

Monumental Brass Society

OCTOBER 2023



BULLETIN 154

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Hon. Treasurer's notice

On 1st January all subscriptions for 2023 became due. Please send £25.00 (associate/student £12.50, family £35.00) to the Hon. Treasurer, Robert Kinsey, 4 Pictor Close, Corsham, Wiltshire SN13 9XH. Payment can be made using the *PayPal* system via mbs_brasses@yahoo.com or make cheques payable to the 'Monumental Brass Society'. Many thanks to all those members who have completed Gift Aid forms. Any U.K. tax-paying member can enable the Society to reclaim tax on their subscription. The appropriate form can be downloaded directly from www.mbs-brasses.co.uk. U.S. members preferring to pay in dollars can send a cheque for U.S. \$45.00 to Shirley Mattox at 1313 Jackson Street, Oshkosh, Wisconsin 54901, U.S.A.

Editorial

I have now served for more than a year! I always enjoy hearing news about brasses and the Society. This issue includes a message from our new President, **Kelcey Wilson-Lee**; reports on recent meetings at Ardingly and the British Museum; **David Meara**'s reflections on sixty years as a member of the M.B.S.; **Kevin Herring**'s description of an astonishingly elaborate brass in Cologne Cathedral to a 19th-century Archbishop of Cologne; a brief report of a new indent discovery in Essex; and, sadly, an obituary for our member and my friend, **Clive Burgess**.

I am also grateful to **Martin Stuchfield** for his continued assistance with the production of the *Bulletin*.

There are still unfilled vacancies on the Society's Executive Council. Once again I urge any members with time to spare to volunteer to be elected to Council for a three-year term. It is an excellent way to learn about the inner workings of the Society. Council meets three times a year, in February, May and October, and most meetings now take place virtually. This makes attendance easier as well as avoiding the cost of room hire. If you are interested in being elected, please contact Penny Williams, the Hon. Secretary.

Stephen Freeth

Personalia

We welcome as a new member:

Michael Ralston, 9 Coxwell Court, Cirencester, Gloucestershire GL7 2BZ.

It is with deep regret that we report the death of **Clive Burgess** who had been member of the Society since 2009 (see p.1080). The Society also mourns the passing of **Mike Good**, **Kevin Kearney** and **Nick Stringer** who had been members of the Society since 1975, 2004 and 2005 respectively.

Cover: Two hands issuing from clouds and supporting a heart inscribed *Credo*, c.1500, at Elmstead, Essex (LSW.II). The brass lies in its original slab in the chancel, and has a scroll (not shown) which reads *videre Bona domini*. The complete text, continued across from the heart to the scroll, is *Credo videre Bona domini*, or, *I believe that I shall see the good things of the Lord*. It is not known whom the brass commemorated. The inscription plate was lost before c.1747.

(photo: © Martin Stuchfield)

A message from our new President



Having been a student of monumental brasses since 2003 and a member of the Society since 2009, I am deeply honoured to serve as President of the Society and am very grateful to Council for their warm welcome. Most especially, I want to thank David Meara, Stephen Freeth and Nigel Saul for their support and advice as I continue to learn more about the M.B.S.' core work, and Martin Stuchfield for the myriad ways he continues to support both the Society and the field of monumental brasses more broadly.

As you know, our Society was formed 136 years ago, but what has struck me already is how very active our members are, and how the depth of scholarship I have long associated with the M.B.S. is matched by an easy readiness by many among you to offer time and talents in the service of our wonderful events series, our *Transactions*, our *Bulletin*, and wider activities. Any Society is only as strong as its volunteers, and I want to express my thanks to all of you who make our collective work possible, as well as to issue a call for any members who may wish to become more involved to reach out to me. We would love to include you.

What first attracted me to the study of monumental brasses was the way they offer rich source material for diverse historical and art-historical questions.

Our subject continues to provide unique insight to scholars, many of whom publish important works within our flagship journal, the *Transactions*. Under the guidance of our new Honorary Editor, Lucia Diaz Pascual, I look forward to further articles that will bring fresh new approaches to keep our field of enquiry alive and exciting for researchers of all ages. I hope to work closely with Lucia and a new Editorial Board, being developed, to increase the visibility of our journal among younger researchers in particular. The study of brasses will only thrive in the longer term with their active engagement.

Another priority for me is the promotion of brasses to the wider public. Compared to the brass-rubbing heyday of the 1970s, our field presently suffers from too little general awareness about brasses. Many churches have installed carpets over their brasses, no doubt with good conservation intentions, but I am afraid that with brasses increasingly out of sight, they are also often out of mind. I believe that a core goal for our Society in the years ahead must be to put effort towards reversing this trend – to encourage more engagement with brasses and other two-dimensional monuments by scholars, church crawlers, and young people – so that we can ultimately hand the baton to the next generation confident that brasses will continue to be looked after, studied and enjoyed well into the future.

Alongside our usual fabulous array of church excursions and study days planned for the year ahead, therefore, we are brainstorming new approaches for engaging the public and encouraging new members. One area is a new short series of online lectures we're putting on during the darker months. Finally, I want to ask you to be in touch if you have ideas for broadening awareness of our Society or our subject to the wider public. We need lots of good ideas if we are to succeed, and I look forward to working with you all on this.

I look forward to meeting as many of you as possible in the months ahead.

Kelcey Wilson-Lee
kelcey.arwen@gmail.com

Diary of events

Saturday, 28th October 2023

GENERAL MEETING – VIRTUAL

***THE BEAUCHAMPS AND THEIR FRIENDS:
TOMBS AND COMMEMORATION IN
ST. MARY'S CHURCH, WARWICK***

Nigel Saul will speak at this virtual meeting via Zoom, which is free to attend and open to all. St. Mary's is famous today for its great monuments to the Beauchamp Earls of Warwick, one of them a magnificent brass to Earl Thomas Beauchamp (d.1401) and his wife. The lecture will look afresh at these monuments, in particular at the brass of Earl Thomas and his wife, and it will go on to consider the many lost brasses in the church, victims of the great fire of 1694, engravings of which, made before their destruction, appear in Dugdale's *Antiquities of Warwickshire*. To conclude, some observations will be offered on the unassuming little post-Reformation brass of Thomas Oken and his wife, which actually has a very interesting inscription.

