The scale of the monument is a reflection of the fortune he made practising the law. He fell foul of Judge Jeffreys in the Pritchard Case in 1684. His rapid rise thereafter followed his support for William III who appointed him Attorney General in 1693, the same year that he was knighted. He lived at a great house in Essex Street off the Strand but was buried on his new country estate at Stoke Doyle.

The other tomb in the church is by Sir Francis Chantry and dates from 100 years later to Hannah Roberts, nearly contemporary with the tombs of Lord Malmesbury, Salisbury Cathedral, and Mrs Arkwright at Cromford in Derbyshire. Chantry was the pre-eminent neo-classical sculptor in England whose 1817 exhibit at the Royal Academy, a monument to the children of the Revd. Robinson, was so affecting that a special barrier had to be erected to support the fainting women!

## SOUTHERN PART OF THE COUNTY

### WARKTON



The decision in 1749 to commemorate John, 2nd Duke of Montagu at Warkton rather than at Weekley led to the wholesale rebuilding of the chancel in a strict classical form with four great arches. These were, during the next 50 or so years filled with four of the finest sculptural monuments in Britain. The first was to the 2nd Duke and is by Louis Francois Roubiliac. It shows the duke's grieving widow at it's base in front of a large architectural feature from which a putto is hanging an oval medallion with a profile portrait of the duke. At the base stands Charity with two children, life size. Behind to right and left project military trophies.

The monument to the Duchess who died only two years later is also by Roubiliac. Here two putti draped garlands of flowers over an urn whilst below stand the three Fates. Again life size. Note the fate with a scissors who cuts the thread of life. The next in date is that to the top left to the Duke and Duchess's daughter Mary, Duchess of Montagu of the second creation. Here the sculptor P.M. van Gelder uses the space brilliantly to create a theatrical tableau. Either side of a large neo classical urn stands a large angel and the Duchess with two children and an old woman pulling her mantel over her head.

The last tomb, opposite , is a much more sober affair. It was executed in Rome by Thomas Campbell and shows Elizabeth, Duchess of Buccleuch seated on a throne like a Roman matron.

### CHURCH STOWE



One of the most impressive early baroque monuments in England is to be found here. To the right of the altar lies, to give her her full names, Lady Elizabeth Neville, Lady Danvers and subsequently Lady Carey. She was the daughter of Lord Latimer and thus part of the great Neville family who were one of the few noble families to survive the Wars of the Roses and prosper under the Tudors (although her father was the last Lord Latimer and she and her sisters were his rich co-heiresses). Lady Elizabeth was one of four daughters. Her sisters were Catherine, Countess of Northumberland, and Dorothy, Countess of Exeter, both of whom were buried in Westminster Abbey, and Lucy, Lady Cornwallis. Their father, Lord Latimer, had married Lady Lucy Somerset, daughter of the Earl of Worcester, the descendant of John of Gaunt. Her splendid tomb, now destroyed, was in Hackney Parish Church "of alabaster, sett over the place with pictures of myself and my fower daughters with arms of the late Lord Latimer, their father, and their several husbands, to be sette, cutte, and graven - cost 500 marks." The paternal grandfather of these four daughters, was John Neville, Lord Latimer, husband of Catherine Parr, who on his death married Henry VIII. This is not the only royal connection as Lady Elizabeth's second husband was Sir Edmund Carey, the son of Lord Hunsden, Elizabeth I's only maternal cousin. Whilst kept apart from politics he was the recipient of many favours from the Queen, not least Kenilworth Castle after Lord Leicester's death.

