

## THE EASTER SEPULCHRE IN FAVERSHAM CHURCH.

BY FANE LAMBARDE.

IN *Arch. Cant.* XXXVI, p. 59, Mr. Arthur Hussey gives the Will of William Norreys, who desired to be buried in the Chancel of St. Nicholas Church, Ash by Sandwich. The will was proved 21st November, 1486, and so ended the connection with Kent of this great family which has left us such precious possessions as Speke Hall in Lancashire, Yattendon Church in Berkshire, and the heraldic glass of Ockwells in the same county.

This William had inherited property from Sir John Norreys, who had acquired it through his second marriage to Eleanor, daughter and co-heiress of Roger Clitherow (*Arch. Cant.* XXXIV, 58) and his wife, the daughter and heiress of Sir John Oldcastle, *jure uxoris* Lord Cobham. It was Sir John Norreys who entirely re-built the Church of Yattendon between 1450 and 1460; who built Ockwells, and made its windows a veritable "Liber Amicorum" in glass; and who built the North or St. Nicholas Chancel of Bray Church: on one of the Corbels of the roof of which he put his Kentish wife's arms. William Norreys appointed, as one of the trustees of his will, Philip Fitz Lewes. He was the third son of Sir Lewes John, alias Fitz Lewes, of West Horndon in Essex and his first wife Alice, daughter of Aubrey de Vere, 10th Earl of Oxford. His daughter Anne, married William Crowmer, grandson and namesake of the Mayor of London, whose estate in Tunstall had been purchased from Sir Robert Knolles, and whose daughter-in-law, Elizabeth (Fiennes) married, for her second husband, Alexander Iden, of Westwell. This same Iden was the slayer of Jack Cade, whose followers in 1450 had killed William Crowmer, Sheriff of Kent, first husband of Elizabeth, and father of William Crowmer, the third of his name. Philip Fitz Lewes' nephew, Sir Richard Fitz Lewes, created Knight Banneret at Blackheath

on 17th June, 1497, married for his fourth wife, Joane Hornby. Sir Richard's will (P.C.C. 13 Jankyn) was proved 24th November, 1529. In accordance with that will, his widow Joane caused "a marbill stone with my armys to be sett upon the same" to be laid over his place of sepulture in West Horndon Parish Church. This was removed to Ingrave Church in 1730.<sup>1</sup> The brass is a remarkable one and shows Sir Richard and his four wives, including Joane who thus must herself have seen and approved her own portraiture.

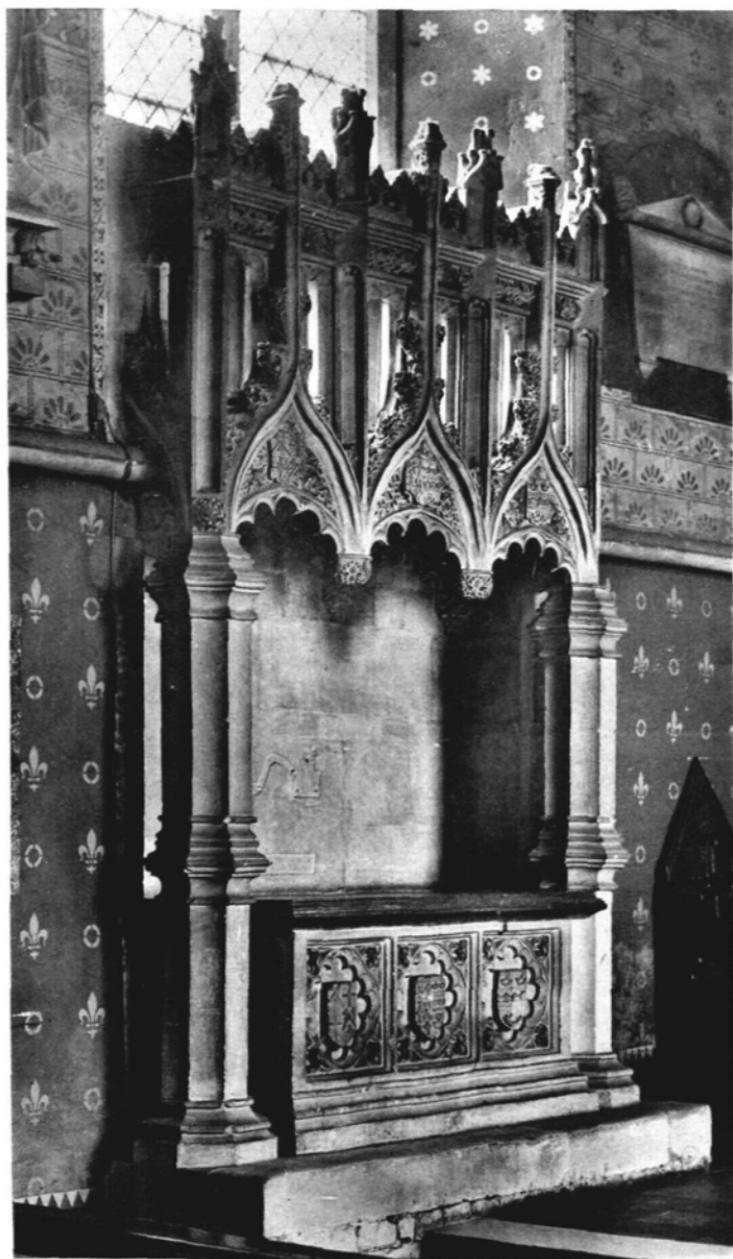
Joane married secondly Sir John Norton of Faversham, who had married, as his first wife, a Northwood co-heiress, also named Joane. They, Sir John and his second wife Joane, resolving to be buried beside one another in Faversham Church, engaged Alen, the mason, of Bearsted, to prepare a tomb for them on the North side of the Altar. Time passed, and for whatever reason, Sir John, as death approached, changed his mind and decided to be buried beside his first wife in the Northwood Chapel in Milton Church. When he died 8th February, 1534-5,<sup>2</sup> his wishes were carried out. His widow Joane was then left with scarcely any option but to be buried, when her time came, beside her first husband, as in fact she was in 1535, in accordance with the wishes expressed in her will.

