

Monumental Brass Society

FEBRUARY 2026



BULLETIN 161

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 May 2026 to:

Caroline Metcalfe, Hon. Assistant Secretary
51 Court Crescent, East Grinstead
West Sussex RH19 3TP
Email: cspearie@gmail.com

Useful Society contacts:

General enquiries, membership and subscriptions:

Penny Williams, Hon. Secretary
15 St. Brides Road, Aberkenfig
Bridgend, South Wales CF32 9PY
Email: membership@mbs-brasses.co.uk

Contributions for the *Transactions*:

Lucia Diaz Pascual, Hon. Editor
Email: transactions@mbs-brasses.co.uk

Conservation of brasses (including thefts etc.):

Martin Stuchfield, Hon. Conservation Officer
Pentlow Hall, Cavendish, Suffolk CO10 7SP
Email: martinstuchfield@pentlowhall.uk

Hon. Treasurer's notice

On 1st January all subscriptions for 2026 became due. Our volunteer bookkeeper, Judy Hodgett (accts.mbs2024@gmail.com), will be very grateful if members can pay their subscriptions online and not by cheque. Many members already pay by Standing Order. Online payments of £25.00 (associate/student £12.50, family £35.00) should be made to: Monumental Brass Society, Barclays Bank PLC, sort code 20-41-41, Account no. 10660957. When doing so, please give your surname as a reference. Payment can also be made using the *PayPal* system via mbs_brasses@yahoo.com. 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, payable to 'Monumental Brass Society', for U.S. \$45.00 to Shirley Mattox at 1313 Jackson Street, Oshkosh, Wisconsin 54901, U.S.A.

Editorial

This issue of the *Bulletin* contains a wide range of articles. There is the second part of the article about the facsimile brass created for St. Teilo's church in St. Fagan's Museum of History, Cardiff, continued from the last issue; Kevin Herring describes a lovely brass on the island of Reichenau in Germany; we have a report on completed conservation work at Mundon, Essex, part-funded by the Society; and under 'Notes and news', we hear about the return of the church key to Little Horkesley, Essex, in September 2025. The M.B.S. does not normally focus on church keys, but this particular key had special significance, both for the Society and for the history of Essex brasses.

Turning to financial matters, the sum reclaimed for Gift Aid has been declining gradually, year by year. Only 60% of members are signed up for Gift Aid. Although not everyone is eligible, it would be good to keep the numbers up. Do please fill in a Gift Aid form if you can. It can be downloaded from the website. The M.B.S. is not wealthy, and every little helps!

Finally, I must apologise for an error in the A.G.M. report in the last issue, when Ben Elliott was elected an Honorary Member. He did not join the Society in 1955 when he was sixteen years old, as was stated. He had in fact joined the Society aged sixteen in 1950, but his membership had lapsed during National Service. He therefore rejoined in 1955, aged twenty-one, and has been a member ever since. He has been supporting the Society for the magnificent total of over seventy-five years, since the reign of George VI!

Stephen Freeth

Personalia

We welcome as new members:

Michael John Andrews-Reading, 29 Newmills Crescent, Balerno, Midlothian EH14 5SX

Laura Rosenheim, Signal Elm House, The Ridgeway, Boars Hill, Oxford OX1 5EU

Jonny Wicken, 2 Basing Lodge, 17 Julian Road, Folkestone, Kent CT19 5HW

Cover: Upper part of the figure of John Brinkhurst, citizen and mercer of London, 1581, at Bisham, Berkshire (LSW.IV) (see pp.1212-13).
(photo: © Martin Stuchfield)

Diary of events

Saturday, 11th April 2026

GENERAL MEETING

AMERSHAM, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

The afternoon meeting will commence at 2.00p.m. There are brasses of 15th- and 16th-century civilians and their wives, and a charming brass for John Drake, who died in 1623 at the age of four. **Martin Pounce** of Amersham Museum will give an outline of the history of Amersham. **Hugh Guilford** will talk about the brasses and conservation work. **Barney Tyrwhitt-Drake** will then explain the Tyrwhitt-Drake family history and the family mausoleum, now known as the Drake Chapel.

Tea and cakes will be provided. During tea, there will be an opportunity to view the church, the Drake Chapel (normally kept locked) and the brasses. This will be accompanied by medieval music, performed by Amersham Music Group. The music will aim to be contemporary with the brasses.

The church building is mainly 14th and 15th century. The Drake Chapel is the former 17th-century vestry. In 1728 there was no room left in the chancel for a memorial to the recently-deceased Montague Garrard Drake. The Bishop of Lincoln allowed the family to convert the vestry into a private mausoleum on condition that a new vestry was built on its north side. The floor of the mausoleum was raised higher than that of the chancel, to allow for a burial vault beneath. In 1811 the mausoleum was extended east, to allow for a new vault. In 1966-7 the family converted the mausoleum into a chapel and presented it to the parish.

Please email Caroline Metcalfe if you plan to attend the meeting, events@mbs-brasses.co.uk. She needs to know how much cake to bake!

The postcode for satellite navigation is HP7 0DB. What 3 words: attending.passions.shorter. Parking may not be easy; there is a paying car park at Tesco nearby. There is a toilet in the church.

The nearest station is Amersham, 35 minutes from London Marylebone (Chiltern Railways) and also the terminus of the Metropolitan line (Zone 9). The church is some way off, and it may be advisable to travel to and from the church by taxi. The station has a taxi rank, or cabs can be booked in advance with local companies such as A to Z (01494 722722), Amersham Cabs (01494 727727), or Hyrons (01494 786486).

Saturday, 11th July 2026

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

STOKE D'ABERNON, SURREY

The Annual General Meeting will take place in the Hall room in the morning at 11.00a.m. The General Meeting will start in the church at 1.30p.m. **Please note the earlier time.** It will include talks from church guide **Stephen Chater** and from our Vice-President **Nigel Saul** about the brasses.

Saturday, 12th September 2026

GENERAL MEETING

ST. OLAVE HART STREET, LONDON EC3

This meeting will include talks by our Vice-President **Nicholas Rogers**, '*But the plates of memory are gone*': visualising the church of St. Olave Hart Street on the eve of the Reformation, and **Mike Harris**. The churchwarden **Penny Ritchie Calder** has also agreed to speak about the restoration of the Capponi monument, which includes a recycled incised slab. This restoration was partly funded by the M.B.S.

2027

Provisional plans are as follows:

Saturday, 17th April, General Meeting at Morley, Derbyshire

Saturday, 10th July, A.G.M. and General Meeting at Ludford, Herefordshire

Saturday, 11th September, General Meeting: possibly at Sawston, Cambridgeshire

There are many other interesting churches and brasses to explore or even revisit. If you know of a church that would be suitable for the M.B.S. to visit, please let Caroline Metcalfe know about it.