Not surprisingly, the tomb of such a rich and well connected person is both splendid and innovative. It is one of the very first effigies where the deceased is accurately portrayed. In this case as a remarkable old lady. She lies dressed in a fine ermine robe open to reveal a delicately embroidered bodice. Her head is partly wrapped in a cloth but rests on an equally fine pillow. She wears exquisite tiny shoes, one of which is supported by her heraldic griffin. The image is both one of great realism and of great dignity. Like her near contemporary, John Donne, she modelled for the sculptor long before her death. He was the most important English sculptor of his day, Nicholas Stone (1587-1647), friend of Rubens, Van Dyck and Inigo Jones. He executed the effigy between 1617 and 1620 at a cost of £220. The white marble figure lies on a black and white tomb chest which contains many references to Lady Elizabeth's children. Her eldest son, Henry Danvers, was created Lord Danby and is well known through the spectacular full length portrait by Van Dyck, now in the collection of the Hermitage Museum. It was for him that Stone created the magnificent gates for the botanical gardens in Oxford between 1632-3 shortly after his mother's tomb had been installed here.

It may seem superfluous to mention other memorials but on the other side of the chancel lies the impressively long Sir Gerald de L'Isle (1304-1360): a gigantic knight in Purbeck marble. His costume reflects his military service under Edward III in the Scottish wars, 1333-5, and then in France where he fought at the Battle of Crecy. He inherited the family estates at Stowe in 1347 and made a pilgrimage to Rome in the holy year of 1350. He died a decade later but not before marrying the heiress to Basing Castle in Hampshire, fighting the French one more and entering Parliament. His life was as large as his memorial.

Beyond lies another huge memorial, put up to celebrate not a burial spot, but charitable achievements. When Doctor Thomas Turner (1645-1714) died, he left a considerable amount of money to buy land at Stowe, the income derived to be used for charitable purposes. Here, as at Corpus Christi College Chapel, where he was President since 1688 he is fulsomely acknowledged. The vast wall tablet is by Thomas Stayner, bounded on either side by full length figures, Dr Thomas himself standing on a terrestrial globe to the left and Faith stand on a celestial one to the right.



# NORTHAMPTONSHIRE CHURCHES INSPIRE

A baldachino hovers over the exhaustively inscribed tablet in the centre. Stayner, (c.1668-1731) was well established by the time he attended to this commission, having indeed been Master of the Masons Company in 1709. That said, this is his most ambitious work. He would have been made in his mason's yard at Bow Bridge in Essex before being transported by cart to this remote part of the county.

A coda: at the back of the church is a fine local work. The memorial to John Daye (d.1767), Comptroller of the General Foreign Post Office. It was erected here by his daughters who commissioned John Middleton of Towcester (1718-1801) to carry out the work.

## EASTON NESTON



The church is full of memorials to the Fermor family (The Earls of Pomfret) and later to the Fermor Heskeths (The Lords Hesketh). The earliest are to be found in the chancel.

Here you find a panelled tomb chest to Richard Fermor (died 1552) who bought the estate from the Crown after the attainder of Henry VII's minister Richard Empson. Fermor had made a fortune out of wool which will be a recurring theme on this tour. The brasses on top of the chest are a palimpsest of earlier brasses reassembled here.

Opposite is the flamboyant tomb to his grandson, Sir George Fermor and his wife Mary Curson. This is attributed to Jasper Hollemans, the son of Garret Hollemans who had come to England circa 1580 and established the family at the alabaster quarries at Burton on Trent. Jasper's few surviving works are best seen in Northamptonshire, here and at Great Brington (he was also responsible for the Spenser tomb at Yarnton near Oxford and the Bassett tomb at Blore in Staffordshire). Here, working in fine soft

alabaster, partly painted and gilded, he created a spectacular funerary show topped by a huge peacock's tail of ornamental panels separated by pennons. Elsewhere are columns, obelisks, allegorical figures and heraldic achievements, whilst around the base the Fermor children kneel in relief. Note Mary Curson's fine head dress and Sir George's helmet, topped with the Fermor family crest of a cockerel.