Before 1534, the Brass in West Horndon Church had been completed, and on her surcoat is shown the older Coat of Hornby.<sup>3</sup> In 1534 Dame Joane Norton (Papworth 828)

<sup>1</sup> See Mill Stephenson's *Monumental Brasses*.

<sup>2</sup> John Weever's *Ancient Funeral Monuments* (1631), p. 282.

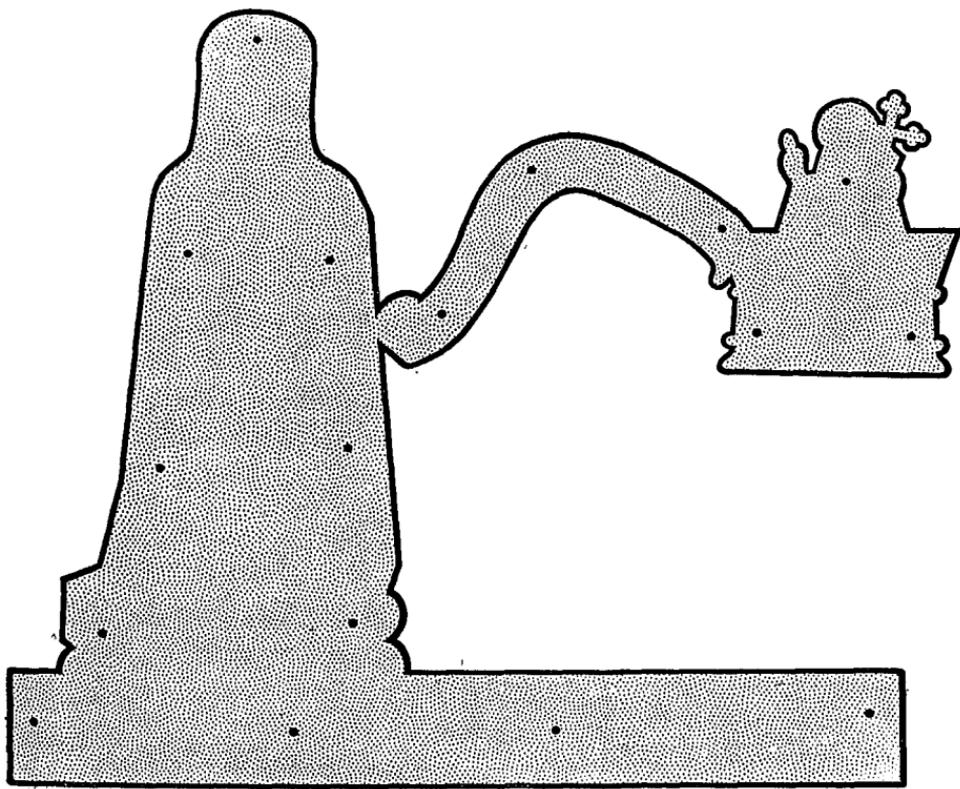
<sup>3</sup> Considerable doubt seems to have existed about the Hornby Arms. Joane, who was said to have been of a Lincolnshire family, recorded her Arms on her first husband's Brass as Quarterly, 1 and 4 Three Bugles; 2 and 3 Ermine. However, on her second marriage she appears to have adopted a quarterly Coat in which three Boars heads take the place of the Ermine Coat. We find these on a Cupboard in the Vestry of Davington Priory Church, where they may be seen on its sinister panel, the dexter bearing the Arms of Norton as adopted from At Leaze. They are interesting as being the only instance we have of the combined arms of the two founders of the Tomb. Neither of these Coats appears to have satisfied the Heralds; which makes it idle for us to conjecture whom the quarterings were supposed to represent. They, however, granted her a Coat which is a combination of all the above. Its active life, nevertheless, was bound to be a short one. It died out, with her, in the ensuing year. This example, therefore, at Faversham, is the only instance of its use that has survived.



