

THE SAVAGE HATCHMENT AT LONG MELFORD

By LESLIE DOW, F.S.A.

In Long Melford Church there is a funeral hatchment for Viscount Savage, which is of considerable interest and of which, as far as I know, there is no detailed description in print. Richard Almack, writing in 1855,¹ mentions it but gives no particulars beyond noting that 'the shield contains 25 [*sic*] quarterings of the Savage family, impaling 12 quarterings of the family of his wife Elizabeth Darcy, afterwards Countess Rivers.' Nearly twenty years later, Sir William Parker² wrote 'A curious hatchment which was in this church has been removed to the Lady Chapel, with others. It was of 1635, to Viscount Savage, with many quarterings.' About 1901, the Rev. Edmund Farrer visited the church in the course of his invaluable survey of Suffolk church heraldry and has left us, in manuscript, a full heraldic description of it, although he did not identify many of the quarterings.³ At that time it was still in the Lady Chapel; later, all the hatchments were moved to the chamber at the base of the tower, at the west end of the nave, where they have hung ever since. But the Savage hatchment had become so dirty and was hung so high up that the heraldry was quite indecipherable. Now, thanks to the generosity of Mr Harold Hawes, of Stanningfield, it has been thoroughly and most successfully cleaned and renovated by Messrs. Smiths Suitall of Ipswich. After the painting had been washed and as much as possible of the old varnish removed, it was found to be in good condition and no 'touching up' was needed. A fresh coat of varnish was applied and the frame cleaned and repaired. It now hangs just inside the south door of the church.

The cleaning of this, the earliest hatchment in the county, affords an opportunity to place on record a full description of it; an attempt will also be made to identify the quarterings and a few notes on Lord Savage and his wife will be added.

The hatchment or 'atchievement', which is of the usual lozenge shape, is painted on canvas and is surrounded by a black and gold wooden frame, measuring about 3 ft. 6 ins. square. On the frame, in gold letters, is painted 'VISCOUNT SAVAGE 1635', but the lettering is almost certainly of later date and was probably added in the 18th century.

¹ *Proc. Suff. Inst. Arch.*, vol. II, p. 83.

² Parker, *History of Long Melford*, 1873, p. 139.

³ Farrer, *Church Heraldry in Suffolk*, (two manuscript volumes in Ipswich Borough Library), vol. II, pp. 67-8.

Mr Hawes has been kind enough to send me his blazon of the achievement and the following description is based on his notes. It should, however, be born in mind that even now, in some cases, the remains of old varnish which could not be removed without damaging the painting make it impossible to distinguish with certainty between gold and silver, and, sometimes, between azure and sable. For the identifications I must accept sole responsibility. All the quarterings except one (Braybroke) can be accounted for in the pedigrees consulted ⁴ although the order of some of them appears to be incorrect. The hatchment is obviously the work of an accomplished herald-painter and makes a very pleasing heraldic composition.

SHIELD:	1. <i>Argent six lions sable</i>	SAVAGE
	2. <i>Argent seven mascles conjoined gules</i>	BRAYBROKE ⁵
	3. <i>Gules a chevron between three martlets argent</i>	WALKINGTON
	4. <i>Argent a pale fusilly sable</i>	DANYERS
	5. <i>Or three lozenges azure</i>	BAGGELEY
	6. <i>Or a fess sable (?)</i>	VERNON
	7. <i>Quarterly argent and gules in the 2nd and 3rd a fret or</i>	DUTTON
	8. <i>Or a cross flory sable</i>	SWINNERTON
	9. <i>Gules a cross ermine</i>	BEKE OR BECK
	10. <i>Sable a fess humetty argent</i>	BOSTOCK
	11. <i>Azure three garbs or</i>	BLUNDEVILLE
	12. <i>Azure two bars argent</i>	VENABLES
	13. <i>Quarterly gules and argent</i>	?DUTTON
	14. <i>Azure an estoile resting upon a crescent or</i>	MINSHULL
	15. <i>Sable a bend engrailed between six billets argent a crescent for difference</i>	ALINGTON
	16. <i>Gules three covered cups argent</i>	ARGENTINE
	17. <i>Sable six martlets and a canton argent</i>	ARUNDELL

