

Monumental Brass Society

JUNE 2024



BULLETIN 156

The *Bulletin* (ISSN 0306-1612) is published three times a year, in February, June and October. Articles for inclusion in the next issue should be sent by 1st September 2024 to:

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Hon. Treasurer's notice

On 1st January all subscriptions for 2024 became due. Please send £25.00 (associate/student £12.50, family £35.00) to the Hon. Treasurer, Robert Kinsey, 2 The Crescent, Impington, Cambridge CB24 9NY. 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

As well as a good selection of new articles, I am pleased to pass on the following news to members:

New Hon. Treasurer: we have a volunteer to succeed Robert Kinsey, our brilliant Treasurer. Andrew Ling, a chartered accountant, has put his name forward for election at the A.G.M. in July. He will be assisted as Hon. Treasurer by Mrs. Judy Hodgett as volunteer bookkeeper. We wish them both well.

Bequest to the Society: our late member Graham Wood of Canterbury left the Society £5,000, for general purposes. This bequest is gratefully acknowledged, and will be received once his house has been sold.

Back issues of the *Transactions* on the Society's website: back issues are now available to download from the website after three years, not five years as previously. This will make the Society's scholarly journal accessible to a wider audience. We hope it will encourage the study of brasses, and attract new members.

'Mortar Shipwreck' – update: in my Editorial in *Bulletin* 151 (October 2022), I described the discovery of a 13th-century shipwreck in Poole Harbour which contained a cargo of Purbeck marble, including two brand-new coffin slabs with raised crosses in perfect condition. According to the B.B.C. website on 6th June, these coffin slabs have now been lifted from the sea bed, and will eventually go on display in Poole Museum.

Stephen Freeth

Personalia

We welcome as a new member:

Andrew Ling, Ireton, Packhorse Road, Sevenoaks, Kent TN13 2QR.

It is with deep regret that we report the death of **Michael Boon** (1942-2024) who was elected an Honorary Member of the Society in 2020. Michael had been a member since 2009 and served as Independent Examiner from 2014 until 2020.

The Society also mourns the passing of Peter Hutchings who had been a member of the Society since 1971.

Cover: Upper part of the figure of Sir Symon Felbrygge, K.G. [d.1443], with banner, at Felbrigg, Norfolk (M.S.III) (see p.1116).

(photo: © Martin Stuchfield)

Diary of events

Saturday, 20th July 2024

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING BEDDINGTON, SURREY

The formal business of the A.G.M. will be at 11.00a.m. The afternoon meeting will commence at 2.00p.m. **John Phillips** will speak on *The Carew Family and the Church*, and our Vice-President **Stephen Freeth** will speak about the brasses.

St. Mary's Beddington is mostly 14th and 15th century, restored and enlarged in the 19th century. The interior is decorated in the Arts & Crafts style. The organ screen was made by William Morris & Co in 1869. The chancel contains important medieval brasses to the Carews, who lived in Carew Manor (now the Carew Academy) next to the church. For many years these brasses were inaccessible, but those in the main aisle have recently been uncovered, and the church authorities have agreed to dismantle the Victorian choir stalls to expose other brasses for our visit. The Carew Chapel also contains a stone tomb for Sir Richard Carew d.1520, and a huge tomb with alabaster effigy for Sir Francis Carew d.1611.

The postcode for satellite navigation is SM6 7NH. Parking will be available at the Carew Academy (next door to the church) until 5.00p.m., by kind permission of the Principal of the Carew Academy. (The church does not have a car park.) There is also some parking in Church Path by the church and some not-very-obvious public parking behind Beddington Park Cottages. (Go past the church and the Manor/Academy, through the gates marked "Weak Bridge" and round to the right.) There are several other car parks within the park about 10 minutes' walk away.

The nearest station is Hackbridge (around 30 minutes from London Victoria or London Blackfriars), which is a ten-minute walk from the church across Beddington Park.

Tea/coffee and cake will be provided during the meeting in the north-east corner of the church. St. Mary's also has The Tower Café which sells cake and tea or coffee. As the church is some distance from shops, members might wish to bring some lunch.

Saturday, 14th September 2024

STUDY DAY

ST. ALBANS CATHEDRAL, HERTFORDSHIRE

The theme is *St. Albans Abbey and its Medieval Monuments*. Speakers will include **David Carrington** on *The Restoration of the St. Amphibalus' shrine*; **John Goodall** on *Abbot Ramridge's Chantry, including Duke Humphrey's tomb*; **Norman James** on *The medieval monastic community 1349-1539*; and **David Lepine** on *Re-examining the Delamare brass*.

There will also be two tours: **Derrick Chivers** will give a tour of the indents and fragments of brasses to abbots, while **Stephen de Silva**, a former Head Guide, will focus on the 14th-century wall paintings in the nave. Each tour will be limited to 20 people and will be delivered twice. The audiences will swap over at the mid point.

The visit is limited to a maximum of 40 people. Fee £35 per person (M.B.S. and C.M.S. members), or £40 (non-members), to include morning coffee and afternoon tea. To book a place, email rosemaryfitchett8@gmail.com. When booking, please state whether you are M.B.S., C.M.S. or a non-member, so that the correct fee can be requested. Please do not book unless you are sure you can attend, and please do not ask to bring a guest. There will be a waiting list, and if anyone subsequently needs to cancel, it will be helpful if this can be done in good time so that someone else can take their place.

The Cathedral contains many brasses or remains of brasses, described in detail in Lack, Stuchfield and Whittemore, *The Monumental Brasses of Hertfordshire* (2009). Electronic copies from this book will be supplied in advance to each participant.

