

# **Blackwork Journey** Inspiration Sir Hugh Starkey SP0011



### **SIR HUGH STARKEY, GENTLEMAN USHER TO HENRY V111** Taking a retrospective view 36 years on!



My first piece of Blackwork embroidery created in 1986

In the 1980's I was working on my City and Guild's Embroidery qualifications and Blackwork embroidery was part of the course. I knew very little about the technique at the time but after some research decided to work on a large piece of embroidery learning as I stitched. In hindsight this was not the way to work a large project but I did learn from my mistakes and this embroidery began a lifelong fascination with the technique which I have explored for the last 30 years.

The subject I chose to work on was: Hugh Starkey of Oulton, Esquire

- Hugh Starkey, Esq.1
- Died,1527
- Father John Starkey, Esq. d. 1462
- Mother Agnes Needham
- Hugh Starkey, Esq. was born at of Oulton, Cheshire, England. He married Margaret Egerton, daughter of Philip Egerton, Esq. and Joanna Smith. Hugh Starkey, Esq. died in 1527.

- Family Margaret Egerton d. Jul 1517
- Children
  - o James Starkey, Esq. d. 1556
  - Elizabeth Starkey+

'The History of the County Palatine and City of Chester', George Ormerod, 1819



1577. HUGH STARKY, ESQUIRE. Over, Cheshire.

Sir Hugh Starkey of Oulton in Cheshire was my first attempt at blackwork embroidery. Sir Hugh Starkey had fought at the battle of Flodden and subsequently had connections with the court of Henry VIII as a gentleman usher. The idea of creating an embroidery of a man who lived at the time of one of Britain's most famous Tudor kings was an added attraction.

Sir Hugh's brass effigy was in St Chad's Church, Over in Cheshire, England but his body was buried elsewhere. Over is an ancient parish that once encompassed the villages of Darnhall, Weaver, Little Budworth, Whitegate, Winsford and Wettenhall. It has always been an important town, the ancient name of which was Ovre. The exact date of the building of St Chad's church is unknown but was in existence in 1307 when the first priest, Thomas de Dutton was nominated by the Convent of St Mary in Chester

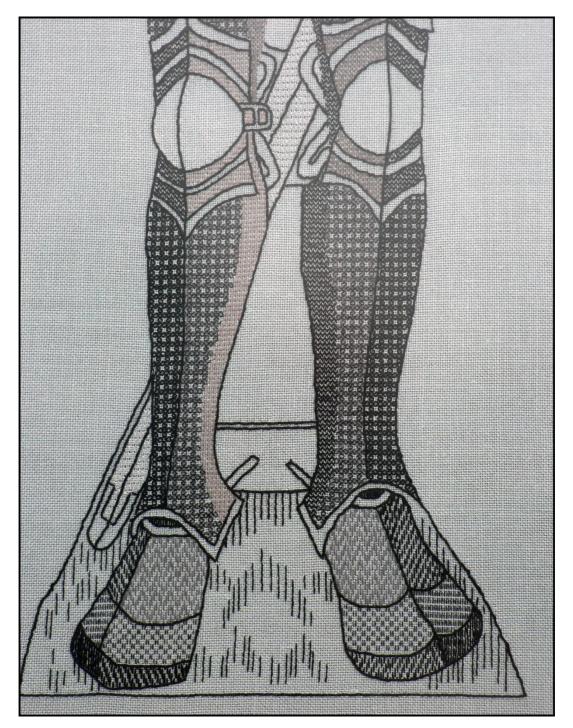
## \*The brass was later stolen from the church but I still have the original brass rubbing.

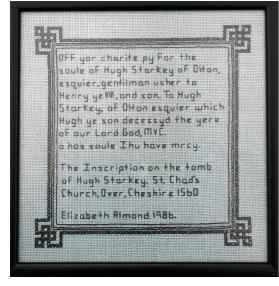
I made a rubbing of the original brass, bought some pale blue evenweave linen, embroidery floss, a book on blackwork stitches and taught myself by trial and error! I traced the design onto the linen using an HB pencil and worked the outline in backstitch which I then whipped to create a corded edge. Nowadays I would use a watersoluble pen, but they were not available in the 80's.

I started with the face, thinking that if the face looked correct the body would be simple. The shading was created by imagining where the light would fall and working in one or more strands of thread to create the depth. The closer the stitches the denser the pattern would be. The whipped back stitch defined the areas to be filled.

I have worked many embroideries of people since and have always started with the faces concentrating on the main features especially the eyes.