⁴ The following are the main sources used: *Visitation of Cheshire, 1580*, Harl. Soc. xviii, 1882, pp. 198-204 (Savage); *Visitation of Suffolk, 1561*, ed. Howard, 1866, vol. i, p. 245 and vol. ii, pp. 181-2 (Cordell and Alington); *Proc. Suff. Inst. Arch.*, vol. iv, 1874, p. 111; Palmer, *Monumental Inscriptions . . . from Cambridgeshire*, 1932, pp. 134, 269, plates xvi, xxiv; *Visitation of Cambridgeshire, 1575 and 1619*, Harl. Soc. xli, 1897, p. 14 (Alington); *Visitations of Essex*, Harl. Soc. xiii, 1878, pp. 44, 186; *Visitation of Suffolk, 1561*, ed. Howard, 1866, vol. ii, p. 83; *Trans. Essex Arch. Soc.*, o.s., vol. v, p. 38 etc., and n.s., vol. vi, p. 48 etc.; Gage, *History of Hengrave*, 1822, p. 19 (Darcy). See also, Papworth's *Ordinary*, Burke's *General Armory*, etc.

⁵ I have not been able to find any reference to this marriage.

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| 18. | <i>Per fess argent and sable a pale counterchanged and three griffins' heads erased sable</i> | GARDNER |
| 19. | <i>Argent fretty sable a canton of the same</i> | MIDDLETON |
| 20. | <i>Gules a chevron between three griffins' heads erased sable</i> | CORDELL |
| 21. | <i>Azure a chevron between three lions passant guardant or</i> | WEBB |

Impaling,

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|-----|---|----------------------|
| 1. | <i>Argent three cinquefoils gules</i> | DARCY |
| 2. | <i>Gules within a voided escutcheon between six cross crosslets another cross crosslet or</i> | BERTRAM ⁶ |
| 3. | <i>Argent a fess between six oak leaves gules</i> | FITZLANGLEY |
| 4. | <i>Argent a fess ermine double cottised sable</i> | HARLESTONE |
| 5. | <i>Argent a chevron and an annulet in dexter chief sable</i> | WANTON OR WAUTON |
| 6. | <i>Gules a goat salient argent</i> | BARDWELL |
| 7. | <i>Quarterly or and gules in the 1st an eagle displayed vert</i> | PAKENHAM |
| 8. | <i>Argent three pallets wavy gules</i> | GARNON |
| 9. | <i>Sable a sleeved arm the hand holding a fleur-de-lys or</i> | CREKE |
| 10. | <i>Argent a chief indented gules</i> | HENGRAVE |
| 11. | (Blank) | — |
| 12. | <i>Argent three cinquefoils gules</i> | DARCY |

- CRESTS: On two helms surmounting a viscount's coronet,
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|-----|---|--------|
| i. | <i>Out of a ducal coronet or a lion's jamb sable armed gules</i> | SAVAGE |
| ii. | <i>On a wreath a demi-virgin clothed gules crined or holding in her dexter hand three cinquefoils gules</i> | DARCY |

SUPPORTERS: Dexter, a unicorn argent
 Sinister, a stag ermine

BACKGROUND: Completely black.

⁶ This rather clumsy blazon serves to describe the quartering as it is painted, but I think there is no doubt that it is meant for Bertram, *gules crusilly and an orle or*. This coat is shown as the third quartering on a Darcy shield in Sylvanus Morgan, *Sphere of Gentry*, 1661, bk. iv, facing, p. 33 and is labelled 'Bertram D^{ns} Milford'. It is implied (p. 53) that a Darcy married 'Isabel sister and heir of Roger de Bertram Baron de Milford'. I am indebted to Mr. G. D. Squibb, F.S.A. and to Mr. R. H. D'Elboux, F.S.A., for this reference.

PLATE XXVII



The Savage Hatchment at Long Melford.

Thomas Savage, for whom this hatchment was painted, was born about 1586, the eldest surviving son of Sir John Savage, of Rock Savage, Co. Chester, who had been created a baronet in 1611, and Mary, daughter and coheir of Sir Richard Alington, of Horseheath, Co. Cambridge. This marriage brought into the Savage family, not only the quarterings 15 to 21, but also Long Melford Hall and its lands. Mary Alington's mother was Jane, sister and heir of Sir William Cordell of Long Melford, and at her death in January 1602 she left the property to her grandson, Thomas Savage. It did not, however, remain long in the family, being sold back to the Cordells about fifty years later.

Thomas Savage succeeded his father as second baronet in 1615 and in 1626 was created Viscount Savage. He died 20 November 1635 'of the running gout' at his house on Tower Hill, London, aged about 49 and was buried 16 December at Macclesfield, Co. Chester, on the same day as, and with, his mother.⁷ The hatchment was presumably painted during the rather long interval between his death and burial, and hung outside Melford Hall before being removed to the church. One would have expected that a second hatchment would have been painted for use at the actual funeral in Cheshire, where his ancestral estates lay, but there is at the College of Arms a Funeral Certificate, which Mr. A. R. Wagner, Richmond Herald, has kindly examined for me; he tells me that there is no mention of any hatchment.

