



# The Monuments St David's Church Ashprington

Laurence Green



# Introduction

St David's Church is fortunate in being one of the Devon churches that retained its Celtic dedication when so many neighbouring churches had theirs altered. It is possible that a much earlier church building on the site of the present church could have been founded by St David himself.

St David's is also fortunate in the support it has received from Sharpham House, Painsford, and other manor houses in the parish. Sharpham House, being the owner of most of the houses in the village until 1940, has played the largest part in the restoration and reordering of the building. It is fitting that the Sharpham family monuments are among the most prominent in the church.

Some people dislike church monuments, claiming that they were put up 'to the glory of X, in memory of God'.

To me church monuments are a fascinating record of social change in a parish. They remind us that great men and women and great families do not endure forever. Many monuments share the same fate, either through accident or decay. There has been a commendable move to restore monuments as historic artefacts. St David's has profited from the generosity of a grant to restore a fine example in the north aisle.

The most poignant monuments in a church are war memorials, either individual plaques provided by the family or plaques with the names and details of the fallen, usually situated in the middle of the north

aisle. Ashprington has none of these; the seventeen fallen men from both world wars are commemorated below a fine Herbert Read cross in the centre of the village.

The first church monuments in England appeared during the thirteenth century in the form of monumental brasses as well as recumbent figures. Ashprington has a fragment of a sixteenth century brass which must have survived the iconoclasts during the Commonwealth.

Every monument has a story, whether of the family commemorated or a more recent event. St David's monuments have stories of crime and loss, high drama and damage as well as restoration and care. They are well worth examining and researching as a record of the life of an unusual Devon parish

I wish to thank the late Mrs Nest Harris and Mrs Pam Lewis for undertaking the thorough research on the monuments and recording them under the aegis of NADFAS in December 1992. Without their painstaking work my task would have been much more demanding and less pleasurable as well as less accurate. I also wish to thank Mr Richard Soans, Churchwarden, for the idea of writing this slim volume. I also thank Dr Clive Easter, an authority on the church monuments of Devon and Cornwall, for his notes written in October 2005.

Laurence Green M.A.  
August 2022

# The Sharpham Group

This important group of monuments comprises the Pownoll monument on the south wall of the sanctuary and the three Bastard monuments on the south wall of the chancel over the door leading to the sacristy.



## a) The Pownoll Monument - south wall of sanctuary



This wall tablet commemorates Jane (d.1778) and Captain Philemon Pownoll (k.1780).

It is: 'rectangular, recessed, black and white marble wall slab in a stele design with flanking pilasters; inscription in tympanum. Central white mourning female figure, holding a flower garland, leaning over an urn on a plinth. The whole resting on a white marble slab inscribed with a eulogy to Captain Pownoll. Lettering incised, straight, Roman, capitals; italics used for Captain Pownoll's name on lower inscription. A long 's' is used.'

It measures 212cm (estimated) by 128cm by 7.5cm (into recess).

The stylised female figure leaning over the urn is not Jane, the wife of Captain Pownoll, who predeceased her husband by two years, aged 33. It could represent their daughter Jane.

Captain Philemon Pownoll RN (c.1734 – 1780), known as 'Phil', was a successful and popular naval commander who, while commanding HMS Favourite on 31st May 1762, captured a Spanish register ship carrying treasure from Lima. He and Captain Sawyer, commanding HMS Active were each awarded prize money of £64,872 (c.£9.51 million in today's money). Both Captains were courting the Magendie sisters of Lisbon; both men married them.

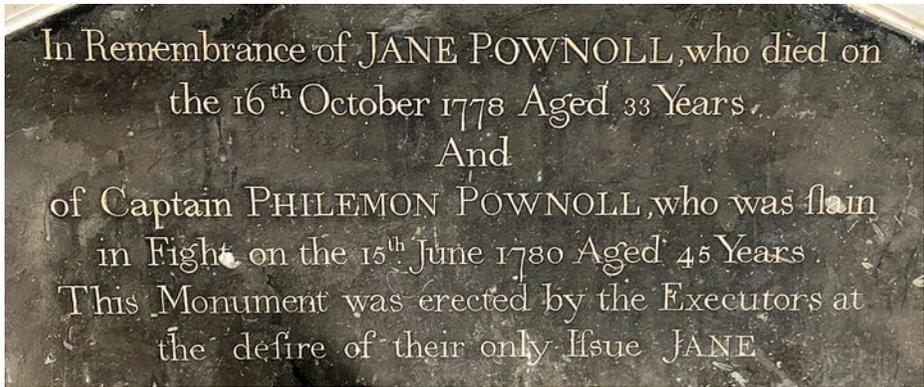
In 1770 Pownoll ordered Sharpham House to be built, designed by Sir Robert Taylor. In 1780 he was killed by a cannon ball while commanding HMS Apollo in a running fight near Ostend with the French privateer Stanislaus. Captain Pownoll died in the arms of Lieutenant Pellew, the future admiral and Viscount Exmouth. The Stanislaus was driven onshore, captured, and became HMS Proselyte.