Please register to attend via the Society's website.

Saturday, 25th November 2023

GENERAL MEETING – VIRTUAL

ROSARIES ON BRASSES – AND ELSEWHERE

Nicholas Rogers will speak at this virtual meeting via Zoom, which is free to attend and open to all. Rosaries are often depicted on late medieval English brasses. This talk will trace the origins and development of this devotional aid, look at the materials of which the beads were made, and examine the various ways rosaries are depicted as a dress accessory and in use on monuments and in other works of art. The impact of the Reformation and the survival of the rosary as a significant element in recusant religious life will also be considered.

Please register to attend via the Society's website.

Saturday, 20th April 2024

GENERAL MEETING

HEREFORD CATHEDRAL

The Cathedral contains a great many brasses or remains of brasses, described in detail in the Society's booklet published in 2005 (Peter Heseltine and H. Martin Stuchfield, *The Monumental Brasses of Hereford Cathedral*). The visit will be limited to a

maximum of 40 people. It will include a tour of the Cathedral as well as the Chained Library and Mappa Mundi.

Further details will be announced in due course.

Saturday, 20th July 2024

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

BEDDINGTON, SURREY

Several brasses which are normally inaccessible will be available to view.

Further details will be announced in due course.

Saturday, 14th September 2024

STUDY DAY

ST. ALBANS CATHEDRAL, HERTFORDSHIRE

The Society has booked a meeting room at the Cathedral and facilities for 50 members from 9.00a.m. to 4.30p.m. Nicholas Rogers has offered to speak on the *Liber Vitae*, and Derrick Chivers has offered to give a tour of the brasses.

More details will follow in due course.



*St. Ethelbert, king and martyr, a small seated figure holding his crowned head in his left hand, engraved c.1290, Hereford Cathedral (LSWI).
(photo: © Martin Stuchfield)*

Annual General Meeting

Ardingly, Sussex – 8th July 2023

The formal business took place in the morning in St. Peter's church, and the General Meeting followed in the afternoon, attended by members, parishioners, members of Ardingly History Society and others from further afield, a total of nearly fifty people.

Ardingly church was built near the crossing of two ancient roads, from Hapstead to Balcombe (east to west) and from Clayton to Selsfield (south to north). There may have been a Saxon settlement here. The advowson lay with the Prior of Lewes, an important Cluniac monastery founded in the eleventh century. Ardingly church was rebuilt in the fourteenth century, and the tower was added in the 15th century.

In the sanctuary lies the tomb and brass of Richard Wakehurst, esquire (d.1454) and his wife Elizabeth (née Echingham) (d.1464), with three heraldic shields and a canopy (M.S.I). Their son Richard married Agnes Gaynesford and had two daughters, Margaret and Elizabeth, who married the brothers Richard and Nicholas Culpeper.

The brasses of the two brothers and their wives lie on the chancel floor. Both Richard and Nicholas are shown wearing armour. Parts of Richard's brass have been restored. The brass of Nicholas and his wife includes ten sons and eight daughters, the largest family group recorded on a Sussex brass (M.S.III).

Near the altar on the south side are brasses for Elizabeth Culpeper (née Farnfold) (d.1633), shown richly dressed (M.S.IV), and her granddaughter, also Elizabeth Culpeper (d.1634), who sadly died aged only seven (M.S.V) (Fig.1).

Our first speaker was **Heather Warne**, who had worked as an archivist at East Sussex Record Office. In her talk, *Landscape, Manors and Families in early Ardingly*, she showed a series of beautiful photographs of the village and of the surrounding countryside, demonstrating the use made of the estate by the Wakehursts and Culpepers. Stone was quarried at Wakehurst, generating income.



Fig.1. Elizabeth Culpeper, d.1634 aged seven, Ardingly, Sussex (M.S.V). (photo: © Challe Hudson)

Heather's talk provided important context for the study of the brasses.

Bob Hutchinson (Fig.2) then spoke about *The Brasses in Ardingly Church*. Bob is an M.B.S. member and has written a number of books about the Tudor period, including *The Last Days of Henry VIII*, and *Elizabeth's Spy Master*. He proposed that history is a living subject, constantly open to reinterpretation, and applied

this to the often-told story that Margaret and Elizabeth Wakehurst were abducted and forced into marriage by Richard and Nicholas Culpeper. The legal record about ‘the seide Margaret and Elizabeth at the tyme of their taking away making grete and pitteious lamentation and wepyng’ may have been just special pleading by their outraged grandmother. The large number of children of Nicholas and Elizabeth Culpeper, not all of whom survived into adulthood, were needed to ensure the continuance of the family line.

After a break for tea and cake and a chance to view the brasses, our final speaker was our member **Challe Hudson** on *The softer materials of the memorials: Imagining the colours and textures remembered in brass and stone*. Using many illustrations, Challe showed portraits and other brasses to illustrate layers of clothing and the richness of the materials depicted, such as velvet or cloth embroidered with gold. She also unravelled the various headdresses depicted in brass, and how they were supported. It seemed particularly poignant to think of seven-year-old Elizabeth Culpeper (d.1634) having to wear so many layers of

clothing! Afterwards, people crowded to look at the fabric samples that Challe had brought to show.

Our new President, **Kelcey Wilson-Lee**, closed the meeting with thanks to all three speakers and to all who attended.

It was a great privilege for me to see the Monumental Brass Society at St. Peter’s church. I was baptised and confirmed there, and my late father served as a Lay Assistant. Nigel Saul has described the brasses as ‘magnificent and under-studied’. I am delighted that so many people came to learn about them.

Thanks are due to all three speakers for their varied and fascinating talks, and to the Rector, John Crutchley, for being so welcoming and letting us take over the church for the day. Churchwardens Nigel Chanter and John Witherington were also very kind, and John joined in for much of the day. [*We also had a magnificent tea for which Caroline and her husband Steve deserve full credit!* – Editor.]

