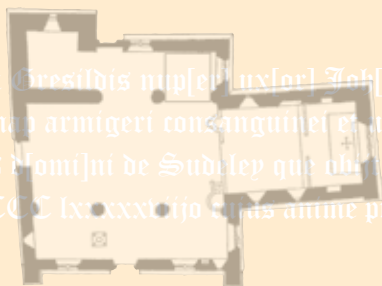


The
**Brasses
& Monuments**
in St. Mary the Virgin
Church, Clapham,
West Sussex

Robert Hutchinson F.S.A.



Hic iacet bona et virtuosa Griseldis nup[er] ux[or] Joh[ann]is Caryll una
 Filiaru[m] h[er]e[di]ci belkn[us] armigeri consanguinei et unius heredu[m]
 Radi[ulph] boteler militis Mon[achi] de Sudley que obiit xi die Julii A[nn]o
 D[omi]ni M[illesimo] CCC[CLXXX]to eius anime propicietur deus ame[n]



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The Brasses and Monuments in St. Mary the Virgin Church, Clapham, West Sussex

Robert Hutchinson F.S.A.

‘And now it is all gone - like an unsubstantial pageant faded;
 and between us and the old English there lies a gulf of mystery
 which the prose of the historian will never adequately bridge.
 They cannot come to us and our imagination can but feebly
 penetrate to them. Only . . . as we gaze upon their silent figures
 sleeping on their tombs, some faint conceptions float before
 us of what these men were when they were alive.’

James Anthony Froude
 History of England (1870)

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THE MONUMENTAL BRASSES, monuments and floorslabs in the church of St, Mary the Virgin, Clapham, West Sussex, form one of the most important collections of these memorials in the County - not only because of their historical value, but also as records of a great family that once occupied a position of enormous power and influence in the area.

The monuments also provide us with a tenuous glimpse of what these men and women were like and how they lived, as the Victorian historian James Anthony Froude, whose words are quoted on the title page, tried to describe.

Monumental brasses are plates of metal, with stylised images of the deceased engraved upon them (or commemorating them by a simple inscription), inserted in stone slabs and placed over the grave. Perhaps 50,000 were laid down in England and Wales from the 14th to the 18th centuries, but now less than 15% remain to us - lost in the ravages of the Reformation, in the Civil War and through subsequent neglect or theft, particularly during the Victorian period of church restoration.

Most were made in London - those in Clapham church were - and were transported in their stone slabs to the church; a difficult and arduous operation, given the limited transportation resources available before the advent of good roads and railways.

This brief guide describes all the monuments in the church and, where appropriate, something of the people they commemorate. Each monument is listed in chronological order with its location in the church. Throughout, words in square brackets in the inscriptions indicate full versions of the original abbreviated words or an interpretation, from other evidence, of missing letters. Following modern practice, the heraldic tinctures “or” and “argent”

are referred to as “gold” and “silver.” The term “dexter” means the observer’s left and “sinister” the observer’s right hand side.

The reader will find many references to Michelgrove, a fine brick quadrangular mansion with hexagonal towers at each corner and a gatehouse on the south front, whose huge estate covered part of the parishes of Clapham and Angmering. Sir William Shelley (No. 6) apparently entertained Henry VIII there¹ after rebuilding it in 1534. In 1585, the house was said to contain more than 50 rooms.

About 1769, the Shelleys converted the house into a mock-Gothick structure, encased in cream-coloured brick, with the internal courtyard covered over and made into a hall. It was sold in 1800 by Sir John Shelley, the 6th baronet, to Richard Walker esq., of Liverpool, who made a number of additions to the building to the designs of George Byfield, but died soon afterwards.

Plans for the improvement of the park, made by the great landscaper Humphry Repton, were not carried out. Richard Walker’s son, Richard Watt Walker, who came of age in 1813, was involved in the running of mail coaches between London and Littlehampton, building a private turnpike road along the Long Furlong valley to connect with the Worthing Road.²

¹ British Library (hereafter B.L.) Harleian MS 6993, art.14.

² T P Hudson, ed., *Victoria County History* (hereafter V.C.H.), VI (Oxford, 1980), 11.



This venture failed, and, burdened with an extravagant lifestyle, he was forced to sell Michelgrove in 1827 to Bernard Edward, 12th Duke of Norfolk, who pulled it down in 1845.³ The former pigeon house, built between 1755 and 1768, later converted into a clock tower, was the last remnant of this great house until its demolition in the 1970s.

1 Purbeck Marble Stone Slab.

The earliest monument is a simple Purbeck marble stone slab with a cross incised upon it, hidden away in the vestry. This dates from the 13th century and probably commemorates the first known rector of Clapham, William de Radenore, who was appointed in 1257.⁴ He was originally buried in the chancel and the slab

was probably moved into the vestry at the restoration of the church in 1873-4 by Sir George Gilbert Scott.

The Rev. Edward Turner, in his account of brasses in Sussex in 1871,⁵ records a brass inscription dug up in the churchyard “some years ago”. Cartwright, writing in 1830,⁶ says in was “lately dug up”. Unfortunately, it has now been lost, but read:

*Hic jacet Thomasina Nenge;
quæ obiit octavo die Martij,
anno d[omi]ni Millesimo. cccc. lviij;
Cujus anime propicietur Deus Amen.*

Translated: *Here lies Thomasina Nenge who died on March 8th, 1458, on whose soul may God have mercy. Amen.*

Nothing is known of the Nenge family at Clapham.

³ It is illustrated in *Sussex Archaeological Collections* (hereafter S.A.C.), LXXI, 10, 16. Richard Watt Walker gave the font to Clapham church.

⁴ L.F.Salzman, ed., *Chartulary of the Priory of St Peter at Sele* (Cambridge, 1923), 14, note.

⁵ S.A.C. XXIII (1871), 149.

⁶ Edmund Cartwright ht, *Parochial Topography of the Rape of Bramber in the Western Division of the County of Sussex* (London, 1830), 85.

The following three brasses were recorded as lying loose in the church chest in 1871, but were relaid in a limestone slab during the church restoration.

2 Brass inscription, John Michelgrove the younger, esq., 1458.

Relaid, mural, south wall of chancel. Three-line Latin inscription in black letter with a flourish at the end of line two, engraved at the same time as No. 3 below:

*Hic iacet iohannes Michelgrove Junior armiger
qui obiit vicesimo die augusti · anno · d[omi]ni
millesimo cccclviii cui[us] a[n]i[m]e p[ro]picietur d[eus] amea [sic]*

Translated: *Here lies John Michelgrove esquire the younger, who died August 20th, 1458, on whose soul may God have mercy, amen.* The brass engraver has made a mistake in the last word “amen”; he cut an ‘a’ instead of an ‘n’ in the last letter.

John, son of the elder John Michelgrove, was brother of Elizabeth Shelley (see No. 5) and pre-deceased his father. He was a knight of the shire in 1445.

3 Brass inscription, John Michelgrove the elder, esq., 1458/9.⁷

Now relaid, mural, south wall, chancel. A three-line inscription in Latin in black letter with flourishes at the end of lines one and three, engraved at the same time as No. 2 above:

*Hic iacet iohannes michelgrove senior armiger
qui obiit vicesimo die Januarii, anno d[omi]ni millesimo
cccclviii^o Cuius a[n]i[m]e p[ro]picietur d[e]us amen*

Translated: *Here lies John Michelgrove esquire the elder who died on January 20th, 1458, on whose soul may God have mercy. Amen.*

The manor of Michelgrove in Clapham formed part of the barony of Bramber and was held by the Fauconers or Falconers of Falconhurst in Kent, one of whom, John, in 1313, assumed the name of de Michelgrove.⁸ His great-grandson, John, married a daughter of William Sidney, ancestor of the Sidneys of Penshurst, Kent and died in 1458, leaving as a surviving only child, Elizabeth (born 1460), who brought the manor to her husband John Shelley (I). (See No. 5).

A 15th-century Latin missal of the Sarum Use that may have been used at Michelgrove by the family is in the British Library.⁹

⁷ Up to 1752, England used the old Roman Julian calendar, whereby the legal and civil year changed on 25th March. However, 1st January was still celebrated as New Year’s Day, so events after this date were officially recorded as, in this case, 1458/9.

⁸ Richard Fawkenor of Warehorn, Kent, left 13s 4d to the fabric of Clapham Church in 1442. *Archaeologia Cantiana*, XI, 371. The arms of Fauconer were recorded in the east window of Clapham church by Thomas Philipot, Somerset Herald, in his visitation in 1634.

⁹ B.L. Add. MS 59856. A note on f.45v requests prayers for John Michelgrove and his family. On another page, prayers are requested for a number of people whose names occur in the list of parishoners of St Mary’s church, Horsham, West Sussex, who were granted a royal licence to found a guild and a chantry there in 1457. John Michelgrove’s name appears in that list. However, the chantry was at the altar of St John the Baptist, who is not prominent in the Missal, and it seems more likely that the manuscript was intended for use by the Michelgrove family at the chapel in Michelgrove, or perhaps at another altar in Horsham church.