The inscription on the monument for Captain Pownoll reads as follows:

**Reader**  
**If thy Breath**  
**Has learnt to lament**  
**Departed Merit**  
**Refuse not the Tribute of a Tear**  
**To the Memory**  
**of Captain Pownoll a Man**  
**Brave without Rashness,**  
**Liberal without Ostentation,**  
**Honest, Open and Sincere.**

**Preferring**  
**The Toils and Perils of the Ocean**  
**When the voice of his Country**  
**Called for his Services**  
**To**  
**A life of Ease and Tranquillity**  
**Which**  
**His Affluence would have afforded**  
**He fell**  
**A Victim in her Cause.**



The main inscription on the tympanum reads:

**In Remembrance of JANE POWNOLL who died on  
the 16th October 1778 Aged 33 years  
And  
of Captain PHILEMON POWNOLL, who was slain  
in Fight on 15th June 1780 Aged 45 Years  
This monument was erected by the Executors at  
the desire of their only issue JANE**

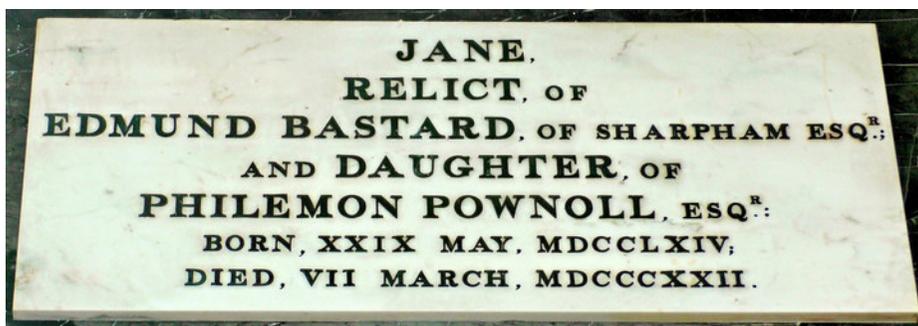
When the monument was cleaned a few years ago traces of red paint were found on the upper surfaces. These were left over from when the sanctuary was painted by Miss Carwithen, sister of the Rector, during the early years of last century.

## b) The Bastard Monuments - south wall of chancel



There are three Bastard monuments, taking the form of wall tablets one above the other, situated above the door leading from the south side of the chancel to the passage outside the sacristy.

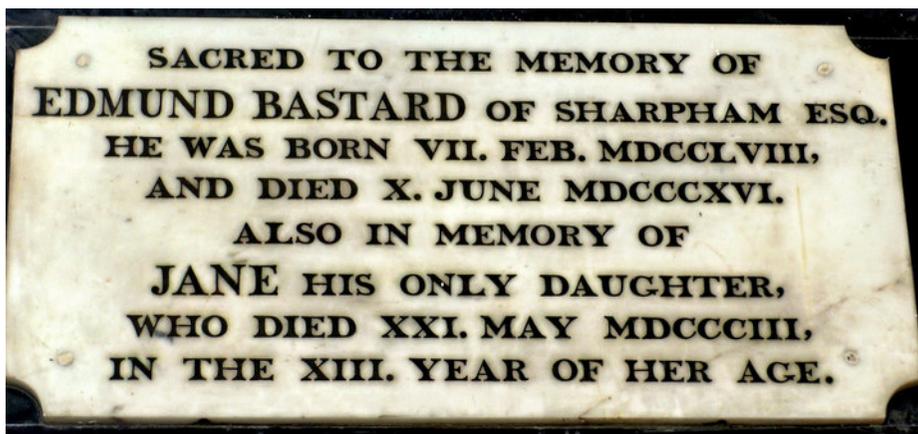
**TOP:** The uppermost is a rectangular memorial of white marble on a black marble base. The lettering is in raised lead with Roman letters in large and small capitals. The outer tablet measures 73cm by 137cm and is 7.5cm deep. The inner tablet is 53.5cm by 127cm and 5cm deep. It reads:



(Jane was born 29th May 1764, died 7th March 1822, aged 56.)