Caroline Metcalfe



Fig.2. Bob Hutchinson speaking at Ardingly.
(photo: © Challe Hudson)

A.G.M. formal business

The 2023 Annual General Meeting was held on 8th July at Ardingly in Sussex. Apologies were received and the minutes of the last A.G.M. on 16th July 2022 were approved by the meeting and signed. The Report and Accounts for 2022 were also approved. Paul Larsen, F.C.I.I. was re-elected as Independent Examiner.

The meeting then proceeded to elect the Hon. Officers en bloc: Kelcey Wilson-Lee as President; Nigel Saul, Martin Stuchfield, Nicholas Rogers, David Meara and Stephen Freeth as Vice-Presidents; Penny Williams as Hon. Secretary; Robert Kinsey as Hon. Treasurer; and Lucia Diaz Pascual as Hon. Editor.

Derrick Chivers and Challe Hudson retired from the Executive Council by rotation. Challe Hudson was co-opted back at the October 2023 meeting of the Executive Council as Communications Officer. Caroline Metcalfe having been duly nominated was elected to serve on the Executive Council.

Nigel Saul, Chairman of the Judges, then made the inaugural presentation of the Jonathan Ali Prize. The worthy winner was Robert Kinsey, for his article on the brass of Sir John and Lady Alyne de Creke at Westley Waterless, Cambridgeshire.

This superb article was both scholarly and readable.

After the formal business there were talks in the afternoon on aspects of Ardingly and its brasses by Heather Warne, Bob Hutchinson and Challe Hudson.

At the Executive Council held on 7th October 2023 the following appointments were approved:

Hon. Assistant Secretary: Caroline Metcalfe

Hon. Bulletin Editor: Vacant*

Hon. Conservation Officer: Martin Stuchfield

Hon. Heraldic Adviser: Sir Thomas Woodcock, formerly Garter Principal King of Arms.

Hon. Communications Officer: Challe Hudson

Hon. Technical Editor: Matthew Sillence

*Stephen Freeth is performing the role as Guest Editor pending a formal appointment.

Penny Williams, Hon. Secretary



*Rob Kinsey receives the inaugural Jonathan Ali Prize from Nigel Saul.
(photo: © Challe Hudson)*

General Meeting

British Museum, London – 12th September 2023

On 12th September 2023 the Society held a weekday meeting at the British Museum. Organised by Matthew Sillence, we were welcomed by Naomi Speakman, Curator, Late Medieval Europe. She and her colleagues then showed us a selection from the museum's extensive collection of brasses.

Because the room was small, we were limited to fifteen people per session, but Naomi and her colleagues kindly hosted two duplicate sessions, in the morning and afternoon. Stephen Freeth and Nicholas Rogers led the sessions and explained the brasses. Naomi Speakman gave a brief introductory talk each time.

The Society last visited the museum in June 1997, for a one-day Symposium, when our member John Cherry showed us the brasses. It was good to see them again. That visit was written up in a special issue of the *Transactions* (XVI, pt.4 (2000-1)).

Among the brasses displayed this time was the large French rectangular plate for Nicholas le Brun, Bailiff of Jeumont in northern France, d.1547, and



Fig 1. Palimpsest reverse showing Thomas Quythed, c.1420-40, British Museum, London (M.S.I(3)).
(photo: © Stephen Freeth)

his wife. This was a revelation. It has much fine detail, not apparent in published illustrations. It also has complex iconography and a multitude of religious quotations and tags. It deserves to be photographed properly and written up in detail.

Also on display were two small palimpsest roundels, the obverses of c.1600 showing symbolism probably related to land surveying, and the reverses showing two medieval priests (Figs.1 and 2). One priest is named as Thomas Quythed, *tercius magister istius collegii* (third Master of this college). Nicholas Rogers speculated that this might have come originally from Walworth's College at St. Michael Crooked Lane in the City of London. The other reverse, in much poorer condition, pitted and also clipped around the margin, appears to show the priest John Mervin with his two brothers and two sisters. These two palimpsest reverses came from two different 15th-century brasses since they were engraved at different times, respectively c.1420-40 and c.1450.

One of the most enjoyable aspects of M.B.S. meetings is the comments and suggestions made by



Fig 2. Palimpsest reverse showing John Mervin and his brothers and sisters, c.1450, British Museum, London (M.S.I(2)).
(photo: © Stephen Freeth)

members. Mike Harris, as a former naval officer, demolished the idea that the obverse of one of these roundels shows a sextant, as had been suggested in the past. Another member suggested that we might all be looking in the wrong place when trying to work out where the obverses come from. They might not come from a *brass* of a land surveyor, but from the ornamental surround of a mural monument.

We also examined the palimpsest figure of Lady Elizabeth Blount from South Kyme, Lincolnshire. (See Ann Dowden's account of this plate in *M.B.S. Trans.*, XIV, pt.5 (1990), pp.356-9.) Here Challe Hudson commented that the ermine around Lady Blount's shoulders is not part of her heraldic mantle, but a subtle indicator of royal status. Lady Blount's figure is part of the brass of her husband Gilbert Taylboys, d.1530, but she was also King Henry VIII's mistress, and the mother of his beloved illegitimate son Henry Fitzroy, Duke of Richmond, K.G.

We also looked at the canopy fragments from the brass of Peter de Lacy, priest, d.1375, at Northfleet, Kent (Fig.3). This church was heavily restored in the 19th century, and the remaining portions

of the de Lacy brass are now set in a cement slab with a recreated marginal inscription and no canopy! Indeed the surroundings of the church itself are now rather bleak, on the edge of a huge hole dug by the local cement works. (It is the location of the funeral in the film *Four Weddings and a Funeral*, where the bleak landscape is emphasised.)