A 15th-century civilian brass at Baldock, Hertfordshire, and its 21st-century replica at St. Teilo's, St. Fagan's Museum of History, Cardiff

Part II – the modern replica

The Baldock brass, or rather a partial replica of it, made a temporary appearance in 2011 at the reconstructed church of St. Teilo's at the National Museum of History, St. Fagan's, Cardiff. The little church was originally sited at Llandeilo Talybont, north of Swansea. Its fabric is substantially 12th century, with late 14th-century north and south aisles, little altered during the Victorian era. Derelict by the 1980s, it was painstakingly recorded, dismantled and rebuilt at the museum. The interior was fitted out in the style of around 1500 with a painted rood screen, loft and organ and vibrant wall paintings, all recreated using traditional methods. The murals were based on an extensive early 16th-century sequence of Christ's Passion, found under limewash, which originally covered most of the interior.¹ The effect is visually stunning.

One aspect that could not be recreated was the mortuary character of the medieval church. Burials had taken place in St. Teilo's and its churchyard over many centuries. A sandstone slab inscribed with a Latin cross of c.600-800, discovered embedded in the walls, suggests that commemoration on the site went back much further than the present building.² No other medieval memorials were found, and the church was dismantled without disturbing the ground beneath it or the adjoining churchyard, which remains consecrated ground. The church was subsequently rebuilt in its new location with no acknowledgement of the community of the dead, an essential focus for pre-Reformation worship. The effect is a little sterile in comparison with the commemorative landscape that would otherwise characterise a medieval church.

In 2011 the 'Experience of Worship' project at Bangor University (jointly funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council and the Economic and Social Research Council) chose

St. Teilo's as the site for the reenactment of medieval parish liturgies. This innovative investigation into how worship was conducted and experienced in the Middle Ages also sought to reveal new insights about worship in medieval buildings today.³ The services included Masses, a procession and Compline, based on the Sarum rite and accompanied by music of the period. Medieval-style liturgical items, such as a pax, pyx, incense boat and hanging lamps, were commissioned, clerics wore historically-informed vestments, and other participants also wore period dress.

Alongside the parish Sunday Mass, celebrated at the high altar, the team also included a Friday Mass of the Holy Name of Jesus, a popular late-medieval devotion which had been celebrated at the Jesus altar in the south aisle at St. Teilo's.⁴ The liturgies for Mass and Compline included prayers for the dead, but without any memorials in the church there was a lack of focus for reenacting these intercessory prayers. The patron(s) responsible for building the aisles and repainting the church, who might have been the object of these devotions, could not be identified with certainty. However Madeleine Gray has offered two possibilities, based on details in the original murals.⁵ A shield in the nave displaying the royal arms encircled by a Garter and the legend *Honi Soit Qui Mal Y Pense* may point towards a Garter knight. Possible contenders are Charles Somerset, 1st earl of Worcester (c.1460-1526),⁶ and Sir Rhys ap Thomas of Dinefwr (1449-1525),⁷ both Garter knights and staunch supporters of Henry VII, with considerable landholdings in the area. Gray has deciphered an inscription beneath the image of the Mocking of Christ in the south aisle as *Heb Dduw, Heb Ddim* (Without God, nothing). This was the motto of Thomas Stradling of St. Donats, whose widow, Janet Mathew, was Rhys ap Thomas's second wife.⁸ Alternatively, the work may have marked the appropriation of the church by Neath Abbey in 1447.⁹

As none of these suggestions could be firmly substantiated, the organisers created a fictive patron whom they called ‘Thomas ap Rhys’. They decided he should not be an elite figure but a merchant, in keeping with the modest character of the church. They gave him a back story as lord of the manor and sponsor of the Jesus Mass, and commissioned a memorial to mark his imagined death in 1498. This was to be a brass, being the only form of memorial that could be made in time and within budget.¹⁰ This was expediency rather than authenticity; the lord of the manor would probably have chosen a military effigy while, even allowing for losses, brasses were never a typical choice in South Wales, where the preference was for fully-sculpted memorials.¹¹ The Welsh economy did not support a middle class of civilians with enough wealth to commission a brass. The landscape was principally agrarian, with sheep- and cattle-rearing where conditions allowed. A small number of individuals were involved as clothiers and wool merchants but most of the profits from sheep farming remained in the hands of the monasteries and Marcher lords.¹²

With so few examples of brasses in Wales, the sources for the project’s brass were English, chosen for speed and convenience from an online collection of brass rubbings.¹³ The result was an amalgam: the figure was modelled on the male civilian at Baldock (Fig.1), while a generic inscription in black letter was taken from a different brass, that of Nicholas Canteys, d.1431, at Margate, Kent (Fig.2).¹⁴ This London E-series product reads *Orate pro Anima Nich(ola)i Canteys qui obiit vii^o / die mensis february Anno d(omi)ni M^o CCCC^o xxxi^o*. It needed only the name and date of death to be changed to fit the fictional circumstances at St. Teilo’s. The male effigy on the Canteys brass was not used, being too early and too individualised. (He has a long, wavy beard and embroidered slippers.)



Fig 1. *Civilian and wife, engraved c.1480, Baldock, Hertfordshire (LSW.III). (photo: © Martin Stuchfield)*

The project sculptor, Phil Neal, created a hybrid from the two brasses using modern techniques. A negative version of his design (which did not include the ‘clover leaf’ between the feet of the figure at Baldock) was transferred onto thin brass plate and cut to a depth of 4mm using a chemical etching process. The brass was then set into a composite slab created from epoxy resin mixed with limestone powder. This resin shrinks to



Fig.2. *Inscription from the brass of Nicholas Canteys, d.1431, Margate, Kent (M.S.I). (rubbing: © Bob Downing)*



Fig.3. The replica brass of 'Thomas ap Rhys, d.1498',
St. Teilo's, St. Fagan's.
(photo: © Dafydd Wiliam)

fit as it dries, so no rivets were required. The brass was 'aged' by hand, using a pumice paste and a patination fluid which was then partly removed, and polished back up with Brasso.¹⁵ The finished brass (Fig.3) was fixed temporarily on the floor in front of the altar of the Holy Name of Jesus,

honouring its fictive sponsor and creating a spiritual focus for the reenactors. At the end of the Experience of Worship project the brass was taken up again and is now in store at the museum.

Authenticity aside, there was perhaps some serendipity in the choice of model for the St. Teilo brass. The patron of the Baldock monument is likely to have been associated with the guild of the Holy Name of Jesus. He may also have traded in cloth. If there had been a merchant connected to St. Teilo's rich enough to acquire a manor and sponsor a mass to the Holy Name of Jesus, he is likely to have made his fortune the same way.

I extend grateful thanks to Ann Adams, Stephen Freeth, Madeleine Gray, Sally Harper, Rev. Philippa Maddox, Phil Neal, Christian Steer and Martin Stuchfield for their invaluable help in preparing this article.