On the opposite wall is the memorial of Sir Hatton Fermor and his wife Anne Cockayne, daughter and heiress of the Lord Mayor of London who owned Rushton Hall in the north part of the County. The memorial also includes their eldest son who died the year before it was erected and three of his sisters who appear as half length sculptures along the top, as if sitting in an opera box. This monument because it eventually had to commemorate not two but six people, is somewhat odd in design, but the execution is rather good. Note the swaggering boots of Sir Hatton, who stands to one side, his wife on the other. It is attributed to Pierre Besnier (c.1630-1693) probably a Huguenot refugee who worked with his brothers under Hubert Le Soeur for Charles I. The civil war clearly affected his career but by the late 1650s he had re-established himself, creating the Shuckburgh monument in Warwickshire, very like this tomb, and was carving the armorials on the façade of Lampport Hall. Besnier's busts of the sitters that were formerly at Easton Neston are now owned by Northampton Art Gallery.

Lastly in the chancel, to the left of the altar, is E H Baily's large wall monument to the 3rd Earl of Pomfret (d.1830) showing his lordship beside a huge funerary urn. Baily was presumably also engaged at the same time on his large figure of Minerva who, resplendent in gold leaf, sits aloft the entrance to the Athenaeum. Later, he was to provide Nelson for his column in Trafalgar Square. Note also the accomplished gothic wall plaque to Thomas Hatton Fermor (d.1864) a noted early photographer.

Off the chancel is the memorial chapel to more recent members of the Fermor Hesketh family approached through wrought iron gates that formerly stood in the entrance hall of the house. The walls are covered with a variety of tablets: the Anglo-American ancestry of the family revealed in their inscriptions. Particularly notable is the great neo-georgian aedicule to the 1st Lord Hesketh who died in 1944. An unusually large and imposing tomb for the period. An equally impressive alabaster tomb to his son the 2nd Lord Hesketh, an unusual arrangement of geometric shapes, stands at the rear of the north aisle.

As you leave the church there are two further wall tombs of particular beauty. The first has been attributed to Sir Francis Chantrey, but there is no evidence to support this and it may be another by Baily to the 2nd Earl and Countess of Pomfret with their children weeping at their loss. This is rather odd when you consider that it seems to have taken those children 30 years to put up the memorial. The Earl died in 1785, his wife two years later, and yet the tomb dates from 1816. Another conundrum, is who is the other man conspicuous here? Nearby, another work by Baily, this time to the 2nd Earl's daughter Lady Charlotte with her husband, Peter Denys and their daughter, also called Charlotte. Rather touchingly the memorial is initialled so you know who is commemorated where: LCD (Lady Charlotte Denys), CD (Charlotte Denys), PD (Peter Denys) - not I think a common practice.

## EDGCOTE



In 1543 the Edgcote estate was leased by Anne of Cleves to William Chauncey (1511 - 1585), a London lawyer who later bought the property outright. By 1553 he had become Member of Parliament for Northampton: his political rise may well have been secured through the patronage of the Earl of Northumberland. In the church he is commemorated here with a particularly fine alabaster tomb which shows him lying full length along side his wife. This stands in the south aisle along side that of his son Sir Toby Chauncey (d.1594) and his two wives. The tombs are so alike that it is tempting to think that they were commissioned at the same time from the Roily workshop at Burton on Trent. Note not only the finely sculpted figures but also the decoration around the tomb chests - a series of children (several in swaddling clothes suggesting early deaths) and some highly unusual shaped balusters. Some original colouring survives.

# NORTHAMPTONSHIRE CHURCHES INSPIRE

The Royley or Roily workshops were at Chellaston near Burton-on-Trent from where they provided a large number of alabaster tombs in the late 16th century. For more information on Richard and Gabriel Roily see Jon Bayliss's article in Church Monuments 1991.

Subsequent generations were commemorated less grandly but there are two good 17th century wall tablets nearby. The one to Toby Chauncey (d.1662) is attributed to Edward Marshall (1598 - 1675) that versatile sculptor who not only produced monuments and engraved brasses but also worked as a master mason at Northumberland House and Syon for the Earl of Northumberland, as well as at The Vine under the architect John Webb.