Saturday, 12th April 2025

GENERAL MEETING COGGESHALL, ESSEX

Saturday, 19th July 2025

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING NORTH MYMMS, HERTFORDSHIRE

Saturday, 13th September 2025

GENERAL MEETING GEDDINGTON, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE



*Fig 1. Sir Richard Delabere, 1514, and two wives, Hereford Cathedral (LSW.XXVII).
(photo: © Martin Stuchfield)*

General Meeting

Hereford Cathedral – 20th April 2024

This General Meeting was an innovation for the Society – a ticketed event with a modest price and a maximum of 40 places. And it was a great success. Those attending were divided into two groups. In the morning one group was taken round the cathedral's brasses and medieval tombs by our Past President and now Vice-President Nigel Saul, while the other group visited the Chained Library and Mappa Mundi. Then after lunch the two groups swapped places, and the two tours were repeated.

The brasses of Hereford Cathedral are an odd mixture. A few are more or less complete and still in their original slabs, such as that for Sir Richard Delabere, d.1514, and his two wives (LSW.XXVII) (Fig.1), or the huge one for Dean Frowsetoure, d.1529 (LSW.XXXII). (The fine brass of Bishop John Trilleck, d.1360 (LSW.II), is misleading, as much of it other than the main figure was restored in the 19th century.) Other brasses however are now mere fragments fixed to boards or stonework in one of the transepts (Fig.2), having been smashed by the collapse of the west end of the cathedral in 1786 or subsequently damaged.

Some further fine brasses have been completely lost without trace, as we know because they were sketched in 1684 by Thomas Dingley.

Nigel Saul gave us an excellent tour. He explained that the cathedral was the only church in Hereford with a burial ground, which meant that the brasses commemorated laymen as well as clergy. He also noted that the brasses of senior clergy, despite being made in London, showed a definite liking for very fancy embroidered vestments: new brasses appeared to have been commissioned at long distance in imitation of those already laid down. He also drew out family links between those commemorated. Hereford is a long way from London, and the same prominent local families feature again and again.

Like some other members, I made a weekend of it, and was able to visit the cathedral to study the brasses at length both before and after the meeting. I was amazed to see the Cantilupe Shrine (Fig.3) once again in use as a devotional shrine, surrounded by kneelers (and at one point by people kneeling). I was however permitted to step over the



*Fig.2. Fragments of brasses on boards in the south-east transept, Hereford Cathedral.
(photo: © Stephen Freeth)*

kneelers to examine the indent of the brass of c.1287 of Bishop Thomas Cantilupe (LSW.I) which forms part of the shrine. One of the last bits of metal to be lost from the indent was a fleur-de-lys from the top sinister corner. I had long wondered whether the stray brass fleur-de-lys in Saffron Walden Museum might be from the Cantilupe brass. Close examination makes it clear that this is impossible. The two have completely different shapes.

Some of the brasses are in poor condition. During the tours we noticed that the brass of Dean Frowsetoure has some plates that are coming loose. Some other brasses and boards are also deteriorating, or have been moved off display. These points have been taken up with the cathedral authorities, who have promised to investigate.

The Chained Library and Mappa Mundi were fascinating. The cathedral received substantial

grant funding some years ago to create a new building for the Chained Library, and a new display for the Mappa Mundi. Both were excellent, and made a good mix with our tour of the brasses. I for one had not realised that the Chained Library is a mix of early manuscript books and later printed material, and that new printed items were still being added (and chained) in the 19th century.

Thanks are due to Nigel Saul for his tours; to Rosemary Fitchett for receiving the bookings, taking the ticket money and allocating people to the tours; to the cathedral authorities for all their help and cooperation; to Caroline Metcalfe for her help on the day; and to Martin Stuchfield for the updated electronic version of the monograph on the cathedral's brasses which he co-wrote with Peter Heseltine (M.B.S., 2005). This was issued in advance to all those attending.

Stephen Freeth



*Fig.3. The Cantilupe Shrine, Hereford Cathedral.
(photo: © Stephen Freeth)*

Noel Boston's brass inscription

The article in *Bulletin* 155 (February 2024) about the incised slab at Gressenhall, Norfolk briefly mentioned the rural dean in 1963, Rev. Noel Boston, vicar of East Dereham nearby (see p.1085, and note 3 on p.1090).

Noel Boston (1910-66) was a fascinating character, an Anglican priest with a large collection of antique firearms in his Norfolk vicarage. He was also a musician who collected historic woodwind instruments, a local historian, and a writer of ghost stories in the manner of M.R.James. However he did *not* have a steam railway in his garden, as I said in the last *Bulletin*. I had confused him with Rev. Teddy Boston of Cadeby, Leicestershire!

In 1982 William Lack, the conservator of so many brass memorials, was contacted by Noel Boston's widow Mary about a small Norwich-6b inscription plate in her possession commemorating John Blaken[ey], of the early 16th century (Fig.1). The inscription plate, 50 x 205-220 mm, was damaged, with part of the right-hand end broken off at an angle. The remaining inscription read:

*Orate p(ro) a(n)i(m)a Joh(ann)is Blaken[ey]
Armigerii [sic] cui(us) a(n)i(m)e p(ro)piciet(ur) deu[s].*

(Pray for the soul of John Blakeney esquire, on whose soul God have mercy.)

Roger Greenwood subsequently identified the inscription plate as from Honingham, eight miles west of Norwich. Blomefield mentions it as one of several brasses in the nave in his *History of Norfolk* (1st edition (1739-75), I, p.681). Blomefield also

mentions a shield of Blakeney, *Sable a chevron ermine between three leopards' faces or*, which surely accompanied the inscription plate. He adds that Blakeney's wife Elizabeth 'was buried by him in 1515', though he gives no details. Perhaps she had a second inscription.