4 Brass inscription, Griselda, wife of John Caryll, 1498.

Relaid, mural, south wall of chancel. Four-line inscription in Latin black letter:

*Hic iacet bona et virtuosa Gresildis nup[er] ux[or] Joh[ann]is Caryll una
filiaru[m] henr[ic]i belknap armigeri consanguinei et unius heredu[m]
Rad[ulph]i boteler militis d[omi]ni de Sudeley que obiit xj die Julii A[n]n[no]
d[omi]ni Millesimo CCCC lxxxviii^o cuius anime propicietur deus ame[n]*

Translated: *Here lies good and virtuous Griselda, late wife of John Caryll, one of the daughters of Henry Belknap esquire, blood relation and one of the heirs of Ralph Boteler, Knight, Lord of Sudeley, who died on July 11th, 1498, on whose soul may God have mercy, amen.*

Henry Belknap, heir to his brother William (co-heir to Sir Ralph Boteler) died, aged 50, in 1488. Griselda had four sisters, Ann, Elizabeth, Mary and Alice, the last of whom married Sir William Shelley, the judge. (See monument 6 below.)

The Shelley family became prominent in the late 14th century. Two brothers, Sir John and Sir Thomas, were attainted for their support of Richard II, and both were beheaded in 1400 by Henry IV. Robert, the son of a third brother, Sir William, married Elizabeth, daughter of John Petit, and died in 1420; he is recorded by the Elizabethan antiquary John Stow as being buried in the church of St Dunstan-in-the-East, in the City of London.¹⁰ No trace of the tomb remains.

His son was John, MP for Rye in the Parliaments of 1415, 1420, 1421 and 1423, who married Beatrice, daughter and heiress of Sir John Hawkwood, the son of an Essex tanner, who became a tailor and, later, a notorious mercenary. Their only issue was:

¹⁰ John Stow, *Survey of London*, 2nd Edition (London, 1603), 136.

5 John Shelley (I) esq., 1513, and wife, 1526, a brass with four shields, inscription, prayer scrolls, plate depicting the Holy Trinity.

Purbeck marble slab, floor of chancel.

John Shelley died in 1526 and his wife, Elizabeth, thirteen years earlier. They married in 1474, when Elizabeth was 14, bringing the Michelgrove family estates into ownership of the Shelleys in dower. This well-known brass was probably engraved and laid down around 1520 by the London series 'F' workshop.¹¹ Both figures are depicted full-face. The male effigy wears armour with his heraldic arms displayed on a tabard - a kind of short-sleeved over-shirt - and stands upon a grassy mound.

His wife wears a heraldic mantle blazoned with her arms, indicating her Falconer ancestry inherited by Michelgrove, over a close-fitting gown edged with fur. Note the tasselled cords holding the mantle, passing through jewelled studs. Around her waist is a girdle, held by a diamond-shaped clasp. Hanging from this, at the end of a long cord or chain, is a pomander that would have contained sweet-smelling herbs. On her head is a good example of the pedimental headdress, familiar in Holbein's drawings and paintings of the Tudor court. She was the only child of John de Michelgrove and his wife Beatrice.

The heraldic designs and the lady's headdress would originally have been coloured with waxes inlaid into the metal. Both figures are shown praying to a representation of the Holy Trinity, engraved on a separate plate above their heads. Both prayer scrolls (the man's slightly damaged) read:

Q[ui]n[que] sp[irit]us laudet d[omi]n[u]m¹²

or, translated "*Let everything that hath breath, praise the Lord*" - a passage taken from the final verse of the last Psalm.

The Trinity shows God the Father, wearing a Papal triple crown and a cope, and seated on a throne, holding God the Son crucified between His knees, with the Holy Spirit portrayed as a dove hovering above. At the foot of the Cross is an orb, representing the world.



Previous writers have maintained, curiously, that the engraving of this Trinity is worn and indistinct. This is incorrect - in fact, it is very finely engraved and far superior work to that of the remainder of the brass. This plate was probably the work of another, separate engraver, who specialised in religious symbolism and who was a sub-contractor for this and other tombs. Brasses bearing representations of the Holy Trinity or the Resurrection were popular during the 15th and 16th centuries but few now remain, as these plates were particular targets for zealous religious reformers.

The Latin inscription reads:

Orate pro animab[us] Joh[ann]is shelley armigeri et Elyzabth uxoris eius filie heredis Joh[ann]is / Michilgrove de Michilgrove armigeri que quidem Elyzabeth obiit penultimo die Julij a[nn]o / Regni regis henrici viii quinto et a[nn]o d[omi]ni mccccxiii et predictus Joh[ann]es shelley obiit iii^o die / Januarij A[nn]o Regni regis henrici viii xviii^o anno domini Mcccc vicesimo sexto

["/" indicates the end of a line].

Translated: *Pray for the souls of John Shelley esquire and Elizabeth his wife, daughter and heiress of John Michelgrove of Michelgrove, esquire, which Elizabeth died the 30th day of July in the fifth year of the reign of Henry VIII and AD 1513 and the aforesaid John Shelley died the third day of January in the 18th year of the reign of King Henry VIII 1526.*

The upper dexter shield bears *Sable a fess engrailed between three whelk shells gold*, for SHELLEY and the upper sinister, *Quarterly, gold and azure, over all a falcon silver*, for MICHELGROVE. The lower dexter bears SHELLEY *impaling* MICHELGROVE and the lower sinister MICHELGROVE *impaling* Gold, *a pheon azure* for SIDNEY.

It is said that this important brass was buried beneath the chancel floor for many years for its protection and only uncovered in the 18th century, when repairs were undertaken to the chancel.¹³ Significantly, perhaps, both the face of the male figure and the plate depicting the Holy Trinity bear the marks of four hammer blows - probable visible evidence of anger directed against the gentry during the agrarian unrest over enclosures of common land and rent increases in May, 1549, coupled with religious motivation. The wife's face is undamaged.

The couple had seven children, surprisingly not depicted on separate plates on the brass, as was usual at this time. The eldest, another John, became a Knight of Rhodes and died in 1522 during the siege of the island by the Turks. The second son, William, inherited the estates (No. 6). The third son, Richard, moved to Patcham, Sussex, and established a branch of the family there. Another son, Edward, moved to Warminghurst, near Ashington, Sussex and became one of the four masters of the household to Henry VIII, Edward VI and Mary I - surely a record for tactfulness! He is commemorated by a brass in Warminghurst church

¹¹ For a description of the various workshops' figure styles, see J. P. C. Kent's 'Monumental Brasses - a New Classification of Military Effigies', *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, 3rd Series, XII, 1949.

¹² It is engraved "spiritas" in the man's prayer scroll. The wife's scroll is reversed.

¹³ Cartwright, op.cit., 84. Probably in 1724, when the chancel was adorned and repaired, partly at Sir John Shelley's expense. See V.C.H., 19.

that also had a Holy Trinity, now sadly lost. (The poet Percy Bysshe Shelley is a descendant of this branch of the Shelley family.) A fifth son, George, became a priest and was rector of Parham, across the South Downs from Clapham. His will, dated September 24, 1557, directed that he should be buried in the chancel at Parham, and left the parson of Clapham “*my geldynge or my mare colte whiche of them he will chose and take and that he refuseth, I gyve [the horse] unto Sr Gylbert Lucas¹⁴ [curate] of Coombes. . .*”.

There were two daughters: Elizabeth, who became a nun, and Johanna, who married Edward Bellingham of Erringham, near Shoreham.

John Shelley was clearly held in high esteem. In 1500, he was asked to hold all the documents relating to the sale of Pulborough manor and a watermill there for seven years, as part of a solution to a dispute over ownership of the premises and land.¹⁵

His will asked that his funeral be arranged by his son William and bequeathed “*to the four orders of Freres [friars] ... 6s 8d each*”. Shortly after his death, “*two trentalles*” should be said. (A trental is a set of 30 Requiem Masses for the repose of a soul, said on a single or successive days.)

6 Sir William Shelley, judge, 1548, and wife Alice, daughter of Henry Belknap.

Carved figures in recessed arched tomb, north wall of chancel.

This monument is one of a series to be found in West Sussex and Hampshire (plus one small panel in Kent), produced by stone carvers probably based in Chichester between c.1525 and c.1545. Their output includes the magnificent de la Warr chantry chapel in Boxgrove church, erected just before the dissolution of the priory. All are characterised by a curious blend of Gothic and Renaissance motifs and a reliance on religious symbolism in the iconography of the tombs.

The crudely carved tomb, of Caen stone, shows Sir William and his wife, facing east and kneeling at prayer desks, facing forward, their heads turned so as to be looking at the high altar. Sir William wears the judicial coif and hood and from his effigy comes the prayer scroll bearing, in Latin, these words:

Adoram[us] te xpe [=Christe] ihesu et benedicim[us] tibi



Translated: “*We worship Thee Christ Jesus and we bless Thee.*” The scroll above the wife has been effaced.

