

Monumental Brasses in Somerset

PART XIII

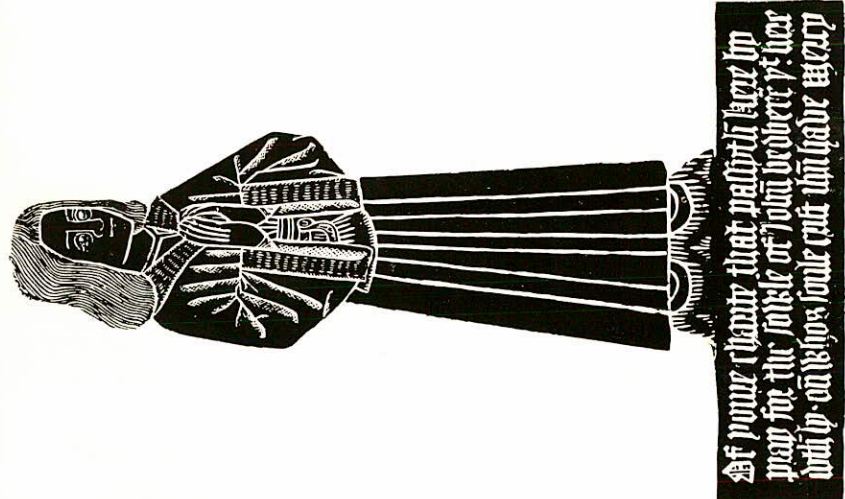
BY ARTHUR B. CONNOR

AXBRIDGE

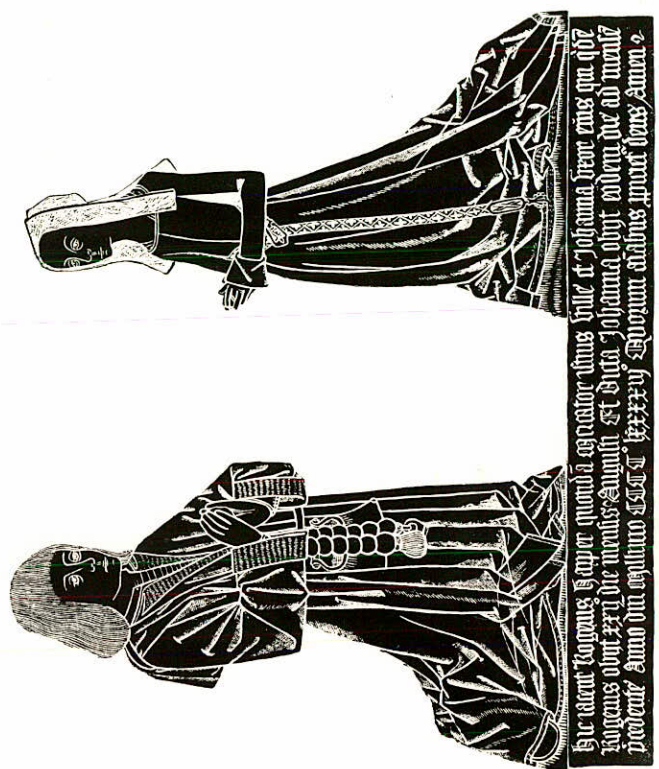
Roger Harper, merchant, in civil dress, and wife Joan, kneeling ; both died 1493 ; with foot inscription. Brasses of sons and daughters, also of two shields and three scrolls are lost. On the floor of the north transept. (Plate IV.)

Roger and Joan Harper are shown kneeling facing each other. The husband's effigy, which measures 24 by 13½ in., represents him with long hair reaching to the shoulders, and cut straight across the forehead. He wears an ample gown, confined at the waist by a plain belt, from which hang a large purse, or gypcière, and a rosary of twelve beads ending at the near end in a tassel, at the other in a ring. The fur lining of the gown, unlike that shown on the effigy at Weare, does not form a broad collar ; but, cut away from the base of the neck, is rolled like the lower part of the lapel of a modern coat, exposing the top of the jerkin, which is slightly open to show the shirt with horizontal pleats or stripes. Buttoned to the left shoulder, and passing behind the back, is a development of the hood called the chaperon. A padded ring was worn on the crown of the head, from which a bunch of pleated cloth was twisted turbanwise. From this the long liri pipe reaches to the knees. This was a scarf which might be wound round the neck in cold weather. One very broad-toed shoe shows beneath the gown.

Joan Harper's effigy measures 23¼ by 13½ in. She wears the kennel or pedimental head-dress, the whole surface of which, with the exception of the outlines, has been cut away and cross-hatched to hold colouring matter which has perished.



