

## Henry Manners, 2nd Earl of Rutland (1543-1563) and Countess Margaret (née Neville), d.1560.

The earl wears armour, his head resting on a tilt-heaume. On his left leg is the Garter. He holds a sword in his left hand, a prayer book in his right. Countess Margaret, daughter of Ralph Neville, Earl of Westmorland, wears a coronet and an ermine-trimmed mantle, her head on a scroll. On the overlying table are the figures of their children. Following the death of Countess Margaret, the Earl married Bridget, daughter of Lord Hussey of Sleaford, who lived until 1600.

During the twenty years of Henry Manners' earldom England had four monarchs, Henry VIII and his three children, Edward VI (1547-53), Mary I (1553-58) and Elizabeth I (1558-1603), each of whom followed a different strand of religious belief. Edward, a strict Protestant, supported the destruction of religious images and transformation of churches into white spaces decorated only with biblical texts. Mary, a devout Catholic, strove to restore the Catholic church and suppress the Protestants. Elizabeth I, the last of the Tudors, created a church which was Protestant but followed some Catholic forms and ceremonies, a compromise called the Elizabethan Settlement. A major point of dispute was the form of the rite of communion, either kneeling at the altar in the Catholic manner or sitting at a table in the nave in the way of the Calvinists. The Earl and his Lady show their confusion at all this religious change and lie not on the traditional altar tomb but underneath a Protestant altar table. He is holding The Book of Common Prayer, whereas she appears to hold a different prayer book, possibly an older Book of Hours reflecting her Catholic faith.

During the reign of Edward VI, Henry Manners supported the reformed Protestant party in church matters and was close to John Dudley, the Lord Protector, who led the government of the young King from 1550 until 1553, and unsuccessfully tried to install Lady Jane Grey as Queen after Edward VI's death. The Earl of Rutland was appointed Warden of



*Tomb of Henry, 2nd Earl of Rutland, and Countess Margaret .*



*The magnificent alabaster effigies of the Henry, 2nd Earl of Rutland, and Countess Margaret, lying side by side.*

the Scottish Marches in 1549, and then Lord Lieutenant of Nottinghamshire in 1552. On Mary's accession in 1553 he was imprisoned as a supporter of Lady Jane Grey, but came to terms with Mary's Government after Lady Jane Grey's and Northampton's executions. He was made an admiral and took part in the Italian War of 1551-1559, serving as Captain-General of the cavalry in the English victory at St Quentin in 1557. Continued fighting during 1558 resulted in the loss of Calais, England's last stronghold in France (a defeat said to have broken Queen Mary's heart!). After these events, the earl was placed in command of the defence of Dover against possible French invasion. He subsequently became a favourite of Elizabeth I, who in 1559 made him a Knight of the Garter and Lord Lieutenant of Rutland. He was made Lord President of the North and in 1561 an ecclesiastical commissioner for the reforms of the Church of England that resulted in the Act of Settlement. He died in 1563, not long after completing the re-building of Belvoir Castle.



*Elizabeth, daughter of the 3rd Earl and Countess, kneels at the foot of her parent's tomb.*

## **Edward Manners, 3rd Earl of Rutland (1563-1587) and Countess Isabel (née Holcroft).**

The alabaster tomb, by the Flemish craftsman Gerard Johanssen (Johnson) of Southwark, is the first of the four richly canopied examples in the Church. These are complex and intricately carved constructions of alabaster, vividly painted to make the figures almost life-like. Earl Edward is shown in full plate armour, wearing the mantle of the Order of the Garter with the Garter itself on his left leg. Countess Isabel, daughter of Sir Thomas Holcroft, wears a ruff with the usual dress of the time under an ermine trimmed mantle. A rich cushion supports her head. Their only daughter, Elizabeth, kneels at her feet.