The wife wears the pedimental headdress and carries a rosary over the right wrist. Behind the male figure kneel seven sons with bobbed hair, loose gowns and purses; seven daughters are behind the wife, six wearing the more fashionable ‘Paris’ cap. The foremost, however, wears a wimple and veils and carries a book. She has been called a nun but it is more likely she is dressed as a widow.

Originally, the tomb probably had an inscription in raised lettering below the figures but there is nothing, other than the heraldry, now to identify whom it commemorates.

Behind the figures are three ornamented circles containing escutcheons.

The central bears, *Quarterly of 4, 1 & 4, Sable a fess engrailed between three wheelk shells gold, SHELLEY, 2 & 3, Quarterly gold and azure, over all a falcon silver, MICHELGROVE impaling, Quarterly of 4, 1, Azure three eagles displayed in bend between two bendlets silver, BELKNAP. 2, Gold, two bends gules, SUDELEY 3, Bendy of ten gold and azure, MONFORT (or MOUNTFORD). 4, Gules a fess compony silver and sable between six crosses patée fitchy silver, BOTELER.*

The sinister bears *Quarterly of 4, 1 & 4, SHELLEY. 2 & 3, MICHELGROVE.* The dexter bears the same impalement as the central shield.

The tomb was probably erected during Sir William Shelley’s lifetime, around 1545, and is almost certainly one of the last produced by this school of carvers.

Sir William was born around 1480. He married Alice, daughter of Sir Henry Belknap, lord of Oston, Warwicks., and Knell, in Beckley, near Rye, East Sussex,¹⁶ who pre-deceased him¹⁷. He was appointed Recorder of London in 1520, became a Serjeant at Law two years later, and was raised to the Bench as Justice of the Common Pleas in 1527. A letter from William’s son, Richard, to Elizabeth’s Treasurer, Lord Burghley, says that:

King Henry the Eight knew my father, whom in his youth he loved very well. And albeit in my Lord Cromwell’s tyme he passed stormes and with great lose (which after was recompensed liberally) yet fynallie, the King made moche of him agayne and witsaved to tell me at Detford and I sho[w]ed to his Majestie of his greate chere he had at Mychelgrove with great comindacion of my father’s uprightness, whom his Majestie at the beginning of his reign forced therefore almost at ones to become Serjeant and Judge muche against his will. . .¹⁸

In 1529, Sir William was despatched to demand from the disgraced Cardinal Wolsey the surrender (to the King) of York House, later to become part of the palace of Whitehall.

¹⁴ The clergy were given the honorary title of “Sir” at this time.

¹⁵ *Calendar of Close Rolls, Henry VII 1500-09*, No. 13 (London, 1963).

¹⁶ Two receipts, dated October 25, 1523, for payments of £150 and £200 from William Shelley, executor of Sir Edward Belknap, late chief butler to Henry VIII, being arrears of his office, are noted in the state papers. See *Letters and Papers, Henry VIII*, Vol III, part 2 (London, 1887), no. 3471. Presumably a relation of his father-in-law.

¹⁷ Probably in 1536.

¹⁸ B.L. Harleian MS 6693, art.14

The Shelleys remained staunch adherents of the old religion. Inevitably, Sir William was caught up in the political intrigues of the Reformation. On June 1, 1533, he was one of the judges who attended the coronation of Queen Anne [Boleyn], having been commanded to attend in their scarlet robes by the King himself.

On Saturday after dinner [the eight justices] rode to the Tower on horses and mules, in scarlet gowns and hoods, sarcenet tippets and collars of SS, but being too late to go into the Tower, they came back to Sir John Davey's house in Mark Lane and after resting half an hour, rode back to Tower Hill where they staid an hour, while the knights and squires rode by. The heralds appointed the justices to ride before the Knights of the Bath and before the King's Council. At Westminster Hall, they alighted and waited for the Queen... When she had sat in her chair and drunk, she went to her chamber and the justices all kneeled to her; to whom she said: "I thank you for all your honor you have done to me this day." They were not at the jousts the next day for they were not commanded to be present.¹⁹

On June 17, 1535, Sir William was appointed to a Special Commission of Oyer and Terminer for Middlesex to try John Fisher, Bishop of Rochester, and three monks from the London Charterhouse on charges that, on May 7 the same year, they denied that Henry VIII was the supreme head on earth of the Church of England. Verdict: Guilty. Judgement: as usual for high treason - execution at Tyburn.²⁰

This was the first of a number of high-profile trials presided over by Sir William and his colleagues. For example, on May 12, 1536, he sat at Westminster on a special commission hearing charges against Sir Francis Weston, Henry Norreys, William Brereton and Mark Smeaton of "violation and carnal knowledge of the Queen [Anne Boleyn]". Verdict: guilty. Judgement against all four, as in cases of treason: execution at Tyburn.²¹ The next day, at the Tower, Sir William and his colleagues found a true bill against the Queen herself and her brother George Boleyn, Lord Rochford, on charges on adultery and incest and they were sent for trial by their peers.

The following year, Sir William served on a special commission trying the Yorkshire rebels and later tried a number of the aristocracy for treason. In January 1547 he heard the case against Henry, Earl of Surrey, at the Guildhall, London, for using the arms of Edward the Confessor in his heraldry. This, said the Crown, was appropriate only to the king's use and no other and this was treason. Verdict: guilty.

State papers show that his salary as a judge was £27 18s 2d for a half year.²² He was kept busy on legal duties right up to his death. In 1547, he was named to hear cases of gaol delivery from Northampton Castle, at Warwick, Coventry, Leicester, Nottingham and Oakham (Rutland), and at the end of May that year, was appointed as one of the Commissioners of the Peace for the counties of Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Lincoln, Rutland and Sussex.

¹⁹ *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic Henry VIII*, VI (London, 1882), 263.

²⁰ *ibid.*, VIII (London, 1885), 350.

²¹ *ibid.*, X (London, 1887), 351.

²² *ibid.* XI (London, 1888), 152.

One of his last cases was heard with the Attorney General, Henry Bradshaw, on June 15, 1548: an inquiry into the lands and heir of Lord Thomas Barkeley, deceased, in the county of Coventry.²³

Aside from his legal duties, Sir William had other civic responsibilities. He was summoned to Parliament on August 9, 1529 and April 27, 1536. In 1546, England was at war with France and the Government feared an imminent French invasion somewhere along the South Coast. Sir William signed a letter²⁴ to Justices of the Peace in East Sussex, urging them to set up warning beacons for use in the event of a landing:

After our hartys commendacions, this shalbe to admonish you that we have received the Kyngs majesties letters for the makynge upp of the beacons and the order of the watche as well uppon the sea coast as other partes of the Shyre as by the copies of the Kynges Majesties letters and Instrucions you shall perceive. Wee therefore desyer you that you being Justices will [meet] at Lewes on Friday the vijth day of Maye that wee mey all counsell together for the spedye expetin and examinacion of the said letters and Instrucions and we thynk good that with all expedycon immediatly that the beakyns may be made before o' meating and for the watche we may counsell seek att o' meating.

Sir William, meanwhile, had problems with Thomas Cromwell, Lord Privy Seal, about the enforced sale of some of his property at Knell to raise cash for the fortification of Calais, then an English possession. He wrote in 1537 to the Secretary of State Lord Wriothesley and the secretary records the letter as follows:

In compliance with my lord Privy Seal's command, gives a valuation of the manor of Knell and the woods there which it is the King's pleasure to have for the commodity of his town of Calais. The Lordship of Knell is worth £48 a year and the yearly wood sale has been £40, never under £20, save of late years since the restraint of carrying wood beyond the seas. Thinks we could sell the wood for over £2,000 and has been offered £1,500. The lordship of Knell is the old house of the Belknaps, given to the writer by Mr Belknap as part of his late wife's portion and he would not part with it to any other. Hopes the King will recompense him and his children with lands in Sussex and would prefer the manor of Fyndon and some of the lands of the Duchy of Lancaster in that county, viz. Maresfield, Willingdon and Seaford. Fyndon is in the hands of the Chancellor of the Augmentations but he might take suppressed lands for it.²⁵

Some of the lost income was returned. In his will,²⁶ Sir William leaves his son Richard "*one hundred poundes which the executors of the late Kinges grace kinge Henry the vijth owe me for I lent yt to our said late souveraigne lord at his being at the siege of Bolloyn [Boulogne]*".

²³ *Calendar Patent Rolls, Edward VI, 1547-48* (London, 1924), 369.

²⁴ *Sussex Notes & Queries* 1 (1926-7), 82.

²⁵ *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic Henry VIII*, XII (pt 1) (London, 1890), 326. The Augmentation Office was the State organisation responsible for organising the collection of cash from the suppression of the monasteries, colleges and chantries during the Reformation.

²⁶ Public Record Office P.C.C. POPULWELL f. 25.