Nicola Lowe

- 1 See G. Nash (ed.), *Saving St. Teilo's: Bringing a medieval church to life* (Cardiff, 2009).
- 2 The Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust Historic Environment Record, PRN 06800w.
- 3 See S. Harper, P. Barnwell and M. Williamson, *Late Medieval Liturgies Enacted: the Experience of Worship in Cathedral and Parish Church* (London, 2016).
- 4 <https://www.experienceofworship.org.uk/enactments/jesus-mass/mass-of-the-holy-name-st-teilo/> [accessed 16th August 2025].
- 5 M. Gray, 'Paint', *Saving St. Teilo's*, pp.80-94 (at p.90).
- 6 A.H. Dodd, 'SOMERSET family, of Raglan, Chepstow and Troy, Monmouth, Crickhowell, Brecknock, Badminton, Gloucestershire', *Dictionary of Welsh Biography* (1959), <https://biography.wales/article/s-SOME-RAG-1450> [accessed 16th August 2025].
- 7 Nash, *op. cit.*, p.90, and J.F. Rees, 'RHYS ap THOMAS, Sir (1449-1525), the chief Welsh supporter of Henry VII', *Dictionary of Welsh Biography* (1959), <https://biography.wales/article/s-RHYS-APT-1449> [accessed 16th August 2025].
- 8 Gray, 'Paint', p.90.
- 9 The abbey had owned Llandeilo Talybont since the 11th century and had tried before to acquire the advowson. H. Watt and R.C. Hayes, 'The Records of Central Government Taxation in England and Wales: Clerical Taxes 1173-1664: Introducing a newly-accessible source for the history of the Welsh Medieval Church', in *The Welsh Medieval Church and its context. Conference Proceedings* (York, 2008), p.25.
- 10 Sally Harper, pers. comm.
- 11 R. Biebrach, *Church Monuments in South Wales, c.1200-1547* (Woodbridge, 2017), p.52, p.132.
- 12 *Ibid.*, p.9.
- 13 Hamline Digital Collections, <https://cdm17520.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/brassrubblings>.
- 14 https://www.experienceofworship.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/da14_brass.pdf.
- 15 Phil Neal, pers. comm.

The brass to Thomas Lorkin, d.1591, in St. Mary the Great, Cambridge

Thomas Lorkin was born in about 1528 at Frindsbury, Kent, the son of Thomas Lorkin and Joan (Huxley). He matriculated from Pembroke College, Cambridge at Michaelmas 1549. He then became a scholar of Queens' College, graduating B.A. in 1551/2 and proceeding to M.A. in 1555. He was a Fellow of Queens' from 1551 to 1553. He then migrated to Peterhouse, of which he was a Fellow from 1553 to 1560, becoming M.D. in 1560. In the same year he vacated his fellowship upon his marriage to Catherine Hatcher, daughter of Dr. John Hatcher, Regius Professor of Physic, at St. Edward's, Cambridge, on 15th November. They had a number of children: John, who died young; Catherine, who married Edward Lively, Regius Professor of Hebrew; Mary, who married Henry Slegg; Elizabeth, who married Nicholas Amy of Great Abington, near Cambridge; and Eleanor and Alice who were unmarried.¹

On 21st April 1564 Lorkin was created Regius Professor of Physic (i.e. Medicine), a position that had been founded in 1540 by Henry VIII. He was the fourth Professor, holding the position until his death in 1591. In August 1564 Queen Elizabeth I visited Cambridge and was present while the doctors of the faculty disputed before her in Great St. Mary's church. Lorkin was respondent, defending the propositions that *Cibus simplex multiplici est preferendus* (Plain food should be preferred to fancy food), and *Cenandum liberalius quam prandendum* (Dinner should be more generous than lunch).

Lorkin had a library of over 270 books. These he annotated heavily, but he only wrote one, *Recta regula & victus ratio pro studiosis & literatis* (*A correct rule and conduct of life for the studious and learned*) (London, 1562). Running to seventeen pages, it is a guide to how students should lead their lives.²



Fig.1. Inscription to Thomas Lorkin, esq., Regius Professor of Physic, d.1591, St. Mary the Great, Cambridge (LSWI).
(rubbing: © Philip Whittemore)

We have little information about the study of medicine in Elizabethan Cambridge. Dissections were rare; official sanction was needed for them to be carried out. However we know of two dissections which Lorkin carried out at Magdalene College in 1564-5 and 1566-7. Both were of felons hanged at Cambridge Castle. Each was carried out over three or four days.³

Shortly before his death Lorkin petitioned Robert Cooke, Clarenceux King of Arms, to grant the five Regius Professors ‘arms and crests which the said lecturers and professors might give and beare lawfully to them and their successors in like place and office forever.’ The coat of arms for the Professor of Physic, one of the five different coats of arms granted to the Regius Professors on 13th November 1590, is *Azure a fess ermine between three lozenges gold, on a chief gules a lion guardant gold marked on his side with the letter M sable. Crest: On a wreath gold and azure a Quinquangle [pentangle] silver.*⁴

Within a year of the arms being awarded Lorkin died. He was buried in Great St. Mary’s, Cambridge. On the north wall is an elaborately-engraved plate erected to his memory, measuring 414 x 641 mm (Fig.1).⁵ It includes two large shields within a strapwork border. The dexter shield bears the arms of the Regius Professor impaling *Ermine three leopards’ faces*, for Lorkin, while the sinister shield bears the arms of Lorkin alone. Between the shields is his crest, *A lark wings endorsed proper on a mount holding in its beak a sprig of columbine gold flowered azure in its mouth proper* (a canting reference to Lorkin’s name), beside a scroll inscribed with his personal motto *VOCE ET ODORE* (By sound and by smell). This may be a medical allusion. Several of his books bear the same motto.

Immediately below the shields is an inscription in eight lines of Latin:

Ad fundum huius parietis iacet Thomas Lorkin Armiger sepultus: natus in uilla Frinsburiensi, in comitatu Cantij / Qui cum in omni literarum genere instructissimus fuit, in Medicina potissimum excelluit donatusque est ob eam / qua facultatem istam locupletare studuit diligentiam, Doctorali gradu. Factus est idem in eadem facultate / Regius Professor: in quo munere per spatium Viginti et Octo Annorum tam studiose se gessit, ut cum

*uitæ / probitate plurimum excelleret: cum acute idem dissereret ac copiose diceret: cum docendi inter- / pretandique rationem optime teneret, mereretur ex Constitutione Civili, in Nobilissimorum Comi / tum numerum adscribi, Hanc eius uitam tam fæliciter productam ad Sexaginta tres Annos matura / mors abripuit primo Die Mensis Maij Anno Salutis Humanæ MDLXXXI.*⁶

(At the base of this wall lies buried Thomas Lorkin, esquire, born in the village of Frindsbury in the county of Kent, who, though he was very learned in all branches of knowledge, excelled particularly in Medicine and was awarded the degree of doctor on account of the diligence with which he endeavoured to enrich that Faculty. He was made Regius Professor in that Faculty, in which office for twenty-eight years he conducted himself so zealously that, as he greatly excelled in uprightness of life, as he debated with intellectual penetration and spoke eloquently, and as he mastered perfectly the art of teaching and expounding, he was deservedly enlisted by civic decree in the ranks of the noblest fellows. A timely death took this well-spent life at 63 years on the first of May AD 1591.)