WEARE
John Bedbere, c. 1505



AXBRIDGE
Roger Harper, and his wife Joan, 1493

MONUMENTAL BRASSES IN SOMERSET

She wears a gown in one piece with tight bodice and sleeves and very full skirt. The sleeves have gauntlet-like cuffs which leave only the fingers exposed. A girdle loosely buckled at the waist and adorned with a fretty pattern of quatrefoils, ends at the knees in a metal tag, from which hangs a claw-like ornament surrounded by beads.

Indents of scrolls rise from the mouths of the effigies, each measuring 8 by 1 in. Above them was a central shield, 5 by 4 in. Over this a long arc-shaped scroll, 33 by $1\frac{1}{2}$ in., was set horizontally.

The foot inscription is still extant, and measures $3\frac{3}{4}$ by 33 in. It consists of three lines in black letter,—

**Hic iacent Rogerus Harper quondā Mercator istius ville
et Johanna uxor eius qui qdē
Rogerus obiit xxij° die mensis Augusti Et Dicta Johanna
obiit eodem die ad mensē
pcedente Anno dñi millimo cccc° lxxxiiij° Quorum aiābus
ppiciet' deus Amen.**

Below this on the dexter side was a plate, 6 by 7 in., representing probably five sons; and on the sinister side several daughters, the indent being almost obliterated.

In the centre under them was a second shield, 5 by 4 in.

The brass lies in its original stone slab, 90 by 49 in., on the floor of the north transept.

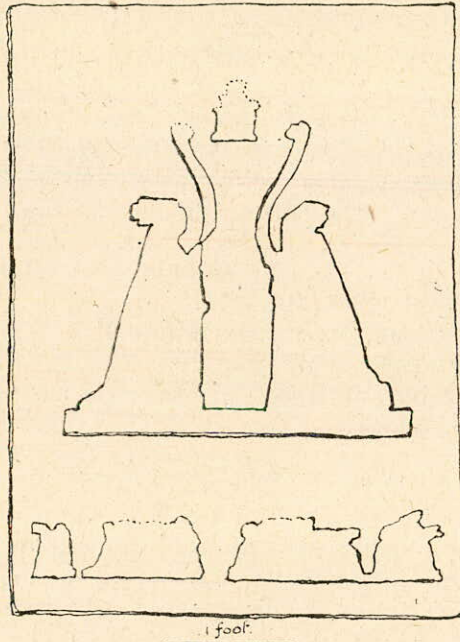
The effigies only are illustrated in E. R. Suffling's *English Church Brasses*, 190.

LOST BRASS

On the floor of the north transept adjoining the Harper brass southwards there is a slab which measures about 60 by 41 in. (*See accompanying illustration.*) It shows the indents of two kneeling figures in shrouds, facing each other, each $20\frac{1}{2}$ by 11 in.

From each rises a scroll, $12\frac{1}{2}$ by 1 in., to what appears to have been a pictorial representation of the Holy Trinity. This is now entirely covered by the organ, which was being repaired at the time that the rubbing for this illustration

was taken. The lower half of the Holy Trinity and the tops of the scrolls were exposed. There is the indent of a foot inscription, $2\frac{1}{2}$ by $32\frac{1}{2}$ in., and under it were four plates of children, probably kneeling, some in shrouds—6 by $3\frac{1}{2}$ in.,