Noel Boston's first collection of ghost stories, mostly written on holiday in 1953, was published privately the same year under the title *Yesterday Knocks* (Fig.2). This small paperback, only 71 pages, and very simply produced, is now a rarity and fetches high prices from enthusiasts. It contained five stories: 'The Half Legs'; 'The Bellarmine Jars'; "'Lot 629'"; 'The North Cloister Walk'; and 'P Aia Johns Blak'. Boston's Preface explains that, although the stories are fiction, they have 'a frame of fact'.

The tales are mostly written in the first person by 'Thomas Rotrod', a gentleman scholar with a private income in 'Eastfolk', a thinly-disguised Norfolk. Rotrod is also, oddly enough, an expert in firearms. 'P Aia Johns Blak' is about an early 15th-century brass inscription for 'John Blak' which Rotrod buys from an elderly lady who is selling her late father's collection of weapons and other items. Rotrod then hopes to find the church of origin of the inscription plate but, before he can do so, must as a member of the 'Bishop's Advisory Committee' first travel to Vale Newton. Here the P.C.C. wish to sell the church's lovely medieval psalter to pay for repairs to the roof. The philistine vicar at Vale Newton, Ernest Bensted, has a front door (possibly not his responsibility, to be fair) panelled with 'lavatory glass', and is described as from 'the



Fig.1. Inscription, John Blaken[ey] esquire, early 16th century.
From Honingham, Norfolk. Currently in private possession.
(rubbing: © Mary Boston)

ranks of those clergymen who are ordained straight from theological college and then go to town curacies. He was obviously out of his element in the country.' He and Rotrod do not hit it off. When they go to the vestry to examine the psalter, Rotrod has an accident: 'the light was not too good and I tripped over a kneeler at the entrance to the sanctuary. As I picked myself up I noticed that the shifting of the mat, which had been flung to one side by my fall, had revealed a small inscription brass.'

However a few minutes later, when the two men have looked at the psalter and return to examine the brass, they find just an indent, long since emptied of its metal.

This vision of a brass inscription turns out to have had a supernatural purpose. Vale Newton P.C.C. proceed to apply for a faculty to sell the psalter; Fleet Street gets interested; and just as Rotrod is reading a 'particularly violent' letter about the whole business in *The Times*, he sees a legal notice from a firm of solicitors, Blake, Thistledown, Postlethwaite, Barnes and Thistledown of Lincoln's Inn Fields, wishing to trace the church containing the tomb of 'John Blake c.1500'. The solicitors are acting on behalf of the American firm of Schmitt and Schulze: the late Henry John Blake of Cuero, Texas has bequeathed a considerable sum of money to this church if it can be identified, because John Blake c.1500 was the founder of his family.

Noel Boston has had fun with this story: a philistine vicar; tasteless vicarages; selling church treasures to meet immediate needs; Americans obsessed with family history – they are all here. His English firm of solicitors also has an amusing name, though not as rude as *Private Eye's* Sue, Grabbitt and Runne, or my personal favourite, Terribly, Terribly, Boring and Dull. The American firm's name is also ridiculous. Nowadays unsolicited notices about huge sums of money waiting to be claimed are spam, placed by criminals, but in 1953 things were different. Needless to say, 'John Blak' of the brass inscription turns out to be one and the same as 'John Blake c.1500' who founded the family in Texas; and the inscription comes from that very same empty indent at Vale Newton. Rotrod makes the connection because of his supernatural experience. The executors pay up, giving Vale

Newton twice the amount needed to fix the roof; the psalter is saved; and everyone lives happily ever after.

The story does indeed have a 'frame of fact'. Mary Boston confirmed to William Lack that her husband acquired the brass plate in the manner described in the story, and that he had attempted to trace its church of origin. He was also involved in the conservation of church heritage. Mary Boston died in 1983, and our latest information is that the family still have the brass, and hope one day to return it to Honingham so long as it will be secure. As members will have noticed, Noel Boston was not able to read the inscription accurately, and he also translated *Armiger* as 'gentleman' instead of 'esquire'. But he tells a good yarn.

A clip from Anglia TV in 1963 in which Noel Boston explains matchlock, wheellock, flintlock and percussion cap weapons, and fires a percussion cap musket in a room at the vicarage, surrounded by around fifty muskets and pistols, is at <https://player.bfi.org.uk/free/film/watch-shooting-gentleman-1963-online>.

Stephen Freeth

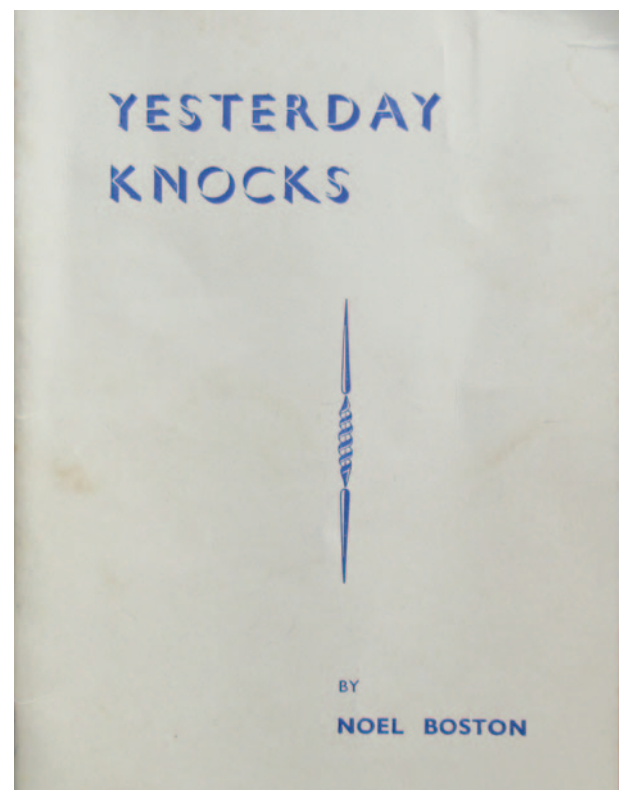


Fig2. Front cover of *Yesterday Knocks* (1953).
(photo: © Stephen Freeth)

Fragments of brass in private possession in France

Some years ago Ludovic Nys, the expert on Tournai monuments, put me in touch with a friend who owned six pieces of monumental brass. He had acquired them from another collector who had in turn obtained them some time in the 1950s-70s. Nothing certain is known of their history, though the pieces are said to come from Valenciennes or the Valenciennes region. They can be seen in the accompanying photographs.