Lorkin’s will makes no mention of any brass or monument. He may have already ordered it before his death, or made his intentions known to his executors, his daughters Catherine and Eleanor. What can be said concerning the provenance of the brass? Brasses were produced in Cambridge between c.1506 and 1541, during what was probably the lifetime of one master. However by the time of Lorkin’s death brass production had ceased. Even so, his brass may have been engraved locally. The engraved lines are very fine, especially when used to indicate shading, which suggests a goldsmith or printer. Cambridge in the 1590s had such craftsmen. The University Press had been established in 1586 and it is possible that it engraved the brass. If the brass was commissioned from a London engraver, no similar plate is known.

Lorkin made his will on 13th April 1591.⁷ One of the four witnesses was a Thomas Talles, but he cannot have been the composer, who had died in 1585. After commending his soul to God and his body buried, Lorkin asked that the preacher at his funeral should have the choice of receiving 20s. or Lorkin’s gold ring for his trouble.

A yearly sermon was also requested. For this, Pembroke, Queens' and Peterhouse were invested with lands, one of their duties being to provide by turn a preacher for 'a sermond to be made for me on my obit day'. The sum of 6s. 8d. was to be given to the preacher. Lorkin left various items of clothing to his daughters and their husbands and to more distant relatives. He also left charitable bequests: the poor of Cambridge received £3, and those of Chesterton 20s. Prisoners in Cambridge Castle and the Tolbooth (the town gaol on the Guildhall site) received 6s. 8d., with the poor in the Spittle receiving 3s. 4d. and the poor of Frindsbury, Kent, where he had been born, 20s.

His most important bequest was his personal library of over 270 books. These he left to the University Library. They were to be kept in a 'greate cubbord locked', which was to be provided by the library within a year of his decease. If the cupboard was not provided, then the books were to be given to Peterhouse. The majority of the books survive today.⁸

There is a surviving probate inventory of his goods and chattels.⁹ The most valuable item was a gilt cup valued at £5, which at the time of his death had been pawned. His clothes were modest. His breeches and hose were described as being made of 'carsey' (kersey), and his upper clothing of 'grosgrain' (a coarse fabric of silk and wool, stiffened with glue). Over this he wore a 'rat-coloured' (black or grey?) cloak. Also listed were two silk nightcaps, a gold purse and various rings. The only items of furniture recorded were two 'standishes' (inkstands), one with gold weights, the other with counters, coral beads and dice.

Surprisingly, neither the will nor the inventory mention any medical instruments or apparatus. Perhaps he had given up practice before his death, but still continued to teach. This would explain his rooms at Trinity Hall. According to the inventory these comprised 'an outward great chamber', a 'low chamber', an upper and a nether study with a little closet, 'a little hole at the stayers foot' that contained fire irons, and also a wood house. Here he kept most of his books. There were also a warming pan, a pair of virginals, an almanack desk, four pots with silver covers,

three glasses, a horn penner with inkpot, two silver tooth picks and an ear pick, a reading glass, seven pairs of spectacles (very necessary for a lecturer), a lute with a case and two 'gittornes' (gitterns), the latter valued at 20s. Lorkin was never a Fellow of Trinity Hall, and there is no mention of that college in his will. The connection seems to have been merely one of convenience.

The inventory adds that Lorkin also had accommodation in his daughter's house at Chesterton. Here he fished in the river Cam using an 'angle rod', and gardened; pots for use in a hot house are mentioned.¹⁰

Lorkin's greatest memorial is undoubtedly his collection of books. These remain at the University Library for use by researchers into Elizabethan medicine. Their annotations make them especially valuable. His finely-engraved brass with its two large shields showing his arms and those of the Regius Professorship is a particularly interesting example of its time.

I am most grateful to Stephen Freeth and Nicholas Rogers for considerable help in writing this short account, and to Peter Pickering for his help with the Latin.

Philip Whittemore

- 1 These biographical details are taken from Cambridge University's online alumni database, ACAD, <https://venn.lib.cam.ac.uk/Documents/acad/enter.html> and from Lorkin's entry in the Online Dictionary of National Biography.
- 2 Only two copies are known. Both are in Cambridge University Library.
- 3 P.M. Jones, 'Thomas Lorkyn's Dissections 1564/5 and 1566/7', *Trans. of the Cambridge Bibliographical Society*, IX, no.3 (1988), pp.209-29.
- 4 The grant is printed in *Genealogical Magazine*, II (1899), pp.125-6.
- 5 W. Lack, H.M. Stuchfield and P. Whittemore, *The Monumental Brasses of Cambridgeshire* (London, 1995), p.65.
- 6 The Latin was transcribed for the *M.B.S. Trans.*, II, pt.7 (September 1896), p.256 by R.A.S. Macalister, later famous as the archaeologist Macalister of Gezer. He however had been trained mostly as a mathematician, and his transcript has several errors.
- 7 Proved in the Vice-Chancellor's Court. The original will is now Cambridge University Library, GBR/0265/UA/VCCt. Wills 3b/19. N.B. the note of probate is undated, though there is a later note of 20th April 1592 about alterations made by Lorkin to the text of his will before his death. For a copy of the will see Brit. Lib., Harley MS.7030, ff.334-5.
- 8 E.S. Leedham-Green, *Books in Cambridge Inventories* (C.U.P., 1986), I, pp.492-508; C. Sayle, 'The Library of Thomas Lorkyn', *Annals of Medical History*, III (1921), pp.310-23.
- 9 Cambridge University Library, GBR/0265/UA/VCCt. Invs 5/28/1-2.
- 10 W. Palmer, 'Cambridge Doctors of Olden Time', *Cambridge Antiquarian Society Communications*, XV (1911), pp.245-7.

Abbot Georg Fischer, d.1519, and his brass at Mittelzell on the island of Reichenau, Germany

The monastic island of Reichenau at Lake Konstanz is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.¹ In the village of Mittelzell is a Carolingian cruciform basilica consecrated in 816 as an abbey for the Benedictine Order. This was extended in 1048 with the addition of transepts and apse to form the current Münster St. Maria & Markus.²



Fig1. Abbot Georg Fischer, d.1519, Mittelzell, Reichenau, Germany. (rubbing: © Hans Gerd Dormagen)

On the floor of the north transept behind the high altar is the figure brass to Abbot Georg Fischer, 'Georgius Piscatoris' (1680 x 610 mm), set in a sandstone slab (Figs.1 and 2). This is not the original slab, which would have held the indents of any inscriptions or other components.³



Fig2. Abbot Georg Fischer, d.1519 (detail). (photo: © Kevin Herring)

He wears a *Mitra Pretiosa* with infulae and is in full Mass vestments, having a chasuble richly embroidered with pomegranates, an amice, an alb with apparel, and a maniple, but with no tunicle, dalmatic or stole. He holds a crozier with vexillum in his right hand, and a Bible in his left. Adjacent to the mitre is a shield with a coat of arms in low relief, showing Quarterly 1 & 4, *Argent a cross gules*, for the Imperial Abbey of Reichenau; 2, *Azure two fish palewise and addorsed argent*, for Fischer; 3, *Vert three bendlets charged with seven mullets (2,3,2) of six points or*, for the Imperial Abbey of Zwiefalten.