AXBRIDGE, SOMERSET, c. 1500

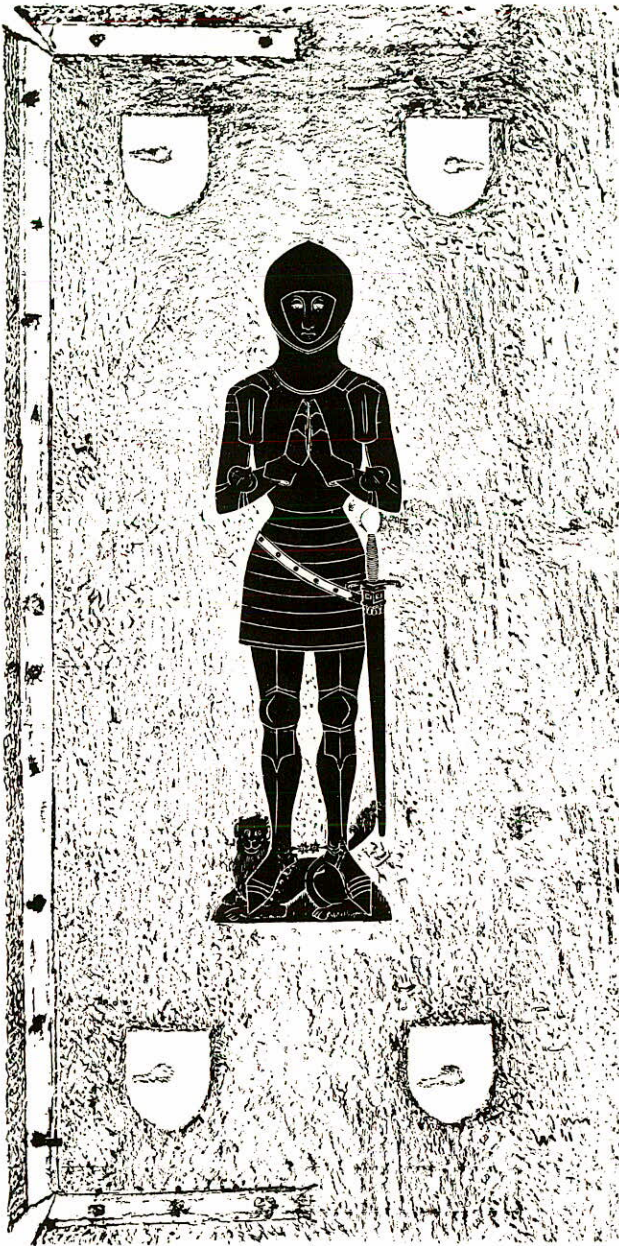
Indent in North Transept (partly hidden by the organ)

6 by $8\frac{1}{2}$ in., 7 by $12\frac{1}{2}$ in., and 7 by 6 in. The date may be the end of the fifteenth, or very early in the sixteenth century.

CHEDDAR

I. *Thomas Chedder, esq., 1443, effigy in armour; four shields and chamfer marginal inscription lost. On a table tomb on the north side of the chancel. (Plate V.)*

Thomas Chedder's effigy, which measures $37\frac{3}{4}$ by 10 in., represents him in complete plate armour. He wears a slightly pointed bascinet, gorget of plate, breast-plate and skirt of eight lames. The pauldrons consist each of seven overlapping



CHEDDAR
Thomas Chedder, 1443
MONUMENTAL BRASSES IN SOMERSET

plates. In front of these and encroaching on the breast-plate, roughly rectangular plates—besagews—protect the armpits. The arms are protected by vambraces and couteres, elbow-pieces with buckle-shaped guards. The gauntlets, with pointed cuffs, are jointed, but not divided into fingers. Plain cuishes and greaves protect the legs, and knee-pieces or poleyns with plates below. Open rowell spurs are screwed to acutely pointed sabatons which rest on a lion. The sword hangs vertically on the left side from a belt crossing the skirt of lames diagonally, adorned at wide intervals with quatrefoils. The lozenge-shaped pommel has been broken away. There is no dagger.

Almost precisely similar effigies are at Ewelme, Oxon; Thomas Chaucer, esq., 1434. Preston-next-Faversham, Kent; Valentine Baret, esq., 1440. Westminster Abbey; Sir John Harpedon, 1457.

Four shields, each $5\frac{1}{4}$ by $4\frac{1}{4}$ in. are lost; as is also the chamfer marginal inscription. The top and bottom strips went rather less than half across the tomb, $1\frac{1}{2}$ by $13\frac{1}{2}$ and $14\frac{1}{2}$ in. There was no sinister strip, which would have been against the wall. The dexter strip measured $1\frac{1}{2}$ by 62 and 64 in.

The brass lies on a canopied table-tomb against the north wall of the chancel within the rails.

The effigy is well reproduced with the indents of the shields in *Proc. Som. Arch. Soc.*, xliv, ii, 44, and from the same block (without the shield indents) in *Druitt's Costume in Brasses*, 165. An illustration of the right-arm defences is given in *Haines's Manual of Mon. Brasses*, I, cxc.

Thomas Chedder, born about 1382, was the youngest of four sons of Robert Chedder, mayor of Bristol, 1361, and Joan, younger daughter of Simon Hanham of Gloucestershire; a widow in 1384 and soon after the wife of Sir Thomas Broke. He survived his brothers and became heir to his father. He married Isabel, one of four daughters of Robert and Elinor Scobahull of South Pool, abutting on the mouth of Kingsbridge estuary opposite to Salcombe, South Devon.¹ By her he had two daughters; Joan, who married 1, Richard Stafford, 2, John Talbot, Viscount de Lisle, son of the Earl of Shrews-

¹ She died at the end of January, 1476. (*S.R.S.*, Extra Series, 1931, 356).

bury. The indent of a brass to her memory lies in front of the screen in Wells Cathedral (*see Proc. Som. Arch. Soc.*, lxxxii, 196-7 and Plate XIV); and Isabel married Sir John Newton of Court de Wyck in Yatton. Their monument there is described and illustrated in *Proc. Som. Arch. Soc.*, xlv, 57-60, and lxx, 84-5 and Plate XII.