The 18th century memorials to the family form part of an interesting commission by Richard Chauncey, a London merchant, who rebuilt Edgcote Manor to the designs of Smith of Warwick between 1747 - 1752. In the church he employed Michael Rysbrack to carve the family monuments. These are to be found both in the nave and at the rear of the south aisle. The first seems to be to his father Richard Chauncey (d.1734) but all of them seem to date from the 1740's. They include that to the children of Toby Chauncey, to another Richard Chauncey, and to Richard Chauncey himself. Dating from the latter part of Rysbrack's career they reflect the sculptor's search for new commissions/ patrons in the wake of increased metropolitan competition from Scheemaker and Roubiliac. The falling off of London work was Edgcote's good fortune.

Rysbrack was one of the most important sculptors working in England during the first half of the 18th century. Born in Antwerp in 1694 he trained there with Michael van der Voort before coming to London in 1720. Through James Gibbs the architect he was introduced to his Tory circle of patrons which included Lord Harley, The Duchess of Marlborough and Lord Bolingbroke. Not that this excluded Whig patrons – Robert Walpole at Houghton, Henry Hoare, and his cousin Sir Edward Littleton at Teddesley. He also got to know William Kent and through him worked for Lord Burlington at Chiswick and for George II at Kensington Palace. Although his pre eminence diminished in the 1740's he could still create magnificent works such as the tomb to the 2nd and 3rd Dukes of Beaufort, Badminton in 1754.

At Edgcote it would be interesting to know whether the bust on Richard Chauncey's memorial in the nave was originally an independent bust added to the monument later. It rather has that feeling.

After Richard Chauncey's death in 1760 the estate passed rapidly through members of the family all of whom are recorded in a fine polychrome tablet that is to be found behind the organ. This type of inlaid work is perhaps more usually found in late 18th century fireplaces, a reminder that jobbing sculptors could put their hands to both. Beyond it is a splendid late neo - classical wall monument to the eventual successor to the estate Thomas Carter who died in 1835.

After Carter's death the estate passed first to his spinster sister Martha (d.1848) and thence to her kinswoman and friend Julia Frances Aubrey, second wife of William Ralph Cartwright of Aynho. The estate then descended in that family who commemorated their deaths in stained glass. That to Julia Frances shows her as a diminutive figure at prayer as does that in the adjacent window to Lady Mary Freemantle, Mrs Richard Cartwright (d.1885) Both of these windows are to be found in the chancel where you will also discover wall tablets to various rectors and their wives by Hopper, Cakebread and Whitney.

## FAWSLEY



The church contains one of the most spectacular and well preserved alabaster tomb chests in the County. On its lid lie the recumbent figures of Sir Richard Knightley (d.1534) and his wife the heiress Jane Skenard of Old Aldington. He is shown bareheaded, wearing an heraldic tabard with a great chain of Lancastrian Ss around his neck. She wears the close fitting cap of the period and an ermine lined gown - note the lowest edge adjacent to the chest top which is beautifully rendered with indications of fur and even showing a set of claws as it terminates by her ankles. These figures are partly painted and partly gilded, the striations of the alabaster cleverly used to give further form. Equally fine are the figures

to either side of the chest below. They stand under ornate ogee gothic arches. They are unusually characterised; sons who were merchants and soldiers, women who were wives and mothers. Their dress and their lively attitudes give them an immediacy not often seen in such works. At the end of the tomb two more sober figures supporting the family's armorial achievements. (Today to see these in all their glory you need to visit the Burrell Museum outside Glasgow where the armorial stained glass panels that formerly decorated the Great Hall at Fawsley, now hang.) This splendid tomb is attributed to Richard Parker of Burton on Trent who is known to have carried out similar work as the memorial to Thomas Manners, 1st Earl of Rutland (d.1543) at a cost of £20 and which still stands at Bottesford in Leicestershire.

Strangely, the next generation opted for the rather old fashioned floor brass albeit a rather large one to commemorate the principal builder of the Tudor house. In the centre of the nave lies the memorial to Sir Edmund Knightley (d.1542) and his wife. The six daughters who appear on the engraved brass below are a reminder that he had no male heirs and the estate passed to his younger brother Valentine and thence to the latter's son, Sir Richard. (The tomb of his wife, Lady Elizabeth Seymour can be seen at Norton).