We know the original layout of the de Lacy brass from a drawing of c.1810 by Thomas Fisher. The canopy fragments in the museum's collection come from the pediment and pinnacles. Part of the pediment has what might be taken for original black mastic. However one member pointed out that the figure of Peter de Lacy, still in the church floor, is now very difficult to rub, the lines being filled with Victorian mastic. Perhaps the mastic in the pediment was part of a trial run?

We are most grateful to Naomi Speakman for her friendly welcome and for looking after us so well. The British Museum's collection of brasses continues to repay study.

Stephen Freeth



Fig.3. Canopy fragments from the brass of Peter de Lacy, d.1375, at Northfleet, Kent, British Museum, London (M.S.VI(2)).
(photo: © Stephen Freeth)



Fig 1. Johannes von Geißel, d.1864, Cologne Cathedral, Germany.
(rubbing: © Kevin Herring)

The brass of Johannes von Geissel, d.1864, in Cologne Cathedral

In *Bulletin* 143 (February 2020), Hans-Gerd Dormagen introduced and illustrated six outstanding Neo-Gothic brasses to Archbishops/Cardinals on the floor of the choir of Cologne Cathedral, immediately above the Archbishops' crypt.¹ This article focuses on Archbishop and Cardinal Johannes von Geissel.

The brass comprises a single plate (2720 x 1250 mm) with a life-size figure of the deceased standing under a simple canopy with ogee arch topped with an entablature containing spandrels, and slender side shafts (Fig.1). The figure extends right up to the apex of the arch so that it dominates the composition. Within the spandrels are, dexter, St. Peter, patron saint of the cathedral, with key and book, and, sinister, St. John the Baptist, patron saint of the deceased, holding the Lamb of God in one hand and a scroll in the other proclaiming *Ecce agnus dei*. The whole composition borrows extensively from the 14th-century Flemish School of brasses, and in particular the following brasses in Lübeck: in the cathedral to Bishops Serken and Mul (1350); formerly in the Petrikerche but now

destroyed to Johann Klingenberg (1356); and in the Katharinenkirche to Johannes Lüneborch (1461), which in turn was influenced by the Klingenberg design.

Geissel is a portrait brass with stern features. His mitre (*Mitra Pretiosa*) shows the Nativity with the Adoration of the Magi, and roundels containing the heads of saints. The *infulae* are visible by his neck and amice. His gloved right hand is raised in the act of blessing; his left hand, facing downwards, holds his pastoral staff, which traverses his body and rests on a winged dragon with curled tail. The alb with apparel extends down to the decorative buskins on his feet. An Archbishop's pallium with nine crosses in roundels is placed over the chasuble, which has a decorative border similar to ecclesiastical Flemish brasses. The ends of the stole are visible below the dalmatic which is embroidered with small crosses within roundels. Over the left wrist is a long maniple. There is a diapered background to the whole figure comprising alternating creatures and foliage within quadrilobes.

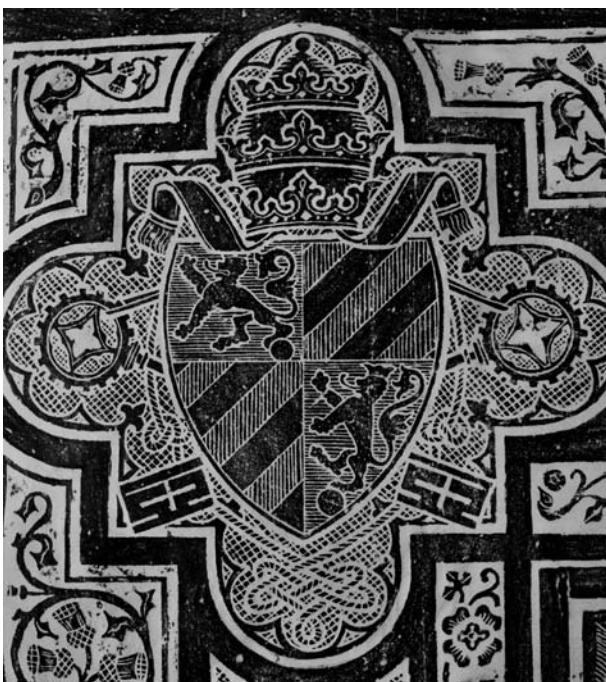


Fig.2. Arms of Pope Pius IX.
(rubbing: © Kevin Herring)



Fig.3. Arms of Archbishop von Geissel.
(rubbing: © Kevin Herring)

The marginal inscription reads:

Ioannes S(anctae) R(omanae) E(cclesiae) Cardinalis
de Geissel natus v Febr(uarii) Mdccxcvi creatu(s) /
Ep(iscop)us Spiren(sis) Mdcccxxxvii / Coadiutor
Colonien(sis) Mdcccxli Archiep(iscop)us C(oloniensis)
Mdcccxlv Cardinalis Mdcccl / defu(n)ct(us) viii
Sept(embris) Mdcccclxiv

And underneath the last line: R(equiescat) I(n) P(ace).

The brass is signed at the bases of the canopy shafts: sinister: M. Welter pinx(it). dexter: J.B. Hilgers fec(it).

In the four corners is the following heraldry:

Top left: Pope Pius IX, *Argent a tiara or with crossed keys or and argent, with arms, Quarterly 1 and 4 Azure a lion rampant langued and crowned, standing on a globe or; 2 and 3 Bendy of five argent and gules* (Fig.2).

Top right: Von Geissel, *A Cardinal's Hat gules, cross and staff or, with fifteen ermine tails each side gules, and Prussian Order of the Black Eagle sable, with arms, Or a scourge sable covered with a pallium argent* (Fig.3).

Bottom left: City of Cologne, *A Helm and visor argent, with arms, Eleven ermine tails 5, 4 and 2 sable, on a chief gules three crowns or.*

Bottom right: Archdiocese of Cologne, *Argent a cross sable.*



Fig 4. Border of the brass of Johannes Lüneborch, d.1461, Katherinenkirche, Lübeck, Germany. (rubbing: © Kevin Herring)

On the outer sides of the marginal inscription is a border of intertwined tendrils with occasional strange beasts, some with wings. This border is similar to the lost Klingenberg brass referred to above, which has vines interspersed with kings' heads and griffins, a theme repeated on the Lüneborch brass (Fig.4). The diapered background to the von Geissel figure, its stance, the way the pastoral staff is held, the detail of the chasuble border and the winged dragon with curled tail at the feet are all clearly reminiscent of the Serken and Mul brass (Figs.5 and 6).

