

Hatchments



*The twelve hatchments of
St Peter's Church,
Ightham, Kent*

Hatchments at St Peter's Church, Ightham

What is a hatchment?

A hatchment is a diamond-shaped (rarely square) armorial panel bearing the heraldic device of a deceased person. The word 'hatchment' derives from 'achievement' –that which was achieved (including that by marriage) during the life of the deceased.

The purpose of a hatchment in the first place, was notice of a family in mourning. Made of canvas sketched on a wooden panel and painted after death, it was hung outside the front door. It was then borne to the church at the front of the funeral procession on the day of interment, where it was left, or returned later, as a lasting memorial. The speed of painting and the use of local artists resulted in occasional heraldic inaccuracies.

Hatchments first came into use in the first quarter of the 17th century, reaching a peak early in the mid-Victorian times. They were rarely in use in the last century. Ours range from 1718 to 1867. Though the Peerage occasionally made use of them, the majority derived from minor gentry, as is the case with all those in St Peter's.

St Peter's has twelve hatchments which were professionally restored and re-hung in 1999 by conservation specialists in London. Only four churches in Kent have more: Margate 20, Lynsted 18, Deal (St Leonard's) 16 and Sutton-at-Hone 13. Knole House, Sevenoaks, 5, Ightham Mote has one.

Sources –

Hatchments in Britain: P Summers and J Titterton. (Maidstone Public Library).

The Sutton Companion to Churches: Stephen Friar.

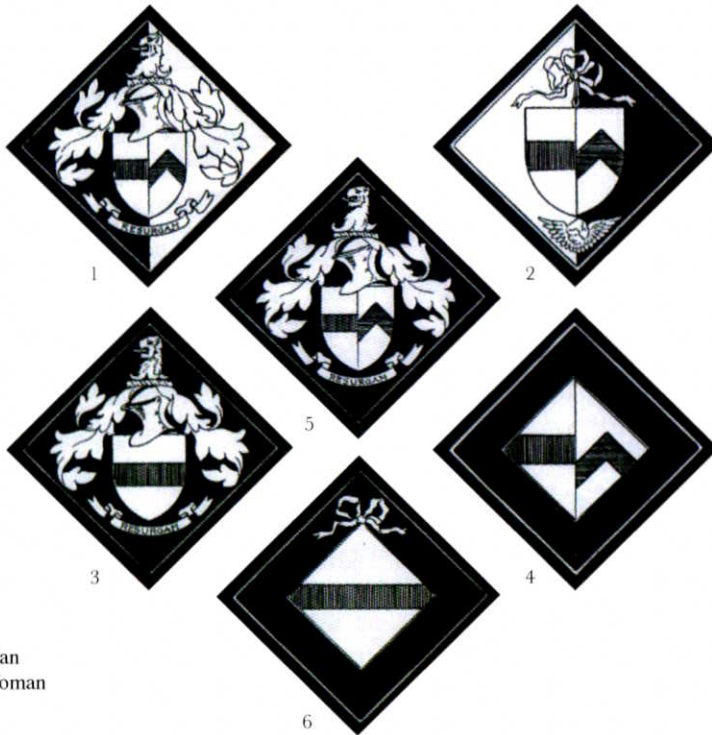
Ightham - notes on local history: Edward V Bowra.

Notes on the hatchments in St Peters' Ightham: Colin Williamson (unpublished).



Interpreting Hatchments

The interpretation of hatchments is fraught with difficulties. Apart from artistic inaccuracies in the heraldry, however, the system in use for the background quickly came into common use. The blackened area, left or right or total, coupled with, where applicable, the arms of husband and wife side by side (impaled) or one upon the other (in pretence, where the wife is an heraldic heiress) give the information set out schematically below:



1. Married Man
2. Married Woman
3. Bachelor
4. Widow
5. Widower
6. Spinster

Because heraldic arms originated on the shields of Knights the left (sinister) side is the right (dexter) side to the viewer and vice versa.