The "next" memorial, on the north wall is the composite recast tomb of Sir Valentine (d. 1566), Sir Richard (d.1615) and his son Sir Valentine (d.1616). Here I think you are looking at a series of fragments which were drawn together and reassembled in a neo Jacobean splendour by their descendant Sir Charles Knightley in the 1930s. However, others think that it is largely intact and just repainted in the 1930s. Similar work does emerge from the workshop of the Thorpes of Kingscliffe. Those who visited Little Oakley last year will have seen similar things. Some elements are clearly original, if restored, others are left in slightly mutilated form such as the cherubs at the top, whilst the overall design owes more to Sir Charles' taste than that of the early 17th century. It's wholly successful and a fascinating amalgam.





# NORTHAMPTONSHIRE CHURCHES INSPIRE

Either side of this hybrid stand the stunning architectural conceits that commemorate Devereux Knightley (d.1681) and Elizabeth Knightley (d.1715). Baroque urns stand on tall pedestals, the latter beautifully garlanded with flowers. As part of the fine restoration of these memorials the flames emanating from the tops of the urns have been particularly well gilded. The first of these has been attributed to Abraham Storey who died circa 1696 (the second was made in his style.) It would not be surprising to learn that Storey did a considerable amount of decorative work, for instance he produced marble chimney pieces for Wrest Park in 1672. These would be ornaments worthy of any baroque house but here deployed as memorials.

In the chancel, surrounding the altar, are a series of five particularly well executed wall memorials whose coherent designs have been attributed to the architect of the new stable block at Fawsley, Francis Smith of Warwick. These were probably commissioned by Lucy Knightley (d.1738). They commemorate four members of the Knightley family who died between 1661 and the late 1720s. The fifth is to Lucy Knightley's wife, Jane Grey, and this is easy to spot as it is topped by her bust. The other four are largely architectural in design but the anonymous sculptor's skill is apparent particularly in the rendering of skulls and outstretched batwings. The reason for this cohesive group of memorials is that the chancel of the church was rebuilt at this time.

On the south wall are two neo-classical memorials from the 19th century, both in white marble. The first is to another Lucy Knightley, executed by Richard Westmacott in 1805. Westmacott, the son-in-law of the architect John Vardy, produced both monumental sculpture as well as ornamental work particularly chimney pieces. The latter are to be found at Cobham Hall in Kent, Korsham Court in Wiltshire and at Warwick Castle. In 1796 he was appointed Royal Mason to Kensington Palace. His most famous memorial is that to James Dutton in Sherborne Church in Gloucestershire. Standing nearly 18 foot high it shows a life size angel with outspread wings trampling death in the form of a macabre skeleton. The Fawsley tomb appears to be the only one he executed in Northamptonshire. The second memorial is to Selina Knightley and is by John Gibson, RA. (1790-1866). The sculptor lived mainly in Rome and this work was conceived there. It contains a large relief showing the deceased being received into Heaven by an angel. It would have been worked concurrently with Gibson's most famous and most controversial work, his Tinted Venus. Here, to use his words he

"tinted the flesh like warm ivory, scarcely red, the eyes blue, the hair blonde and the net which contains the hair, golden." It was not to everyone's taste, and indeed remained in his studio long after his death.

## NORTHAMPTON – ST MATTHEWS



HENRY MOORE, MADONNA AND CHILD, 1943.

St Matthew's was built between 1891 and 1894 to the designs of Matthew Holding (1847-1910), a Northampton architect, follower of John Loughborough Pearson, who was responsible for five churches in the town. The initiative was taken by a local brewer, Pickering Phipps MP, mayor of Northampton, who provided the land. After his death in 1890, his son, also named Pickering, built the church in his father's memory with an important financial contribution from his mother. That funds were generous is demonstrated by the building and its furnishings, especially the remarkable four-console Walker organ with two 32ft and nine 16ft stops out of forty-nine in all. This instrument has inspired a strong musical tradition at St Matthew's, which has been served by fine musicians including four who became cathedral organists, Denys Pouncey (Wells), John Bertalot (Blackburn), Michael Nicholas (Norwich) and Stephen Cleobury (Westminster Cathedral).