Photograph by Aymer Vallance

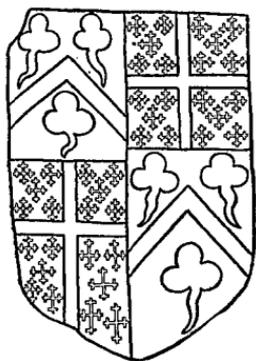
Emery Walker Ltd. Collotypers

FAVERSHAM CHURCH, EASTER SEPULCHRE



FAVERSHAM CHURCH.—INDENT OF BRASS AT BACK OF EASTER SEPULCHRE,  
from a rubbing by Mr. W. Whiting.

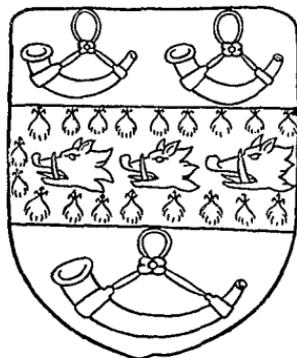
(NOTE.—The scale represents inches.)



1



2



3

FAVERSHAM CHURCH.—SCULPTURED SHIELDS ON FRONT OF EASTER SEPULCHRE,  
drawn by Mr. G. W. Humphry from rubbings by Mr. W. Whiting.

1. Fitz Lewes, quartering Gosholm.
2. As No. 1, impaling Hornby.
3. Hornby.

was granted the following Coat for Hornby :—" Gules on a fesse ermine between three bugles with bawdricks argent three boars heads or", the same Coat that occurs on the Tomb in Faversham Church.

Dying next year, she, after desiring to be buried at West Horndon, states in her will (P.C.C. 26 Hogen) :—" Item I will that myn executours shall fynyshe upp my tombe in ffeversham church according to the bargeyn that I have made with oon Alen a mason of Bersted in Kent. And it to be used for a sepulchre place in the same church to the honour of God and the blessed Sacrement."

The Tomb (see *Arch. Cant.*, XXII, 197) shows three distinct shields of arms—that of Norton however being conspicuous by its absence, though that of Joane and her first husband Sir Richard Fitz Lewes appears.

NOTE BY THE EDITOR.

The will of Dame Joane Norton is a document of exceptional interest, first because it affords a rare and incontestable example of a personal monument designed to serve also as an Easter Sepulchre,<sup>1</sup> and secondly because it records the exact date, as well as the executant's name, of an architectural work which still exists almost perfect. It is not a little remarkable that, with all the skilled masons that there must have been much nearer to the spot (as, for instance, in Canterbury, only nine miles off from Faversham) the donor or donors should have gone out of the way to entrust their order to a mason so far distant as Bearsted. It is evident, however (as Mr. Arthur Hussey points out) that there was, in the later middle ages, a considerable colony of masons resident in Bearsted parish. No fewer than six of them took part in Jack Cade's rebellion in 1450, as is known from the fact that their names and occupations are entered on the list of those subsequently pardoned for their share in the rising. No mason, however,

<sup>1</sup> In like manner John Pympe, by will dated 7th August, 1496, directed that his tomb in Nettlestead Church was to be fashioned so that it might be used for the Easter Sepulchre. *Arch. Cant.* XXVIII., p. 275.

of the name of Alen of Bearsted occurs among them ; but incidentally it is of interest to note that one of them was Thomas Rokesacre, Roseacre being to this day the name of a hamlet in the western portion of Bearsted parish.

The monument, which is of Caen stone, and is strictly a cenotaph, not a tomb, is exceedingly handsome. It is of matured Gothic and yet so entirely free from the slightest taint of the Renaissance that one would never have supposed it to be of so late a date as 1535. Indeed it looks as though it might have been fashioned quite fifteen or even twenty years earlier than it really was. And yet it could not possibly have been made before 1534, because it bears the new Hornby arms which were not granted until that year.