Born in 1549, Edward Manners, eldest son of the 2nd Earl of Rutland, inherited the title in 1563 at the age of 14. He was made a ward of the Queen Elizabeth, and placed under the charge of Sir William Cecil, 1st Baron Burghley. This relationship led to all of his offices of state. The first was when, aged 20, he served as a commander of Queen Elizabeth's forces against the northern earls who had rebelled in support of Mary Queen of Scots and her possible marriage with the catholic Duke of Norfolk. Edward became a Lieutenant and Colonel of Foot in the forces led by the Earl of Sussex. In the event the rebellion petered out and Mary Queen of Scots went into the long period of arrest and confinement which was only ended by her execution in 1586. Edward Manners also played a role in that drama, in that he was one of the commissioners who tried and condemned the Scottish Queen following the Babington plot, a government trap engineered by William Cecil and Francis Walsingham. Edward married Isabel, daughter of Sir Thomas Holcroft. Their daughter Elizabeth was married at the age of 13 to the grandson of William Cecil. Tragically, she never fully recovered from childbirth at the age of 14 and died aged 15 in London. She is commemorated as the kneeling figure at the foot of the tomb. Her father served as England's Lord Chancellor for just two days in 1587 before his death at the age of 38. The Earl died on Good Friday, 14th April 1587, at Puddle Wharf, London, and was brought home for burial on 11th May.

The effigies of Edward Manners, 3rd Earl of Rutland (d.1587), and Countess Isabel lying side by side on their tomb.





## **John Manners, 4th Earl of Rutland (1587-1588), and Countess Elizabeth (née Charlton), d.1613.**

Opposite the tomb of his elder brother, Edward, is that of John the 4th Earl (born 1552) and Countess Elizabeth. Gerard Johanssen again was the sculptor, both tombs being created at the same time, in 1591. John lived only ten months after Edward's death and died on 24th February 1588 at Nottingham. Countess Elizabeth, daughter of Francis Charlton, then had the dubious pleasure of ordering both the 3rd Earl's as well as her husband's monuments. There were nine children, of whom two died in infancy.

John became the 4th Earl of Rutland in year of the Great Armada, 1588. Although he had a military career in the Irish wars, John Manners is now chiefly remembered as the father of a large family. No less than three of his sons, Roger, Francis, and George, became Earls of Rutland. Oliver, the fifth son, was suspected of involvement in the Gunpowder Plot having been converted to Catholicism by the Jesuit John Gerard, a close friend of the Plot leader Robert Catesby. He was serving as MP for Grantham in November 1605 but failed to warn the authorities about the conspiracy. He went into exile in 1606, was ordained to the Jesuit priesthood at Rome in 1611, and returned to England before dying in London in 1613.

Countess Elizabeth became the *de-facto* Earl during the minority of her eldest surviving son Roger and proved to be a formidable administrator, founding the Countess of Rutland's Hospital in Bottesford, amongst many other things. She arranged her sons Roger and Francis' educational visits to Europe, outlined on their tombs in the church, which were something of a prototype for the 18th century Grand Tour.

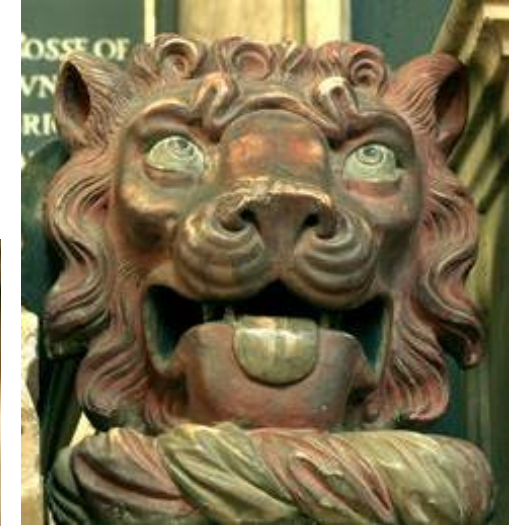
*Effigy of John, the 4th Earl, and Countess Elizabeth, with their youngest daughter, Elizabeth, at their head.*



*Three sons of the 4th Earl of Rutland, weepers on their parent's tomb, from left to right: Roger (later the 5th Earl), Francis (later the 6th Earl) and George (later the 7th Earl).*