The single plate was cast by the metal and bell foundry family firm of Claren, active in both Cologne and Sieglar during the 18th and 19th centuries, during Christian Claren's time at Sieglar. It was delivered in October 1867 and cost 638 Thalers and 20 Silver Groats. It was then engraved by Johann Baptist Hilgers of Cologne at a contract price of 750 Thalers and laid down in the Choir in August 1872.² Michael Welter from Cologne (1808-92) designed the brass and provided the template for the engraving. He specialised in ecclesiastical artwork including wall paintings and stained glass. Between 1866 and 1873 he designed sixteen windows for the nave and south transept of the cathedral.³

Johannes von Geissel was born at Gimmeldingen in the Palatinate on 5th February 1796. He studied Theology at the diocesan seminary in Mainz and was ordained priest in August 1818. By June 1822 he was a Canon of the cathedral chapter of Speyer, and was consecrated as Bishop of Speyer in August 1837. His fortunes increased with the accession to the Prussian throne of Friedrich Wilhelm IV, who wanted a resolution to the conflict between church and state (known as the Conflict of Köln). The Archbishop, Clemens August von Droste-Vischering, was to abstain from the running of the Archdiocese, with Geissel appointed as Coadjutor by Pope Gregory XVI, with the right of succession. In January 1846 he duly became Archbishop on Vischering's death, and was made a Cardinal by Pope Pius IX in September 1850. He expanded the work of the Archdiocese, founding seminaries to educate the clergy. He was also keen to ensure the future prosperity of the Catholic church, and organised an



Fig. 5. Detail from the Serken & Mul brass, 1350, Lübeck Cathedral, Germany.
(rubbing: © Kevin Herring)

inaugural conference of the German Episcopate at Würzburg in 1848. He had a particular interest in the completion of Cologne cathedral. This finally took place in October 1863, before his death on 8th September 1864.⁴

I record my thanks to Dombaumeister Füssenich for permission to rub the cathedral brasses, and to Herr Matthias Deml for invaluable assistance during my visit.

Kevin Herring

- 1 *M.B.S. Bulletin* 143 (February 2020), pp.856-8. Herr Dormagen has also produced a detailed account of these Neo-Gothic brasses, comprehensively referenced. This remains unpublished but has been seen by the author.
- 2 *Dombau Archiv Köln*, 344 Bl 28r; LR 208.
- 3 Ursula Blanchebarbe, 'Michael Welter 1808-92. Ein Kölner Dekorationsmaler im 19. Jahrhundert', *Kölner Schriften zur Geschichte und Kultur*, VII (1984).
- 4 *Catholic Encyclopedia* (1913)/ Johannes von Geissel (Wikisource); Robert Haass, 'Geissel, Johannes von' in *Neue Deutsche Biographie*, VI (1964), pp.157-8 (online version, URL: <https://www.deutsche-biographie.de/pnd118716670.html#ndbcontent>); Archiv des Erzbistum Köln Metropolitankapitel, Nr.128 (Will and Testament).



Fig. 6. The dragon beneath the feet of Archbishop von Geissel, Cologne Cathedral, Germany.
(rubbing: © Kevin Herring)

The revival of the M.B.S. in 1934

The Monumental Brass Society was severely affected by the Great War, and became dormant. Fortunately early in 1934 several former members, including Reginald Pearson, arranged for it to be revived. Having done so, they placed a notice in the *Times* newspaper for 2nd November 1934 inviting interest from any brass enthusiasts whom they had not already contacted.

The following documents from 1934 were found in the library of our late member Leslie Smith. They comprise the draft of a letter sent by Wilfred J. Hemp in response to the notice in the *Times*; Reginald Pearson's reply; and the *Rules* of the revived Society. Several of Leslie Smith's books came from Hemp's library and had his bookplate. These papers must have been among them.

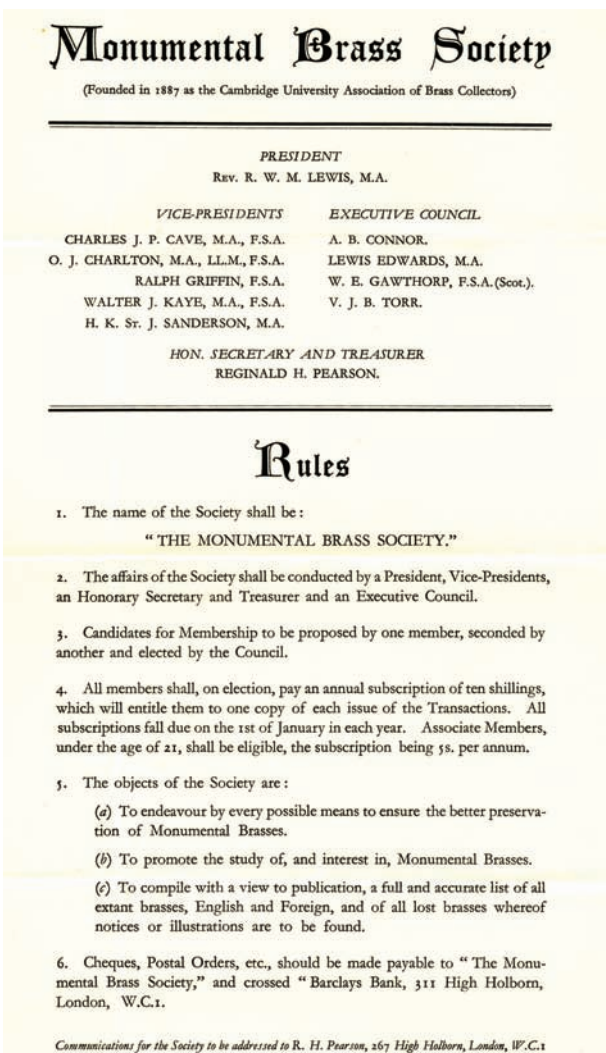


Fig 1. The Rules of the revived Monumental Brass Society.