More detailed explanations of interpreting hatchments can be found in various sources eg 'The Sutton companion to Churches' by Stephen Friar or 'Hatchments in Britain' by Summers and Titterton (Maidstone Public Library).

The Twelve Hatchments of St Peter's Church, Ightham

The twelve hatchments fall into four groups.

Those from the JAMES family of Ightham Court.

- 1 William James, 1718
- 2 William James, 1781
- 3 Elizabeth James, 1798
- 4 Richard James and wife, Laetitia Gibbons, 1807
- 5 Colonel Demetrius Grevis-James, 1861

Those from the SELBY family of Ightham Mote.

- 1 John Browne, 1797
- 2 Thomas Selby, 1820

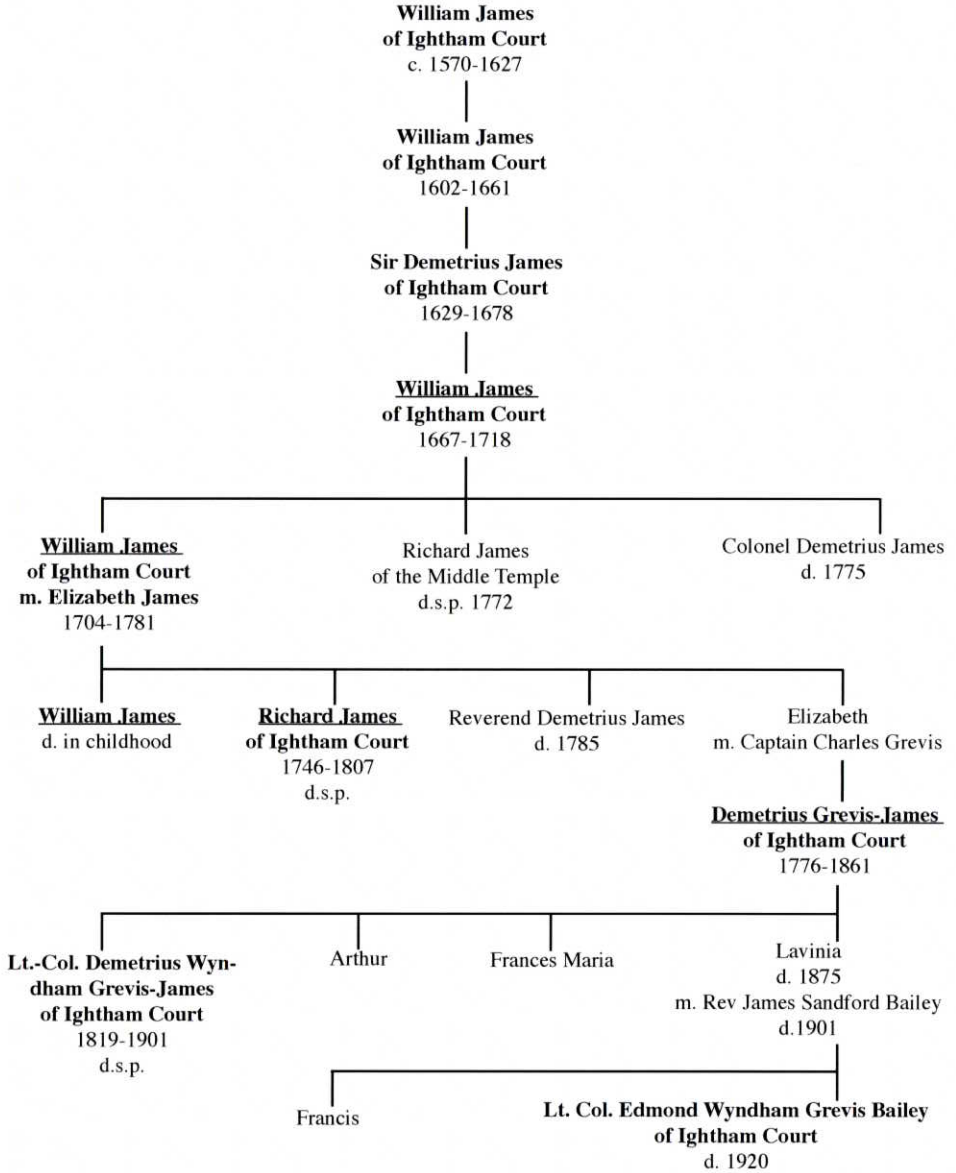
Those from the EVELYN family of St Clere.