His instructions for his funeral indicate a modest man. *“My desire ys to be buried withoute any pompe or costly Cerimonies. . . I will have no herse²⁷ but four honest tapers aboote my body yf myn Executors thinke that convenient.”*

Not all the children shown on the tomb can be identified. We know the eldest son was another John [II] (see No. 7). The second son was Sir James, a knight of Malta. The third, Sir Richard, born c. 1513, was the last grand prior of the Knights of St. John in England; he retired to Spain on Elizabeth I's accession to the throne, having had his land and possessions confiscated for his adherence to the Catholic faith. Sir Richard served in Malta during the Turkish siege and later went to Venice where, returning to favour with Elizabeth, he negotiated some commercial treaties on her behalf. He died in 1566.

A third son, Edward, was paymaster to the English army that invaded Scotland in October 1542 and became second in command of the cavalry under Lord Grey. He was killed leading a charge against Scottish cavalry in the battle of Pinkie, near Musselburgh, on September 10, 1547. A fourth son, Thomas, married Elizabeth, daughter of Sir Roger Copley of Gatton, near Willingdon, Sussex and settled at Mapledurham, Hants., where he founded yet another branch of the Shelleys. Three daughters are known: Catherine, who married Henry Browne, son of Sir Matthew Brown; Elizabeth who married Sir Roger Copley, her brother's father-in-law; and Frances, who died unmarried.

7 John Shelley [II] esq., died 1550, with four sons, [William, John, Richard, James] and wife, Mary, daughter of William Fitzwilliams of Milton and Gainspark, with eight daughters [Bridget, Eleanor, Elizabeth, Mary, Margaret, Anne, and two others, unnamed].

Brass plates with inscription and shields, relaid in a new limestone slab at the restoration of the church, mural, south wall of chancel.

The figures kneel on a tiled pavement with a small desk between them, on which are hung Shelley's gauntlets. Beneath the desk lies his helmet, with visor raised; on top, two open books with clasps. The male figure is bare-headed and clad in armour, worn over a mail skirt. This armour is fictitious - created by the designer of the brass purely to reflect Shelley's perceived status. Behind him, his four sons kneel in civilian dress of fur-edged robes. Mary and her daughters kneel facing, clad in Paris headdresses and over-dresses with puffed sleeves at the shoulders. A small pendant, perhaps holding sweet herbs or some sacred object, hangs from her waist.

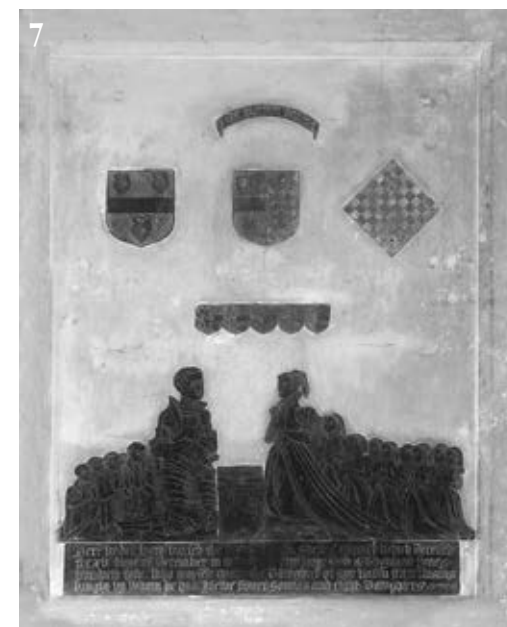
The inscription is in four lines of English black letter with flourishes at the end of lines two and four:

Here under lyeth buried the Body of John Shelley Esquier which Deceased
the xvjth daye of December in the yere of our Lorde God a Thousand fyve
Hundreth fyfte: who married Mary the Dawghter of Syr Willia[m] Fitzwilliams
Knight by whom he had Issewe ffouer Sonnes and eight Dawghters

²⁷ An iron or wooden framework covered with a cloth and fitted with candles that covered a coffin during the funeral service.

This, together with the five small shields and the dexter larger shield, was conserved and relaid by B. S. H. Egan in March, 2000. The inscription is made up of three plates, 2 mm. thick, and is blank on the reverse. The metal is so thin that, in places, the engraver cut right through it. It is probably made up of metal melted down from sacred objects looted from churches by Edward VI's commissioners in the quest for cash for the royal Exchequer.

At the top of the slab is a small curved scroll, inscribed *“Da gloriam Deo”* or *“give praise to God”*. Below are two shields and an heraldic lozenge, some still retaining some vestiges of colour. At dexter is: *Sable, a fess engrailed between three wheel shells, gold, SHELLEY*. This has a crack at the bottom sinister corner, probably caused when it was relaid at the restoration of the church. It is however, not palimpsest.²⁸ In the centre, is SHELLEY impaling FITZWILLIAM, *Lozengy silver and gules with two crescents for difference*. At sinister on the lozenge, is emblazoned the arms of FITZWILLIAM alone. Between these and the figures are five small shields showing the heraldry of the daughters' marriages:



Elizabeth Shelley = Thomas Guilford: *Gold, a saltire between four martlets sable, GUILFORD impaling SHELLEY*.

Eleanor Shelley = Thomas, son and heir of Sir John Norton of Northwood, Kent. *Ermine, a cross engrailed gules. NORTON impaling SHELLEY*.

Mary Shelley = George Cotton of Warblington, Hants. *Azure, a chevron between three banks of cotton silver, COTTON impaling SHELLEY*.

Bridget Shelley = John Hungerford of Wilts. Quarterly of four: 1 & 4 - *Per pale indented gules and vert, a chevron gold, HEYTESBURY*. 2 & 3 - *Sable, two bars silver in chief three roundels silver, HUNGERFORD impaling SHELLEY*.

Margaret = Edward Gage of Bentley, Framfield, Sussex (see no. 8 below). *Gyronny of four silver and azure, a saltire gules, a crescent for difference, GAGE impaling SHELLEY*.

²⁸ Not engraved on the reverse of the plate. During the Reformation, many brasses were ripped up and recycled into new brasses by turning over the plates and re-engraving on the reverse,

The heraldry does not include a reference to marriage of the remaining named daughter, Ann e, which logically would have occurred after her father's death and the erection of the brass. However, this is not so: she married Sir Richard Shirley of Wiston, who died in 1540, and Anne's figure appears, together with the Shelley arms, on the tomb (again probably carved in Chichester) in Wiston church.

In John Shelley's will, made on August 8, 1550, and proved on April 27, 1551,²⁹ he left John Walle "*parson of Clapham, my best gelding next unto those geldinges as I have given and willed to my brother Richard Shelley*". The curate, John Briston or Burstone, was to receive a pension of "*13s 4d yerely during the tyme as he shall dwell and do syrvyce unto the said ... John Walle to praye for my fathers soule, my soule and all Christen soules*". Shelley also left his personal chaplain, Robert Brygges, "*four markes yerely oute of my Mannour of Knell in the Countie of Sussex... during his lyfe to praye for my soule*". He also left £10 as a contribution towards the cost of a "*newe steple*" for Clapham Church.³⁰

After John II's death, a *post mortem* inquisition, or inquiry³¹ into his estate, revealed the extent to which he had amassed lands and properties. These included the manor of Clapham, the advowson³² of the church of Clapham, "*one capital messuage with lands and tenements called Michells grove and the Lee*³³ ... in Clapham, Clympinge, Offebam, Burdham [Birdham, near Chichester] and Cleyton [?Clayton, north of Brighton] held of barony of Bambre in socage³⁴ [sic] worth £34 4s". He also held the manors of Patching, Slinfold (near Horsham), [West] Chiltington, Billingshurst and Pulborough, together worth a further £10, and the manor and advowson of Combes (north of Shoreham), worth £15 9s 8d, and of Denton (near Chichester), £21 6s 8d, together with land in Barham [Barnham] called Thornewick, worth £4 a year; a barn and land in Shermanbury called Sacam, £3 6s 8d; lands and tenements in Storrington called Binnesden and Cookespere, £3; Northdowne in Ferring, £3; and houses in Slinfold, Rudgewick, Yapton, Sullington, Thakeham, Binsted, Bosham, Barnham, Chichester and Petworth, worth together £45 a year.

John was active in local affairs. In February 1548, when the threat of French invasion remained, he was named, together with his uncle, Edward, as one of the Commissioners of Muster for the Rape of Bramber in Sussex - charged with organising local militia forces. State papers of the time provide an insight into the call to arms. Clapham's military preparedness, like that of other parishes in the potential front line, was painstakingly listed:

²⁹ Public Record Office PC.C. BUCKE f.12.

³⁰ A shingle spire, probably the one mentioned in the Shelley will, was taken down before 1830. See V.C.H., 19. A planned replacement in the 1873-4 restoration was not carried out.

³¹ From the Rawlinson MS B433 in the Bodleian Library, Oxford, reprinted in Sussex Record Society (hereafter S.R.S.), XXXIII (1927), 2.

³² The right to nominate clergy to a benefice and a form of property which can be bought or sold.

³³ Now Angmering Lee farm.

³⁴ Socage is free tenure without obligation of military service to the Crown. Abolished in 1660.

Archers - 0. Billmen - 0. Harnesses - 3. Bows - 4. Sheaves of arrows - 3.