The pieces comprise five architectural fragments (including one very small piece which abuts directly onto a larger piece) and a shield, and are all believed to be from the same monument. The shield bears *Three hunting horns* (in French, *cor-de-chasses*, *huchets* or *cornets*). The architectural fragments are perhaps late 14th or early 15th century. The shield at first sight seems crude and perhaps later in date than the other pieces, but this may be because it is so small (only 69 mm high). It could therefore be from the same monument as the other pieces.

All the fragments are of interest because continental brasses are so rare. Also, the architectural fragments appear to be from a separate-inlay brass, a form of continental monument that is even rarer. Most continental brasses are on rectangular plates. Four of the architectural fragments bear parts of an inscription in French around the arch of a canopy, commemorating Robiers (?) Lichocq (the name seems to be truncated) and (?) Lysette his wife. That too is a most unusual design.

The fragments may all be casualties of the Great War. Many churches in the battle areas were destroyed in that conflict, and Valenciennes was captured from the Germans by the British Army in a major battle in 1918. The front cover of *Bulletin* 150 (June 2022) showed a newly-discovered fragment of a brass from the destroyed church at Nieuport. A search of reference works earlier than 1914 may reveal the precise origin of these new fragments.



Fig1. Two architectural fragments (not shown to scale), 14th or early 15th century.

Upper fragment: 'Chi gist robiers lichocq'.

Lower fragment: 'ysette se feme qui trespasa lan'.



Fig.2. Architectural fragment, 14th or early 15th century.



Fig.4. Shield, bearing three hunting horns, 14th or early 15th century.

As a rough guide, the dimensions of the fragments are as follows: Fig.1: (upper) 64-98 x 259 mm and (lower) 70 x 308 x 43 mm; Fig.2: 259 x 40 mm; Fig.3: 43-73 x 259 mm; and Fig.4: 69 x 58 mm.

I am grateful to the anonymous owner of these pieces for permission to publish them as a record, and for the photographs and measurements. I also thank Ludovic Nys, Paul Cockerham and Martin Stuchfield for their help.

Stephen Freeth



Fig.3. Architectural fragment, 'pires pour same', 14th or early 15th century.

The brass of Sir Peter von Stettenberg (d.1428) at Bronnbach, Germany

The Cistercian monastery of Bronnbach was founded in 1146 by four local noble families at an isolated place in the Tauber valley near Wertheim. Unlike the Benedictines and Cluny,¹ the Cistercians initially buried only members of the convent in their churches. Benefactors and their wives could only be buried there after 1134.² The monastery of Bronnbach formerly held the tombs of their founders Sigebot von Zimmern (d.1190) and Billung von Worms (d.1176) and his wife Irmgard (d.1170), but these are long since destroyed.

After 1217 it was possible to bury members of the laity in Cistercian monastery churches provided that the local parish priest agreed, because he had to give up his burial fees. In 1191 and 1194 flat slabs on the floor were permitted; however sculptures and images were forbidden by a statute of 1213.³

Bronnbach monastery church now became an outstanding burial place. From the second half of the 14th century there are two tombs of the Counts of Wertheim: Count Eberhard (d.1373) and his brother Count Poppo (d.1374). Today there are also nearly twenty slabs dating within the next fifty years, and more than 50 more from the rest of the 15th century, now mounted on the walls of the cloister. These include seven members (from 1411 to 1493) of the von Stettenbergs, a local family of the lower nobility known since the 13th century⁴ and finally extinguished in the second quarter of the 17th century.⁵

Among them are Sir Peter von Stettenberg (d.1428), his son (d.1441) and his grandson (d.1450), all of the same name. Sir Peter's tomb (Fig.1) was placed in a prominent position in the nave of the church, immediately before the steps and the wrought-iron lattice which separated the monks' choir from the nave. The slab was removed between 1888 and 1896.⁶ The brass plates were then mounted on the southern pillar of the nave between the first and second bay (from the east), with the number '28'

in Arabic numerals. The original site was then also marked with the number '28'. However this was replaced in 1923 by a tomb slab for members of the Portuguese royal family, who died in Wertheim in exile.

The brass pieces were separately inlaid. In the centre are two plates with the heraldry of von Stettenberg. The upper plate shows a helmet with the crest of a bust of a bearded man; the lower plate shows a shield bearing a can with two spouts. These two plates are surrounded by a marginal inscription with evangelists' symbols at the corners. The inscription is in Latin in raised letters. The text begins in the top left:

*Anno d(omi)ni 1428 / in die sancti Marci Evangeliste
Obiit Stren(u)s vir d(omi)n(u)s / Petrus de Stetin /
berg miles cui cuius (sic) anima requiescat in pace Amen.*

(In the year of our Lord 1428, on the day of the Evangelist Mark (25th April) died the energetic man Sir Peter von Stettenberg. May his soul rest in peace. Amen.)

The total size is 1860 x 870 mm; the quatrefoils measure 200 x 200 mm; the width of the frame is 86 mm. Scrolls in different varieties of Gothic minuscule identify the evangelists.

