

Monumental Brass Society

1887-2012



A SHORT HISTORY

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Cover:

Arms and Crest granted by Letters Patent of Garter, Clarenceux and Norroy and Ulster Kings of Arms dated 22nd May 2012 thus celebrating the 125 years of the Society since its foundation in 1887.

Arms:

Azure a Chevron Or billetty Sable between three Winnowing Fans within a Bordure Or.

Crest:

On a Helm with a Wreath Or and Azure a demi Knight affronty in Armour of the 14th century Or garnished Sable holding a Model of a Church in perpendicular style with a central spire Argent the fenestrations Sable.

Motto:

Memoriam Conservare in Saecula

meaning

To preserve the monument for future generations.

In the design of the Arms the Azure field is a reference to Purbeck marble and the bordure symbolises a brass fillet. The billets on the chevron represent sticks of heelball used by brass rubbers and winnowing fans are taken from the brass to Sir William de Septvans, c.1323, at Chartham in Kent which shows without tinctures the Arms of Azure three Winnowing Fans Or.

The Crest is recognisable as a demi figure of Sir John de Cobham, 3rd Baron Cobham, from his brass at Cobham, Kent. He died at an advanced age in 1408, seventy-four years after his marriage. The brass shows a full length figure but demi figures make better Crests and to depersonalise it the figure is described as a demi Knight affronty in armour of the 14th century. Although Sir John de Cobham died in 1408 the brass was thought to be set up in his lifetime.

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The Arms were presented to the President, Martin Stuchfield by the Garter Principal King of Arms at a reception held at the College of Arms on Wednesday, 27th June 2012.

The Monumental Brass Society (“M.B.S.”) to-day enjoys a world-wide membership. One hundred and twenty-five years ago it began with a handful of enthusiastic undergraduates at Cambridge University. This short history has been written to commemorate an important milestone, to highlight some of its achievements – and failures – and to remember some of those, past and present, who have guided the Society through both good times and bad.

In the Beginning

The modern study of monumental brasses began in the 1840s at Oxford University, among a small group comprising mainly undergraduates (notably Charles Boutell (1812-77), Herbert Haines (1826-72) and Charles Robertson Manning (1825-99)). Some forty years later, a Society devoted to the study and preservation of brasses was formed at Cambridge. From the diary of the then 19 year-old Herbert Macklin of St. John’s College, we know that the new Society was his idea, and that he spared no effort to organise informal discussions, meetings and publicity. At the end of October 1886, Macklin drafted a notice announcing the formation and first meeting of the Society for the *Cambridge Review*. It was decided to call the new group the Cambridge University Association of Brass Collectors (“C.U.A.B.C.”), an unfortunate choice, leading to some misgivings amongst clergy in particular as to the Association’s true objectives. It even caused one irate Kentish incumbent to suggest forming ‘The Anti-Poking the Nose into other People’s Business Society’ in opposition.

The only journal outside Cambridge consistently to report early activities of the C.U.A.B.C. was *The Antiquary*. In January 1887 it printed an open letter from Macklin, the first Honorary Secretary, drawing attention to the Association’s existence, and stating that: ‘All past and present members of the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge (who) were interested in this branch of archaeology . . . were eligible for membership.’

As the first issues of the ‘C.U.A.B.C. Transactions’ testify, most early meetings of the Association were held in the comfort of the member’s rooms at Cambridge. Enthusiasm was effusive, and amongst its first priorities the C.U.A.B.C.’s committee included the compilation of ‘an accurate list or



Rev. Herbert Haines, M.A. (1826-72), schoolmaster, scholar and author of one of the best general books on monumental brasses ever written *A Manual of Monumental Brasses* (1861). ‘Badger’, as he was known affectionately to his pupils, helped raise the study of brasses from an antiquarian pastime to a recognised academic pursuit. Although he had died well before the M.B.S. was founded, it was the revision of Haines’ *List* accompanying his *Manual* of 1861, which was to be one of the Society’s main objectives. Haines himself has a brass in Gloucester Cathedral, paid for by subscriptions raised by his friends and former pupils.

index of all English brasses with a view to publication’. This was essentially a revision of Haines’ *List* of 1861, and by February 1887 Harry Sanderson (1865-1936), a Trinity man, but by then a teacher in the army, announced that the first revised list for Cambridgeshire was underway. Guidelines were set down in a pamphlet entitled ‘Hints for the Discovery and Description of Monumental Brasses’. Amongst the ‘Cambridgeshire Committee’ responsible for the revised list were O.J. Charlton (1871-1941) and

R.A.S. Macalister (1870-1950). The latter became a famous archaeologist, nicknamed ‘Macalister of Gezer’, where he directed excavations during the early years of the 20th century. The two men were later joined by C.J.P. Cave (1871-1950) and the results were published in the *Transactions* until 1909, but were never completed. Cave’s only daughter, Dorothy, was later to marry the Society’s Hon. Heraldic Adviser – Philip Walter Kerr, Rouge Croix Pursuivant of Arms (1886-1941).