The first vicar, the Rev. John Rowden Hussey (d. 1950), was inducted in 1893. He retired forty-four years later in 1937 and was succeeded by his younger son, the Rev. Walter Hussey, 1909 - 1985, who served until 1955, when he became Dean of Chichester. Walter had a strong interest in contemporary visual art and music. When he retired from Chichester in 1977, he wrote, "The artist can purge our imagination. He may, by forcing us to share his vision, lead us to the spiritual reality that lies behind the sounds and sights that we perceive with our senses. If all this be so, the true artist is one of the most valuable and honourable members of society and his work one of the highest activities of man." Hussey's own collection of art is now housed at the Pallant House Gallery, Chichester.

During the Second World War, in 1943, John Rowden Hussey proposed to fund a new sculpture to celebrate St Matthew's golden jubilee and the half-century ministry of the Husseys. Walter was to select the artist. At the same time he commissioned Benjamin Britten's 'Rejoice in the Lamb' and a performance in St Matthew's by the BBC Symphony Orchestra. Later came further commissions for Britten, Finzi, Rubbra and Howells; two recitals by Kirsten Flagstad and a text by Auden in 1946, the same year as Graham Sutherland's 'Crucifixion' was created for the south transept. Hussey's ambitions as patron of contemporary religious art were later to be further developed in Chichester.

Wartime is difficult for sculptors: the materials of sculpture, stone, metals, wood, concrete are requisitioned for military purposes; transport and fuel for moving them are needed elsewhere. This created problems for Henry Moore, who had developed a reputation for tough avant-garde carving in stone and wood since the early 1920s. It was the intervention of Kenneth Clark providing an opportunity for him to undertake projects as a war artist that enabled Moore to keep working. The resulting 'Shelter Drawings' were exhibited at the National Gallery in 1942. Walter Hussey, already familiar with Moore's sculpture, recognised the powerful empathy for the plight of humanity evoked by the 'Shelter Drawings'. Moore himself wrote, "Without the war, I think I would have been a far less sensitive and responsible person. The war brought out and encouraged the humanist side of one's work". Hussey sensed that this evolution in Moore's thinking might make him receptive to a religious commission, specifically a carving of the 'Madonna and Child'. He knew that Moore was not a religious man. However Moore's admitted 'fundamental obsession' with images of a mother and her child meant that he, more than any other living artist, had explored countless variants of a composition which could perhaps represent the Virgin Mary and the infant Christ.

# NORTHAMPTONSHIRE CHURCHES INSPIRE

When Hussey first approached him, Moore was sceptical. "Although I was very interested", he wrote, "I wasn't sure whether I could do it...religion has been the inspiration of most of Europe's greatest painting and sculpture, and ....the Church in the past has encouraged and employed the greatest artists; but the great tradition of religious art seems to have got lost completely in the present day, and the general level of church art has fallen very low....Therefore I felt, it was not a commission straightway and light-heartedly to agree to undertake, and I could only promise to make notebook drawings from which I would do small clay models, and then only should I be able to say whether I could produce something which would be satisfactory as sculpture and also satisfy my idea of the 'Madonna and Child' theme."

He described how he began considering in what ways a 'Madonna and Child' differed from a carving of just a 'Mother and Child'; that is, in what way did he think religious art differed from secular. He concluded that, "the 'Madonna and Child' should have an austerity and a nobility, and some touch of grandeur (even hieratic aloofness) which is missing in the everyday 'Mother and Child' idea."