Jane Pownoll Bastard was heiress to the Sharpham estate. Against the wishes of Captain Pownoll's executors Jane eloped to Gretna Green with Edmund Bastard of Kitley, near Plymouth. Perhaps they feared that money for the building of Sharpham House would be diverted for the restoration of Kitley House. Reputedly all the post horses in the district were hired by Edmund Bastard to prevent pursuit of the eloping couple. The marriage was a happy one and the executors forgave Edmund, even though he did spend some of Captain Pownoll's prize money on the restoration of Kitley House.

**MIDDLE:** This is a rectangular memorial of white marble with concave corners on a black marble base. The letters are in bold type in large capitals, lead filling in incised sockets. The outer tablet measures 83cm by 127cm by 5cm deep; the inner tablet is 58.5cm by 122cm by 5cm deep. It reads:



(Edmund was born 7th February 1758 and died 10th June 1816, aged 58. Jane died on 21st May 1803, aged 12.)

Edmund Bastard was the younger son of William Bastard of Kitley. He was MP for Devon and succeeded to Kitley house on the death of his older brother John who died without issue on 4th April 1816.

**BOTTOM:** This is a rectangular memorial of white marble on a black marble base. The letters are raised in Roman capitals. The outer tablet measures 73cm by 137cm by 7.5cm deep. The inner is 53.5cm by 127cm by 5cm deep. It reads:



(John was born 25th January 1787 and died 11th January 1835 aged 48)

John (Iohn) Bastard was the second son of Edmund Bastard and inherited Sharpham from his father. Like his grandfather Philemon Pownoll, he was a Captain in the Royal Navy. He was also MP for Dartmouth. He married Frances Wade of The Grange, Yorkshire. Their daughter, Frances, did not inherit Sharpham House because her father had, reputedly, gambled it away.

## c) Earlier Sharpham Monuments

**Mary Cockey Floor Slab** - cut into two steps from chancel to sacristy passage



This black marble slab, with white striations, was cut around 1904 to form the steps as mentioned. It is the oldest of the Sharpham monuments and dates from 1753. It was described : ‘Two rectangular black marble slabs (used as two steps) in memory of Mary Cockey. Letters slightly worn. Spelling not archaic, but long ‘s’ is used.’

It measures :

Top Step – 37.5cm by 76cm by 4.5cm deep

Bottom Step – 37cm by 76cm by 4.5cm deep

It reads :

**In memory  
of MARY the Wife of Philip  
COCKEY Esqr: of Sharpham  
Who was Buried the 15th of  
August 1753. Aged 33 Years.  
This stone was Erected by  
her son Mordecai Cockey  
Gent:**

The Cockeys sold the Sharpham estate to Captain Philemon Pownoll not long after Mary Cockey’s death.

## **Blackhaller Wall Tablet** - east wall, obscured by organ



This ornate tablet commemorates Henry Blackhaller d.1684, his son Henry d.1680 and his daughter Lettice d.1681.

It is described:

‘Rectangular, architecturally framed, black marble and [Portland] stonework tablet in memory of Henry Blackhaller of Sharpham Esq. The tablet is flanked by white veined black marble, free standing, Corinthian columns, with gilded capitals which support a segmented pediment, on top of which is a central painted

achievement, flanked on either side by two blank cartouches surrounded by gilded acanthus leaves. The base of the tablet is formed by a bracketed apron with a central black marble round. Spelling is not archaic and the long ‘s’ is not used.’

It measures 217cm by 131cm by 20cm deep.

The inscription is:



Henry Blackhaller was a Justice of the Peace and probably succeeded John Giles of Bowden as owner of Sharpham.

Dr Clive Easter wrote in 2005:

‘This monument is complete and in its original place. It is the product of an Exeter workshop which was nearing the end of its productive life. The apron (at the extreme bottom of the monument) is crude and simple. The paint on the arms is original. The area occupied by the organ could have been the family chapel.’