Wilfred James Hemp (1882-1962) was born in England but became the first ever Inspector of Ancient Monuments for Wales, and Secretary of the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of Wales and Monmouthshire. He also became a Vice-President of the M.B.S. and has a memorial tablet at St. Catherine's, Criccieth.

He owned a small fragment of a medieval brass (Mill Stephenson's *List*, p.584). This was a broken figure of the Virgin and Child, c.1400. This fragment was published by R.H. D'Elboux in our *Transactions* (VIII, pt.3 (December 1945), pp.102-4), with the title 'A Cobham Finial in Private Possession'. The attribution to Cobham has since been rejected. The plate is now part of the Burrell Collection in Glasgow.

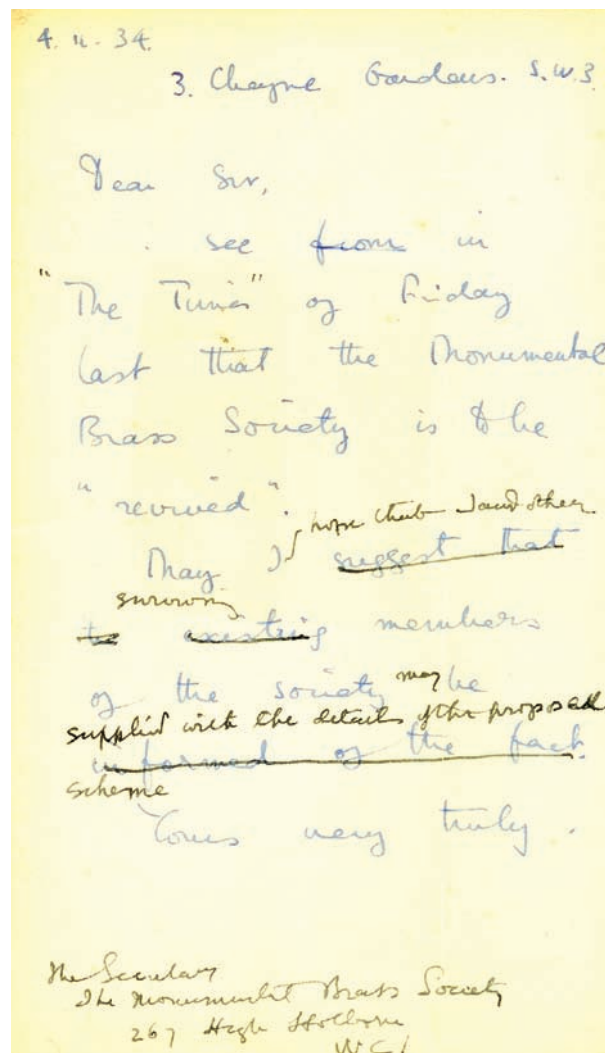


Fig 2. W.J. Hemp's draft letter enquiring about the revival of the M.B.S., dated 4th November 1934.

Reginald Pearson is generally acknowledged to have been the individual most responsible for the revival of the M.B.S. '267 High Holborn' was his business address, for he and his wife lived at 85 Addiscombe Road, Croydon. He was an engineer, and Managing Director of Reginald H. Pearson Limited, Aerial Ropeway Engineers. He was responsible for the conservation and repair of a great many brasses, using his

technical knowledge. Sadly, on his death in 1961, the majority of his records of repairs went to the dustman, although a few of his reports and 'blueprints' have fortunately survived. Some of his rubbings of palimpsests are now in the V&A Museum, and can be seen online

Stephen Freeth

Monumental Brass Society

(Founded in 1887 as the Cambridge University Association of Brass Collectors)

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Communications for the Society to be addressed to

Hon. Secretary and Treasurer: REGINALD H. PEARSON

267 HIGH HOLBORN · LONDON · WC·1

5th November, 1934.

W. J. Hemp, Esq.,
3 Cheyne Gardens,
S. W. 3.

Dear Sir,

In reply to your letter of yesterday's date, when the revival of the Society took place, early in the year, I endeavoured to communicate with all the old members that I could find, but as the only list was dated 1909 this was not of very great service.

I enclose a few circulars with regard to the Society, and would say that our first volume of transactions is now in the printers' hands. I should very much like to add your name to the list of members, and if you could let me have a line during the course of this week, this could be included in the printed lists.

I am glad to say that we have a large number of the old members including Mr. Griffin, Mr. Charlton, and Mr. Sanderson, and, of course, our President, Mr. Lewis.

Yours faithfully,

Reginald H. Pearson.

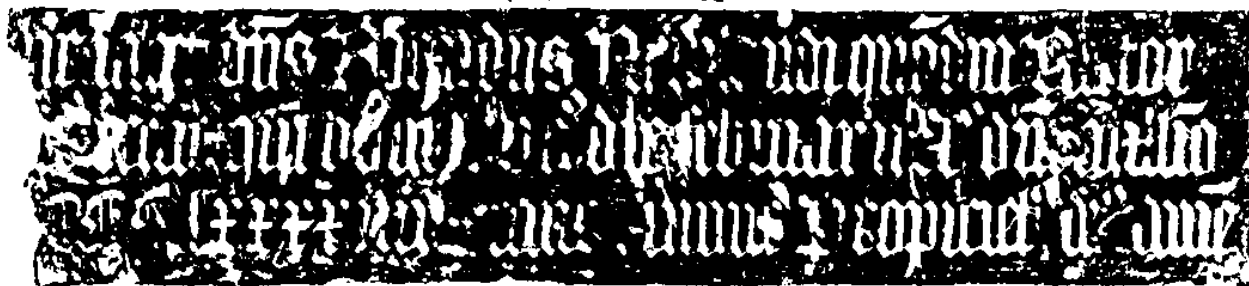
Fig.3. Reginald Pearson's reply, dated 5th November 1934.