*Effigies of four more of the surviving children of the 4th Earl of Rutland and Countess Elizabeth. We tentatively identify them, from the left, as Frances, Oliver, Bridget and Edward (who died as an infant). One more of the daughters is missing from the tomb altogether.*

*The heraldic lion, crouching at the foot of Countess Elizabeth.*



## Roger Manners, 5th Earl of Rutland (1588–1612) and Countess Elizabeth (née Sidney), 1585-1612.

Next to the altar rail on the north side of the chancel is the tomb of Earl Roger and his Countess Elizabeth, in alabaster, the work of Nicholas, son of Gerard Johanssen. It cost £150 including carriage by sea from London to Boston. Earl Roger is in half armour and an ermine-trimmed mantle with a tippet and wears a coronet. A cushion supports his head and a peacock is at his feet. Elizabeth wears a close fitting cap, coronet, ruff and bodiced gown under her ermine trimmed mantle and tippet. A richly embroidered cushion supports her head.

Roger Manners had been one of Queen Elizabeth's wards following the death of his father in 1588, and was placed under Sir William Cecil, together with Robert Devereux, 2nd Earl of Essex. However his relationship with the Cecils was anything but close. Seemingly influenced by Essex, he came to regard Cecil's hard-headed statecraft irredeemably vulgar, and they sought a more courtly way of conducting affairs of state. Roger Manners travelled widely on the continent between 1595-98, then in 1599 became a Colonel of the Infantry in the force Essex led to fight the rebellion of the Earl of Tyrone. The Queen forbade the earl from going, fearing Essex's increasing power, but in April he slipped out of England and in May was knighted by Essex before being summoned back for disobeying the Queen's orders. Essex, realising that the campaign was a fiasco, concluded a private truce with Tyrone, to the Queen's fury. He rode back overnight and famously burst into the Queen's apartments in an attempt to explain his agreement. She was angry and probably frightened of the possibility of assassination and a coup. Essex was placed under house arrest, but on February 8<sup>th</sup> 1601, with Roger Manners as his third of command, he led a group of nobles and gentlemen (some later involved in the Gunpowder Plot) to raise a rebellion. They expected to receive popular support, but none was forthcoming. Essex was found guilty of treason and beheaded. Rutland was imprisoned in the Tower and fined £30,000, a huge



*A cherubic face on the tomb of the 5th Earl and Countess Elizabeth.*

amount, but was fortunate not to have lost his life.

In 1599, he had married Elizabeth Sidney, daughter of Sir Phillip Sidney, the poet, military hero and role model for Elizabethan men of letters, who had died heroically fighting the Spanish in 1586. Sir Philip Sydney's funeral was a major state event, gaining him the status of a Protestant martyr. Countess Elizabeth was also the grand-daughter of Sir Francis Walsingham, Queen Elizabeth's master spy, and as the result of her mother's re-marriage she was step-daughter of the ill-fated Earl of Essex. She was said to have been dismayed by her exile from court life following her husband's punishment.



*The effigies of Roger Manners, 5th Earl of Rutland, who died in 1612, and Countess Elizabeth, who died in the same year.*

Ben Jonson wrote the first of three poems to her in 1600, *The Epistle to the Countess of Rutland*, in which he tactfully withdrew a verse about the imminent birth of a son on hearing that the Earl was in fact impotent.

James VI of Scotland was proclaimed James I of England in 1603, and crossed into England on April 6th. Because of plague in London, he made a slow journey south, and on April 10th reached Belvoir Castle, where he stayed for two weeks. He had been receiving an annuity of £4000 from Queen Elizabeth, under the settlement negotiated by the 3rd Earl, and this probably helped restoration of Earl Roger's political fortunes. The Earl was appointed ambassador to Denmark, with orders to invest King Christian IV with the Order of the Garter and to convey gifts on the christening of his first son, an important role because of the close links between the Danish and Scottish thrones. Roger Manners evidently enjoyed his visit to the Danish court. The accountant John Brewer, who accompanied him, records what was almost a royal progress of the Earl's party to Copenhagen and Elsinore, with lavish spending on food, entertainment, and munificent gifts to the poor. The fact that *Hamlet* was altered to improve the description of Elsinore in the 1605 edition, published shortly after the Rutland visit, has led some scholars to claim that Roger Manners actually was Shakespeare! Indeed, Ilya Gililov has argued that both Roger and Elizabeth Manners were the true authors of Shakespeare's work. However this is very much a fringe opinion, rejected by mainstream of Shakespeare scholarship.