When the frame was mounted in the 19th century, the lower narrow side was reversed, despite the individual segments being marked. The 'cui', a doubling of 'cuius', makes no sense and is a mistake.

The brass seems not to be contemporary, but to have been made in the first or second decade of the 16th century.⁷ Its purchaser and exact date of manufacture are unknown. The brass does not show Renaissance elements, unlike the brasses of various bishops and canons of the same date in Würzburg and Bamberg cathedrals, but this does not mean that it could not have come from one of the famous Nuremberg foundries. Its quality is high, and needed an experienced



Fig.1. Sir Peter von Stettenberg, d.1428, Bronnbach, Germany.
(photo: © Hans Gerd Dormagen)

workshop. Its different design may have been intended to meet the requirements of the Cistercians for simplicity.

Despite this, Sir Peter von Stettenberg (d.1428) has a second memorial at Bronnbach, with sculptures in high relief (Fig.2). His figure in armour is surrounded by a similar inscription to the one on his brass, and by four shields with family heraldry. This is now in the nave, and intensifies the commemoration of the Stettenberg family.

We have few details about Sir Peter's life. He first appears in 1379, with his father Albrecht.⁸ In 1401 he was named as a knight, and as a judge in proceedings of Archbishop John I of Mainz.⁹ In 1403 he bought one-eighth of the castle of Gamburg.¹⁰ From 1411 he acted as bailiff of Wertheim.¹¹ He occurs as a witness and guarantor in documents until 1420 both for the Counts of Wertheim¹² and the monastery of Bronnbach.¹³ He married Anna von Ehrenberg and they had one son, Peter (d.1441).

Hans Gerd Dormagen

- 1 Dietrich Poerck, 'Laienbegräbnisse in Cluny', in *Frühmittelalterliche Studien*, XV (1981), pp.68-179.
- 2 Joseph Maria Canviez (ed.), *Statuta Capitulum Generalium Ordinis Cisterciensis ab anno 1116 ad annum 1786*, I, *Ab anno 1116 ad annum 1220* (Louvain, 1933), p.19, no.27.
- 3 Canviez, *op. cit.*, p.145, no.78; p.172, no.7; p.404, no.1; p.465, no.3.
- 4 Johann Gottfried Biedermann, *Geschlechts-Register Der Reichs Frey unmittelbaren Ritterschafft Landes zu Francken löblichen Orths Ottenwald ...* (Kulmbach, 1751), pl.414 (to be used carefully; online available).
- 5 Stadtarchiv Wertheim (StA Wt), R-Lit. Br no.775.
- 6 Stephan Beissel, 'Die Cistercienser-Abtei Bronnbach', in *Stimmen aus Maria-Laach. Katholische Blätter*, XXXIV (Freiburg (Breisgau) (1888)), p.78; Adolf von Oechelhäuser (ed.), *Die Kunstdenkmäler des Grossherzogthums Baden*, IV, 1 (Amtsbezirk Wertheim), (Freiburg (Breisgau) (1896)), p.62, p.64. (He describes the slabs recently removed and fixed on the wall.)
- 7 Oechelhäuser, *op.cit.*, p.70; Ernst Cucuel/Hermann Eckert (eds.), *Die Deutschen Inschriften*, I, *Die Inschriften des badischen Main- und Taubergrundes* (Stuttgart, 1942), pp.54-6.
- 8 Staatsarchiv Würzburg (StA Wü), MIB 9, f.118r [02] (12th January 1379)
- 9 StA Wü, MIB 13, f.240r [01] (6th November 1401).
- 10 StA Wü, MIB 14, f.36r [01] (29th May 1403).
- 11 StA Wt, F-US 7 no.13 (25th October 1411); G-Rep. 101 no.57/15 (1st May 1412); G-Rep. 2a Rüd't von Collenberg 5 (28th August 1415).
- 12 StA Wt, G-Rep. 102 no.3252 (22nd May 1398); G-Rep. 100 U 1420 März 3.
- 13 Inter alia: StA Wt, R-US 1405 Juni 24; G-Rep. 15 Lade XXIV no.37 Transsumpt (12th December 1406).



Fig.2. Sir Peter von Stettenberg, d.1428,
Bronnbach, Germany.
(photo: © Hans Gerd Dormagen)

‘Blue Peter’ and brasses

Those of a certain age will remember the glory days of B.B.C.’s *Blue Peter*, especially its ‘makes’ items. One person who remembers them well is freelance TV cameraman Pete Eveson, from Pulham Market, who whilst working at the B.B.C. not only filmed *Blue Peter*, but also came up with a ‘makes’ item himself, which was made on the show by John Noakes in 1972.

Pete was reminded of this when he found the main item from that ‘make’ in his loft during a recent clear-out (Fig.1), along with some pictures he had taken in the studio during the filming (Fig.2).

Pete says, ‘The idea was to make a monumental brass rubbing but to use kitchen foil instead of paper to make the impression, slowly rubbing with a duster to get the outline of the image. The foil was then used as a mould, turned up around the edges, and Plaster of Paris was poured into the mould to make a solid copy. This could then be painted to look like the original brass.’

‘I was paid £25 for the idea and a small budget for the materials, although I needed to make more



Fig.1. Pete Eveson with the Dowlish Wake facsimile brass.
(photo: © Pete Eveson)



Fig.2. A ‘still’ from the TV broadcast,
with John Noakes and Lesley Judd.
(photo: © Pete Eveson)

examples than required as dear old John Noakes could break the odd item during rehearsals! I used a facsimile brass for the studio demonstration, as it wasn’t possible to unscrew an actual one from a church. I managed to purchase the facsimile seen in the picture in Norwich, and to keep it after transmission.’