The (probably marginal) inscription is missing. According to Mone it read, 'A.D. 1519 II non. Nov. indict VII obiit dom. Georgius Piscatoris, hujus et Zuifuldensis monasteriorum abbas ac primus regularis hoc in loco vitae reformator'.⁴ Hans Gerd Dormagen refers to a lost eighteen-line Latin inscription, probably of later origin, and because of its length and complexity not part of the brass but an epitaph, which was possibly placed

in the vicinity of Fischer's grave.⁵ His seal survives.⁶ The letters ANHSF appear in a monogram at the top of the vexillum on the brass. Sources interpret this as the signature of Hans Vischer the Younger of Nürnberg, although Vischer products, if signed, usually have a Vischer monogram. Hauschke considers the brass came from the workshop of Peter Vischer the Elder, engraved either in collaboration with Hans or by Hans alone.⁷

Zwiefalten Abbey, formerly in Upper Swabia but now in Baden-Württemberg, was founded in 1089. It was totally transformed from a Romanesque to a lavish Baroque building in 1738. Georg Fischer was born in the village of Baach nearby. He is first recorded as a monk at Zwiefalten in 1470 and was appointed Abbot in 1474 by Bishop Hermann III of Konstanz. He was highly educated, and in 1483 matriculated among eight monks from Zwiefalten at the University of Tübingen. He enjoyed a close relationship with Count Eberhard I of Württemberg and the humanist poet Heinrich Bebel. He even became godfather to the future Duke Ulrich. During his tenure as Abbot there was an intense programme of construction at Zwiefalten, the infirmary, cloister and chapter house being remodelled and the monks' dormitories enlarged, along with a new library. In 1510 the abbey church was extended.⁸ He also improved the economy of the Abbey. He placed great emphasis on the monks' academic education. The pinnacle of his achievements was arguably in 1500, when Pope Alexander VI permitted the monastery school to award academic degrees.

Following Ulrich's accession, Abbot Fischer's relationship with him started to break down. Opposition also grew from within the Abbey, led by the Provost of Mochental, Dionysius Munsinger, against Fischer's strict implementation of the Bursfelder Reforms.⁹ Munsinger wanted to become Abbot and even tried to poison Fischer. By 1512 there was open conflict, and the Abbot was imprisoned in Hohenneuffen Castle. He resigned on 8th October 1513 and moved to a house in Reutlingen.¹⁰ Emperor Maximilian I later helped him to become Abbot of Reichenau, and he was formally appointed on 23rd April 1516.¹¹

His term of office was relatively short, since he died on 4th November 1519. Nevertheless he did manage to alleviate the Abbey's dire

financial situation, securing money from various benefactors including Emperor Maximilian. Alongside twelve selected monks from Zwiefalten he also re-established a much stricter monastic rule. His will has not been found.

Kevin Herring

- 1 Designated in 2000 and relating to three Romanesque basilicas/monasteries in the villages of Mittelzell, Oberzell and Niederzell.
- 2 The largest ecclesiastical building on the island of Reichenau, the former abbey church is now a Catholic parish church. Its furnishings from the Gothic and Baroque periods are outstanding.
- 3 This is not the original location, which was in the floor near the altar of St. Benedict in the north transept. During the renovations in the 19th century the brass ended up on the north wall of the transept. Its current location behind the high altar occurred during the major restorations of 1964-70.
- 4 Mone, Franz, *Quellensammlung des Badischen Landesgeschichte* (1848), I, p.241. <https://doi.org/10.11588/diglit.61762#0001>.
- 5 Dormagen, Hans Gerd, 'Der Reichenauer Abt Georg Fischer. Fragmente der nach seinem Tod 1519 gravierten Grabplatte im Münster', in *Schriften des Vereins für Geschichte des Bodensees und seiner Umgebung*, 141 (2023), pp.63-74. <https://doi.org/10.57962/regionalia-26772>. The translation of the Latin text is: 'Here are buried the remains of the once great man Georg of Zwiefalten, who born of humble origins was through his holiness and experience of the world appointed to the same monastery in 1474. He managed internal affairs honestly, and was most attentive to church and secular law. From this . . . he attracted envy. He suffered the insult of imprisonment in 1512. Released in 1516, he was appointed Abbot of Reichenau. The eventual fate of this holy man was a beacon to all men. He died on 4th November 1519. Respect for him placed this inscription. It is enough, traveller, that you should know these things.'
- 6 Held by Karlsruhe Badisches Generallandesarchiv. Its inscription, expanded, reads, 'Sigillum Georgii Dei Gratia Abbatis Monasterii Augie Maioris Anno 1516'. He is shown in Mass vestments with his coat of arms below.
- 7 Hauschke, Sven, *Die Grabdenkmäler Der Nürnberger Vischer-Werkstatt (1453-1544)* (2006), pp.201-2, catalogue 27, and pl.148, p.411. Hauschke has classified the various diapered backgrounds on Vischer products. The pomegranate design on Fischer's chasuble is grouped with that on the brass to Cardinal Friedrich Jagiello, d.1503, in Krakow Cathedral (Style 7, p.134).
- 8 Halder, Reinhold, 'Zur Bau Und Kunstgeschichte Des Alten Zwiefalter Münsters und Klosters', in Pretsch, H.J. ed., *900 Jahre Benediktiner abtei Zwiefalten* (1989), pp.172-77, p.247. See also Setzler, Wilfrid, 'Zwieter Gründer des Klosters Georg Fisher Abt von Zwiefalten 1474-1513', *Schwäbische Heimat*, LXXI (4) (2020), pp.404-11.
- 9 The Bursfelder Reform Movement began in 1433. It aimed to reform Benedictine monastic life through a stricter observance of the Rule, the consolidation of many monasteries, and the creation of a unified monastic community across central Europe.
- 10 Landesarchiv Baden Württemberg (Hauptstaatsarchiv Stuttgart), B 201, Reichsstadt Reutlingen: Urkunden und Akten, U254. Dated 24th November 1513. The Mayor and town council of Reutlingen agree that Abbot Fischer can buy and occupy a house in the town, paying the usual taxes and carrying out citizen's duties. <http://www.landesarchiv-bw.de/plink/?f=1-2429560> It is not clear how this tallies with his imprisonment between 1512 and 1516.
- 11 His appointment was far from straightforward. Bishop Hugo of Konstanz wanted to incorporate Reichenau Abbey into his diocese. Markus von Knöringen was appointed Abbot, and not until his expulsion on 15th May 1515 did a clear path open up for Abbot Fischer, with Emperor Maximilian's assistance.



