

REMARKABLE BURIALS.

The Bury, Chesham,

Dec. 27th, 1859.

MY DEAR UNCLE,

I send you a drawing of the Tombstone, near Coke's Farm, in the parish of Amersham, distant three miles from the Parish Church. The inscription is copied verbatim with all its faults. The stone was erected by Mrs. Hannah Grimsdell in 1739, in memory of her husband, Richard Grimsdell, whose immediate ancestors were also buried in this vault, and whose grandfather, Richard Grimsdell, purchased the estate, and died in the year 1647. It appears that there were entries made at the time of the burials in the Parish Register, as the following extracts will show, though the name is spelt differently in two of them:—

1716. Sept. 18th.—Richard Grimsdale, buried in wool-
len; aff. made by Dorothy Dosset.

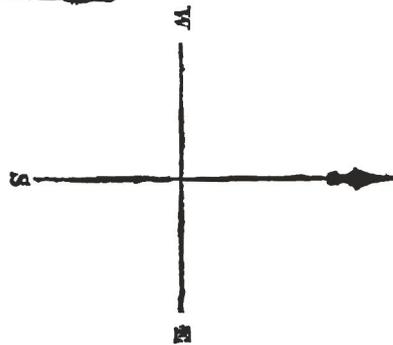
1730. Dec. 11th.—Jane Grimsdell, buried in her
orchard; aff. by Dorothy Dosset.

1739. May 30th.—Jane Grimsdale, spinster, buried in
an orchard; aff. by Martha Ewen.

The tombstone was formerly surrounded by a wall four and a half feet high, all traces of which have now disappeared. About fifty-five years ago some trees, which are still standing, were planted round the burial-ground, close to the foundation of the wall.

I also enclose a drawing of the Monument in the parish of Great Missenden, erected on his own property, by Mr. Backhouse, of Havingfield Lodge. It is situated one mile distant from the Parish Church, on the right hand of the road leading to Wendover, in a plantation on the

Within this Place Lies the Bodies
 Of M^r RICHARD GRIMSDELL, who Purchased
 This Estate and died in 1647. And his wife,
 Of M^r RICHARD GRIMSDELL, his Son, who died in 1716
 Aged 64. And JANE his wife who died in 1730. Aged 86
 Of M^r RICHARD GRIMSDELL, the onley Son of M^r
 RICHARD GRIMSDELL, by JANE his wife, who died 1712
 Aged 36
 And Issue 4 Daughters, Coheirs of this Estate.
 And M^r JANE GRIMSDELL one of the Coheirs of the
 Same M^r RICHARD GRIMSDELL, by HANNAH his wife. Aged
 In Memory of whom his Affectionate wife hath
 Erected this Stone in 1739.



TOMBSTONE AT COKE'S FARM.

hill. Mr. Backhouse died in June, 1800, at the age of eighty years, and was by his express desire buried in this tomb. Seven years afterwards his son and successor, Lieutenant-General Backhouse, removed the coffin to Great Missenden Churchyard, and erected a tombstone to his memory. The removal is recorded in the Parish Register, as the following extract will show, viz. :—
 “ August 8th, 1807.—The remains of Thomas Backhouse, Esq., removed by a Faculty from the Archdeacon of Buckingham, from the Mausoleum in Havenfield to the Churchyard of Great Missenden, and there interred. He died June 21st, 1800.”

The monument is about eleven feet square at the base, six and a half feet high on the north side, and four and a half on the south side; the whole building is from sixteen to eighteen feet high. There is a window or loop-hole on the north side, and also one on the south side, each one foot long by eight inches wide. The entrance was on the west side, but it is now built up with flint. The monument is built of flint, edged with brick on the roof; and from the circumstance of some plaster still remaining near the top, as seen in the drawing, it may be presumed that the whole building had formerly been covered. It is now in a very dilapidated state.

Believe me,

Yours affectionately,

WM. LOWNDES.

REV. C. LOWNDES.

From the Rev. BRYANT BURGESS.

Latimer Rectory, Chesham,

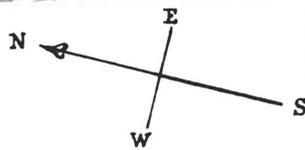
Dec. 29, 1859.

MY DEAR MR. LOWNDES,

I went yesterday to look at the tombstone of the Grimsdells. I know of no reason for these strange burials: but the date of the first interment at Coke's Farm (1647) suggests to my mind what may be a clue to the whole question. In those troublous times, in which we know



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BACKHOUSE'S TOMB

From a drawing by N. Lowndes Jun. Esq.

that party spirit ran very high in the country, it would seem not unlikely that Grimsdell, with perhaps a prejudice against the service, and a dislike to consecrated ground as connected with the idea of prelacy, might choose to be buried in that picturesque spot on his own property. The spot close by the house, and overlooking a beautiful valley among the hills, is just such an one as a man might stand on day by day, until with the peculiar notions we have imagined, he might fancy it for his body's resting-place. The head of the family being buried there, and a vault made, the descendants, brought up with the same opinions, might choose to be buried there also; and then Mr. Liberty, of Chorley Wood, (whose name may have had its origin in the free-thinking propensities of the family) may have admired the spot, and the peculiarity of such a place of burial—and so have resolved upon a similar tomb for himself in his own field two miles away.

Now this is all *my supposition* only, but it appears to me the most likely solution of the mystery. In the case of the Grimsdells, the proximity of "Chapel Field" seems to point the other way; but there is no sign that I can find of any other interment there, and the wording of the inscription is different from what we should expect to find in a Churchyard. If there was a Chantry Chapel there before the Reformation, the bounds of the old Chapel-yard may have remained in the seventeenth century, and so, though unused for a time, might sanction the idea of interment. I enclose a little account of the Flaunden Tomb.

Believe me,

Very faithfully yours,

BRYANT BURGESS.

FLAUNDEN—FLANDEN—OR FLAMDEN.

The old Church or Chapel of Flaunden is situated in a corner of Hertfordshire which projects into the county of Buckingham, between Chenics and Latimers. It is now in ruins, a new Church having been built in the village.

About two hundred and twenty yards east of the old

Church, in an orchard by the side of the footpath, is an altar-tomb of very fine brick-work, surmounted by a flat stone slab, and about the tomb are four stones marking the extent of the vault. The stone slab bears the following inscription:—

Sacred to the Memory
of Mr. William Liberty, of
Chorley Wood, Brickmaker,
who was by his own desire buried in
a Vault in this part of his estate.
He died 21 April 1777 aged 53 years.

Here also lieth the Body of
Mrs. Alice Liberty
widow of the above named
William Liberty
She died 19 May 1809
aged 82 years.

The Tomb stands east and west.

It seems to me not improbable that having seen the tomb of the Grimsdells, at Coke's Farm, this person may have imbibed the idea of being buried in a similar way.

There is a report that Liberty was an atheist, but I know of no proof of its truth.

Dec., 1859.

BRYANT BURGESS.