The person depicted on the facsimile brass is Sir George Speke, d.1528, whose actual brass is at Dowlish Wake in Somerset (M.S.I). Pete has only just found out who he was, with help from Martin Stuchfield ... solving a 50-year mystery!

During the live show, Pete said, all went well until John Noakes poured in the plaster mixture, which then flowed over the mould edges and all over the table and Lesley Judd’s dress! ‘I’d love to know if the B.B.C. still have this particular ‘make’ item. I haven’t seen it since the 1970s. It would be a great trip down memory lane!’

One of Pete’s previous *Blue Peter* studio events was the infamous Girl Guides’ fake campfire, which caught fire during their singing and had to be extinguished by B.B.C. firemen walking into the set and spraying CO₂ everywhere. That video can still be seen on *YouTube*, with Pete and his camera ducking down out of shot as smoke filled the air! (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GRIIIz9_vqY)

Mike Harris

An anagram on a brass

The church dedicated to St. Giles at Wyddiall, Hertfordshire contains a series of seven brasses ranging in date from 1532 to 1644. *The Monumental Brasses of Hertfordshire* (Lack, Stuchfield and Whittemore (2009), pp.713-22) describes and illustrates all the brasses. One in particular located in the north chapel commemorates John Gouleston, esq., [d.1644], and his wife Jane, daughter of Richard Keteriche of South Mimms, esq. (LSW.VII). The composition comprises an inscription in Latin with four Latin verses and five shields. The brass was placed by their eldest son Richard.

The four Latin verses read as follows:

*Gouleston eras quondam nunc Nominis ultima tantum /
Pars restat, nudus scilicet iste lapis / In tumulum postrema
tuum tibi Syllaba cessit / Quae manet inversa est Lugeo
facta mihi.*

I offer as a translation:

You were once Gouleston; what now remains is only the last part of your name, to wit this bare stone. The last syllable has departed into your tomb. What is left, turned over, has been composed for me: 'I grieve.'

Very odd; and 'Gouleston' with its three syllables seems to break the rules of Latin verse. But in a nearby brass (LSW.VI) the father of Helen, surely the same man, is spelt 'Gulston', which would fit the metre.

The explanation must be that the last part of Gouleston's name is 'ston[e]', Latin lapis. The letters before that are 'goule', an anagram ('inversa') of 'lugeo', 'I grieve'.

Peter Pickering



Fig 1. Inscription in Latin with four Latin verses to John Gouleston, esq., [d.1644], and wife Jane, daughter of Richard Keteriche of South Mimms, esq.; Wyddiall, Hertfordshire (LSW.VII). (photo: © Martin Stuchfield)

Betjeman and brasses

Two of my life-long passions have been a love of visiting old churches and the study of monumental brasses. Both began when I was about twelve years old, living in Pinner in Middlesex, in the heart of Metroland. My brother and I would cycle off to explore the churches in the Chiltern Hills, guided and enthused by the *Collins Guide to English Parish Churches*, edited by John Betjeman and published in 1958.

John Betjeman (Fig.1) is one of my heroes. In many ways I learnt from him to love and understand old churches, and that was one of the influences that eventually led me to seek ordination in the Church of England. You have to remember that when I was growing up in the 1950s John Betjeman had become a national figure through the publication of his *Collected Poems* in 1958, which immediately sold 1,000 copies a week. He was also known for editing the *Shell Guides to England*, starting with Cornwall in 1934, and for his work as a broadcaster. I vividly remember watching his *ABC of Churches*, a nine-part series produced by the B.B.C. between 1960 and 1967, which captivated me with his knowledge, and his eagerness to share his enthusiasm with the viewer.

John Betjeman (1906-84) was born in Highgate in London. He went to school at the Dragon School in Oxford and Marlborough College, before going up to Magdalen College Oxford to study English. He left without a degree, and took on a succession of jobs, including a stint at the *Architectural Review*, before establishing himself as a writer and a poet. He was knighted in 1969, became Poet Laureate in 1972, and ended his life as a national treasure, with a memorial service in Westminster Abbey attended by members of the Royal Family.

He has been hugely influential in my life because of his passion for the built environment, especially churches, and he often mentions memorial brasses in his poetry and prose writing. This first alerted me to the wonder of these self-effacing memorials in brass set into the floor of the church or on an altar tomb.

You would think that this aspect of church art would have been of real interest to Betjeman, and

indeed in his TV documentary *A Passion for Churches*, screened in 1974, he includes a scene shot at St. Margaret's Felbrigg, where he chatted to a group of brass rubbers (led by Mrs. Dawson of Apple Acre, Blofield) taking a copy of the fine brass to Sir Symon Felbrygge [d.1443], banner bearer to Richard II, and his wife Margaret (Fig.2). In the voice-over Betjeman says:

'I wonder who fall to their knees here today?
Oh – the new cottage industry – brass rubbing.
Memorial brasses to former generations of
Squires of Felbrigg and their ladies.
Medieval effigies that tell us nothing
Of the people they represent.
They're so calm and bland and self-controlled
Outlined there, as large as life
Sir Simon and Lady Margaret Felbrigg.