Countess Elizabeth gathered poets and admirers around her, including Ben Jonson, the playwright Francis Beaumont who worked for Shakespeare's King's Men, and Sir Thomas Overbury who was murdered in one of the most notorious of Jacobean conspiracies. She danced in the *Masque of Hymenaei*, a spectacular entertainment written by Jonson and designed by Inigo Jones, staged in Whitehall in 1606 to celebrate the marriage of her step-brother Robert Devereux, 3rd Earl of Essex, to Frances Howard, daughter of the Earl of Suffolk, a marriage designed by King James and Robert Cecil to reconcile the factions divided by the Essex rebellion.

The 5th Earl died childless on 26th June 1612 at Cambridge. At his funeral there

were: 203 Retainers and Servants, 9 Clergy and 27 Cooks. Costs included £145 Herald's fees, £5 Black draperies, £30 Doles for the poor, £20 Southwell Minster Choir, £20 Embalming fee, 16s. for 16 men ringing at the Funeral, 6 mourning gowns given to the people of Bottesford. Elizabeth died in August 1612, two months after Roger Manners' death. A contemporary, John Chamberlain, reported a family rumour that she was poisoned by Sir Walter Raleigh, and her death was the subject of an extremely angry poem by Beaumont, *An Elegy on the Death of the Virtuous Lady Elizabeth Countess of Rutland*. According to Chamberlain, she had been planning to marry a member of the Howard faction with what was considered indecent haste. Ben Jonson said of her that she was as talented a poet as her father. However, none of her poems have been uncovered to date.



*The winged skull and hourglass mounted on the top of the tomb of the 5th Earl and Countess: memento mori, a reminder that we all must die.*

**Francis Manners, 6th Earl of Rutland (1612–1632),  
Countesses Frances (née Knyvet), d.1608, and  
Countess Cecilia (née Tufton), d.1653.**

Southwest of the altar is the massive tomb of Earl Francis, born in 1578, third son of the 4th Earl and Countess Elizabeth. Its height required the roof of the chancel to be raised and even then the peacock crest was only accommodated by cutting away part of a rafter. The Earl lies below Countess Frances, his first wife, and above Countess Cecilia, his second. He is shown entirely in court dress, with the Garter and the mantle of the Order, a sword of state, a peacock full of pride at his feet. Countess Frances wears Elizabethan dress, her hair swept back, with a cap and circlet, at her feet a wyvern. Countess Cecilia's dress is early Carolean in style. At her feet is a lion.

Their three children are included, Katherine at the head, the boys at the foot both holding skulls as symbols of their deaths. Known as the 'Witchcraft Tomb', the monument commemorates one of the best-known witchcraft trials in English history, described in detail by Michael Honeybone (2008). Part of the inscription reads, "*In 1608 he married ye lady Cecilia Hungerford, daughter to ye Honourable Knight Sir John Tufton, by whom he had two sons, both of which died in their infancy by wicked practises and sorcery*".

In 1598, Francis Manners had embarked on a 'grand tour' through France, Germany and Italy, culminating in a visit to the court of Rudolf II, Holy Roman Emperor. He was probably accompanied by the architect and theatre designer Inigo Jones amongst others. On his return, he joined his brothers Roger and George in the Essex rebellion. He was imprisoned as a consequence, and fined a thousand marks, but Robert Cecil obtained a remission of the fine probably as an act of reconciliation with the Essex faction. Like Roger, Francis was

*The alabaster effigies of Francis Manners, 6th Earl of Rutland, and  
Countesses Frances (above the earl) and Cecilia (below).*



reconciled on the accession of James I, and in 1605 took part in Prince Charles's investiture as Duke of York and was made a Knight of the Bath alongside the Prince.

