

The Brasses of Dinton Church

The brasses of Dinton Church can now be found at the east end of the chancel, close to the altar rail. But that is not their original position; they were previously to be found in what is now the area occupied by the vestry. They were moved to their current positions in the late 1940s, having previously been surveyed by the Oxford University Archaeological Society. But the vestry was not their original home; in Victorian times the church was restored by George Edmund Street, at which time the brasses were moved from their original positions in the nave and chancel, to the vestry. We do not know exactly what these positions were.

The brasses have been set into the floor of the chancel in 4 memorial slabs. They relate to 8 families or individuals (described below) and comprise 19 individual pieces.

From the north:

In the first memorial: Simon Mayne (1617) and his wife Colubery, plus 2 children, Simon (the regicide) and Colubery.

In the second memorial: John Compton (1424) and his wife Margery, plus 4 sons and 7 daughters.

In the third memorial, nearest to the altar rail: Thomas Grenewey (1538) and his wife Elizabeth and, furthest from the altar rail, Richard Grenewey (1551) (son of Thomas above) and his wife Joan. Richard's head is missing.

In the fourth memorial, adjacent to the south wall, are brasses relating to four families or individuals: (i) William Lee (of Morton) (1486) and his wife Alice, whose head is missing (ii) Francis Lee (of Morton) (1558) and his wife Elizabeth (iii) John Lee (of Morton) (1503) inscription only (iv) Elinor Lee (1633) inscription only.

Clearly Morton must have been an important settlement once, now it is a deserted village. There is a theory that there is a "Mayne" vault beneath the nave, and that the Mayne brasses were originally over the burial site.

The secret of the brasses is that four of them are "palimpsest", i.e. the reverse sides were previously used as brasses elsewhere and have figures on them apparently unrelated to Dinton. An early example of recycling.

Both the Compton and Mayne memorials include children who lived into adulthood so the brasses feature the whole family not just the departed.



Hic iacet Johannes & companionis Armandi & Margerita
de eius filia & filii & filia que quidem Margerita
fuit de filia & de Angulm. Anno dñi m cccc xxviii



Thomas Grenfell Photo



Here vnder this stone lyethe buried the Bodys of Thomas Grenelven Esqer
 whiche decessed the xxij day of April A d m m cccc xxxviii and Elizabeth his wyfe
 whiche decessed the xxviii day of maye A d m m cccc xxxix whole soules into paradys



Here vnder this stone alio lyethe buried the Bodys of Richard Grenelven Esqer
 sone and heire of Thomas Grenelven Esqer whiche decessed the xij day of
 January in the yere of oure lord God m cccc li and Johne his wyfe & daugh-
 ter and heire onto John Wynter of Ickhamsted Esqer whole soules into paradys