Bills - 8.³⁵ Household servants of Sir William Shelley: Archers - 3. Billmen - 6.

Great Horses - 0. Harnesses for demi-lances - 0.³⁶ Harnesses - 30. Bows - 12.

Sheaves of arrows - 12. Bills - 20.

John was appointed to remain at home in case of invasion in 1548; in July that year, he paid for one horse and one light cavalryman for the king's service.

After his death, his son William was named heir, and he appeared before the jurors of another *post mortem* inquisition, held at Clapham on September 19, 1558, to prove his age "of twenty one years and five days" and so enable him to claim his inheritance.³⁷

The Shelleys remained staunch Catholics. William was imprisoned in 1580 for recusancy,³⁸ and in 1585 he was attainted of treason and appeared at a special Commission of Oyer and Terminer at East Grinstead before Anthony, Viscount Montague, John, Lord Lumley, Thomas, Lord Buckhurst, Thomas Gent, one of the Barons of the Exchequer, and special esquires of Sussex. The indictment alleged that Shelley, on September 15, 1583, "*imagined and encompassed the death of the Queen [Elizabeth], the subversion of the established religion and government, and the procurement of an invasion of the kingdom*".

Mark Antony Lower, in his *Worthies of Sussex* (Lewes, 1845), takes up the story:

It appears that Charles Paget Esq., who had been in exile for treason, arrived at Petworth 7th September, from parts beyond the seas, to consult with Henry late Earl of Northumberland, and had a discourse about how and in what place the kingdom could be most successfully invaded by the aliens; and Shelley, on the 6th November following, went from his home called Mychelgrove in Clapham, to a wood in Patching called Patching Copse, and there held a traitorous interview with Paget, touching the proposed invasion, and the elevation of Mary, Queen of Scots to the throne.

William was found guilty and committed to the Tower of London, and a few days later brought for judgement at Westminster Hall. He was sentenced to death at Tyburn, but this was commuted³⁹ and he was released from the Tower in 1596. His estates were, however, confiscated and the Sheriff of Sussex, Richard Bostocke, produced a detailed inventory of Shelley's possessions at Michelgrove in 1586, which, together with the livestock, crops and farm implements, were valued at £841 15s 4d, including a considerable amount of arms and armour which had been seized and held by Sir Thomas Shirley (across the South Downs at Wiston House) and Sir Thomas Palmer.⁴⁰

³⁵ Bills are pole weapons carried by infantry. Harnesses were body armour.

³⁶ Demi-lances were lightly armed cavalry.

³⁷ S.R.S. III (1904), 8.

³⁸ *Acts of the Privy Council, 1580-81*, 152. His brother John was reported to have a Catholic priest at Michelgrove in 1592. See *Calendar State Papers Domestic, 1591-4*, 176.

³⁹ *Catholic Record Society*, XXXIX, 288.

⁴⁰ The full inventory is printed in *S.A.C.*, LV (1912) 284-98.

Despite the considerable value, the inventory indicates scanty furnishings within such a large house, most broken and old, no silver plate or wine or beer in the cellars - all indications of non-residence and neglect. The best furnished room was a bedroom over the parlour, which was clearly that used by the old judge, Sir William. The inventory mentions a bedstead of walnut with a tester of red velvet with the judge's initials embroidered in gold; a large chair covered in crimson velvet edged with gold lace; and curtains of red and green serge with cushions for the seats.

A rather unusual item occurs in the storehouse list which mentions a "*bathing tubbe*" and "*one bathing chaire*", together with "*one owlde broken tent*".

William died on April 15, 1597. The lands were leased by the Crown to a number of gentry but were restored in 1604, during the reign of James I, on payment of £11,000 by William's nephew, John.

William's first wife, Margaret, daughter of Sir Thomas Wriothesley, Earl of Southampton, died in 1561. Her funeral in London is recorded by Henry Machyn, one of the first undertakers:

The xijij day of Desember was bered at sant Katharine Cree church my lade Lyster, sum-tyme the wyff of Master Shelley of Sussex and the dowther of the erle of Sowthamtun late lord chanseler of Engeland, with a herald of armes and ij dosen skochyons of armes [in the procession].⁴¹

William's second wife is so far unidentified, save for her Christian name of Jane. William appears on the brass kneeling immediately behind his father. It was State policy that monuments to traitors were illegal; they were subsequently destroyed or damaged by the heralds. William's great uncle's youngest son, Edward, son of Edward Shelley of Warminghurst, Sussex, was martyred in the Catholic cause at Tyburn on August 30, 1588. On his father's brass in that church, Edward's head and shoulders have been deliberately sliced off.⁴²

Both John II's brass at Clapham and his uncle's at Warminghurst belong to what has become known as the "Fermer" series of around 80 made in London during the troubled years of the mid-16th century, spanning the reigns of Protestant Edward VI and of Catholic Mary I.⁴³

8 John Shelley [III], died 1592, and wife Elinor [daughter of Sir Thomas Lovell of Harling, Norfolk] with one son [Sir John, created 1st baronet, 1611] and daughter [Eliza, married Sir Thomas Tymperley of Hintlesham, Suffolk].

Rectangular brass plate, relaid in a new limestone slab at the restoration of the church in 1873-4, but retaining two incised inscriptions in alabaster below. South wall, chancel.

⁴¹ *Diary of Henry Machyn* (London, 1847), 273.

⁴² The brass is illustrated in *Transactions of the Monumental Brass Society* XIV (1986-91), 294.

⁴³ For a description of this workshop, see Robert Hutchinson and Bryan Egan: "History Writ in Brass: The Fermer Workshop" in *Transactions of the Monumental Brass Society*, XV (1992-96), 256-81.



Both main figures are shown kneeling on a tiled floor, on each side of a covered table with two open books (? prayer books) lying open before them. The male figure, at dexter, wears a representation of the high-status Greenwich armour with escalloped edges and lobster-tail tasset plates protecting the thighs. There is a prominent ruff at the neck. Behind him kneels his only son, also wearing a ruff over a doublet with hose and cape. Facing them are the female figures, mother and daughter, both wearing Paris headdresses, ruffs, and dresses with full sleeves.

Between them is a shield bearing the arms: *Silver, a chevron between three escallop shells sable* for SHELLEY impaling *Silver, a chevron azure between three squirrels gules cracking nuts, gold, LOVELL*. These Shelley arms are different from previous blazoning on the monuments in this church: gone are the less refined whelk shells, substituted by scallops. The reason for this change is unclear. It may be a question of taste or possibly may be connected with John's brother's conviction for treason seven years before his death. The shield is engraved on a separate, thicker piece of brass that is neatly inserted into the rectangular plate. Whether this was because of an error in engraving the arms, or because a thicker piece was required for resin colouring to be inserted into the shield, is a matter of conjecture.

The rectangular plate is only 2mm. thick, with a dark patina, and is an example of the poor quality hammered plate produced for the brass workshops in England at this time. Before the late 1560s, most brass plate was produced overseas in the Low Countries and shipped into England for engraving.

It was only at this time that a large-scale indigenous brass industry grew up in this country - one of the main centres was on the River Thames at Isleworth, Middlesex. The plate's edges have been cut too closely to the figures. This may have been an error by the original workshop in Southwark, or, less likely, the brass may have been trimmed when it was relaid in the late 19th century.

Underneath the brass plate is an inscription in three lines of Roman capitals, incised in two slabs of alabaster:

HEERE LYETH Y^E BODIE OF IOHN SHELLIE Y^E SECOND SONNE OF IOHN
SHELLIE OF / MICHELLGROVE WHO MARYED ELINOR Y^E DAUGHTER
OF SYR THOMAS LOVELL / OF HARLYNG IN NORFOLKE KNIGHT &
HAD BY HER A SONNE & A DAUGHTER

Beneath this, on two separate alabaster slabs, now much worn, is a quotation from the Sarum *Lauds of the Dead* in five lines of Roman capitals:-

DOMINE SECUNDVM ACTVM MEVM NOLI ME IVDICARE: NIHIL DIGNM
IN CONSPECTV TVO EGI: IDEO DEPRECOR MAIESTATEM TVAM VT
TV DEVS DELEAS INIQUITATEM MEAM AMPLIVS LAVA ME
DOMINE AB INIVSTITIA MEA: ET A DELICTO MEO MVNDA ME · VT
TV DEUS DELEAS INIQUITATEM MEAM.

Translated: “Judge me not, O Lord, according to my sin: I have done nothing worthy in Thy sight: I beseech Thy Majesty therefore that thou, O God, blot out my iniquity. Wash me thoroughly from my wickedness, O Lord: and cleanse me from my sin, that thou, O God, mayest blot out my iniquity.”