Thomas Chedder's will is given in *S.R.S.*, xvi, 151-2 [15 Rous, Fo. 119]. It is dated the last day of May, A.D. 1443.¹ He bequeaths his 'body to holy burial in the parish church of Chedder, in the chancel, before the image of St. Andrew the Apostle'. An interesting item is a silver cup, left to his daughter Isabel Newton, with a cover, having 'on the top a flower called "Columbein"'. To her husband Sir John Newton he leaves 'a gown "penulatam cum Martryn de Murrey" colour'.

An account of the Chedder family is given by William George in *Proc. Som. Arch. Soc.*, xxxiv, 114-16; and in the first of a series of papers, by W. H. Hamilton Rogers, on the Brook Family of Somerset and Devon in vol. xlv. *See also S.R.S.*, Extra Series, 1931, 354-6.

II. *Dame Isabel, daughter of Robert Scobahull, widow of Thomas Chedder, esq., 1476; effigy in widow's dress; four shields (three lost) and fragments of marginal inscription with one remaining evangelistic symbol. On the floor on the north side of the chancel. (Plate VI.)*

The effigy in widow's costume measures 34 by 11½ in. Isabel Chedder wears a long full-skirted gown with tight sleeves and a plain high-waisted band; over which a mantle, open for its full length in front, joined across the breast by cords knotted just below the waist-band, and ending at the knees with tassels. Over the mantle the barbe vertically pleated forms a sort of bib under the chin. Over the head a nun-like veil of thick material with one broad square pleat in the centre over the forehead completes a costume not unlike that of 'sisters' at the present day.

Of the four shields the top sinister only remains, though the indents of the missing three are clearly outlined, with the lead which formed the setting for the rivets in situ.

¹ In the *I.P.M.*, taken 21 Hen. VI, he is stated to have died 3 July, 1442.



CHEDDAR

Dame Isabel, widow of Thomas Chedder, c. 1476

MONUMENTAL BRASSES IN SOMERSET

The remaining shield is entirely composed of lead, and consequently much defaced. It measures $5\frac{1}{4}$ by $4\frac{1}{4}$ in. and bears (*sable*) a *chevron ermine between three escallops (arg.)*—Chedder, impaling (*arg.*) *three fleurs-de-lys (gu.) in chief a label of three points (az.)*—Scobahull.

Two fragments only of the marginal inscription are extant. The top strip begins with the symbol of St. Matthew on a plate formed of a square on a quatrefoil,—4 by 4 in. It measures $1\frac{1}{8}$ by 19 in. About 1 in. appears to be covered by the plinth of Thomas Chedder's table-tomb, as is also the whole of the sinister strip **Hic Jacet** (leaf) **domina** (leaf) **Isabella** (leaf). The bottom strip has been cut off. The upper end of the dexter strip which remains measures $1\frac{1}{8}$ by $15\frac{1}{2}$ in. The stone has been cut away to accommodate tiles, on which this fragment is actually laid. (leaf) **deus** (leaf) **Amen** (leaf)

The slab when complete appears to have measured about 70 by 30 in. It lies on the floor on the north side of the chancel within the rails, and at the foot of Thomas Chedder's table-tomb.

The brass is illustrated without the inscription, and with the one remaining shield restored, in *Proc. Som. Arch. Soc.*, xliv, ii, 45, and from the same block (omitting indents of the missing shields) in Druitt's *Costume in Brasses*, 266.

WEARE

Effigy of John Bedbere, in civil dress, with foot inscription in three lines of English verse; not dated, but about 1505. On the floor of the chancel. (Plate IV.)

John Bedbere is represented slightly turned to the sinister, clean-shaven, with long hair to the shoulders cut straight across the forehead. He wears the long fur-lined gown familiar to us in portraits by Holbein, turned back at the neck forming a broad collar of fur, and showing the square top of the jerkin. The very ample sleeves are likewise turned back showing those of the jerkin tight at the wrists, and a plain belt, from which hangs a large purse, pouch, or gypcière. The feet in clumsy round-toed shoes rest on a grassy mound.

The effigy measures $18\frac{1}{2}$ by 6 in.

The foot inscription, which measures $3\frac{1}{4}$ by $13\frac{1}{2}$ in., consists of three lines in black letter :

**Of youre charite that passyth Hereby
pray for the soule of Johū bedbere y^r here
doth ly . oñ whos soule crist ihū have Mercy**

The brass lies on the floor on the south side of the altar. Collinson (i, 186) mentions it as 'In the body of the church'.