Sixty years a member

This summer of 2023 marks the sixtieth year of my membership of the Monumental Brass Society. I joined as a sixteen-year-old schoolboy in 1963, although I had been visiting churches and rubbing brasses since I was twelve, when I was living in Pinner in Middlesex, the heart of Metroland. My brother and I would cycle off to explore the churches of the Chiltern Hills, enthused by the *Collins Guide to English Parish Churches* (1958), edited by John Betjeman, with his superb historical introduction. Soon we were taking rubbings of the brasses we discovered, my first being that to Richard Newland, 1494, a priest in

mass vestments in St. Michael's church at Chenies, Buckinghamshire (LSW.III). My rubbing technique at that stage wasn't very good, but I was hooked. As my interest, and my collection, grew, I decided to join the M.B.S., and got in touch with the Hon. Secretary, Major Owen Evans. He encouraged me to come to one of the General Meetings, which took place at the Art Workers' Guild in Queen Square, London.

It must have been at the summer meeting of 1963 when I first entered the imposing Main Hall, the walls lined with portraits of former



*Richard Newland (?) rector, 1494, in mass vestments without stole,
Chenies, Buckinghamshire (LSW.III).
(rubbing: © Lack, Stuchfield and Whittemore, Buckinghamshire)*

Masters of the Guild, the floor covered with wicker chairs, and the raised dais at the front, where illustrious senior officers of the Society were gathered... all rather daunting for a schoolboy. The President was the august F.A. Greenhill; Augustus White was the Treasurer; Canon David Rutter was the Editor of the *Transactions*; and G.H.S. Bushnell, H.K. Cameron and Lewis Edwards were Vice-Presidents. When Lewis Edwards became President the following year, I remember him falling asleep in the chair during a long meeting in the overheated hall. In those days well over one hundred members regularly attended, and the President always made a point of welcoming those from the U.S.A. Heelball was on sale, dispensed by Mrs. Evans; rubbings were often hung around the room; and tea was taken at the end, with a splendid array of cakes.

A few years after I joined, during my time as an undergraduate at Oxford, I have warm memories of visiting Major and Mrs. Evans at their home on Rose Hill in Oxford, where Mrs. Evans provided a splendid tea, while Major Evans gave me advice about improving my rubbing technique. He generously gave me some of the special Society heelball, which gave a much blacker impression than the sort you could obtain from the local cobbler.

During the middle years of the 20th century brass rubbing became an incredibly popular national hobby. While many people remained hobby rubbers, a number found that a more serious interest was kindled, and joined the Society. Membership rose from 284 in 1960 to 400 by 1963 and continued to rise over the next ten years. I soon became involved in the affairs of the Society and in 1969 organised the first M.B.S. Conference, at Somerville College, Oxford. It was a great success, and over the years many others followed. In 1970 the full-scale revision of Mill Stephenson's *List* was launched, with Regional Controllers, but it was over twenty years before the illustrated *County Series* books started to appear, a truly monumental task which is still in progress. John Cottle had taken over as an energetic Treasurer in 1968, and I vividly remember him at conferences setting up his office in his room, with a good bottle of wine to share with members who dropped by.

I had begun to explore the 19th-century revival of brasses, and this interest was affirmed in 1973 when Richard Busby gave his seminal lecture on Victorian brasses. Two subsequent conferences focused on modern brasses, with talks and demonstrations by designers and engravers, and in 1983 I published *Victorian Memorial Brasses*, which sought to summarise current research about this hitherto taboo subject.

There has always been a tension in the Society between the interested generalist who enjoys taking rubbings and attending the occasional meeting, and the serious researcher who takes a more academic interest in the subject. At times it has been difficult to get the balance right. This was further complicated when in 1979 the International Society for the Study of Church Monuments was founded (now the C.M.S.), and many M.B.S. members became members of both. Some of the more serious members started contributing to both journals, and this coincided with the scholarly realisation that rather than studying brasses in isolation, it was more fruitful to pursue the comparative study of their social, cultural and artistic history, setting them in a wider historical and artistic context. On the whole, however, the M.B.S. has managed to retain its place and standing within the expanding field of the study of church monuments. The challenges for the future remain those of growing the membership, strengthening our appeal to the academic community, maintaining the quality of our publications, and fully embracing modern technology and digital communication.

Little did I imagine as a sixteen-year-old schoolboy meeting those venerable leaders of the Society at the Art Workers' Guild in 1963 that one day I too would be elected President, and serve with a newer generation of scholars and officers. It was a huge privilege to do so, and to see the Society move forward into the third millennium. As I look back over sixty years of membership, I remember many happy outings to rub brasses, the stimulus of lectures and conferences, and above all the many members and friends I have met along the way who have shared their knowledge and enthusiasm and increased my own. I feel profoundly grateful to them all. Long may the M.B.S. continue to flourish!

David Meara

The discovery of a brass indent at St. Peter's, Colchester



Newly discovered indent showing a man and two wives in shrouds with inscription below, marginal inscription with corner roundels, and scroll to a figure of (?) Christ in the top centre, c.1525, Colchester, St. Peter, Essex.

(photo: © Colchester Archaeological Trust)

In March/May 2023 groundworks for new toilets and kitchen in the north aisle of St. Peter's church, Colchester revealed the indent of a lost brass near the north wall. The slab was photographed by the Colchester Archaeological Trust but later reburied under protection. It measured approximately 2100 x 900 mm, and was complete and unbroken, though all the brass plates were missing. It lay east-west in what may have been its original position. The slab received no expert examination but was probably Purbeck marble, for a London-made brass. The photograph is not clear, but seems to show indents for a man and two wives in shrouds, with inscription, marginal inscription with roundels at corners, and a scroll rising to a small figure of Christ (?) in the top centre, of c.1525.

