

THE BLUNDEVILLE MONUMENT AT
THE CHURCH OF ST MARY THE VIRGIN
NEWTON FLOTMAN.
By Ron Fiske.

Newton Flotman church is best known for its associations with the Blundeville family. They are said to have taken their name from Blunvill on the east coast of Normandy and, at the time of the domesday survey c1086, one of them, by the name of Richard, was a sub-tenant of Hubert de Monte Canisio who held lands under William the Conqueror in Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex. It was not until c1199 that Ralph de Blunville was termed 'of Newton Flotman' and the family continued to live in the village for the next four hundred years (1).

As lords of the manor of Newton they lived in a manor house, later called Newton Hall, and now a farmstead, which is about half a mile north-east of the church, to the east of the Norwich-Ipswich road, right on the borders of the River Tas (2).

For more visual reminders of the family it is best to first look up to the top of the church tower. Here on the often overlooked east battlements are three shields of impalements, denoting marriages, interspersed by four panels of text, the fourth being a letter M perhaps denoting the churches dedication to St. Mary. The Norfolk historian, Francis Blomefield saw the inscriptions c1740 but found them 'so high I could not read it.' Fortunately a self-styled 'Viator' found himself in the churchyard in 1861 and, having a telescope with him, made out the remnants of three panels as: -

The swete	aima ei'	patron'
Pascion of	ae.....	anno dom
ite crist	me ac...	ni 1531 (3)
Help us	Emme uxoris	

About a hundred years later Miss M. Sawbridge told Nicholas Pevsner ' that on the east side of the battlements, invisible from the ground [sic] is an inscription to Ralph Blundeville with the date 1503 (4)' Both these statements cannot be supported

The first southernmost shield is badly worn but sufficient of it remains to show it is: *Quarterly per fess indented, a bendlet overall* (BLUNDEVILLE), impaling: *Per pale, on a fess wavy between three crosses paty, as many crescents* (GODSALVE, Elizabeth Godsalve being the wife of Edward Blundeville (1499-1568).

The second, centre shield is well cut, and is for Blundeville impaling a *Salitre engrailed* for an unknown Blundeville wife. No person who bears such arms are named in the published pedigrees but it is worth noting that the KERDISTON arms (*Gules a salitre engrailed Argent*) occur in three stained glass windows at