Such was the enthusiasm of the membership that by June 1897 the revised national list of brasses was optimistically announced as becoming ‘a complete descriptive list of the ancient brasses of the world’. With Rev. W.F. Greeny (1825-97), then the leading expert on continental brasses and incised slabs, as President, this optimism was perhaps not so foolish as it might seem. Yet the publication by the Society of the first list of continental brasses was still another seventy years away.

The First Transactions and Portfolio

Transactions

Since the foundation of the Society, the importance of publishing a journal has been paramount, and on 21st October 1887 the C.U.A.B.C.’s Committee resolved to publish its *Transactions* two or three times a year. The first six issues were very modest publications – more a pamphlet than a journal – produced on equally slender budgets. The first part appeared in November 1887, but by issue number 6, the Editorial stated with contrived irony that ‘some members . . . have weighed the old pamphlet against a sixpenny-piece, and have found it wanting’.

In the light of such criticism issue number 7 was enlarged to thirty-two pages and an illustration added. Then, as membership of the C.U.A.B.C. grew, so its *Transactions* improved and more illustrations were added (often paid for by the contributors or lent by co-operative publishers), including a few yellow-tinted plates of lost brasses. There was also a ‘Notes & Queries’ section and another of items for sale. Herbert Macklin, no doubt tongue in cheek wrote of the *Transactions* in the first edition of his *Monumental Brasses* (1890), ‘It is just possible that it has a future before it’.

Portfolio

In 1893 the C.U.A.B.C. Committee decided to publish a ‘Portfolio of Monumental Brasses’ containing reproductions of ‘blackings, engravings or rubbings’, reduced by photo-lithography to ‘ensure strict accuracy’. Preference was to be given to brasses not illustrated elsewhere. The first part appeared in 1894, and was accorded a ‘cordial welcome’ by *The Antiquary* and by the membership at large. Its large format made it an excellent medium for reproduction, though more letterpress might have been helpful in the captions.

Regeneration: 1894-1914

‘By the time these pages reach the hands of their readers’, wrote R.A.S. Macalister, joint Hon. Editor of the *Transactions*, in December 1893, ‘the C.U.A.B.C., as such, will have ceased to exist’.

It was already well known by then that the Association’s name was both unwieldy and misleading, giving the impression that all its members were from Cambridge University, and more significantly, ‘that they were engaged in the illegal and sacrilegious pursuit of collecting brasses’. *The Antiquary* in 1892 conceded that the C.U.A.B.C. ‘is now gradually gaining the general recognition which it fully deserves . . .’, but proposed dropping the final two words of its long title, or at all events placing them ‘in a less conspicuous place’.

The C.U.A.B.C. Committee also saw the Society in national terms, and spoke of moving its headquarters from Cambridge ‘to the most central place possible’, although an autonomous branch was to remain in Cambridge, affiliated to the parent Society, to complete work on the ‘revision of the old Haines’ list of brasses’.

On 1st January 1894, therefore, the old C.U.A.B.C. was renamed the Monumental Brass Society, with a new constitution, but much the same objectives. By 1895 membership had risen from about 80 to 146, nearly half paying the full ten shillings annual subscription. With finances on a sounder footing a regular series of general meetings was held at 32 Sackville Street, off London’s Piccadilly. Lantern slides proved the ideal medium for illustrating lectures; a particular advocate of this

method, and of the direct photography of brasses in their original slabs, was Ethert Brand, for a short time the Society's Hon. Secretary.

In 1897 Cecil T. Davis (1854-1922) was appointed Honorary Librarian (he was a professional librarian at Wandsworth Public Library, and thus a natural choice), and drew attention to the Society's growing library of books and pamphlets.



Rev. H.W. Macklin and his wife posed for this photograph whilst cycling to church at Pidley, Huntingdonshire, where Macklin was curate from 1894-7 after leaving Princetown, Dartmoor, where he had been prison chaplain. After Pidley, he became rector of Houghton Conquest, Bedfordshire from 1897-1914, during which time he was President of the M.B.S. from 1903-14, and wrote *The Brasses of England* (1907), dedicated to his five sons. (photo.: Susan Macklin)

Perhaps the most significant achievement of the period up to 1914 was the remarkable progress made towards the revision of Haines' list of brasses. This resulted in the regular publication, in the *Transactions* and elsewhere, of detailed descriptions of the brasses of individual counties and of palimpsests (the latter mainly by Mill Stephenson). Five county series appeared in the *Transactions*, and a further six in the journals of local archaeological societies, including Dorset,

Essex, Surrey and Yorkshire, all compiled by M.B.S. members. Most were well illustrated. However, the enthusiasm for listing brasses did lead to the almost total exclusion of papers on the allied arts and on the origins and stylistic and artistic development of brasses. The only recorded lecture on the latter subject was given to the Society by its member Archibald Knox (1864-1933) in 1912, but never published. By 1900 Knox was chief designer and teacher at Liberty's, London.