He, a Garter Knight, and she a cousin
of the Queen
It must have been the day of days,
The day they took their vows.'¹

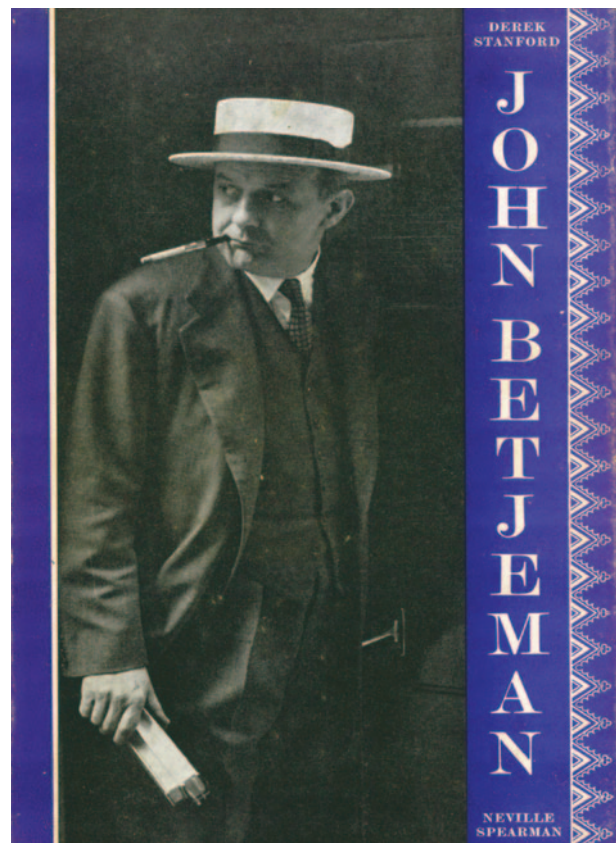


Fig 1. John Betjeman.
(photo: © David Meara)

It is obvious from his words that memorial brasses, and therefore brass rubbing, left him cold. Nevertheless he makes a number of references to brasses and brass rubbing in his writings and poetry, which suggest that the subject held a kind of fascination for him. Indeed his daughter Candida Lycett Green had fond memories as a child of being taken on expeditions to churches and enjoying rubbing the brasses:

‘Here I am in St. Andrew’s Grinton (Yorkshire Dales), and also two thousand Saturdays ago in a quiet ‘shepherds’ church’ on the Berkshire Downs, brass rubbing beside my brother in the narrow aisle, our knees cold on the surrounding stone, our crayons skimming backwards and forwards over the paper and the sad, blank faces of forgotten, recumbent knights mysteriously appearing as if by magic ... our father often took us sketching or brass rubbing because he wasn’t necessarily working.’

(From *Over the Hills and Far Away* (2002), p.65)

We can’t read too much into this memory because Betjeman stopped so often to look in old churches that his children would complain: brass rubbing may have been a ruse to allow him yet another stop on their travels.

In a broadcast talk of August 1938 on ‘How to look at a Church’, Betjeman ends:

‘I only hope I’ve shown you, in this talk, that a church isn’t just an old building which interests pedantic brass rubbers; but a living building with history written all over it and history that, with very little practice, becomes easy and fascinating reading.’²

And in 1952, writing on ‘Antiquarian Prejudice’ in *First and Last Loves*, in the context of a tirade against short-sighted ‘experts’ who write learned research papers with endless footnotes, and have the ‘gift of turning life to death, interest to ashes’, Betjeman sends up the old antiquarian church guide books, with another swipe at those who visit churches to rub brasses:

‘True, the writer of the Guide may have visited the church to rub a brass, but finding no brass, have gone off in a temper as black as his own heelball,

pausing to note the piscina to which an antiquarian vicar desperately drew his attention.’³

These references suggest that it was pedantic antiquarianism of which Betjeman really disapproved, and that brass rubbing was merely a manifestation of this broader attitude. It is certainly true that when the Society of Antiquaries of London was formed in 1707, a key early interest was the recording of inscriptions and the study of sepulchral monuments and brasses, and this has continued to be the subject of scholarly antiquarian study. It has always surprised me that Betjeman was never elected a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries, because so many of his interests aligned with those of the society, and he himself possessed a fine antiquarian library and wide-ranging knowledge of architecture. It may have been suggested, but in view of his published comments Betjeman is likely to have refused the offer.

He does refer to memorial brasses in a number of other places, including in the third stanza of his poem ‘Sunday Morning, King’s College, Cambridge’:

‘In far East Anglian churches, the clasped hands
lying long
Recumbent on sepulchral slabs or effigied
in brass
Buttress with prayer this vaulted roof
so white and light and strong
And countless congregations as the
generations pass
Join choir and great crowned organ case,
in centuries of song
To praise Eternity contained in
Time and coloured glass.’⁴

Amongst the short films he made about English towns in the early 1960s, the one on Crewkerne in Somerset features the brass of Adam Martine (M.S.II), which has his heraldic crest, *On the stump of a tree couped (argent), a monkey sejant (proper) collared and lined (or) looking in a mirror framed or*. Betjeman remarks that this must be the inspiration for the trademark of ‘Monkey Soap’, apparently a cleaning agent for pots and pans. Again, this snide remark suggests his condescending attitude to brasses. This was shared by his friend the novelist Evelyn Waugh, who includes a contemptuous



Fig.2. Sir Symon Felbrygge, K.G., [d.1443], and wife Margaret, 1416, Felbrigg, Norfolk (M.S.III).
(rubbing: © Lack, Stuchfield and Whittemore, Norfolk (forthcoming))

reference to the brass-rubbing activities of his anti-hero Paul Pennyfeather and his ineffectual friend Arthur Potts in his novel *Decline and Fall*, published in 1928. While his close friend the artist John Piper was clearly fascinated by church monuments and brasses, using striking black and white photographs in *Murray's Guides to Berkshire* (1949) and *Buckinghamshire* (1948), Betjeman was clearly unable to share his enthusiasm. Although he took the trouble to review a substantial book on the subject, *Church Brasses* by A.C. Bouquet in the *Museums Journal* for April 1957, he remained unmoved by this branch of medieval art, associating it with the dry antiquarianism he so despised for reasons which went back to his Oxford days. (See the discussion in my book, *A Passion for Places: England through the eyes of John Betjeman*, Amberley Publishing (2021)). He loved church bells, but was left cold by church brasses.