- 1 Colonel Alexander Hume, 1837
- 2 Frances Evelyn, 1837

Those from the RECTORS of St Peter's.

- 1 Rev George Bythesea, 1800
- 2 Lieutenant Charles Brome RN, 1830
- 3 Reverend Thomas Cobb, 1817

The James Succession



LEGEND

d = died, d.s.p. = died without issue, m. = married

Owners of Ightham Court in bold type. Subjects of hatchments underlined.



The James Family

The James Succession

The James family was of Dutch origin. Roger, son of Jacob van Haestrecht, a landowner of Cleve and Gouda, came to London in the middle of the 16th century and bought the Rams Head Brewery near the Tower of London in 1566. Brewing was the main source of wealth in the earlier James's, and the mill-rind (the central metal part in the stone for grinding barley) as well as the garb (a sheaf of barley) became essential parts of their heraldic 'identity': both are carved on St Peter's box pews.

Roger, known as Jacob, assumed the anglicised name of James and his son bought the manor and estate of Ightham in 1600. The Manor House became known as Ightham Court. Eight generations of James' were to be associated with Ightham Court until the mid-nineteenth century. Throughout they followed a strong tradition of public service both to Crown and County.

The James Family

1. William JAMES 1718

WEST HATCHMENT NAVE, SOUTH SIDE

He 'married well', to Anne, daughter of Sir Thomas Wyndham, who traced his descent from Thomas Plantagenet, fifth son of Edward I by his second wife Margaret, daughter of Philip III of France. Thus 'royal blood' came to live in Ightham Court.



Dexter background black.

Argent two bars embattled counter embattled gules (James) impaling, azure a chevron between three lions heads erased or langued gules (Wyndham).

Crest: from a ducal coronet or a demi-swan rising proper.

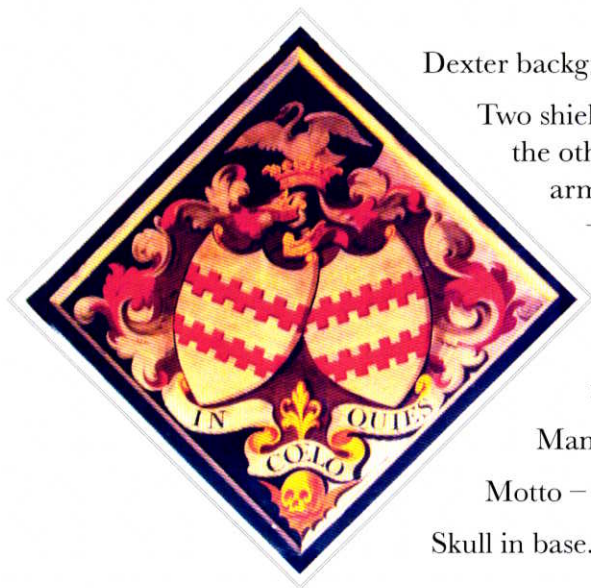
Mantling - Gules and argent.

Motto - Mors janua vitae

2. William JAMES 1781

WEST HATCHMENT NAVE, NORTH SIDE

Like his father, another prestigious marriage – to his cousin Elizabeth, heiress of Haestrecht James from the most senior branch of the family. On Haestrecht's death in 1752, all the James' properties became united in the Ightham branch. This William James held various important posts – Justice of the Peace, High Sheriff of Kent, Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod to the Irish Parliament. He served in the Militia during the Seven Years War.



Dexter background black.

Two shields, one slightly overlapping the other, each bearing the arms of James Haestrecht – argent two bars embattled counterembattled gules.

Crest: from a ducal coronet a demi-swallow rising proper.

Mantling – Gules and argent.