# The Painsford Monuments

## a) Kellond and Cork and Orrery Monument, 1712 - formerly on north wall of sanctuary

One of the most interesting monuments in St David's Church is no longer in place. It was the Kellond and Cork and Orrery monument dating from 1712 which was situated high on the north side of the sanctuary. The monument consisted of two parts: a shield-shaped cartouche and an oval plaque below.

The epitaph plaque was described in 1992 as:

'Fragment of a stonework memorial to the Kellond family of Painsford. Shield shaped cartouche, scrolled at base, draped at top and down sides. Flanked at top by two stone winged putti with feathered ruffs. Broken acanthus top could have supported an achievement. In very poor condition. Epitaph by Weston with an oval representation of the Rising of the Dead at the foot of the epitaph.'

The lower plaque measures 125cm by 87cm by 8cm deep.

One Saturday night in 1962 the upper monument fell from the wall, smashed the corner of the altar and landed hard on the step in front of the altar, chipping it. It appears that the iron clamps holding it to the, then, damp wall had rusted through. Had the monument fallen a few hours later it would, most likely, have killed the Rector who always celebrated an eight o'clock communion service on Sunday morning. It

took four strong men to carry the monument out though the north choir vestry to the churchyard. In the early 1990s it was given to the Royal Albert Museum in Exeter who placed it in storage and cannot now locate it (!) The damaged altar was replaced by a cut-down altar from All Saints Church, Babbacombe.

The remarkable Weston plaque of The Last Judgment was taken down during the 1970s and removed, with permission and in good faith, by a friend of the Rector for research and valuing. It was never returned but came up for auction at The Royal Seven Stars Hotel in Totnes in the late 1990s. It was bought for the nation by the Royal Albert Museum in Exeter where it is displayed today with red patches on the marble from Miss Carwithen's noble sanctuary painting project.

John Weston had a workshop in Cathedral Close in Exeter from 1715 to 1735. The Ashprington plaque is one of four of his Last Judgement scenes and is of very high quality, belying provincial workmanship and equal to, if not surpassing, work done in London. The figures anticipate the work of William Blake.

It is recorded that the inscription on the main monument was:

**Johan Kellond de Paynsford Armiger ...  
Qui post exteras regionas bis visas et fere aetam peregre  
Juvenatutum vix tandem in patriam redux, ex Ephebis excesserat  
Cum fibre repentina correpus ex vita migravit.  
Apr. 19 AD 1712.**

This translates as:

John Kellond of Paynsford, Armiger ...

Who, after he had twice visited strange lands and reached as far as Aeta, while still a young man he finally returned to his homeland. He then left Ephebis and was struck down by a sudden fever and died ('migrated out of life').

*Translated by Simon Boyes*

John Kellond, who died in 1712, commemorated on this monument, was a member of an important Totnes family who originated in North Devon and settled at Painsford, one of the most important manors of Ashprington. He was the grandson of John Kellond who died in 1692 and is commemorated on the Kellond monument in the north aisle. He died aged 22 without issue. The property passed to his aunt, Suzannah, and then, through marriage, to William Poyntz of Midgham and to Edward, seventh Earl of Cork and Orrery.

Dr Clive Easter wrote in 2005:

‘There are four other Weston tablets known to have existed, one of which was possibly destroyed in the bombing of St Andrew’s Church, Plymouth in World War Two.’

## b) Johannes Kellond, 1679 - north aisle above door

This elaborate wall tablet, ‘not at all provincial in style’, has been ascribed to John Weston despite the fact that no signature is visible. It was recorded in a partial state in 1992 after several parts were removed in 1980.



The partial description is as follows:

‘Two central black marble inscribed cartouches are surrounded by acanthus scrolling with ribband cresting (larger cartouche surround is of marble, the smaller of Portland stone). Larger cartouche was originally flanked by grey marble columns and rests on a black marble shelf supported on stone putti consoles. The small cartouche is supported by a stone lion mask. There are wing brackets of fruit and flowers. Several parts collapsed [were removed] in 1980 :- flanking black marble pillars; marble pediment with carved roses; two stone putti with gilded wings (one holding skull, the other a blank cartouche). Both inscriptions in lightly incised Roman with long ‘s’ used.’

The monument shows faintly discernible arms:

‘Sable a fess argent, in chief 3 fleurs de lys of the second.’

