Hanney Church Brasses

Our Church has a very fine collection of church brasses. At some stage-date unknown- the brasses were collected together and placed in front of the altar in their present position.

The brasses,apart from the oldest one, relate to the most well-to do families in the parish which at that time included Lyford. Most of the families owned manors in Hanney and a closer study would probably reveal inter-family relationships. Marriages were often made with the purpose of extending estates and certainly with producing heirs!

It is also interesting to bear in mind the times of national change through which these various families lived,not least the Reformation and subsequent changes in national religion. The Wellesbournnes, for example,were close to the court of Henry VIII and set to benefit from new changes and the availability of old estates belonging to the monasteries. At the same time, marriages were made with families such as the Yates who remained with the old religion as Recusants. In the jumpy reign of Elizabeth I, the Catholic priest, Edmund Campion, was actually arrested at Lyford and subsequently died for his faith. Yet neighbouring gentry held important posts within Elizabethan local hierarchy and as local Sheriff of Berkshire would be responsible for maintaining law and order and searching for such priests who were known to be harboured locally.

In the study of a line of church brasses not only does English history come alive but questions spring to mind of the day to day lives of these people and the information still retained in these brasses-the clothes they wore, their heraldry. We can still look at some of the places they lived in.

Do come back to study our brasses more closely but please treat them with respect as they are irreplaceable.

The oldest brass is to a priest- **Rector John Seys** and he is in full mass vestments. This brass dates from 1370 and some parts of the old brass framework and possible heraldry are missing. In 1824 this brass plate lay on a blue gravestone in the middle of the chancel.

1577- **Sir Humphrey Cheynie** (Cheney), Shown in the uniform of a Tudor Soldier with his head resting on his helmet and with long sword and dagger. He was the second son of John Cheynie of West Woodhay in Berkshire and died two days after making his will at Lyford , on April 13th,1557, asking 'to be buried in the chauncel of the parish church of Hanney'.It is likely that he owned the Manor of Priors' Hanney in East Hanney.

A marginal inscription – a quotation from the Book of Job runs round the brass with the emblems of the Four Evangelists in the corners.

1592- **John Ayshcombe and his two wives**. There are ten sons and four daughters depicted on the brass. A 'gentleman' of Lyford, his first wife is not named nor did she bear him any children .The fourteen children of the marriage were by his second wife Margery Wellesbourne ,daughter of Oliver Wellesbourne of Hanney.( Manor of Long Hanney).She predeceased her husband by a year.

John Ayshcombe wears a ruff, doublet and long gown. His wives wear French hoods and large ruffs. Their long waisted gowns were worn with a small farthingale.zabeth

1599-  **Sir Christopher Lytcot** . Knight depicted in armour. Married twice,firstly Jane Essex,widow of Thomas Essex and secondly, Catherine Young,widow of William Young of Basildon.

Sir Christopher was knighted by King Henry IV of France in November 1591 in the camp before Rouen. Queen Elizabeth I was said not to be best pleased at a French king knighting an Englishman.

Sir Chriistopher was also twice High Sheriff of Berkshire. 'After his travailes in Germany, Italy and France and the execution of justice' he ended his 'pilgrimage' at Basildon.

1602- **Francis Wellesbourne and his two wives** with three daugters.

Francis held the Manor of Long Hanney, East Hanney. He had three daughters,Frances,Katherine(deceased) and Anne by his second wife Alianora and none by his first wife,Ann.

Francis wears armour and a small sword. His wives are dressed nearly alike wearing French hoods with veils behind and a gown with the skirt open to show an embroidered petticoat.

Francis was born in 1526, the only son of Oliver Wellesbourne.It is likely that his sister Margery Ayshcombe is depicted in the adjoining brass. The Wellesbournes are said to have been descended from Simon de Montfort.

1611- **Oliver Ayshcombe,gentleman of Lyford and his wife Martha** who was the daughter of Thomas Yate Esquire of Lyford. They had four sons and two daughters. The couple died within a month of each other. By his will he gave 'a very liberal and bountiful gift unto the poore of this parishe'.

Oliver wears ruff,doublet and hose. His wife has a French hood, large ruff and a dress over a farthingale.

Memorial stones to his son John,Sheriff of Berkshire who died aged 97 in 1655 and his grandson,also John 1644-1692) also lie behind the altar rail.