In May 1602, Thomas Savage had married Elizabeth, daughter and coheir of Thomas Darcy, 3rd Baron Darcy of Chiche, later created Viscount Colchester (1621) and Earl Rivers (1626). Her mother was Mary Kitson at whose death she inherited Hengrave, another great Suffolk house. In 1641 she was created Countess Rivers for life. Being a staunch catholic, she suffered much persecution in early Cromwellian period, her mansions at St. Osyth, the Darcy home in Essex, and at Long Melford being sacked by the mob. She died a ruined woman 9 March 1651 and was buried at St. Osyth. Thomas, Viscount Savage, and Elizabeth Darcy had thirteen children. The eldest son, John Savage, succeeded his father as Viscount Savage in 1635 and, under a special remainder, his maternal grandfather as Baron Darcy of Chiche, Viscount Colchester and Earl Rivers in 1640. He shared the fate of his mother and died intestate in 1654, when his chief creditor obtained letters of administration, wherein he is described as 'late a prisoner in the upper bench prison in Southwark', presumably for debt.⁸

Apart from its heraldic interest and its pleasing appearance, the Savage hatchment is remarkable on account of its early date. Not

⁷ *Complete Peerage*, vol. xi, 1949, p. 458.

⁸ *ibid.*, p. 27.

only, as has been said, is it the earliest lozenge-shaped example in Suffolk, but it is one of the earliest in England. These lozenge-shaped hatchments seem to have evolved from the earlier and smaller rectangular wooden heraldic panels, which are still to be seen in some of our churches.⁹ Very few lozenge-shaped examples of the first half of the seventeenth century have survived and these are mostly painted on wood, *e.g.* John Blount, 1629, at Eye, Herefordshire, and Lieutenant Filloll, 1631, at Marnhull, Dorset. One example, now in the possession of Mr Elmhirst, of Ipswich, is painted on glass; it is for a member of the Bromley family of Shropshire who died in 1626.¹⁰ It is probable, therefore, that the Savage hatchment at Long Melford is one of the first instances of the use of canvas, which was the material employed throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

There is one heraldic mistake to which attention should be drawn. The background is all-black, but, since Lady Savage survived her husband, the background behind the sinister side of the shield should have been white. As painted, it would indicate that Lord Savage was a widower.

In conclusion, it may be of interest to give a picture of life at Melford Hall in the time of Thomas, Viscount Savage. James Howell, who had been appointed tutor to two of Lord Savage's sons, wrote to his friend Daniel Caldwell in 1621,¹¹

My dear Dan,

Though considering my former condition in life I may now be called a countryman, yet you cannot call me a rustic (as you would imply in your letter) as long as I live in so civil and noble a family, as long as I lodge in so virtuous and regular a house as any I believe in the land, both for æconomical government and the choice company; for I never saw yet such a dainty race of children in all my life together. I never saw yet such an orderly and punctual attendance of servants, nor a great house so neatly kept; here one shall see no dog nor cat nor cage to cawse any nastiness within the body of the house. The kitchen and gutters and other offices of noise and drudgery are at the fag end; there's a back gate for the beggars and the meaner sort of swains to come in at. The stables butt upon the park,

⁹ For an interesting discussion, the first of its kind, on these panels, see Bayley and Steer, 'Painted Heraldic Panels', *Ant. Journ.*, vol. xxxv, 1955, pp. 68-87.

¹⁰ For some more general remarks on early hatchments, see an article by Mr. P. G. Summers, F.S.A. in these *Proceedings*, pp. 208-213.

¹¹ James Howell, *Familiar Letters or Epistolæ Ho-Eliana*, (Temple Classics, 1903), vol. 1, p. 110.

which, for a chearful, rising ground, for groves and browsing ground for the deer, for rivulets of water, may compare with any for its highness in the whole land. It is opposite to the front of the great house, whence from the gallery one may see much of the game when they are a-hunting. Now for the gardening and costly choice flowers, for ponds, for stately large walks green and gravelly, for orchards and choice fruits of all sorts, there are few like it in England. Here you have your Bon Christian pear and Bergamot in perfection; your Muscatel grapes in such plenty that there are some bottles of wine sent every year to the King; and one Mr Daniel, a worthy gentleman hard by, who hath been long abroad, make good store in his vintage. Truly this house of Long Melford, tho' it be not so great, yet it is so well compacted and contrived with such dainty conveniences every way, that if you saw the landskip of it you would be mightily taken with it, and it would serve as a choice pattern to build and contrive a house by.

Your's, J.H.