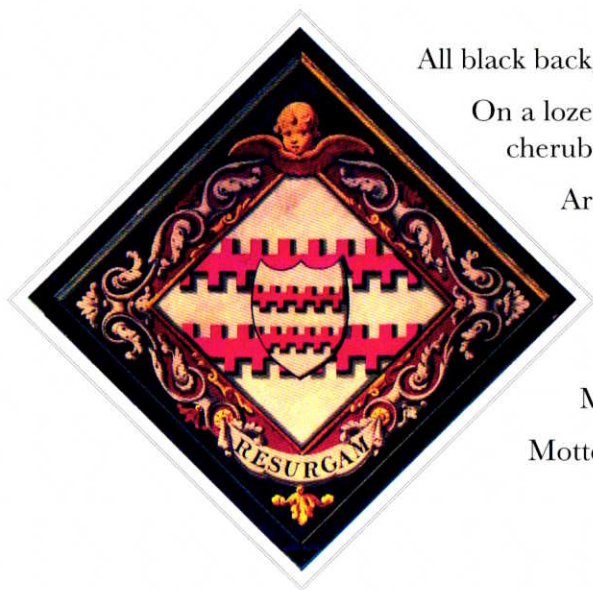
Motto – in coelo quies.

Skull in base.

3. Elizabeth, widow of William JAMES 1798

EAST HATCHMENT NAVE, NORTH SIDE

The only daughter of Haestrecht James of the most senior branch of the James family, she married her cousin William James and eventually united all the family within the Ightham branch, to their considerable financial advantage. Her husband (whose hatchment also hangs here) predeceased her in 1781.



All black background.

On a lozenge surmounted by a
cherub's head.

Arms: argent two bars
embattled and
conterembattled gules
with wife's coat in
pretence.

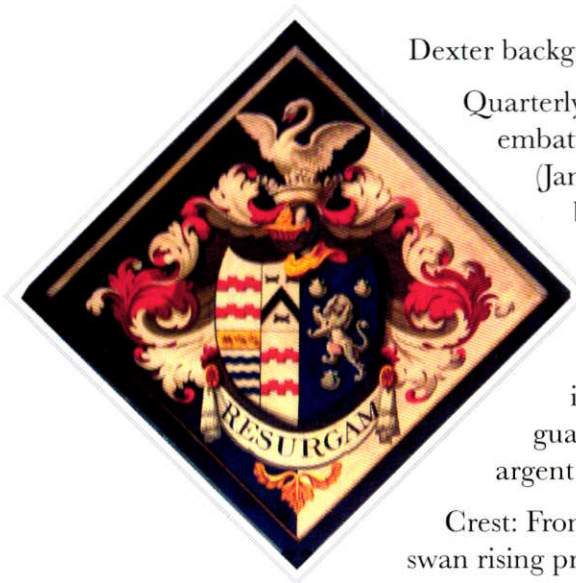
Mantling – Gules and argent.

Motto - Resurgam

4. Richard JAMES 1817

EAST HATCHMENT NAVE, SOUTH SIDE

His older brother William died in childhood and Richard inherited the Manor. His various duties included Service in the West Kent Militia in which he gained the rank of Colonel. He married Letitia Gibbons of Cranbrook when he was 60 and died a year later without issue.



Dexter background black.

Quarterly, 1st and 4th, Argent two bars embattled and conterminous, (James), 2nd Argent a chevron between three millrinds azure (James) 3rd Argent three bars wavy azure on a chief or three falcons rising proper (Moriskins), impaling, azure a lion rampant guardant between three escallops argent .(Gibbons)

Crest: From a ducal coronet argent a swan rising proper beaked or.

Mantling: Gules and argent.

Motto: Resurgam.

5. Colonel Demetrius GREVIS-JAMES 1861

MIDDLE HATCHMENT NAVE, NORTH SIDE

All possible close heirs either predeceased Richard James or died without issue and he finally bequeathed his considerable estates and properties, including the Manors of Ightham, Wrotham and Stanstead, to his nephew Demetrius Grevis, through his sister Elizabeth, in his will. Richard required Demetrius to take on the surname of Grevis-James which he did by Royal Licence in 1817.