Moore was very ambitious. His youthful reverence for Michelangelo made him a sculptor and he admired the heroic talent of Rodin. These masters he chose as markers for his own artist ambition. This was his first full-length mother and child carving. His willingness to produce work on the scale required by the architecture indicates, despite his apparent timidity, that he gave careful consideration to the challenge of emulating his forebears. He wrote, "In sculpture which is related to architecture, actual life-size is always confusing, and as St Matthew's is a large church, the 'Madonna and Child' will be slightly over life-size. But I do not think it should be much over life-size as the sculptor's real and full meaning is to be got only by looking at it from a rather nearer view, and if from nearby it seemed too colossal it would conflict with the human feeling I wish to express".

We know that during Moore's visit to Italy in 1925, he was impressed by the painting of Masaccio and the sculpture of Giovanni Pisano as well as Michelangelo. For nearly twenty years this admiration was suppressed while he responded to non-European and non-Christian influences. With the demands of this Christian work, the admiration returns, but not without a conflict - a re-enactment of what Moore called "the miserable six months after I had left Masaccio behind in Florence and had once again come within

the attraction of the archaic and primitive sculptures of the British Museum". The qualities to which he aspires in religious art, 'austerity', 'nobility', 'grandeur' and 'hieratic aloofness' exemplify the characteristics of Virgins in works by Masaccio (like the Pisa polytych in the National Gallery) and Pisano, not the earthy allure of a Toltec-Maya 'Chacmool'.



The key compositional element defining the difference between 'Mother and Child' and 'Madonna and Child' is the pose of the child. The traditional iconography of the 'Madonna and Child' often shows the infant Christ looking at or facing the viewer. The engagement of the child with the viewer is at least as important as the engagement of the mother with the viewer. The pose of a 'Mother and Child' generally shows the two facing each other in mutual engagement. In his quest for a twentieth-century 'Madonna and Child', Moore made numerous drawings and from them twelve small clay models, which comprised both inward and outward facing infants. He chose what he considered the six most successful and submitted them to Kenneth Clark and Walter Hussey. They chose this version. With regard to Moore's uncertainty about this commission, it is perhaps significant that I can recall no other occasion when he gave a client this degree of influence over the outcome.

Moore wrote, "Of the sketches and models I have done, the one chosen has I think a quiet dignity and gentleness. I have tried to give a sense of complete easiness and repose, as though the Madonna could stay in that position for ever (as, being in stone, she will have to do). The Madonna is seated on a low bench, so that the angle formed between her nearly upright body and her legs is somewhat less than a right angle, and in this angle of her lap, safe and protected, sits the Infant. The Madonna's head is turned to face the direction from which the statue is first seen, in walking down the aisle, whereas one gets the front view of the Infant's head when standing directly in front of the statue." Moore chose Hornton limestone from a quarry near Banbury; a material he had used frequently. Since his youth he had been a

virtuoso carver of stone. He now had twenty years experience behind him. His adaptation of the internal characteristics of the material in this piece has been much admired, as has been his deft response to the natural lighting of the space.

Reactions were mixed. Hussey, supported by his congregation, identified 'real enthusiasm from all sorts of people'. The popular press was critical, describing the work as 'grotesque' and 'an insult to every woman'. 'The Architectural Review' reprinted passages from a publication produced at St Matthew's providing the history of the commission, Moore's statement and texts by Geoffrey Grigson and Eric Newton. Grigson describes the sculpture as, "Moving and lovely and masterly...I have not seen a piece of sculpture by Moore in which all the abstract virtues are more imaginatively combined with the meaning of a great subject". However, he senses the artist's uncertainty about the commission, detecting a lack of belief, which the artist would have conceded, and challenges Moore to make equivalent work of explicit pagan inspiration. Newton sees Moore as acting as both master of form and servant of an idea: both creator and interpreter. He believes that form has not been sacrificed in the service of religion, but feels that religion may have been made secondary to the artist's aesthetic demands, partly because nobody knows what a twentieth century 'Madonna' should be. He thinks Moore's Virgin has "some of the clumsy dignity of the peasant and some of the inscrutable grandeur of the sphinx. She is timeless." Newton's final word, I find now, nearly seventy years on, deeply compelling, "She is not part of an art-revival but a stage in art evolution. Therefore, a century hence, whatever may have happened to Christianity, she will have lost none of her potency. She will be seen as an example not of Henry Moore's sculpture but of a deep seriousness somehow inherent in the mid-twentieth century". TDL 1.5.12