The same quotation, cut in alabaster, occurs with the brass to Edward Gage, died 1595, and his wife Margaret, daughter of John Shelley II, at Framfield, East Sussex.⁴⁴ This brass, also a rectangular plate, and the alabaster work are so similar to that of John Shelley III at Clapham that they are clearly by the same hand - the Dutch Protestant refugee sculptor Geraert Janssen (anglicised to Garat Johnson), who arrived in England c.1567, and produced brasses and monuments in his Southwark workshop until his death in 1611.⁴⁵

It seems likely that both the Clapham and Framfield brasses were made at the same time - 1595 - as the magnificent Gage brasses and monument at West Firle, East Sussex (for which cartoons by Johnson, for his client, John Gage, survive⁴⁶). Edward Gage was a member of a junior branch of the Firle family.⁴⁷



⁴⁴ The arms of this marriage occur as the last of the five small shields on the brass to John Shelley, 1550.

⁴⁵ For an assessment of the Johnson workshop, see Adam White's "Biographical Dictionary of London Tomb Sculptors" in *Walpole Society*, 61 (1999), 65-74.

⁴⁶ Illustrated in *Sussex County Magazine*, 30 (1956), 61, 63 and 117.

⁴⁷ The Shelley arms are given as *Silver, a chevron between three escallops sable* at Framfield.

9 Mildred Belson, 1624.

Black marble slab, 182.5 cm. x 81 cm., with crudely carved inscription in capitals. Central aisle, nave, immediately west of the slab to Sir John Shelley, 1852:

HERE LYETH T[h]E BODIE OF MYLDRED
BELSON WIDDOW OF AVGVSTINE
BELSON ESQ AND DAUGHTER TO
EDWARDE AND MARGARITE GAGE
OF BENTELEY AND GRANDCHILDE TO
IOHN SHELLEY WHOE WAS SONNE TO
IVDG[*E*] SHELLEY OF MICSELLGROVT [*sic*]
OBIIT ANNO 1624

AETATIS SVÆ 49

10 Charles Shelley, 1696.

Inscription in crudely carved capitals in a damaged and worn grey limestone slab, 75 cm. x 58 cm. Between choir stalls, immediately west of memorial to Lady Catherine Shelley:

HERE LYETH Y^E BODY
OF CHARLES SHELLEY
SECOND SON OF S^R [JOHN]
WHO DIED THE 16TH 48 OF
OCTOBER IN Y^E YE[AR]
1696

Sir John was the third baronet, who married firstly Mary, daughter and co-heir of Sir John Gage of Firle, died 1703, and secondly, Mary, only daughter of George, Lord Abergavenny.⁴⁹ Charles, the first son of the second marriage, died without issue, as did his brother Thomas. The title was inherited by John, one of three sons of the first marriage.

11 Lady Catherine Shelley, 1726.

Inscription in upper and lower case letters, white marble slab, 138 cm. x 71 cm. Between choir stalls, immediately west of brass to John Shelley (I):

HERE LYETH CATHERINE LADY
SHELLEY WIFE TO S^R. JOHN
SHELLEY OF MECHELGROVE
WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE Y^E 3TH
OF OCTOB: 1726 AGED 32 YEAR^S

⁴⁸ Cartwright, op. cit., 85, provides the date of death. He also lists a floorslab, now lost to Thomas Shelley, son of Sir —, 1698, but this is almost certainly to Thomas (son of Sir John Shelley, third baronet, and his second wife, Mary), who died unmarried in 1696.

⁴⁹ William Berry, *County Genealogies. Pedigree of the Families of the County of Sussex* (London, 1830), 70.

Catherine, daughter of Sir Thomas Scawen, was the first wife of the fourth baronet. They had two daughters, Catherine and Mary, who both died unmarried. Sir John later married Margaret, daughter of Thomas, Lord Pelham (see below).

12 Margaret, wife of Thomas Parsons, 1742, and Thomas Parsons, yeoman, 1746.

Freestone slab, 141 cm. x 87.5 cm., with elegantly carved inscriptions beneath a double incised canopy, lateral crack across centre. Nave, immediately adjoining south door:

Here
Lyeth the
Body of Tho^s
Parsons Yeo^m
who departed
this Life the
JJ of October
J746
Aged 39 Years

Here
Lyeth the
Body of
Margaret the
wife of Thom^s
Parsons Yeoⁿ
who departed
this Life the
3J of August
1742
Aged 32 Y[ea]rs

Also DANIEL son of Daniel
and Ann Parsons
(and Grandson of the above)
who departed this life
the 12th of August 1799
Aged 28 Years

13 Thomas Parsons, 1750.

Floorslab, 61 cm. x 67 cm., cut down cream marble, cracked and partially effaced. Nave, aisle leading to south door.

Here Lyeth the Body
of Thomas the Son
of Thomas and
Margaret Parsons
who departed this
Life the 8th of
October J750
Aged 34 Years

[All] you that pass this way along
[...] think you how sudden I was gone
God doth not always warning give
Therefore be careful how you live

14 Lady Margaret Shelley, 1758

White marble slab, 124 cm. x 68 cm., with elegantly incised inscription. Floor, immediately west of communion rails, north side of chancel:

Here lyeth interr'd the
Hon^{ble} Lady Margaret Shelley
late wife of Sir John Shelley
of Michelgrove Baronet
who departed this Life
the 23^d Day of November J758
Aged 58 Years

Margaret was Sir John's second wife, and the daughter of Thomas, Lord Pelham.

15 [....] son of Thomas and Margaret Parsons, 1766.

Pink marble slab, 122 cm. x 84 cm. Nave, aisle leading to south door.

Here lyeth the Body
of [.] the Son of Tho
and Margaret Pa[r]sons
who departed this Life
the 22th of April J766
in the 52^d Year of his
age

A lingering life he had
And little else but pain
We hope he lives with Christ
His everlasting [gain]

The verse, curiously, begins with the same words as No. 16 and is identical to No. 21, below.

16 William, son of Thomas ?Parsons, c.1770.

Dark marble floor slab, 69 cm. x 51.5 cm., nearly effaced. Nave, aisle leading to south door.

Here Lyeth y^e
Body of William
The sonne of Thos
and [. . .]
[? Parsons who]
departed this
life the 28 of
August [. . .]
Aged 6 Years

17 Sir John Shelley, fourth baronet, 1771.

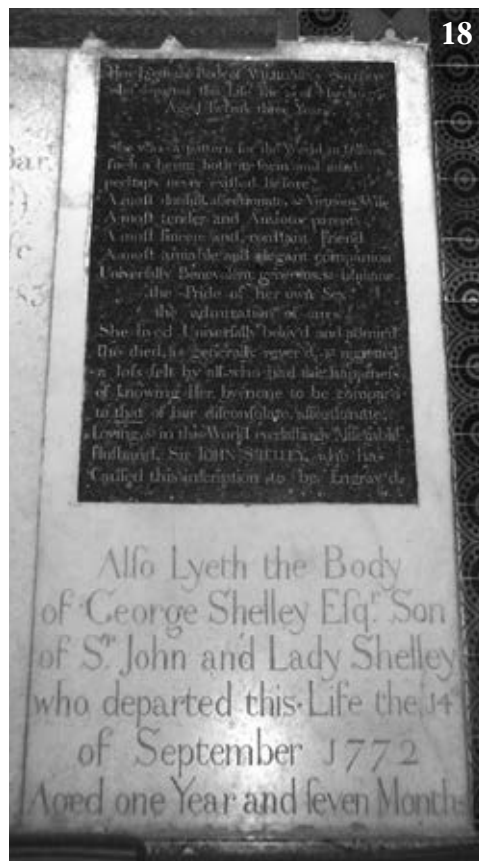
White marble slab, 124 cm. x 71 cm., in elegantly carved rounded upper and lower case letters. North side of chancel, immediately west of communion rails:

Here Lyeth
S^r. John Shelley Bar^t.
late of Michelgrove,
who departed this Life
the 6th of September J77J
Aged 8J Years.

He married firstly Catherine, daughter of Sir Thomas Scawen, who died in 1726, and secondly Margaret, daughter of Thomas Lord Pelham. He renounced his recusancy - adherence to the Catholic faith - in 1716, and was MP for Arundel and Lewes between 1727 and 1747.⁵⁰

18 Wilhelmina Shelley, 1772.

Brass plate, olive-brown in colour, 75.9 cm. x 58.1 cm., with inscription in 21 lines of elegant upper/lower case script, set in a white marble slab, 124.6 cm. x 70.5 cm.



Floor, south side of chancel, immediately west of altar step:

Here Lyeth the Body of WILHELMINA SHELLEY
who departed this Life the 2Jst of March J772
Aged Twenty three Years.

She was a pattern for the World to follow
such a being both in form and mind
perhaps never existed before.

A most dutifull, affectionate, & Virtuous Wife
A most tender and Anxious parent
A most sincere and constant Friend
A most amiable and elegant companion

⁵⁰ V.C.H., 13.

Universally Benevolent, generous & humane
the Pride of her own Sex
the admiration of ours

She lived Universally belov'd and admir'd
she died as generally rever'd, & regretted
a loss felt by all, who had the happiness
of knowing Her, by none to be compar'd
to that of her disconsolate, affectionate,
Loving, & in this World everlastingly Miserable
Husband, Sir JOHN SHELLEY, who has
Caused this inscription to be Engrav'd.