Many years later, distraught by his oldest daughter, Frances Maria, insisting on marrying a tenant farmer, Colonel Grevis-James shut up Ightham Court in 1843 and moved to Tunbridge Wells, where he built a fine house for his wife and remaining seven children. There he lived until he was 85.

Thereafter, Colonel Grevis-James' daughter and son-in-law, Rev. James Sandford Bailey, lived at Ightham Court, followed by his grandson, Lt Col Edmond Wyndham Grevis Bailey who died in 1920. The link between the James' and Ightham and St Peter's was finally broken after over 300 years.



All black background.

Quarterly, 1st and 4th argent two bars embattled counterembattled gules (James), 2nd and 3rd, Argent on a fess between three roundels azure each charged with a lion's head erased argent a griffin passant between two escallops or (Grevis).

Crests: Dexter, from a ducal coronet or a swan rising proper beaked or. Sinister, a grey squirrel sejant proper in its paws and escallop or.

Mantling: Gules and argent.

Motto: Fide et constantia.

The Selby Family

1. John BROWNE (SELBY) 1797

WEST HATCHMENT SOUTH SIDE-AISLE

Until recent years, this hatchment was unidentified. Sir John Winifrith (Patron of St Peter's 1974-96) discovered the arms to be those of Browne of Salop. The last Selby heiress, Dorothy, (a later Dorothy Selby than that remembered in the chancel monument) married John Browne who succeeded his cousin William Selby in 1777 and took the name Selby by Act of Parliament in 1783. The burial register records him as John Selby. He had disinherited his son and Ightham Mote passed to his cousin.



All black background.

Sable a chevron between three fleurs-de-lys argent.

Crest: From a ducal coronet or a buck's head erased argent.

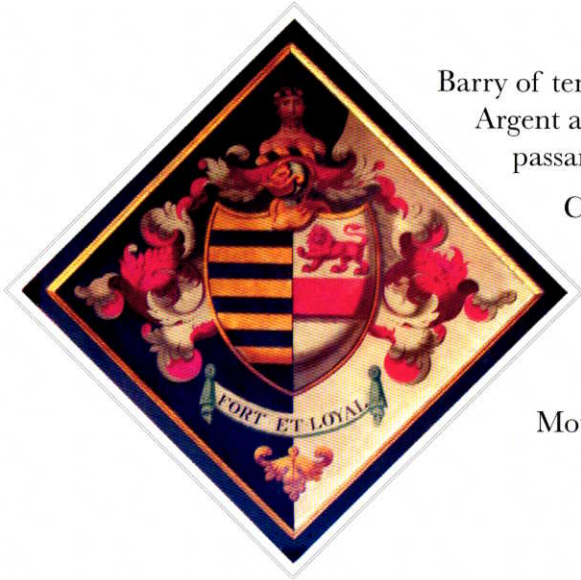
Mantling: Gules and argent.

Motto: In morte quies.

2. Thomas SELBY 1820

EAST HATCHMENT SOUTH SIDE-AISLE

Thomas Selby was the son of John Browne of Salop. His wife, Elizabeth, survived him and lived on at Ightham Mote as a recluse until she died in 1845 at the age of 90. Having disinherited his son, Ightham Mote passed to a cousin on Elizabeth's death. He was Prideaux John Selby, a distinguished naturalist and ornithologist.



Barry of ten or and azure, impaling,
Argent a fess and in chief a lion
passant guardant gules.

Crest: A Saracen's head and
shoulders, affronte proper,
wreathed at the temples
azure and or.

Mantling: Gules and argent.

Motto: Fort et loyal.

