

Monuments in Mursley Church

The monuments, having become much disfigured by age and injury, were restored by Lord Clermont in 1866, and replaced in the newly-rebuilt chancel in their former positions.

1 Chancel north wall, Sir John Fortescue Sir John, in costume of red, blue and gold, kneels. His second wife, Dame Alice, is with him, wearing a richly brocaded gown and a blue cloak.

2: Below them is an altar tomb, with a brass portrait of his first wife, Lady Cecily, who is richly robed.

3 Chancel south wall Sir Francis Fortescue, son of Sir John, and his wife, Grace, nee Manners, who came from Haddon, Derbyshire. They kneel at a desk with open books and below them are their children: on one side, 6 boys in red; on the other side, 4 girls in blue. Three of the children carry skulls to show they had died in childhood. On top of the monument are a little peacock and a small, brown bear. Two rosy faced cherubs adorn the sides.

A translation of the transcriptions :

Here lies Sir John Fortescue, Master of the Great Wardrobe, Chancellor and Under Treasurer of the Exchequer and a Member of the Privy Council of Queen Elizabeth; later, in the first year of King James's reign he became Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster.

He lived for 76 years and died on the 23rd December in the year of our Lord 1607. He was survived by his sons Francis, Knight of the most noble Order of the Bath, and William, Knight: who placed this memorial in memory of their dead father.

Cecilia had three great gifts, a most holy spirit, unswerving loyalty and the purest of bodies. The first she devoted to Almighty God, the second to the heart of her dear husband, and the third lies at peace in this tomb.

She lived for 29 years and 3 months and of her 9 children was survived by Robert; Francis, William; Thomas, Elizabeth and Eleanor. She died on 7 February 1570.

Cecilia daughter of Sir Edmond Ashfield and wife of John Fortescue of Salden lies here. She died on 7th February in the year 1570.

The wall monument to Sir Francis Fortescue bears the inscription: Reader for example know that this Monument was erected in pious memory of Sir Francis Fortescue of Salden in the County of Buckingham, Knight of the Bath, eldest Son of the Right Honourable Sir John Fortescue Knight, Privy Counsellor to Queen Elizabeth and to King James, Chancellor to the Exchequer and Duchy and Master of the Wardrobe, & of Cecilia daughter and Co heir of Sir Edmond Ashfield Knight. Whose piety, virtue & religion made him beloved, whose prudent care and zeal of his countries good made him honoured.

And of Grace, daughter of Sir John Manners of Haddon in the County of Derby, Knight, second Son of Thomas Earl of Rutland, and of Dorothy, his wife, daughter and Co heir of Sir George Vemoun Knight. Who in convivial love, maternal care, domestic discipline, charitable works and religion equalling the ancient and best Christian matrons, was 34 years his loyeful wife, bore him 8 sons and 5 daughters and in testimony of her everlasting loyalty not only remained till death his sorrowful widow but also, in memory of their mutual love, erected this monument at her own proper cost and charges.

Photos : M Cole

