

The Hawstead Hatchments: 1

Francis Hammond



Francis Hammond, a 'citizen and salter of London' lived at 'Hammonds' in Bull Lane, Pinford End and died in 1727 aged 38 years. He married **Honor**, the daughter of **Ambrose Asty** of Hertfordshire. Honor died later than Francis, in 1758, and is buried in Hertfordshire. I'm assuming that Francis may have moved to London for business but retained the family home in the country.

The hatchment for Francis appears to have been made after Honor's death, as the background is all in black – otherwise it would have been split, with black colouring on the left for Francis and white on the right for her, to indicate that she is still alive. The shield is, however, split with the Hammond arms on the left and those of Asty on the right.

The Hammond arms has a silver background with green edging, on which sit three black circles each containing a bird – a 'martlet', which in heraldic terms is a 'stylised bird of the swallow family'. There's also a black chevron containing three gold-coloured scallops.

Asty has a red background with an ermine diagonal stripe (the arrow-shaped markings and other small black markings denote it as ermine) and two golden hawks.

There is a decorated golden surround to the shield and further decoration beyond that in red and silver. The shield is topped by a helmet from the top of which emerges an eagle with wings outstretched (though this is rather difficult to make out as the eagle is in black except for a golden beak). There is a skull at the base and the Latin motto "Mors Janua Vitae" which means "Death is the Door to Life".

This is the oldest of the Hawstead hatchments and the smallest in size: the others all date from the middle of the following century and celebrate members of the Metcalfe family.