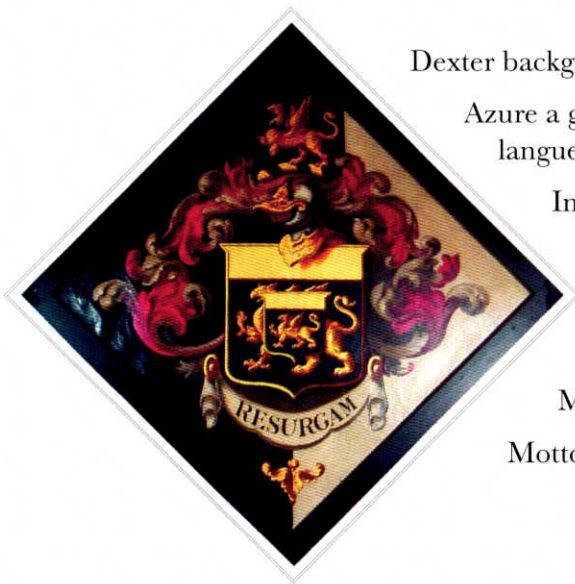
The Evelyn Family

St Clere, now in the Parish of Kemsing, was one of the great houses and estates in the Parish of Ightham. The north aisle of St Peter's was rebuilt in 1639 by Sir John Sedley of St Clere, widening it by five feet to accommodate his Manor pews as well as a family vault underneath.

1. COLONEL ALEXANDER EVELYN (HUME) 1837

EAST HATCHMENT NORTH SIDE-AISLE

Colonel Hume, on marrying Frances Evelyn, the heiress of William Evelyn of St Clere, took the name and arms of Evelyn. The wife's arms are 'in pretence', indicating a claim by the husband on the estates of his wife.



Dexter background black.

Azure a griffin passant or armed and langued gules a chief or (Evelyn).

In pretence: Evelyn.

Crest: a griffin passant or, beaked, forelegged and ducally gorged azure, taloned and langued gules.
Mantling Gules and argent.

Motto: Resurgam.

2. FRANCES EVELYN 1837

WEST HATCHMENT NORTH SIDE-AISLE

Colonel Hume's wife died only a month after her husband.



All black background.

On a lozenge surmounted by a
cherub's head.

Crest: A griffin passant or,
beaked, forelegged and
ducally gorged azure,
taloned and languid
gules.

Mantling: Gules and argent.

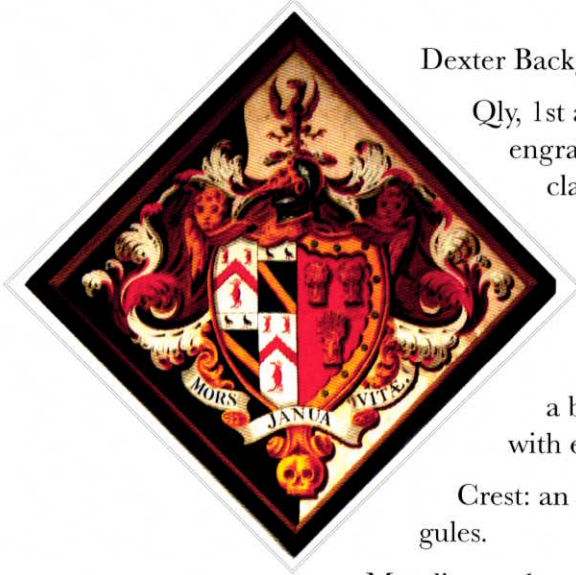
Rectors

1. REV GEORGE BYTHESEA RECTOR 1800

NORTH HATCHMENT WEST NAVE WALL

In 1791, the advowson (patronage) of St Peter's hitherto included in the title of the Manor was sold by Richard James of Ightham Court to William Bythesea of Greenwich 'to be heirs forever' for the considerable sum of £3400. Richard James spent much of his time away with the Militia both in England and during the prolonged war in France. It seems likely that the estate became neglected and this money was used to defray debts: deeds show his wife was compelled to sell land to meet his liabilities after his death.

Mr Bythesea promptly appointed his son, the Rev George Bythesea, to be Rector of St Peter's. He married the daughter Ann of Thomas Read Kemp of Lewes Castle and Hurstmonceux. He is commemorated not only by his hatchment but also by a mural in the chancel which records his death in 1800 'by a most rapid disease'. Before he died he inherited the patronage of his own living which he passed to his infant son George Kemp Bythesea.



