

The Dyer Memorial



The Dyer monument is situated in the chancel of St Denys Church, between the vestry door and the east window. It is a stunning monument which attracts visitors to the church specifically to look at it. It is a nationally-famed sumptuous monument and was commissioned by Lady Katherine Dyer in memory of her late husband, Sir William Dyer, who died in 1621. A poem inscribed at the back of the tomb is believed to be one of the most significant poems written by a woman in this country at that time, an opinion substantiated by the eminent historian, John Julius, Lord Norwich. Exquisitely carved in alabaster and Italian black marble, the tomb was erected in 1641, twenty years after Sir William's death.

Under the canopy lie the effigies of Sir William and his wife. Both accurately record the clothing of the time and the ceremonial armour of a knight. She wears an elegant dress of the period. Her hair is beautifully styled and her head rests on a skull. The emblems on Sir William's armour include a ram's head, shells and a leopard's head, all of which are of significance.

Below, on a panelled base, are the figures of Hope, Faith and Charity and between them stand the four sons and three daughters. Their attitudes are effectively varied and the workmanship is far removed from the dull mechanical work so often found of that period. The girls are dressed in similar dresses to their mother. The sons show an interesting difference of dress; two are dressed as Royalists and two as Parliamentarians. The daughters hold large handkerchiefs and may be weeping for the divided family.