The monument stands under the easternmost window on the north side of the chancel, the recess of the splayed window being continued down to the floor expressly to contain it. The upper part of the monument rises considerably above the level of the window sill, for which reason, lest it should unduly darken the window, the canopy is formed of openwork. The monument is mounted on a step, or platform, of ashlar, seven inches high. In the middle stands the table-, or casket-tomb, having its front divided into three panels, cusped and feathered, each having an armorial shield in the centre. The top of the tomb is a polished slab of Bethersden marble, which extends back one foot from the face of the wall into the hollow recess. In the back of the said recess is the indent of an engraved brass or latten, now entirely lost. It presents the silhouette of a hooded form kneeling, no doubt Dame Joane herself, with a scroll extending from her to a representation of our Lord rising from the tomb ; commemorating, appropriately enough, her devotion to the glorious mystery of the Resurrection, and her consequent desire to do honour to our Lord in His Easter Sepulchre. Underneath was an oblong strip of brass with the inscription, which may be assumed to have vanished already before Weever's time (1631) since he does not give it with the other inscriptions at Faversham church in his *Funeral Monuments*. Only the metal pins or rivets for attaching the brass remain. The sheltered situation of this indent has kept it

always free from wear. Its edges, then, are for the most part as true and clean and sharp as though they were fresh from the chisel. But in six or eight places, adjacent to the bolts or pins, the stonework bears marks of violence, showing where some metal instrument has been forced in between the brass and its bed in order to wrench the brass away. To avoid confusion in the reproduction these injuries are omitted.

Each end of the tomb is flanked by an octagonal, concave-sided shaft, with moulded capital and base, and banded with mouldings in the middle. These pillars stand six feet high, and are clumsy in proportion to the canopy which surmounts them and is joined to them in a somewhat incoherent fashion. There is no continuity between the supports and the canopy above, which is merely balanced on the pillars, instead of springing out of them as an organic entity. The construction of the monument, with its long front overhanging, and supported at the ends only, is not particularly sound; in proof whereof there is a bad crack across the face of the canopy, which crumbles at the touch. Its design, or at any rate this part of it, is in fact one which might have been more suitable for execution in wood than in stone. The canopy consists of three bays of hanging arches, each surmounted by a crocketed ogee shaped gable, rising into a finial with pinnacles on the intermediate shafts. The tops of these interpenetrate a Tudor-flower cresting. The face of each gable under the ogee contains a shield of arms, between carved spandrels of late-Gothic conventional leafage, the easternmost gable having a vine on the left of the shield and a Tudor Rose on the right. The canopy is sculptured underneath with ribs to represent tierceron vaulting, the ribs springing from somewhat massive bosses. The armorial shields are seven altogether, i.e. three on the canopy front, three on the front of the tomb and one at its west end.

The westernmost shield of the canopy bears quarterly 1 & 4 Sable a chevron between three trefoils slipped argent (Fitz Lewes) and 2 & 3 Azure a cross argent between twenty crosslets or (Gosholm).

The middle shield bears quarterly as the foregoing, impaling Gules on a fesse ermine between three bugles with bawdricks argent three boars' heads erased or (Hornby).

The easternmost shield bears Hornby alone. On the tomb itself, at the west end, is a single shield, Hornby. The three shields on the front of the tomb are a repetition, in the same order, of those on the canopy immediately above them.

The shields are complete, that is to say, there could never have been any more of them than there are now ; and yet it is a strange circumstance that the arms of Dame Joane's second husband, Sir John Norton, who had joined with her in commissioning the monument, do not occur anywhere at all upon it. The shields are sculptured in a low plane of relief ; and are without a trace of colour. The lower range of shields, on the tomb itself, is obtuse heater-shaped ; the upper range, on the canopy, is of more ornate outline, and such that one would have been inclined to attribute to a slightly later date than the lower shields. It may be worth remarking that none of the shields is lozenge-shaped.

The dimensions of the monument are :—Total width over all 7 ft. 6 ins. ; total height from the foot of the pillars to the summit of the highest pinnacle, 11 ft. ; and depth from the back of the tomb to the utmost projection of the slab, 2 ft. 6½ ins.

AYMER VALLANCE.

Thanks should be given to Rev. P. A. L. Clarke, Vicar of Faversham, for his courtesy in permitting the photograph to be taken within the chancel ; to Mr. W. Whiting for kindly supplying certain information, and for taking rubbings of the indent and coats of arms ; to Mr. G. W. Humphry for his pains in re-drawing the coats of arms from the rough rubbings ; and to General Fane Lambarde for generously defraying the cost of the block to illustrate the monument, and the printing of the same.

ED.