

The Hawstead Hatchments: 4

Henry Metcalfe



Of all the Hawstead hatchments the one commemorating **Henry Metcalfe** of Hawstead House is the most complicated. Henry (1790 – 1849) was the son of **Christopher Barton Metcalfe** (1759 – 1801) and **Sophia**, his wife. He was great-nephew and heir of **Philip Metcalfe** (1733 – 1818) who founded the Almshouses in 1811. As heir to Philip, he was the owner of the Hawstead estate between 1818 – 1849.

Henry married twice, firstly to **Frances Whish** (see HJ Sept/Oct 2012) and secondly to an as yet unidentified lady. He is buried in the family vault in the centre of the nave and neither here, nor in the monument to him on the South nave wall, is there mention of a second wife. His hatchment, however, shows arms of another family, but this has not yet been identified.

The hatchment design is significantly different from the others because he had two wives. This really is HIS hatchment: the large shield in the middle, showing the Metcalfe arms, is a full one, not split in two and the background is all black – the colour of death ie Henry's death. However, to the left and right of the main shield we can see two small inset shields, and these are both split with two sets of arms and a split black/white background. To the left, the first marriage is depicted: the Whish arms are on the right of the shield and the black background here as opposed to white on the left with the Metcalfe arms shows that it is Frances who has died. On the right, Henry's arms on the left with a black background show that he has died. He has been survived by the mysterious second wife: her arms, unidentified, (and unfortunately too small to be clearly seen in the illustration above) show a forearm in gold armour, the hand clutching a black battleaxe.

There's an imposing crest on this hatchment: a black and gold helmet (with gold 'mantling' – a protection for the neck) is surmounted by a 'talbot' – a large (extinct) hunting hound – which is supporting a gold escutcheon (= a small shield). There is further decoration in red, silver and white around the hatchment and the (now familiar) "Resurgam" (I shall arise again) as a motto at the bottom.