# NORTHAMPTONSHIRE CHURCHES INSPIRE

## NORTON



Apart from the brass to William Knight (d.1501) and his wife, the earliest monument is the spectacularly large wall tomb on the south wall of the nave. This is to Lady Elizabeth Seymour (1552-1602), daughter of Edward Seymour, Duke of Somerset "The Lord Protector", first cousin to Edward VI and second wife of Sir Richard Knightley. In its splendour as well as in its design it owes much to the tomb of the sitter's mother, the Duchess of Somerset who died in 1587. Her tomb is in Westminster Abbey and again is executed in painted alabaster richly enhanced with ornament. The Duke had no such flamboyant memorial. He was simply buried in the chapel of St. Peter ad Vincula having been executed at the Tower in 1549. Lady Elizabeth lies under a rich canopy, her hands clasped in prayer. Note her red cloak lined with fur and the gold tasselled and embroidered head pillow. The tomb retains a great deal of its original paint and gilding and is a fulsome example of the late Elizabethan love of squiggly ornament, coffering, heraldry, columns, obelisks, etc, etc. (In its ornateness it may be no coincidence that Geerhaerd's portrait of Lady Elizabeth shows her covered in costly jewellery.)

After the death of her husband, Sir Richard, the estate was sold to Nicholas Breton whose monument only put up 20 years later, is a very different affair. It is sober and classical. A broken pediment contains his

arms beneath which is a centrally placed tablet of black marble flanked by two semi-naked cherubs standing on brackets. The colouring is also more sober but there is a pleasant controlled use of different coloured marbles and paint is employed to highlight the cherubs' few draperies.

Nearby is another monument to Anne Breton (d.1635). Much more Jacobean in quality and mood with a pair of banded obelisks and a skull in the pediment.

Continuing with the Breton family the tomb commemorating the next generation is a very substantial work. Nicholas Breton and his wife appear here as a pair of busts in the centre of a large pink and white marble "altar piece" with free standing black marble columns to either side. The busts stand on elaborate socles of Italianate form. Above their coat of arms hovers between another broken pediment from which emanate large bold garlands of fruit.

Slightly earlier in date is the memorial on the north side of the church to Elizabeth Verney (d.1633). Again a classical concern with a familiar broken pediment and armorial tablet and beneath the deceased kneeling in prayer. Above a painted figure holds up her shield whilst either side allegorical figures tell of the shortness of life's span.

From the Bretons you need to jump to the Botfields: from the 17th to the early 19th century. Thomas Botfield was an ironmaster from Dawley in Shropshire, who acquired the Norton estate circa 1800. Also on the north wall is the tomb to Thomas' daughter-in-law, Charlotte Botfield (d.1825). It is almost shockingly austere. It shows her son mourning at her tomb sculpted in high relief. This tomb deserves to be much better known as it is undoubtedly one of the finest neo-classical monuments in the County. It is a relatively early work by William Behnes (1795-1864) when to some extent he was at the height of his powers. Behnes was the son of a piano maker from Hanover who first settled in Dublin and then in London. As a young man he attended the Royal Academy Schools and in the early 1820s was also engaged on the statue of George IV for Dublin Castle, the Hon. Charles Lambton (Sir Thomas Lawrence's Red Boy) for Lambton Castle, and of Alexander Hope for The Deepdene. His only other work in Northamptonshire seems to be the memorial to Lord James Fitzroy at Grafton Regis.

Before leaving Norton, take a look at the vast decaying family mausoleum in the

churchyard, to the south east of the church off what must have been the path to the Hall. This is to the whole Botfield family and is a huge tomb chest with a roof topped by a swagged urn. The whole surrounded by iron railings with flaming tops which was presumably made at the family's own iron foundry. The tomb, though, is a local affair, being made by Baseley of Daventry.



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