St. Peter's is partly medieval, but damage in the Colchester earthquake of 1692 led to much later rebuilding. This slab is not mentioned in the church notes of William Holman, c.1710, deposited in the Essex Record Office. Early 16th-century wills at TNA mention a Jesus chapel or Jesus altar. We do not know the location of this chapel or altar, but the wills may identify the small figure at the top of the slab.

The exact position of the indent is shown in the archaeological report (*C.A.T. Report 1940*, June 2023, slab F1 in diagram 1 and fig.2). The report includes (as 'Photograph 2') the photograph reproduced here, and another one looking east which has the slab in the background ('Photograph 4'). It is unfortunate that the significance of the slab was not recognised sooner. The M.B.S. could perhaps collaborate with training colleges so that archaeologists can recognise indent slabs. Such slabs have great value as finds, because they can often be dated within a few years.

We are grateful to David Andrews, the County Archaeologist for raising awareness of this important slab, and to Megan Beale, Project Osteologist and Archaeologist of the Colchester Archaeological Trust.

Stephen Freeth and Martin Stuchfield

An addendum to ‘The Victor of St. George’s Cay: Commander John Ralph Moss, R.N. (1759-99)’

In 2014 I published an article in our *Transactions* about the brass of Commander John Moss R.N., died 1799, now in Martin Stuchfield’s collection. (See *M.B.S. Trans.*, XIX, pt.1 (2014), pp.57-80.) Moss was the victor of the Battle of St. George’s Cay or Caye, which effectively secured the independence from Spain of present-day Belize on 10th September 1798, a day that is still a national holiday there.

The 225th anniversary of the battle of St. George’s Cay fell on 10th September 2023, and a commemoration was held on that little tropical island, led by the Admiral of the Belize Coast Guard. It centred on a locally-made replica of

John Moss’s brass. The replica was made by a Belizean sign maker, using a photograph of the original brass. The material used was reverse acrylic. Since the original was made for a desert island, albeit a different one, Grand Cayman, it is appropriate that a replica is now sited at the scene of Moss’s triumph. Eventually the Belizeans hope to obtain a replica of the real thing.

Martin Stuchfield writes, ‘I never thought for one moment that a late-18th [almost 19th] century brass would stimulate so much interest!’.

Mike Harris



Rear Admiral Elton Bennett, Commander Belize Coast Guard; Kate Reynolds, Deputy British High Commissioner; John Searle, Chairman, St. George’s Caye Village Council; and Dr. Melissa Badillo, Director, Institute of Archaeology, at the unveiling of the replica brass on 10th September 2023.

(photo: © John and Linda Searle)

In memoriam: Clive Burgess (1952-2023)

Our member Clive Burgess, who died unexpectedly in August at his home in St. Andrews, was a distinguished authority on English late medieval urban religious practices and beliefs.

Clive, an undergraduate at Corpus Christi College, Oxford, came to his work on medieval urban religion through his early postgraduate research on the records of the parish of All Saints, Bristol. This remarkable documentary deposit includes a series of wills, a long run of churchwardens' accounts, a cache of property deeds detailing the parish's landed endowment, an archive for the administration of the Halleway chantry and, above all, the so-called Church Book, which records the clerical and lay benefactors of the parish and the donations and bequests which they made. Through close study of these records Clive was able to build an extraordinarily detailed picture of the religious life of All Saints in the final century before the Reformation, showing both how it drew on a deep well of popular devotion, expressed collectively as well as individually, and how the many intercessory foundations brought into being by the town's burgesses added to the staffing of the church and the quality of its liturgical celebration. At the same time, Clive brought before us a rich gallery of characters: Alice Chester, who took over her husband's business after his death and was a generous benefactor of the church; Maud Spicer, another wealthy widow who became a vowess; and Richard Haddon, who paid for the rebuilding of All Saints' north aisle, but who later sank into debt and whose name was to be expunged from the Church Book. All these sources Clive published in a set of three magisterial volumes with the Bristol Record Society between 1995 and 2004. He supplemented the editions with a general survey of the parish, *The Right Ordering of Souls: The Parish of All Saints' Bristol on the Eve of the Reformation* (2018).

On his appointment to a post at Royal Holloway, University of London, in 1993, Clive turned his attention to the religious life of the capital, focusing in particular on the records of the two parishes of St. Mary-at-Hill and St. Andrew Hubbard in Eastcheap. Here he again highlighted the deep devotion of the laity and the contribution which

they made to the collective worship of the parish. At the time of his death, Clive was working on a study of the religious patronage of Richard Whittington (better known to history as Dick Whittington) and, more generally, on comparing and contrasting the piety of the Londoners with that of their Bristol counterparts.

Clive Burgess was a warm-hearted, gentle, convivial man, encouraging to his students, generous to his fellow scholars, and a good friend to all who had the pleasure of knowing him. A bachelor, he much enjoyed the sociability of conferences and seminars, and he was a regular attendee of the Harlaxton Medieval Colloquium. It was at Harlaxton in 2017 that he was presented with a volume of essays in his honour, *The Urban Church in Late Medieval England*, edited by David Harry and Christian Steer.

Clive's interests in liturgical commemoration, that is, commemoration in prayer, spilled over into the connection between that and physical commemoration, commemoration by tombs and brasses. In 2012 he published an article in our *Transactions* on how commemoration worked, 'Obligations and strategy: managing memory in the late medieval parish'. In the following year he spoke about the medieval college of Lingfield at a Society Study Day held in the wonderful surroundings of Lingfield church. Most recently, he was present with another of our members, his close friend and former colleague Caroline Barron, at our meeting at Trotton last year.

Clive was a man with a wide hinterland, his interests ranging from art – he was a Friend of the Royal Academy – to amateur theatricals in which he had delighted since his Oxford days. His tastes in music ranged from Mozart to the Rolling Stones.

Clive Burgess was a modest, unpretentious man who nonetheless knew his own worth and made a huge contribution to the study of his chosen field. We will miss his enormous knowledge and insight, his warmth and his friendship, and the winning smile which he brought to every occasion and to every conversation.

Nigel Saul