Fig. 1. John Brinkhurst, citizen and mercer of London, and wives Elizabeth (d.1581) and Jane, Bisham, Berkshire (LSW.IV). (photo: © Martin Stuchfield)

Classical learning on a brass at Bisham, Berkshire

In All Saints church, Bisham, Berkshire, amid the many impressive monuments to the Hoby family, is a brass to John Brinkhurst, citizen and mercer of London and merchant adventurer, in civil dress, with his wives Elizabeth Blundell (d.1581) and Jane Wodforde (LSW.IV) (Fig.1).¹ Above each of the effigies is a word or phrase from a sentence reading *Misericordiam, Impetramus, and Non Iustitiam* ('We seek Mercy, not Justice') (Fig.2).

I have not found this four-word sentence elsewhere, though the thought and choice of words is reminiscent of Thomas Aquinas: *Et ideo multa orando impetrat homo ex divina misericordia, quae tamen non meretur secundum iustitiam.*² The Brinkhursts were a Catholic family,³ and this wording harmonises with Catholic practice while avoiding the direct request for prayers for the dead that would have been usual before the Reformation.

There is also a plate with this couplet in Latin (Fig.3):

*Ut Rosa mane viget, tamen et mox vespere languet
Sic modo qui fuimus, pulvis et umbra sumus.*

This couplet is of particular interest. I translate it thus: *As the rose flourishes in the morning, but soon in the evening droops, so we who were recently living are dust and shadow.* In the pentameter which forms the second line, its second half (*pulvis et umbra sumus*) is line 16 of the seventh ode of Horace's *Odes*, Book Four, a beautiful ode on the shortness of life. Searching the internet for the wording of the rest of the couplet did find it, but only with *cras levis umbra sumus* ('tomorrow we are an unsubstantial shadow') at the end, and in two very obscure places. The first is an article in the *Record of the Art Museum*



Fig.2. Plate bearing the word 'Misericordiam' from the brass to John Brinkhurst, citizen and mercer of London, and wives Elizabeth (d.1581) and Jane, Bisham, Berkshire (LSW.IV). (photo: © Martin Stuchfield)

of Princeton University (1958), 'A portrait of Rubens by Daniel Seghers'. This quotes it as an anonymous text from the collection *Symbolorum Emblematum Centuria* of Joachim Camerarius (1500-74). The second instance is from the humanist Pierio Valeriano (1477-1558), who quotes it 'ex recentioribus quidam' (i.e from an anonymous neo-Latin poet) in his work *Hieroglyphica*.

What do we deduce? Was the Brinkhurst version the original, the Horatian *pulvis et* being altered later by another anonymous poet to *cras levis*, perhaps in order to bring in 'Tomorrow we die'? Or did the writer of the Brinkhurst version decide to alter what he had seen, to show his appreciation of Horace? Either way, the poem in Bisham church demonstrates great and arcane learning on the part of whoever was responsible for the brass in the late 16th century.

Peter Pickering

- 1 W. Lack, H.M. Stuchfield and P. Whittemore, *The Monumental Brasses of Berkshire* (London, 1993), p.12.
- 2 *Summa Theologiae* I-II, Quaestio 114, Articulus 6: 'By praying Man obtains many things from divine mercy, which however he does not merit according to justice.'
- 3 Sheila Featherstone-Clark in the Bisham Church Friends' Newsletter no.8 (April 2020). She notes that while his first wife is recorded as dying in 1581, the death dates of John Brinkhurst and his second wife were never filled in. She relates this to the troubles suffered by the family as recusants.



Fig.3. Plate bearing two Latin verses from the brass to John Brinkhurst, citizen and mercer of London, and wives Elizabeth (d.1581) and Jane, Bisham, Berkshire (LSW.IV). (photo: © Martin Stuchfield)

Completion of conservation work at Mundon, Essex

In June 2022, during major works at Mundon, Essex, by the Friends of Friendless Churches, a badly damaged indent was discovered buried under the sanctuary floor. This was for a lady, c.1525, with foot inscription, four sons, three daughters and a shield. The discovery was reported in *Bulletin* 153 (June 2023), pp.1050-2.

When discovered, the slab was in such poor condition that it might have been reburied under a protective layer, after photography and recording. Happily, with financial assistance from the Francis Coales Charitable Foundation and a grant

of £450 from the M.B.S. Conservation Fund, it was possible to fund 100% of the conservation needed to incorporate the slab into the sanctuary floor. The work was carried out by a stone conservator from Essex.

I was able to examine the completed project in June 2025. It has been beautifully done (Fig.1). The slab has been conserved and consolidated, and is now permanently available to view. The craftsman has even matched in new 'Victorian' tiles to surround the slab.

Stephen Freeth



*Fig 1. The Mundon indent after conservation, 2025.
(photo: © Stephen Freeth)*

Notes and news



Fig.1. *Mystery rubbing of a man in armour.
Does anyone recognise it?*

A mystery rubbing

Mike Harris, who answers general enquiries on behalf of the Society, has recently been asked to identify a framed rubbing of a man in armour, around 915 mm high (Fig.1). He comments:

‘Superficially, he is an early 16th-century man in armour, but a closer glance shows how badly his armour is portrayed. The avian crest on his helm is one thing, but the squashed bird under his feet is another! I thought he might be Victorian, but he could be a fake.

My correspondent’s father once worked in Cheltenham, and his chauffeur used to take the children on brass rubbing expeditions to nearby villages. Perhaps the brass still exists, in a church that ‘doesn’t have brasses’, so no-one is looking?

Would it be worth putting him in the Bulletin to see if anyone has come across him? It’s just possible that there was a serious intent by a family named Bird or Hawke, or something of that nature.’

Off the top of my head, there may be some similarity with the Rochdale brasses described in the last issue. Could this be another of George Shaw’s creations?

Please email any suggestions to the Bulletin Editor, freeth@ntlworld.com, or Mike Harris, mgtharris39@gmail.com

Stephen Freeth

Brasses in the Elisabethkirche, Marburg, Germany

Our member Hans Gerd Dormagen has published another article on brasses in Germany. This is in the *Zeitschrift des Vereins für Hessische Landeskunde*, CXXVII (2022), pp.15-38, and describes the brasses in the Elisabethkirche in Marburg. There are four brasses, all similar in style, each comprising a frame inscription surrounding heraldry on a separate plate. They range in date from 1481 to 1497.

Herr Dormagen has very kindly sent me the text of his article, which is in German. I will happily forward a copy to any member who would like one. Please email me at freeth@ntlworld.com.