The partial measurements are no longer relevant since the whole monument was expertly restored with a grant from Devon Historic Monuments Trust. The putti and black marble pillars were brought in from the churchyard and the smaller fragments, including the arms, from a garden wall in Holly Villas into which they were built in the mid 1970s when they were cleared out of the church.

The upper cartouche reads:

**MS**  
**Hic Jacet Iohannes**  
**Kellond de Painsford Armg**  
**nuper Vicomes huius Comitatus**  
**Devonice, et unus (sic) justiciariourum**  
**Domini Regis pro pace**  
**Qui obyt ecto die Iuny**  
**Anno (Salutis 1679**  
**(Aetatis 71**  
**Hic jacet etiam Susanna Vsor (sic)**  
**dilectissima dicti Iohannis Kellond**  
**Quice obyt tertio die February**  
**Anno Christi 1648, Aetatis: 33**  
**Pietatis ergo Posuit hoc**  
**Johannes filius**

The translation reads:

In Sacred Memory  
Here lies John Kellond of Painsford Esquire  
Deputy Lieutenant of this County  
of Devon, and a Justice of the Peace.  
Who died on 6th day of June  
Year (Departed 1679  
( Aged 71  
Here also lies Susanna beloved wife of the  
said John Kellond who died on 3rd day of  
February in the year of Christ 1648. Aged 33  
Erected here respectfully  
by their son John

The lower cartouche reads:

**His jacet etiam  
Iohannes Kellond de  
Painsford, Armiger, Filius  
nuper Vicecomes hujus Comitatus  
Devonice, et unus etiam justiciarior  
Domini Regis pro pace. Qui  
obyt Septimo die Octobris  
Anno (Salutis 1692  
(Aetatis 58**

The translation is:

Here lies also  
John Kellond of  
Painsford, Esquire, Son,  
Deputy Lieutenant of this County  
of Devon, and also a  
Justice of the Peace. Who  
died on the 7th day of October.  
Year (Departed 1692  
(Aged 58

John Kellond (often Kelland elsewhere) of Totnes bought Painsford Manor (often Paynsford or Pynefford but still pronounced PainsFORD) from his father-in-law John Sumaster (see next monument). His son, also John Kellond, was MP for Totnes in conjunction with Sir Edward Seymour in 1678-9. He was also High Sheriff of Devon in 1683.

Dr Clive Easter wrote in October 2005:

‘The monument was not made by Weston of Exeter or made in London. The scrolling indicates a Westcountry origin, as does the liberal use of volutes (the curly bits). The monument is in no way provincial [Pevsner], but the use of flowers around the outer edges of the monument points to a local provenance. The ‘marble’ pillars are, in fact, a compressed limestone with intrusions. The lions on the corbels are too small to have been made in London. The upper shelf below the two angels has four bellflowers and is made of alabaster from the north coast of Somerset, around the Watchet – Blue Anchor area. The probability is that the monument was made in Barnstaple.

The Kellond monument is placed over the former doorway to the stairs of the former screen [rood] loft, indicating that access to the screen must have been removed at some time before the late eighteenth century.’

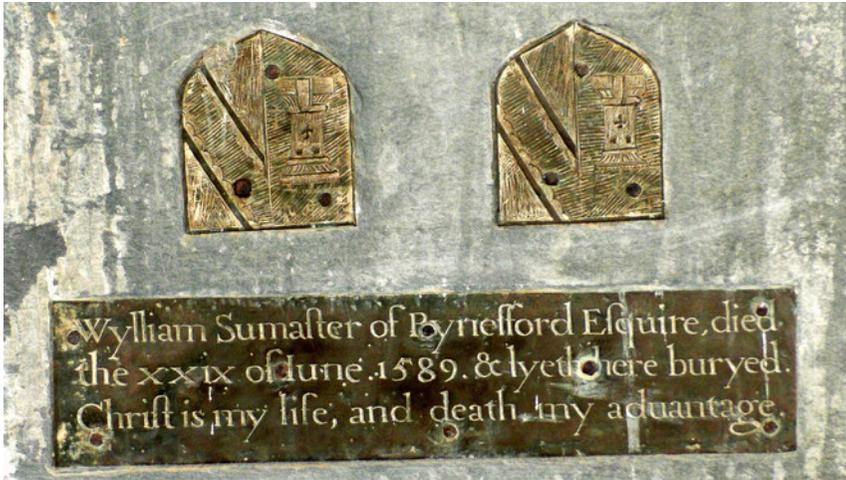
### c) William Sumaster Wall Tablet Fragment - south aisle next to door



This fragment is the oldest monument in the church, dating from 1589, the year after the Armada. It is described:

‘Rectangular stonework wall tablet bearing two inverted brass shields inscribed with the arms of William Somaster (Sumaster) of Painsford. In 1904 the memorial was to be found inside the doorway of the south vestry and has since been placed, with the shields up-side down, in its present site. The arms are badly worn; the inscription in incised Roman, uses archaic spelling and long ‘s’.

