



The Hundred Parishes

An introductory article about CHURCH MEMORIALS

Most of our churches have accumulated memorials over the centuries, some extremely elaborate. In years gone by, these generally paid homage to the wealthy members of society whose families could afford grand and eloquent testimonials. More recent memorials often commemorate those who have served the church or the community or died in the service of their country. We will mention just a few. Please also see the separate article on Church Stained-Glass Windows.



One of the wealthiest former residents of the Hundred Parishes has what is regarded as one of the finest sepulchral monuments in England. The tomb of Baron Rich, a 16th-century minister under several monarchs, occupies an enclosed chapel in Felsted parish church. You can read more about Richard Rich in one of the People pages on the website www.hundredparishes.org.uk.



St Mary the Virgin in Arkesden has an elaborate and colourful Elizabethan monument to Richard Cutte, who died in 1592, and his wife Marye.

The parish church at Little Easton contains a variety of interesting memorials including this family group of members of the Maynard family who were lords of the manor for more than 300 years. The central figure is the second Lord Maynard who died in 1698.



Little Dunmow church has a memorial that is not named but is believed to depict Matilda, the daughter of Robert FitzWalter, one of the Magna Carta barons in the 13th century.



Legend has it that she inspired the character of Maid Marian in the stories of Robin Hood.

Some churches have very grand memorials that have served their intended purpose for centuries.



Great Waltham's Norman church houses a memorial to Sir Anthony Everard and his wife who died early in the 17th century. They are depicted in elaborate costumes with gold braid.

Standon's parish church has elaborate memorials to father and son senior statesmen, Sir Ralph and Sir Thomas Sadleir. Shown below is that to Sir Thomas who died in 1606.

The parish church of Great St Mary in Sawbridgeworth is Grade I listed and the listing narrative states it has "an outstanding collection of memorials of the highest artistic quality".

One such memorial is the painted alabaster tomb of Sir John Leventhorpe and his wife Joan in black mourning dress, shown below.



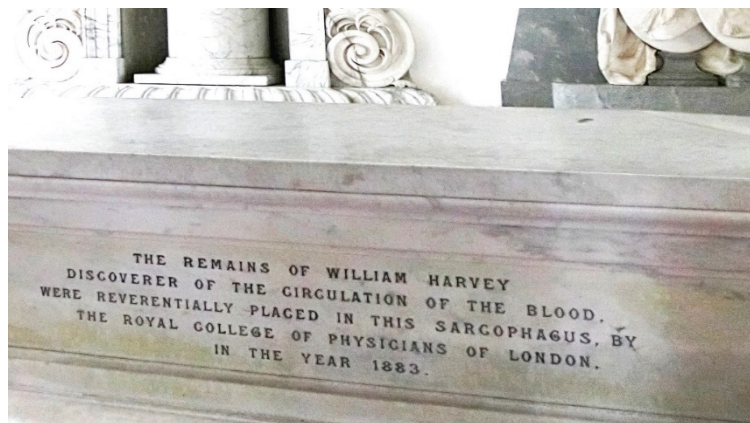
The two memorials pictured below can be seen in Clavering church. They not only remember the two wives of Haynes Barley but also give some insight into life in the 17th century. It is notable that each wife is described as “obedient”.



The first wife, on the right, had four sons and nine daughters. The statuettes at the foot of the memorial, enlarged below, show the sons lined up on the left and the daughters on the right. The skulls tell us that two of her sons died in infancy, as did four of the daughters.



In Hempstead, there are several memorials to illustrious members of the Harvey family, including 17th-century William who discovered the circulation of the blood and whose remains were placed in a new sarcophagus in 1883 by the Royal College of Physicians.



On the wall of Quendon church, in Essex, there is a colourful memorial tablet to Thomas Turner who died in 1681. As so often, the tablet, shown on the left, gives details of his immediate family, including a daughter who was named Essex.



On the right is a photo of the grandest memorial in St Mary's, Stansted Mountfitchet. The Latin inscription tells of Sir Thomas Myddelton's achievements in the early 17th century when he served as Lord Mayor of London.

Please take the time to look around our churches. There is much to discover.

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