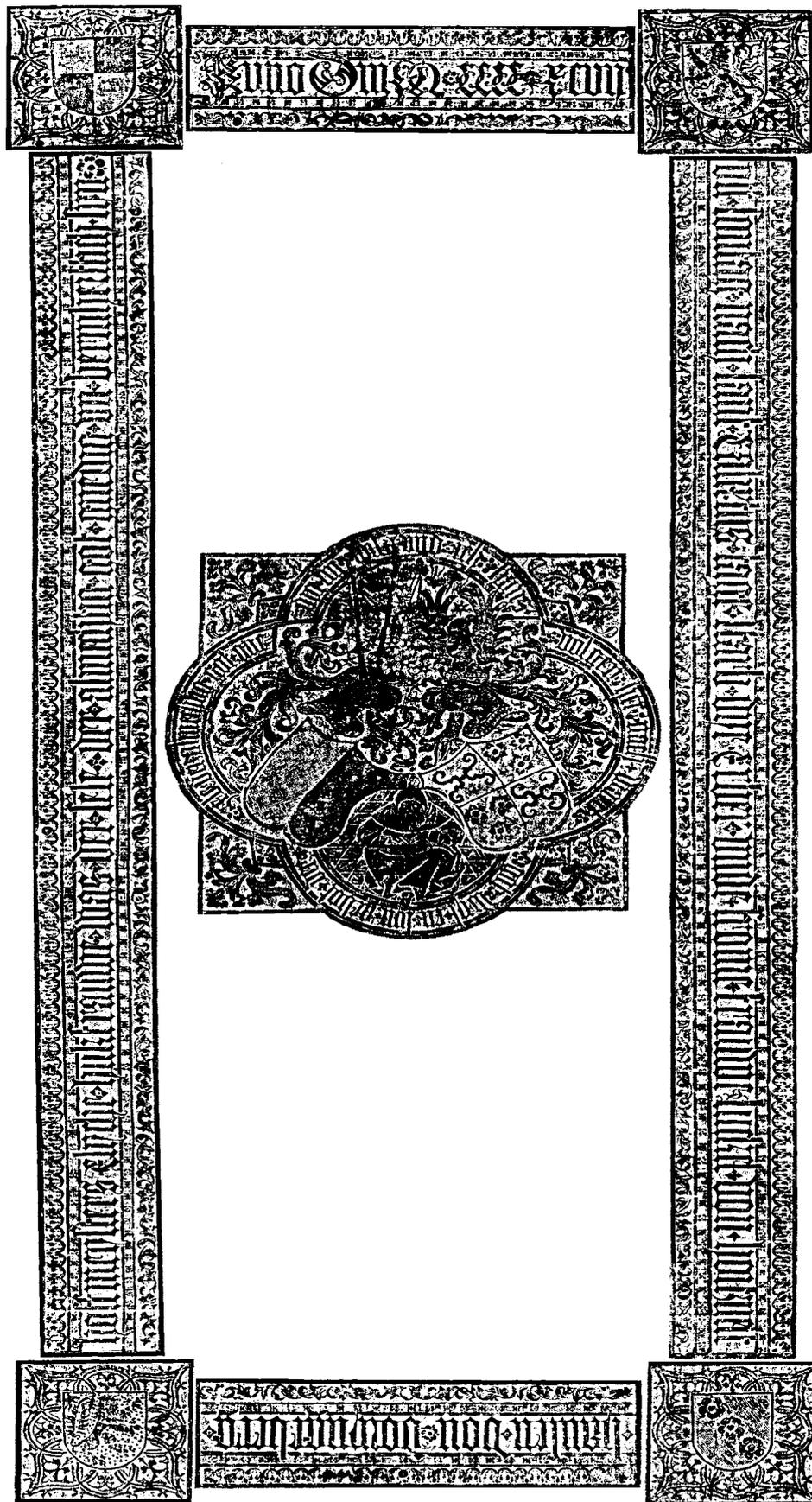


Fig.2. Luckel von Hatzfeld, d.1497, Elisabethkirche, Marburg, Germany.
 (rubbing: © Hans Gerd Dormagen)

Reminiscences of a *County Series* recorder

Our former member Frank Kingwell did a major part of the fieldwork for *The Monumental Brasses of Devonshire* in the south-west of the county around Plymouth and further afield.¹ He died on 23rd January 2025, aged 98.

My abiding memory of Frank is of our visit to the Royal Marines Barracks at Stonehouse in Plymouth. This was in the era before satellite navigation. Finding my way to the dock area was easy, but not so Stonehouse Barracks, despite its enormous size. Turning into what proved to be the wrong entrance, I was confronted by two Royal Marines armed with assault rifles. They were kind enough to give me directions, in the nicest possible way. I soon found the right entrance.

Inside the barracks, much of which was built in the 18th century, Frank took me to St. Christopher's chapel on the first floor. Outside, fixed to the wall, was a large brass plate commemorating Officers, N.C.O.s and men of the Royal Marine Artillery who had been 'killed in action, [or] died of wounds or from effects of climate' in the Egyptian Campaign of 1892-4. It included the full-length figures of two Royal Marines with reversed rifles, as well as ironclad warships, a sphinx and palm trees. 'Is this the kind of thing you are after?' Frank asked. It turned out to have been engraved by Matthews & Hodgson of Poland Street, London, and was sufficiently important to be illustrated in the Devonshire volume.²

Each week, almost without fail, a letter would arrive with details of the brasses that Frank had recorded the previous week. He did an outstanding job recording brasses in so many churches. Quite rightly, the Devonshire volume was dedicated to him.

Philip Whittemore

¹ W. Lack, H.M. Stuchfield and P. Whittemore, *The Monumental Brasses of Devonshire* (London, 2000), p.xiii.

² On p.241 (LSW.II).

More reminiscences, by a former North American member

Here is a charming message from a former member in the U.S.A.:

I am still interested in monumental brasses. However I no longer have the time to pursue all my interests.

With apologies in advance for what will be a long story, I feel compelled to explain my interest in the M.B.S. My husband lived in London in the late 1960s while he actively served as an officer of the United States Navy. He and his late first wife lived in Chiswick. To occupy herself while their two young children were in school, the first Mrs. Dirksen received a permit to take rubbings of some of the incised brasses in the area. When my husband and I began planning our first overseas trip together in 2002, I researched the brass rubbings that were hanging in our home: Sir John D'Abernon and his son. I began with Herbert Macklin's book on Monumental Brasses and through some additional research located St. Mary's Church in Stoke D'Abernon. I wrote to the vicar requesting permission to see the brasses. My purpose was to photograph them to provide an accompanying record as part of the inheritance my stepsons will one day receive. (They were too young to appreciate their mother's efforts at that time.) We met the vicar and he personally pulled back the carpet to uncover the brasses for us. Of course, we were nothing less than awestruck and incredibly grateful for this opportunity! I can only hope that my stepsons will have an appreciation for the historic significance of Sir John D'Abernon, as well as the piece of history left by their late mother.