On 26 June 1612 he became the 6th Earl of Rutland. Promotion to Lord Lieutenant of Lincolnshire followed as did the first of a series of visits by King James to Belvoir Castle. Francis played a part in the funeral of the King's eldest son, Henry Fredrick, Prince of Wales, on 6 November 1612, carrying a ceremonial shield. He again took a part in a ritual joust in 1613 to celebrate King James's accession day, carrying a shield bearing an *impresa* designed and painted by Shakespeare's leading actor Richard Burbage with a motto written by Shakespeare himself. Francis's steward recorded a payment "to Mr Shakespeare in gold about my lord's *impresa*, 44s.; to Richard Burbage for painting and making it, in gold, 44s.", one of William Shakespeare's few written records and much quoted by biographers.

Francis Manners married twice, firstly to Frances Kynvett with whom he had a daughter Katherine. With his second wife, Cecilia Hungerford, he had two sons, Henry and Francis, both of whom died in infancy of what the Earl believed was witchcraft, though a contemporary John Chamberlain described their condition as *the falling sickness*. Francis may have been influenced by King James, who particularly during his reign as James VI of Scotland was an enthusiastic witch hunter and had written a book, *Daemonologie* (1597), to counter a rational attack on the validity of witchcraft beliefs, Scot's *Discovery of Witchcraft*, which according to historian David Wootton was actually written in 1585 by Abraham Fleming, brother of the rector of Bottesford, Reverend Samuel Fleming. Abraham Fleming died in Bottesford in 1602 and is buried in St Mary's where his memorial brass plate can be seen in the floor before the altar steps. The king had ordered the *Discovery of Witchcraft*



*Henry (left) and Francis Manners (right), the sons of the 6th Earl of Rutland and Countess Cecilia, both of whom were allegedly killed by witchcraft.*

to be burned by the hangman on his accession, but seems to have tempered his belief toward the end of his reign. Nonetheless he probably exerted a powerful influence upon Francis, 6th Earl of Rutland. In 1619, three local women, Joan, Phillippa and Margaret Flower, were arrested for allegedly murdering Rutland's sons by witchcraft. All three lost their lives. Joan Flower reputedly died choking on bread she had asked for as a substitute for the Eucharist. Her two daughters were executed after their trial at Lincoln in 1619. Three other local women, Anne Baker of Bottesford, Joan Willimot of Goadby, and Ellen Greene of Stathern, were also arrested and examined, but their fate is not recorded.

Francis's daughter Katherine was selected by the Duchess of Buckingham to wed her son George Villiers, 1st Duke of Buckingham, the King's favorite and probable lover. However this did not go smoothly. The families were unable to agree the dowry and King James forbade his favourite from marrying a Catholic. Katherine, like her father, was a Catholic, but she eventually agreed to become a Protestant, the dowry was increased, and they married in 1620. They had four children before Buckingham's assassination in 1628 by a disaffected army officer, John Felton. In 1623, Francis had commanded the fleet accompanying Prince Charles back from Spain after the failure to gain the hand of the Spanish Infanta. This project, with its prospect of aligning the English and Spanish crowns during the Thirty Years War, horrified many of the English Protestants who would later come to be known as the Puritans. Their open celebration of its failure was one of the straws in the wind that foretold the conflicts to come. Francis Manners' last official duty was at James I's funeral in 1625. Katherine re-married the Irish peer Randal MacDonnell, 1st Marquis of Antrim, in 1635.

*Effigy of Katherine, daughter of Francis, the 6th Earl of Rutland, and Countess Frances, his 1st wife, kneeling at the head of the tomb.*



## George Manners, 7th Earl of Rutland (1632 –1641).

Next to the priest's door, the neoclassical marble effigy of Earl George, standing erect in fanciful Roman dress. This tomb and that of the 8th Earl, both erected in 1686, were by Grinling Gibbons to designs by Gabriel Cibber. The Belvoir Accounts include a receipt dated 12th July, 1686, from Gibbons to the 9th Earl for £100 paid for two tombs. It seems that Earl George did not get his memorial until 45 years after his death.