#### Inscription written on the brass

Many years later I came across a more detailed description of Sir Hugh including a copy of his will in "The Monumental Brasses of Lancashire and Cheshire" by James L Thornely in 1893. It makes fascinating reading.

There is a discrepancy in the spelling of 'Starky' which was not uncommon at the time.On the brass the inscription is spelt Hugh Starkey. In the Chester Palentine Records it is also spelt without an 'e. James Thornely removes the 'e' referring to Hugh as Starky.

#### **Description of Brass – James Thornley 1893**

The brass of Hugh Starky of Oulton, in the Church of St. Chad at Over, near Winsford, in the County Palatine of Chester, is well preserved, and is a fine example of contemporary monumental art.

The Cheshire esquire of the sixteenth century appears smoothly shaven, and wearing his hair long. The effigy is full-fronted, and the hands, which are without gloves, are joined in prayer. He wears plate armour over a shirt of mail, portions of which are shown. The lower part of his mail shirt is divided in front. He wears sabbatons with spurs, and his knee and elbow plates are handsomely ornamented. He wears a dagger and a cross-hilted sword, the latter slung in a slanting position behind him. The high shoulder guards should be noticed. As we have seen, the head is bare, but rests upon a helmet richly adorned with mantling, and bearing his crest, a stork's head erased, having a viper in its beak. The feet rest upon a mound of earth, upon which are plants or flowers and grass. Beneath the figure is this inscription in old-English letters.

'Off yor charite py for the soule of Hugh Starky of Olton, esquier, gentilman usher to Kyng Henry y e VIII. & son to Hugh Starky of Olton esquier which Hugh e son decessyd the yere of or lord God mvc , o hos soule Ihu haue m'cy.'

There is also a shield charged with storks, the "canting" heraldic bearings of the Starky family.

THE MONUMENTAL BRASSES OF ANCASHIRE AND (HESHIRE. WITH SOME ACCOUNT OF THE PERSONS REPRESENTED. (Illustrated with Engravings from Drawings by the Author.) JAMES L. THORNELY. 7-6973 "Etenim si defunctorum imagines domi positae dolorem nostrum levant, quanto ma hae, quibus in celeberrimo loco non modo species et vultus illorum, sed honor etiam et gle referrur."--Pinina Minor, Ep. in, 7. HULL: WILLIAM ANDREWS & CO., THE HULL PRESS. LONDON: SIMPKIN, MARSHALL, HAMILTON, KENT, & Co., LIMITED. 1893.

This monument appears to have been engraved in the lifetime of the person it commemorates (a not infrequent practice), for the date has been only partially given - a blank space being left for the insertion of the year. Hugh Starky's will was proved 8th June, 1577 but the style of the brass is of a much earlier date.

That Hugh Starky was a person of consequence appears from his epitaph. He came of old lineage, and his family still flourishes, though not upon the ancestral acres. He was son and heir of Hugh Starky, of Oulton, Esquire, by Margaret, daughter of Philip Egerton, of Egerton, Esquire.

He rebuilt the church of Over in 1543. Hanshall, in his 'History of Cheshire,' mentions 'another altar tomb in the front of the chancel steps, containing the ashes of Hugh Starky, the rebuilder of the church. The inscription, now obliterated, ran thus:

> 'Hie jacent corpora Hugonis Starky de Olton arm'i, & Margaretae uxoris ejus.'

In the south aisle, in stained glass, are the figures of John Starkey of Oulton, and Agnes, his wife, the male figure is in plate armour.'

Hugh Starky married Margaret, daughter and heiress of - Swanwick of Wirswall, by whom he had no issue. He had, however, an illegitimate son, Oliver Starky, a Knight of Malta, and subsequently Grand Master of the Order.

**Hugh Starky's will, dated 5th August, 1560,** is an interesting document, and shows that the wealthy Cheshire squire did not forget his numerous servants and dependants when he was arranging his affairs with a view to leaving the world. The distribution of his worldly wealth and his compassion for the community he represented is set out in full in his will. It gives an interesting insight into his world at the time of his death.

'I will," reads the testament, 'y l iff (it) shall ffortune me to dye w th ip the countie of Chestr that then my bodye shall be buried in ye chansell of Ovr in my tombe there. I bequeathe to Margarie my wyffe xlt, e marks of my lands of the inheritance of my ffather as is appoynted unto her by writinge and the third pte of all my goods and ye litle fouldon borde y\* standeth in ye plore.'

He makes provision for his sisters, and fornumerous servants:—"To Hugh Wettenhall xxs yearly duringe ye lyf of his ffather so l he be not retayned unto any man's service nor weare any mane's livraye duringe ye same tyme.