Dexter Background black.

Qly, 1st and 4th, Argent a chevron engrailed between three crabs claws towards the dexter gules (Bythesea), 2nd & 3rd, azure a bend or on a chief argent two choughs proper (Vyner) impaling, Gules three garbs or within a bordure engrailed or charged with eight roundels vert (Kemp).

Crest: an eagle displayed or languid gules.

Mantling: gules and argent.

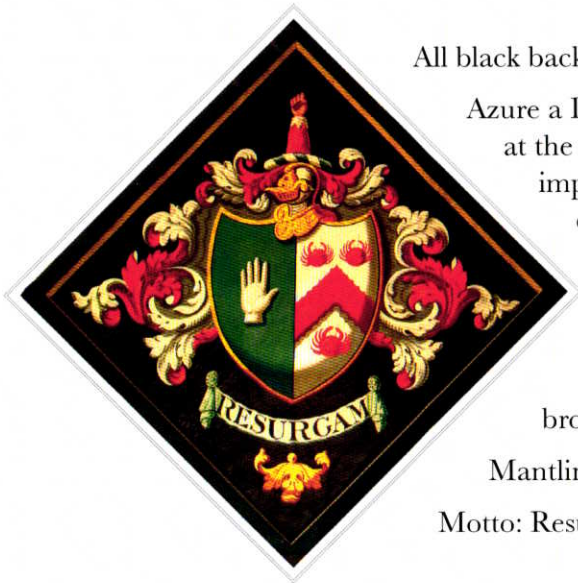
Motto: Mors janua vitae.

Cherub's head above and skull in base.

2. Lieutenant CHARLES BROME RN 1830

MIDDLE HATCHMENT NAVE, SOUTH SIDE

Lieutenant Brome was the husband of Cecilia, sister of the Rev George Bythesea, whose hatchment hangs in this church. She predeceased him by four years.



All black background.

Azure a Dexter hand apaumy couped at the wrist argent. (Brome), impaling. Argent a chevron engrailed between three crabs gules. (Bythesea).

Crest: a cubit arm erect vested gules cuffed argent holding in the hand a slip of broom proper.

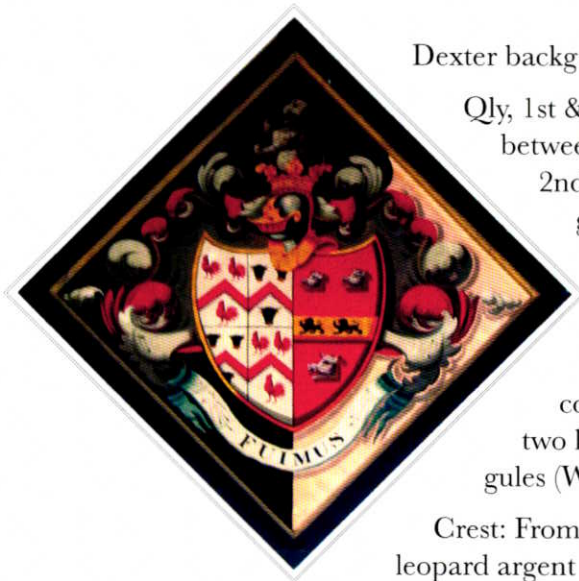
Mantling: Gules and argent.

Motto: Resurgam.

3. Reverend Thomas COBB Rector 1817

SOUTH HATCHMENT WEST NAVE WALL

Under the patronage of the infant George Kemp Bythesea, Rev Cobb was appointed Rector.



Dexter background black.

Qly, 1st & 4th, Argent a chevron
between three cocks gules (Cobb),
2nd & 3rd Argent a chevron
gules between three bulls'
heads cabossed sable
(Curteis), impalling,
Gules on a fess or
between three boars' heads
couped argent langued azure
two lions passant sable langued
gules (Wyatt).

Crest: From a ducal coronet or a demi-
leopard argent spotted sable langued gules.

Mantling: Gules and Argent.

Motto: Fuimus.