Blazon: Sinister on a field azur a tower arg. Dexter on a field gu a bend arg. Plain notised or.’



It measures 42.5cm by 66cm

It reads:

**Wylliam Sumaster of Pynefford Esquire, died  
the XXIX of June 1589. & lyeth here buryed.  
Christ is my life, and death my aduantage.**

The Somasters bought Painsford from the Piperell family during the reign of Henry VII. William married Elizabeth Prideaux of Modbury, he used the Tudor badge for his crest and predeceased his father.

Dr Clive Easter wrote in 2005:

‘This was probably the whole of the monument. The brass shields were made elsewhere and fitted to the incised stone, possibly in the parish. The two shields are not identical, the left hand one having three fleurs-de-lys which are absent from the right-hand shield. Could there be a connection to the Kellond family? Why they were placed upside down is a mystery. Perhaps it was the inscription which was wrongly placed by an illiterate craftsman.’

## Other Monuments

a) **Knowing Floor Slab** - in passage at entrance to sacristy



This is similar to the Cockey monument but slightly older, black marble with white striations floor slab. It is intact and measures 174cm by 96cm. It memorialises Peter and Alice Knowling of Washbourne Manor, written as ‘Washborton’, possibly the ‘Wachetone’ of the Domesday Book.

The inscription is:

**HERE lieth ye Body of Alse ye  
wife of Peter Knowling Gent: of  
Washborton who departed this  
life ye 5th: day of April 1729.  
And was buried in a Lid Chest  
Also ye Sd: Peter Knowling Gent:  
her Husband who departed this  
life ye 27th: day of August 1734.  
And was Buried in a Lid Chest  
Being in ye 74th year of his age.**

**b) The Fowell-Knowling Monument** - found in the passage leading from the choir to an outer door, opposite the sacristy door

It is a strange place to find a monument and it was probably taken down from the south wall of the sanctuary during the early years of the twentieth century to allow the window to be made. Dating from 1813 it fits neatly between the Pownoll monument of 1780 and the Bastard monument of 1822. Being connected to the Knowling floor slab (monument a) it was placed in the obscure passage with no objections!



It reads:

**This Monument is erected  
to the memory of SARAH FOWELL  
of Black Hall in this County  
and the youngest and only  
surviving Daughter and Coheirefs  
of PETER KNOWLING  
of Washbourne House in the  
same County Esq.  
She departed this life  
December 31st 1813  
Aged 48**

Black Hall is near Avonwick and Washbourne House is off the road from Tuckenhay Mill Pond to Washbourne and Harbertonford.

The monument, by T King of Bath, is of very good quality and deserves a better fate than to be hidden in a dark passage. It is oval in

shape; the background is black marble and the medallion depicting a draped urn and the shield carrying the inscription is white marble, the whole assemblage surmounted by an elaborate coloured coat of arms. It is supported by a curved corbel. The inscribed letters are painted black. The penultimate 's' of Coheiress is expressed as an 'f'.

It measures 114cm by 71cm by 2.5cm.

The shelf below the medallion is unfortunately damaged, somewhat spoiling the look of the monument.

Dr Clive Easter wrote in 2005:

'This monument was made in Bath and is typical of a number of monuments in Bath Abbey. It was moved from its original place, possibly at the time when the sacristy was added to the church. The draped urn is typical of the period.



Blazon : Argent a chevron sable, on a cheep gules 3 mullets of the field (Fowell). Quartering : 2 and 3 sable or azure, 2 shin tones in saltire argent (Newton). Impaling : (Digby). Azure a Fleur de lis argent an escutcheon of pretence; (Chudleigh or Prowse) Ermine three lions rampant gules.'

**c) Edmonds Wall Tablet** - removed from south aisle wall, now in north (choir) vestry



This tablet was badly damaged when the wooden panelling was put onto the side of the organ during the early 1960s and taken down.