To Jane Wadnett xls to her mariage. All myapprell of my bodie to ye said Hughe Wettenhall and to John Leche. To Ellen Ecton iij li towards y e exsebycon of her poore children. I bequethe lxxxh to make a substanciall horse waye paved betwixt Darley and the Namptewich and to defend it w 4 carts. Unto my cosyn Thomas Starnynge my best horse or geldynge at his aleccon and v marks. To Willm Greene my sr vante my best wayne, one plowe, one cowe, andone harrowe. To evry one of my servants bothe men and women wch shalbe dwelling wl me at y e daye of my deceasse a whole yeare's wages apeese. . . . To John Brickinden, nowepson of Grace churche in London my newe clothe gowene furred w l marterons (martens).

My said wyffe shall have ij ffether beds and ijMy said wyffe shall have ij ffether beds and ij matrases, compleate, one sylvr sake, and one sylvr cuppe psell gylte wherein she useth to drinke ale, vj kyne and vj sylvr spones in full satisfaccon of all her pte of my goods &c.

"(Part of the residue) I will y l my executors shall imploy towards ye p rferments of mariage of poore mayds, releve and succore of poore infants and fatherles children and other poore neadie people, repayring and mendyng highe wayes and decayed bridges, and suche other lyke and charitable good deades as my said executors and ye survivrs of them shall thinke most charitable and godlye to be done. I ordayne my right trustie and lovinge cosens Richard Wylbra Esquyer John Brewne of Stapleford, Esquyer' (a namelong remembered in Cheshire as typifying the highest form of puritan life and 'the primitive piety,') ' Richard Starkye of Stretton Esquyer, and John Leche gentelman my execetors, and for their paynes I gyve &c to evry one ye sum of v and I make S r John Savage, Knyghte, Supvisor.'

This will was proved 8th June, 1577.

Having completed Sir Hugh it was 2008 before I returned to blackwork and Blackwork Journey was born. The rest is history......

Liz Almond August 2022 www.blackworkjournev.co.uk



#### St Chad's Church, Over, Cheshire, England

St. Chad's is the parish church for the town of Winsford although the hamlet of Over is outside the town.

Churches dedicated to St. Chad are usually associated with a water feature such as a well or spring and St. Chad's at Over has two wells. There is a well-dressing ceremony in June.

The church was owned by the Cistercian Abbey of Vale Royal from the time of the abbey's foundation by Edward I until the Dissolution of the Monasteries. There is a small amount of masonry dating from the 14th century in the west end of the south aisle and the south doorway. However, the main structure has been much altered over the centuries. The 74 feet high tower, dating from the early 1500s is one of about 50 of this type in the county.

The church was restored by Hugh Starkey in 1543 and he added the south aisle and the two storey porch. Access to the upper room of the porch is by a spiral wooden staircase in the nave. The embattled parapets date from this period.



#### Lady Chapel and Nave

In 1870 the church was restored by Ewan Christian and W Milford Teulon. The north aisle was widened in 1904 by John Douglas. The south aisle and nave were lengthened in 1926 but the 14th-century east window was retained.



#### Sir Hugh Starkey's Tomb

There is a monument to Hugh Starkey in the chancel with a brass effigy. The letters HS can be seen above the arch above the recess.

#### Exterior

The church is built of red sandstone with a lead roof. Its plan consists of a tower at the west end, a nave with aisles, a chancel, a vestry to the northeast, and a southeast porch. At the east end of each aisle is a chapel. The porch has two storeys, the upper projecting over the lower one. Most of the church is in Perpendicular style although the east window is decorated.

#### Interior

A lavishly decorated stoup is in the porch and Hugh Starkey's tomb lies in the sanctuary. The octagonal font is dated 1641. In the chancel is a decorated Saxon stone. This consists of a sarcophagus in a recess with a brass effigy.

There are fragments of medieval and 19th-century glass in one of the north windows.<sup>[5]</sup> Three of the stained glass windows in the north aisle are by Kempe. The two-manual organ was built by Jardine and Company in 1916, and rebuilt in 1987 by Sixsmith. The parish registers begin in 1558 and the churchwardens' accounts in 1733.



#### Bells

The church originally had four bells, dated 1513, but these were recast into five bells by Rudhall of Gloucester in 1733. It currently has a ring of eight bells, cast by John Taylor and Company in 1915, which were re-hung in 1938.

Portrait of Henry V111 painted by Hans Holbein the Younger after 1537