The youngest son of the 4th Earl, George served in Ireland with his brothers Roger and Francis, and was knighted by the Earl of Essex. Like his brothers he joined the Essex Rebellion of 1601, but also like Francis was excused his fine after the intervention of Sir Robert Cecil. After the accession of James I he became MP for Grantham then in 1614 MP for Lincolnshire in the *Addled Parliament*, which tried but failed to limit James's extravagance. He served in the Parliament of 1621 and again in 1624 when he represented Stamford in the *Happy Parliament*, so called because it was James's last Parliament and was determined not to disagree with the king. Sir George Manners was re-elected in 1625 to the *Useless Parliament*, Charles I's first Parliament, which tried to limit the king's powers to raise customs duties in a way that no other monarch had previously experienced (Charles continued to raise customs revenue, and dismissed parliament when it tried to impeach Buckingham following his failure to lift the siege of La Rochelle). George Manners entered the peerage as the 7<sup>th</sup> Earl of Rutland in 1632 on the death of his brother Francis, and served in the Lords until his death in 1641, eighteen months before the start of the English Civil War. The Earl's wife, Countess Frances, daughter of Sir Edward Cary and sister of Viscount Falkland, the Royalist poet, died in 1641. They had no children and she was denied a place in this monument, which seems harsh and difficult to justify by modern standards. At any rate, his titles passed to his second cousin, John Manners.

*Marble statue of George Manners, 7th Earl of Rutland.*



## John Manners, 8th Earl of Rutland (1641 – 1679) and Countess Frances (née Montague), d.1671.

Next to the vestry door is the white marble tomb of Earl John and Countess Frances, again in roman dress. He inherited after the death of the 7th Earl brought the direct descent to an end and the title passed to the cadet branch of Haddon Hall in Derbyshire. He was grandson of Sir John Manners of Haddon, who was the second son of Thomas, 1st Earl of Rutland. Countess Frances was the daughter of Edward Lord Montague of Boughton. They had at least eleven children. Of three sons only the third John survived, becoming the 9th Earl and, in 1703, 1<sup>st</sup> Duke of Rutland.

Earl John was MP for Derbyshire during the *Short Parliament* of 1640 and a supporter of Parliament. After inheriting in 1641 he sat in the House of Lords and was one of the few peers to remain in London despite the King's summons to Oxford after his failure to arrest the five Westminster MPs in 1642. Following the outbreak of the Civil War, Belvoir Castle was taken into Royalist possession by Gervase Lucas, a member of the Earl's household, and Baptist Noel, Viscount Campden (John Manners was later to claim compensation from the estate of Campden). The Castle became a Royalist cavalry base, visited by King Charles as well as Princes Rupert and Maurice. However, John Manners confirmed his loyalty to the Protestant cause in 1643 by signing the Solemn League and Covenant to install Presbyterian church government in England in exchange for Scottish military support. The Castle was besieged in 1645 by Parliamentary soldiers under Sednham Poyntz, and Lucas surrendered on February 3rd, 1646, when he was allowed to march out with his garrison to Lichfield. The castle was demolished in 1649 with the reluctant agreement of the Earl of Rutland, as a part of the campaign to 'slight' or destroy English castles to prevent them being re-captured by the Royalists, as Colchester had been in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Civil War. Both Newark Castle and Nottingham Castle were slighted in the same process.



*The marble effigies of John, 8th Earl of Rutland, and Countess Frances.*



*Faces of the marble statues of John Manners, the 8th Earl of Rutland, and Countess Frances.*

John Manners served from 1646 as Chief Justice in Eyre, North of Trent. Like many Parliamentary leaders who later became Whigs he was reconciled to the Restoration of Charles II, becoming Lord Lieutenant of Leicestershire from

1667 until July 1677. Nichols reports that from 1666 he devoted most of his time to restoring Belvoir Castle. He died in 1679.