It is described:

‘Rectangular slated memorial with central white marble tablet bearing inscription, surmounted by white lidded urn decorated with stylised oak leaves. Lettering mainly Roman with some Gothic and italics.’

It measures 86cm by 83cm by 7cm deep and was made by Wills of Totnes.

It reads:

**THIS  
Tablet is Erected  
as an affectionate memorial  
by the sorrowing relatives of the late  
JOHN EDMONDS,  
(of Yetson) who departed this Life after  
a short illness at Sea on his return from  
India on the 11th day of April 1846.  
Aged 21 Years.**

John Edmonds lived at Yetson House. His gravestone, laid flat, used to lie beside the yew tree to the south of the church tower. When the tree died and was cut down in the late 1960s the stone was lost.

Dr Clive Easter wrote in 2005: ‘This monument is of interest because it was made by Wills of Totnes, otherwise unremarkable.’

**d) Marshall Wall Tablet** - north wall of choir near altar rail



This lavish and imposing mid eighteenth century monument is the only one dedicated to a former rector.

It is described:

‘Black and white marble and [Portland] stonework, rectangular, architecturally framed tablet, supporting a painted stone achievement on a fluted plinth against a two-dimensional slate pyramid. The central white marble inscribed tablet is flanked by black slate, tapered, free-standing, Corinthian columns with gilded capitals, which are supported by a leaf-encrusted pediment. The stonework base of the tablet rests on acanthus-decorated brackets. Behind the black columns are wall-mounted strips of black slate. Behind the black columns are wall-mounted strips of black slate.’



Arms: Or a millroid sable, on a chief gules three antelope heads erased of the field impaling Gules a pile in point or, a chevron countercharged.’

Estimated measurements: 224cm by 114cm by 20cm deep.

The lengthy inscription reads:

IN MEMORY OF SUSANNA THE WIFE OF WILLIAM  
MARSHALL, RECTOR OF THIS PARISH, AND DAUGHTER OF  
THE REVD. MR EDWARD NOSWORTHY, RECTOR OF DIPTFORD,  
WHO DIED SEPTR. 14TH 1709, AND LIES AT THE FOOT OF THIS MARBLE,  
TOGETHER

WITH THEIR TWO SONS, RICHARD AND  
EDWARD: THE FORMER BURIED MARCH 3RD 1708. THE LATTER  
SEPTR. 23RD 1710.

ALSO OF MARY THE SECOND WIFE OF THE SAID WILLIAM  
MARSHALL, AND DAUGHTER OF MR GEORGE FORD OF THE PARISH  
OF DARTINGTON, AND OF THEIR INFANT DAUGHTER ANN.  
ALSO OF WILLIAM MARSHALL, M.A., WHO AFTER A RESIDENCE  
OF NEARLY 50 YEARS ON HIS PARSONAGE, AND A DILIGENT  
DISCHARGE OF HIS PROFESSION, DIED IN THE  
80TH YEAR OF HIS AGE, ON THE 30TH JANRY. 1756, AND WAS BURIED  
UNDERNEATH,

WHERE BY HER OWN DESIRE ARE  
ALSO LAID THE REMAINS OF HIS THIRD, AND LAST WIFE, MARY,  
DAUGHTER OF MR  
WILLIAM KITSON OF THIS PARISH, WHO DIED THE 6TH FEBRY. 1785,  
AGED 83;  
TOGETHER WITH THOSE OF THEIR SON, HENRY, WHO DIED DECEMBR.  
25TH 1725.

THIS MONUMENT, ORIGINALLY ERECTED FOR THE FIRST  
WIFE, WAS FILLED UP WITH THIS BRIEF ACCOUNT OF THE OTHER  
RELATIVES, HERE

INTERRED, BY ORDER OF RICHARD MARSHALL,  
THE ELDEST SON OF WILLIAM MARSHALL, AND MARY HIS LAST  
WIFE, IN TESTIMONY OF HIS PIETY TO HIS OWN EVER RESPECTED,  
AND HONOURED PARENTS.

Revd. William Marshall was reputed to be a man of great physical strength. On one occasion he is said to have lifted three men on a bench onto a table and was said to have been able to bend cold horseshoes. He was Rector of Ashprington, indicating that he derived an income from the glebe lands of the parish. It is unusual to have your name four times on a monument.