I do not profess to be anything more than an American tourist whose interest in history was first piqued by early seventeenth-century headstones in a Newport, RI cemetery, and contemplating those who went before. I thank you for your time and commitment to the Monumental Brass Society. It is indeed a labor of love, and I do appreciate the knowledge you and others continue to share with people like me.

You may absolutely use [this] letter. In fact, I would be very honored! I also have one of the permits that was issued to allow the rubbing. I think it was dated some time in 1968. I can't even imagine how difficult the brasses must have been to rub; I did two rubbings of small replicas at the Brass Rubbing Center in London (Richard the Lionheart and Robert the Bruce, I think), and I was exhausted!

Thank you for allowing me this little skip down memory lane.



Fig.3. Sir Robert Swynborne, lord of the manor, d.1391, and his son Sir Thomas, d.1412, Little Horkesley, Essex (LSW.I), photographed in 1922 prior to the bombing (photo: © Royal Commission on Historical Monuments)

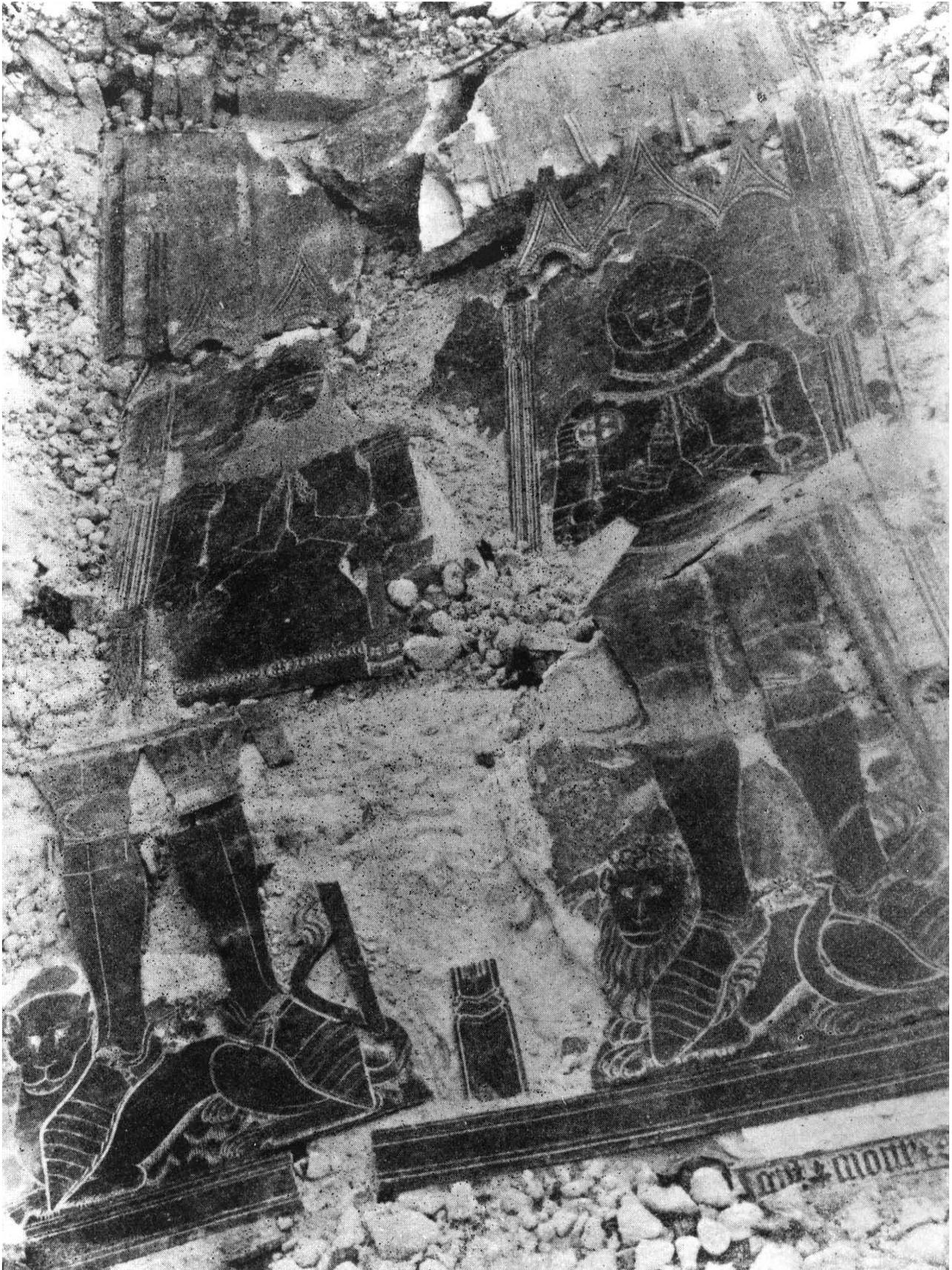


Fig 4. Sir Robert Swynborne, lord of the manor, d.1391, and his son Sir Thomas, d.1412, Little Horkesley, Essex (LSWI), photographed on 22nd September 1940 following the bombing (photo: © Illustrated London News)

The church key returns to Little Horkesley, Essex

At his retirement in 2022, our former President, Martin Stuchfield, was presented with the key to the medieval church at Little Horkesley in Essex. This was in recognition of his sterling work for the M.B.S. over many years.

Little Horkesley church and its key have an interesting history. Before World War II the church contained many fine brasses and tombs of the 15th and 16th centuries, along with three life-size medieval wooden effigies. Unfortunately on 21st September 1940 the medieval building was totally destroyed by a German aerial mine. Local people rallied round to rescue what they could, and most of the brasses and tombs were retrieved from the rubble. When the church was rebuilt in 1957-8 by Duncan Grant and Marshall Sisson, in an early 16th-century style which closely followed the form of the old church, the surviving brasses and tombs were replaced in the new building.

The church key is Victorian, not medieval, and about 150 mm (six inches) long. It was last used to lock the building on the evening of 21st September 1940. A few hours later the church was destroyed, rendering the key redundant. The lady keyholder then kept the key safe for over fifty years after the war, and in 1992 sold it for £5 to my mother Zahra Freeth, an M.B.S. member who lived nearby. In 2022 the Council agreed that it would make a very suitable retirement gift to our President, given his interest in Essex history, and he was elated to receive it.



Fig. 6. Presentation of church key by Martin Stuchfield to Meriel Sparkes on 21st September 2025. (photo: © Suzanne Albert)

I can now report a further development. Martin Stuchfield has very generously returned the key to Little Horkesley. The rebuilt church contains a small display about the destruction of the medieval building, and on 21st September 2025, the 85th anniversary of the bombing, at a special service, the key was delivered to the parish. A quarter peal was rung on the bells, Martin handed over the key to Meriel Sparkes, a former churchwarden, and the Bishop of Colchester preached an excellent sermon. I was privileged to attend the service and ceremony along with my sister Penny.

Stephen Freeth



Fig. 5. Little Horkesley church following its destruction by a parachute mine on 21st September 1940. (photo: © Illustrated London News)