Wilhelmina was the daughter of John Newham esq., of Maresfield Park, East Sussex. This property was conveyed to Sir John Shelley, fifth baronet, on the marriage,⁵¹ which took place on July 27, 1769 "*at the house of the Rev. Mr Russell by him at Broadwater*".⁵² Incised below the brass plate, on the same slab, is the following inscription, by a different hand:

Also Lyeth the Body
of George Shelley Esq^r. Son
of S^r. John and Lady Shelley
who departed this Life the J4th.
of September J772
Aged one Year and seven Months

The diary of John Tompkins senior, agent to the Shelleys, records the birth of George on February 23, 1771 "*at half an Hour past nine in the Evening*" and his death on September 4, 1772 "*of a teeth fever*".⁵³

The birth of a second son, John (afterwards sixth baronet), came on March 2, 1772, at the Shelley's London home in Jermyn Street, St James. Wilhelmina died 19 days later, almost certainly from complications connected with the delivery of the child. Tompkins' diary records her funeral at Clapham on March 29:

The Corpse of the late Lady Shelley being yesterday brought from London to Horsham & was this day brought from thence to Steyning about Eleven o'clock attended by Mrs Windsor the Housekeeper & Mrs Coward my Ladys woman Mr Cook the Cook & Thomas Whittington my Ladys footmann where Mr Henry Shelley Doct. Kipping of Brighton & Capt. Henry Bishop and all Sir John Shelleys Tenants & a great number of his Tradesmen from Arundel joyned the Corpse & attended to Clapham Church where it was interr'd near the Communion Table within the Rails of ye Chancel about four o'clock.⁵⁴

⁵¹ S.A.C. XXIV (1872), 193.

⁵² *ibid.* LXXI (1930), 22.

⁵³ *ibid.*, 33. Probably named after Sir John's brother-in-law, George, 1st Earl of Onslow, who married his sister Henrietta.

⁵⁴ *ibid.*

Sir John remained a “disconsolate” and “everlastingly Miserable” husband for just under three years. On February 15, 1775, he married Elizabeth Woodcock, daughter of Edward Woodcock esq., of Lincoln’s Inn, at Stoke Newington church, Middlesex and the birth of daughters followed on January 16, 1776, on December 24, 1776 and on May 7, 1778, at the Shelley homes at Lime Grove, Putney and Michelgrove and at Brighton, respectively. These daughters, Elizabeth, Lucy and Arabella, all died unmarried.

19 John, son of John and ?Johanna Lear, 1774.

Floorslab, pink marble, 103 cm. x 75.5 cm., lateral crack. Nave, aisle leading to south door.

Beneath this stone lies
the Body of IOHN the son
of IOHN and I[OHANNA] LEAR
who died the [?]1 Day
of January J774
in the [?10th] Year of his age

20 Daniel Parsons, 1778.

Double floorslab, in pink marble, 101 cm. x 140.6 cm. Only sinister side used. Nave, aisle leading to south door.

In Memory of
D[A]NIEL [PA]RSONS
who departed [t]his
Life the [?16th] of June
1778 Aged 55 Years
A ling’ring life he had
And little else but pain
We hope he lives with Christ
His everlasting gain

21 Sir John Shelley, fifth baronet, 1782.

White marble slab, 153.6 cm. x 70.7 cm., south side of chancel, immediately west of communion rails:

Here Lyeth
S^R. JOHN SHELLEY Bar^t.
(late of Michelgrove)
who departed this life
the 16th. of September 1782
Aged 52 Years

Sir John was keeper of the records at the Tower of London, and Treasurer of George III’s household, as well as MP for New Shoreham borough in the Parliament of 1774-80. He was appointed a Privy Councillor in 1776.

22 Richard Parsons, 1789.

Cut down cream marble floor slab, 61 cm. x 67 cm., cracked. Nave, aisle leading to south door.

In Memory
of
RICHARD PARSONS
Who departed this life
April the 11th J789
Aged 63 Years

23 Richard and Alethea Walker, 1801 and 1805.

White marble wall monument with black slate surround and arms above. Mural, high on north wall of chancel.

HIC SUBTUS
IN EODEM TUMULO CONDUNTUR
RELIQUE
RICARDI ET ALETHEÆ WALKER
DE MICHELGROVE.
ILLE, 15^{MO} DIE OCTOBRIS A:D: 1801 ÆT: 41 OBIIT
ILLA, 10^{MO} DIE JUNII A:D: 1805 ÆT · 35
OLIM AMORE, INGENIO, FAUSTISSIMIS NUPTIIS
NUNC, UT SPERAMUS, IN ÆTERNA FELICITATE CONJUNCTI
ELIZABETHA
RICARDI WALKER FILIA
OB: A: D: 1804
ÆT: 16



Translated: *Hereunder in the same place are laid together the remains of Richard and Alethea Walker of Michelgrove. He died 15 October 1801, aged 41 and she 10 June 1805, aged 35. Once they were joined by love and disposition in most fortunate marriage; now, as we hope, they are joined in eternal happiness. Elizabeth, the daughter of Richard Walker, died 1804, aged 16.*

The arms are: *Silver, a chevron between three crescents sable, WALKER (Yorkshire) impaling a dolphin....* (unidentified)

Richard Walker, of Liverpool, bought the Michelgrove estate from the 6th baronet in 1800. His son, Richard Watt Walker, disposed of it in 1828 to Bernard Edward, 12th Duke of Norfolk.

24 Jane, daughter of Daniel and Ann Parsons, 1807.

Cream marble, 103 cm. x 75 cm., nearly effaced. Nave, aisle leading to south door.

In Memory of
JANE Daughter of DANIEL
and ANN PARSONS
who departed this life
the 23rd of April 1807
Aged 30 Years

A lingering life I had while living here
And left behind a Mother [.....]
And now my journey to my God I take
Who will receive me for my Saviour's sake

25 Thomas Parson, 1816.

Inscription in Roman capitals on white marble slab with black slate surround, south wall, east of south doorway:

TO THE MEMORY
OF
THOMAS PARSON,
OF HOLT FARM IN THIS PARISH
WHO DIED THE 28TH OF FEBRUARY 1816, AGED 47 YEARS.

25



Holt is a very ancient place-name within Clapham parish. Cartwright⁵⁵ quotes a deed conveying one acre of land called "Middlefurlong in Holte" from John de Sountinges to Robert, the son of Nicholas at Holte in 1327. He adds:

On the south east side of this parish is a farm called Holt containing about 160 acres. By the title deeds belonging to this farm, the Editor is enabled to shew how progressively the lands of small proprietors have fallen into the hands of the large owners. From the year 1200 to 1400 the hamlet of La Holt was in the occupancy of 21 proprietors. From that time till the year 1520, their number was reduced to six and by the end of the reign of James I, to two. Of these, it was then purchased by - - - Parsons, whose descendants continued in possession for nearly two centuries, when it was sold to the owner of the Michelgrove estate. Of names occurring among the ancient possessors, Jupp, Isemonger and Hyde are alone remaining in the neighbourhood.

The Place-Names of Sussex⁵⁶ says Holt Farm is the "Holt next Passyng, i.e. Patching" quoted in a deed dated 1322 and was the home of Ralph and Roger atte Holte in 1296. The settlement of Holt lay north of the modern Holt Farm.

Roger Hide, died 1630, was seised of the messuage called Holt which passed to the Parsons family around 1686, and who held it until 1816 when it was purchased by Richard Watt Walker. In 1686, the farm consisted of 110 acres freehold and in 1807, 79 acres freehold and 70 acres copyhold.⁵⁷

26 Sir John Shelley, 6th baronet, 1852.

Cream marble floorslab, 192 cm. x 92 cm. Nave, centre aisle.

SIR JOHN SHELLEY BAR^T.
BORN 3RD MARCH 1772.
DIED 28TH MARCH 1852.

FRANCES, WIDOW OF THE ABOVE,
AND DAUGHTER OF
THOMAS WINCKLEY ESQ OF
BROCKHOLES & COLTERHALL HALL,
LANCASHIRE

DIED FEB 24TH 1873 AND IS BURIED AT
WHIPPINGHAM CHURCH
ISLE OF WIGHT.

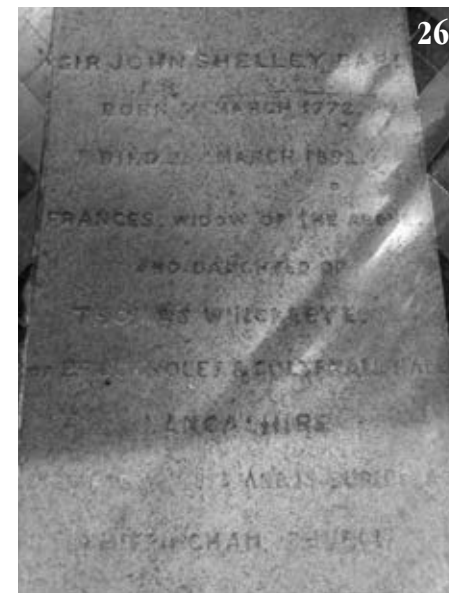
Sir John sold Michelgrove to Richard Walker in 1800. He and his wife had six children: John Villiers, born 1808; Frederick, born 1809; Fanny Lucy, born 1811; Adolphus Edward, born 1812; Spencer, born 1813; and Cecilia Victorine, born 1817. He was MP for Lewes in successive parliaments in the 19th century.

