

Effigies of John Peryent, esquire of the body and [pennon-bearer to Richard II, esquire to Henry IV] and Henry V, master of the horse to Joan of Navarre, Queen of England, in armor with a leopard at his feet, and his wife Joan, [daughter of Sir John Risain, chief lady-in-waiting to the said Queen], 1415, with a hedgehog at her feet and a swan on the collar of her dress, both with SS collars; marginal inscription much mutilated. One shield (three others lost). On the floor of the chancel.

This brass to John and Joan Peryent is one of the most distinctive of the Hertfordshire brasses, primarily for Joan Peryent's rather eccentric headdress. Both are full-face figures with hands raised in prayer, he in full armor with his feet resting on a leopard,² (perhaps a badge of her family), she in a flowing gown with a hedgehog on the hem of her skirt.³ Both, too, have livery collars, that on Joan clearly the Lancastrian SS collar which probably derives from either Henry IV's motto "Souveigne vous moy" (forget me not)⁴ or from his earlier title of Seneschal, that on Sir John unclear but probably also an SS collar, the enamel of the letter having disappeared with time.

In most ways, the armor which John Peryent wears is typical of the early fifteenth century. His bascinet is high and pointed, with cheek pieces and a metal gorget to protect the neck, all engrailed along their edges. The body armor is symmetrical, from the jointed spaulders at the shoulders the buckled rerebraces on the upper arms, and the vambraces on the forearms to the roundels on the couters; the round palettes or besagews at the armpits, and the jointed gauntlets with pointed cuffs on the hands. The breastplate is of a piece and engrailed at its bottom edge, below which is a fauld of eight lames or overlapping hoops. A richly ornamented baldric of the late fourteenth century style and worn low on the hips supports on the viewer's left a misericorde or dagger to dispatch wounded enemies, and on the right, a long sword, both weapons having scabbards with quatrefoil designs just below the hilts. The frieze of mail just below the fauld suggests that beneath the armor, Sir John may be wearing the hauberk or mail shirt.⁵

¹Kent, p. 94. Norris, *Memorials*, I, 75.

²This may rather represent a panther, which was a badge of Henry IV. According to Brooke-Little, pp. 71, 82, the leopard in ancient heraldry meant a lion passant guardant.

³The French word for hedgehog is herisson, so it may here be a punning reference to Joan's surname, Risain.

⁴Page-Phillips, p. 80.

⁵Blair, pp. 77-78, points out that it tended to be worn until c.1425 after which pieces of mail were often stitched to the arming-doublet at vulnerable spots.

To the left, Joan Peryent has a kirtle with sleeves tight from the wrist to the middle of the forearm, then hanging in ample folds, a high-waisted and belted overgrown with extravagantly long sleeves that reach almost to the ground, and a double collar at the neck, the larger one the turned-back collar of the outer gown, the smaller one that of the kirtle beneath. On her left lapel is a brooch with a white swan, the de Bohun badge which, through the marriage of Mary de Bohun to Henry IV, passed as a badge to Henry V.⁶ Joan's headdress is particularly noticeable, for there is none other like it—hair arranged in a great triangle with her chin as the tip, apparently some kind of interlaced caul or net that may be supported by wires, the whole topped with a veil that does not, as usual, fall behind.

The one shield extant but not on the Hamline rubbing displays the arms of Peryent (Gules, three crescents Argent⁷ impaling Risain (. . . bar palewise between six cross-crosslets . . .).⁸

Little remains of the marginal inscription once surrounding the figure. When complete it was in Latin and black letter and read as follows:

Hic iacent Johannes Peryent Armiger pro corpore Regis Ricardi Secundi
et Penenarius ejusdem Regis et armiger regis Henrici quarti et
Armig' etiam Regis Henrici quinti, et Magister Equor' Johanne filie
regis Navarr. et Regine Anglie qui obiit ____ et Johanna uxor ejus
quondam capitalis Domicella ____ que obiit xxiiij Aprilis A^o Dni
M CCCC xv.⁹

Translated:

Here lie John Peryent, Esquire of the Body to King Richard II
and pennon-bearer to this king, and esquire to King Henry IV and
esquire also to Henry V and Master of the Horse to Joan, daughter
of the king of Navarre and Queen of England, who died . . . and Joan,
his wife, once chief lady-in-waiting . . . who died the 23rd
of April in the year of our Lord 1415.

The effigy of John Peryent is 66" (167.4cm) high, and that of his wife Joan is 65" (165.1cm).

John Peryent, born in Gascoigne, came to England with the Black Prince. Once in England, perhaps because of this earlier association with the Prince who was father to the future Richard II, he became the King's Esquire of the Body and Pennon-Bearer.

⁶Brooke-Little, p. 167.

⁷Cussans, II, pt. 3, 253. On a red field are three silver crescents.

⁸*Ibid.*, p. 256. There is a vertical bar between six crosses with crossed limbs.

⁹Quoted in Cussans, II, pt. 3, 255.

As the inscription points out, he continued as esquire to two succeeding kings, Henry IV and Henry V, and his wife Joan, the daughter of Sir John Risain, became chief lady-in-waiting to Joan Navarre, the second wife of Henry IV.

In 1413 and 1414, Peryent became the sole lord of the manor of Digswell, an estate that descended in the family of Peryent for a number of generations.¹⁰ The couple had two sons, the elder, John, who became lord of Digswell on his father's death, and Walter. The elder son, who married Joan, the daughter of Thomas Mansfeld and Matilda de Etten, died on 30 April 1432, leaving four children, the eldest a son John, who became lord of Digswell, but died at the age of twenty-two on 2 November 1442, leaving the estate to the second son, Edmund, who married Anne, the daughter of Thomas Vernon and died in March 1473/74. The other two children were girls, Joan, who became a nun at Dartford, and Margaret.¹¹

Edmund and Anne Peryent also had four children: Thomas, who was thirty at his father's death in 1473/74, and who served as Sheriff of Essex and Hertfordshire in 1498; Joyce, who died in February 1484 and was wife of William Robert, auditor to King Henry VII; Mary, who married Thomas Robynson, citizen and mercer of London, and Joan.¹²

Since a number of these people are commemorated with brasses, note also the discussions of John Peryent (1442) and William and Joyes Robert, 1484.

¹⁰Cussans, II, pt. 3, 252.

¹¹*Ibid.*, p. 253.

¹²*Ibid.*

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