As a coda to this subject, he was a member of the Oxford Diocesan Advisory Committee on the Care of Churches, and sometimes had to give advice about requests for memorials in churches. After one D.A.C. meeting he left behind the following verse:

'We want a little tablet made of brass.'
Around the table murmurs of 'Alas,
If only it were much more widely known
How strongly this Committee favours stone.'

David Meara

- 1 Script of 'A Passion for Churches' in John Betjeman: *Coming Home*, ed. Candida Lycett Green (Methuen, 1997), pp.498-521.
- 2 'How to Look at a Church', *ibid.*, pp.76-80.
- 3 'Antiquarian Prejudice' in *First and Last Loves* (John Murray, 1952), p.54.
- 4 From *A Few Late Chrysanthemums* (John Murray, 1954).

Notes on books, articles and the internet

Philip Whittemore has sent this useful list of recent books and articles which may be of interest:

Shirley Hall. *Holy Trinity Ely [i.e. the Lady Chapel of Ely Cathedral when it was used as a parish church] 1566-1938: church and parish* (privately printed 2022, ISBN 978 1 3999 1613 4). 234 pp., colour illus.

Robert Hutchinson. 'Iconoclasm and profit: sales of despoiled monumental brasses and tombs in London, 1547-53', *Antiquaries Journal*, 102 (2022), pp.316-41. Illus., tables, graphs. [Supplementary material can be accessed via the online version.]

Philip Whittemore has also published more short articles on brasses in the City of London in *Skyline: The Magazine of the Friends of the City Churches*. These continue the series listed in *Bulletin* 147 (June 2021) as follows:

August 2022, p.14. 'Where there is Brass · 8: Rising from the rubble: Resurrection, c.1500, probably from the monument to Sir Robert Tate, 1500, at All Hallows Barking by the Tower'. 1 b/w illus.

November 2022, p.12. 'Where there is Brass · 9: For Mercers' sake: the brass to Nicholas Leveson, 1539 and wife Denys, St. Andrew Undershaft'. 1 b/w illus.

February 2023, p.14. 'In the lion's mouth, the brass to an unknown lady, c.1535, St. Helen Bishopsgate'. 1 b/w illus.

June 2023, p.7. 'The Mercery man, the brass to Sir Richard Haddon, Mercer and Lord Mayor, 1516'. 1 colour photo.

October 2023, p.7. 'Three cheers, the brass to Roger James, citizen and brewer of London, 1591 at All Hallows Barking by the Tower'. 1 b/w illus.

February 2024, p.11. 'Elizabethan recycling at St. Olave Hart Street'. 2 illus. [Suggests that as well as the brass being palimpsest, the slab in which it is set was also reused.]

June 2024, p.9. 'The Brass to Simon Burton, Citizen and Wax Chandler of London at St. Andrew Undershaft'. 2 b/w illus.

Robert Yorke, *A Catalogue of Manuscripts in the College of Arms: Records, Volume 1. Record Manuscripts of the Tudor Visitations mainly contained in the Series D-H* (London: College of Arms, 2023). lxx, 739 pp., 32 colour plates. ISBN 978-0-9506980-3-8. £60 plus postage and packing from the College of Arms (e-mail: reception@college-of-arms.gov.uk).

The manuscript collections of the College of Arms are not as well known as they should be. In large part this is due to the lack of accessible catalogues. For the Arundel manuscripts, which include several important chronicles, the standard catalogue is of 1829! An introductory guide to the records and collections of the College of Arms was produced by Sir Anthony Wagner in 1952, and in 1988 the College of Arms published the first volume of a comprehensive catalogue, covering early collections, including the 260 manuscripts of Augustine Vincent's library. This catalogue, the work of Louise Campbell and Francis Steer, was indexed by Robert Yorke, archivist at the College from 1978 to 2011.

On retiring, Robert Yorke undertook the compilation of this present catalogue, which is devoted to the earliest sequence of official records, the visitations carried out by heralds between the 1530s and 1603. The General Introduction provides a useful account of how heraldic visitations were carried out. The first part of the catalogue ('Part I') then provides full descriptions of the 66 manuscripts in this category, with each pedigree itemised. The second part of the catalogue ('Part II') then comprises a complete list of Tudor visitation manuscripts, arranged by county. The status of each manuscript is indicated (e.g. whether rough notes, original, rough copy, office copy, enlarged copy etc.), and printed editions, often based on inferior texts, are cited. There are also three excellent indexes, of families and persons, places, and subjects, all well cross-referenced.

Among the earliest visitations was one of burials in London churches, begun by Thomas Hawley in 1530. This is to be found in College of Arms MSS. A.17 and C.G.Y.647. Another manuscript, College of Arms MS D.13, a series of visitations carried out by Thomas Benolt, contains invaluable pre-Dissolution lists of burials in St. Augustine's



Fig 1. Thomas Fisher drawing of the lost brass to Thomas Benolt, Clarenceux King of Arms, 1534, in official robes with crown and sceptre, St. Helen, Bishopsgate, London. (drawing: © College of Arms)

Abbey and the Blackfriars and Observant Friars at Canterbury. Inspections of arms in churches soon developed into more detailed antiquarian recording. Typical of these is MS H.11 C.N., a volume of Lincolnshire church notes compiled by Richard Scarlett as part of the 1592 visitation of that county. The involvement of heralds in the design of monuments is illustrated by what appears to be Robert Glover's own composition of the inscription commemorating Richard Bunny (d.1584) at Normanton, Yorkshire (M.S.I), on f.259v of MS 2 D.5.

This catalogue is an essential resource for anyone researching the family background of those commemorated by late medieval and 16th-century monuments.

Nicholas Rogers