⁵⁵ Cartwright, op. cit., 82-3.

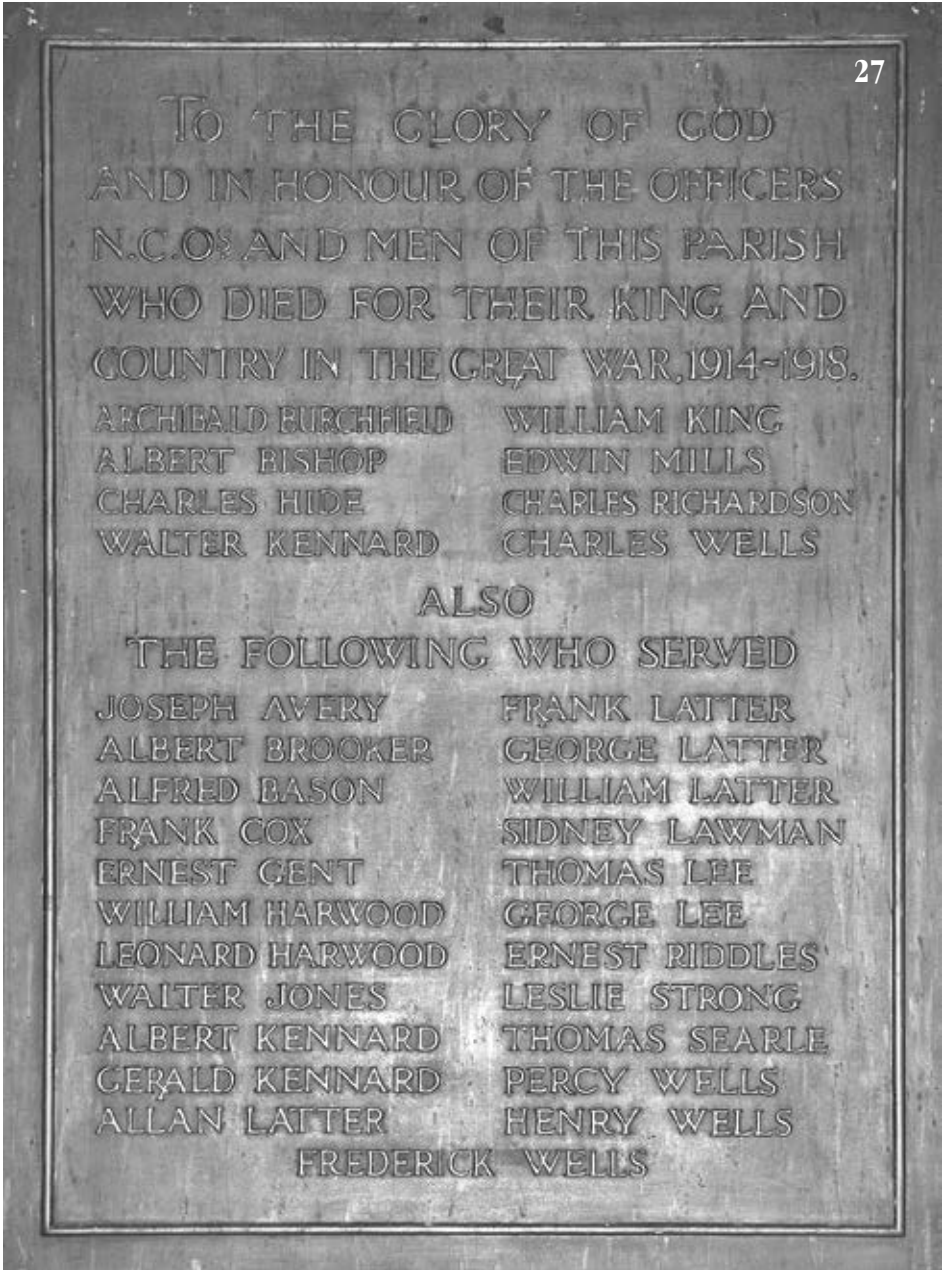
⁵⁶ A. Mawer and F. M. Stenton, *Place-Names of Sussex*, I (Cambridge, 1969), 195.

⁵⁷ *V.C.H.*, 15.

26

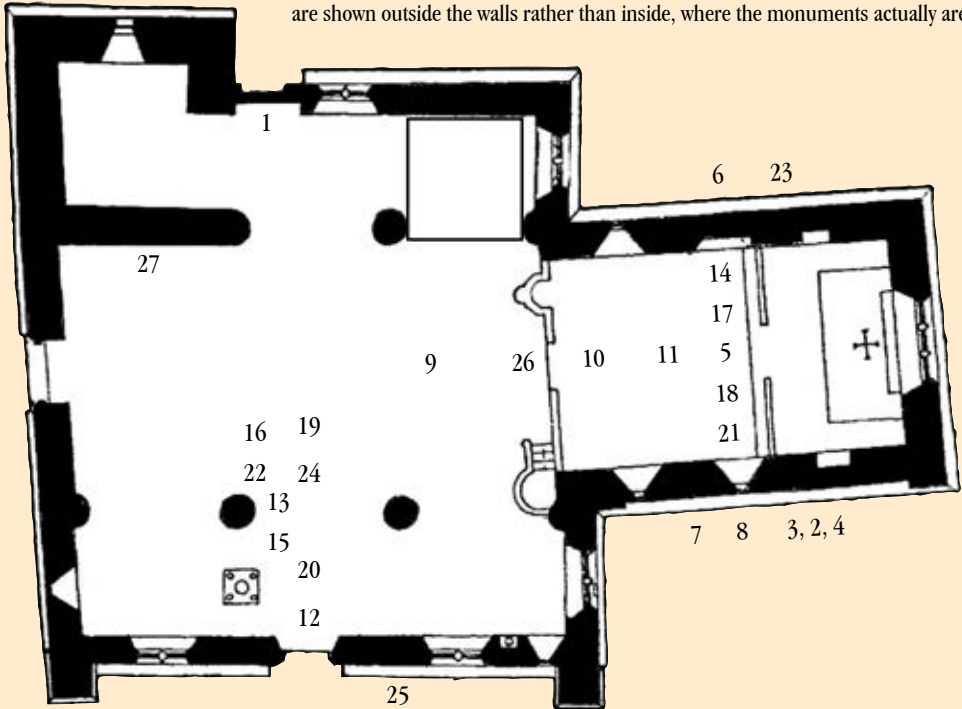


27 Wall memorial in cast bronze, with raised lettering.
71.5 cm. x 53.7 cm, north wall of nave.



St. Mary the Virgin Church, Clapham

Floor plan of Clapham Church (drawn by W.E. Godfrey, from *Sussex Notes and Queries*, vol. 14, 1958) indicating the approximate position of the monuments described in this booklet. Note that, for clarity, the numbers of mural monuments are shown outside the walls rather than inside, where the monuments actually are.



- | | | | |
|----|---|----|---|
| 1 | Purbeck Marble Stone Slab | 13 | Thomas Parsons, 1750 |
| 2 | John Michelgrove the younger, 1458 | 14 | Lady Margaret Shelley, 1758 |
| 3 | John Michelgrove the elder, 1458/9 | 15 | [...] son of Thomas and Margaret Parsons, 1766 |
| 4 | Griselda, wife of John Caryll, 1498 | 16 | William, son of Thomas ?Parsons, c. 1770 |
| 5 | John Shelley (I) and wife, 1526 & 1513 | 17 | Sir John Shelley, 4 th baronet, 1771 |
| 6 | Sir William Shelley, 1548, and wife Alice with 7 sons and 7 daughters | 18 | Wilhelmina Shelley, 1772 |
| 7 | John Shelley (II), 1550, and wife Mary with 4 sons and 8 daughters | 19 | John, son of John and ?Johanna Lear, 1774 |
| 8 | John Shelley (III), 1592, wife Elinor, son and daughter | 20 | Daniel Parsons, 1778 |
| 9 | Mildred Belson, 1624 | 21 | Sir John Shelley, 5 th baronet, 1783 |
| 10 | Charles Shelley, 1696 | 22 | Richard Parsons, 1789 |
| 11 | Lady Catherine Shelley, 1726 | 23 | Richard and Alethea Walker, 1801 and 1805 |
| 12 | Thomas Parsons, 1746, wife Margaret, 1742, and grandson Daniel, 1799 | 24 | Jane, daughter of Daniel and Ann Parsons, 1807 |
| | | 25 | Thomas Parsons, 1816 |
| | | 26 | Sir John Shelley, 6 th baronet, 1852 |
| | | 27 | War memorial, 1914-1918 |



**St. Mary
the Virgin Church,
Clapham, West Sussex**