With the growth of the Society, and greater public interest and awareness of brasses, came a brass rubbing 'boom'. In November 1891 the Oxford Ladies Archaeological and Brass Rubbing Society was founded, followed by the Oxford University Brass Rubbing Society two years later. During 1893 and 1894 M.B.S. member Miss Gertrude Harraden's well illustrated articles on brasses and brass rubbing appeared in the *Girls' Own Paper*. Between 1890 and 1914 a number of popular handbooks on brasses, of varying quality, also appeared, including those by Herbert Macklin (1890); Herbert Druitt (1906); E.R. Suffling (1910); J.S.M. Ward (1912); and Edward T. Beaumont (1913). The Society did little publicly to encourage or discourage brass rubbing, except where any danger to the actual brass was likely. The repair of brasses was still largely a commercial undertaking by firms such as John Hardman of Birmingham and Gawthorp & Sons of London.

Work also began during this period on the two collections of early brass rubbings owned by the Society of Antiquaries of London and by the Cambridge Antiquarian Society. The arrangement, conservation, cataloguing and ultimate completion of these two collections, to form national records of inestimable value, was largely the work of a few individuals. At Cambridge these were H.F. Bird and Ralph Griffin (1854-1941), and at the Antiquaries Mill Stephenson (1857-1937) and the same Ralph Griffin. Before both of the latter were dead, the two collections contained rubbings or dabbings of virtually every known English brass then existing, plus many others of lost or missing brasses, laid down before about 1800. It was the Antiquaries' collections that were to form the basis of Stephenson's *List* (1926) and *Appendix* (1938),

and may be considered as the final culmination of the Society's work on the revision of the old Haines List of 1861. The work on these collections by Griffin and Stephenson is considered by some to be the Society's single greatest achievement.

The Presidential Chair: 1887-1914

For the first ten years of its existence the energetic Rev. W.F. Creeny (1825-97) was the Society's President. Creeny became widely known for his large illustrated *Book of Facsimiles of Monumental Brasses on the Continent of Europe* (1884), and for his amusing anecdotal talks about his brass rubbing expeditions abroad. The latter he achieved mainly by train and by horse and carriage, and despite weather, difficult church officials, language problems, being locked inside a cathedral and the loss of the top joint of one thumb! The young Herbert Macklin visited Creeny in Norwich in April 1887 where the latter was having an exhibition of his rubbings, which Macklin described in his diary as 'magnificent' and 'most



Rev. Herbert Walter Macklin, M.A. (1866-1917). The true founder of the M.B.S. This photograph shows him in c.1890, just a few years after the Society began as the C.U.A.B.C. Also in 1890 Macklin published the first edition of his handbook *Monumental Brasses* (known affectionately as *Little Macklin*), one of the best popular manuals of this kind to be written. But for his enthusiasm and energy in 1886-7, the Society may never have been started. (photo.: Susan Macklin)

beautiful works of art'. When Creeny died ten years later in Norwich the Society set up a Memorial Fund, and placed a commemorative brass, engraved by W.R. Weyer of Norwich, on the wall of his church of St. Michael-at-Thorn.

Creeny was succeeded by another Norfolk cleric, C.G.R. Birch (1839-1903), said to have possessed a knowledge of brasses 'probably greater than that of any man in England . . .', though rarely displaying it in print. Sadly, however, ill health dogged him during his presidential years and severely limited his activities.

In 1903 the choice of President fell most appropriately on Rev. H.W. Macklin (1866-1917), the true founder of the Society itself. Like many fellow enthusiasts, he had begun brass rubbing when a schoolboy (in Kent) and his concise and much acclaimed handbook *Monumental Brasses* (1890 et seq, affectionately known as *Little Macklin*), remained the best general guide for many years. Much progress and valuable publicity occurred during Macklin's presidential years, the most important already mentioned; yet, curiously, membership of the Society dropped back to the level of the 1880s, with an average of some 80 personal and 11 institutional members by 1912. By then, only eight of those in membership in 1887 remained.

Interregnum: 1914-34

In 1914 came a sudden and dramatic change in the Society's history. By 4th August, Britain and much of Europe were at war with Germany. On the 1st December, the following statement, signed by Mill Stephenson as Honorary Secretary and Treasurer, was sent to members:

'In consequence of the decrease in the number of subscribers and the . . . present disastrous war, it is found impossible to continue the work of the Society, Part 54 of the *Transactions*, completing Volume VI, with index, &c, and also Part 6, Volume IV of the *Portfolio*, making a half volume to December in this year, will be issued to all members whose subscriptions for 1914 are paid. After this no publications will be undertaken and it is requested that no subscriptions for future years be paid. A final statement of accounts will be sent to all members in due course'.



Mill Stephenson, B.A., F.S.A. (1857-1937). A very early member of the C.U.A.B.C., he was a prolific writer on brasses, especially palimpsests, but is best remembered for his invaluable work in revising the old Haines' *List of brasses*. His *List of Monumental Brasses in the British Isles* (1926) and *Appendix* (1938) is a fitting tribute to a man who, despite private means (or because of it), gave unstintingly of his time to his chosen interests.

The activities of the Society now ceased officially for twenty years, even though people like Griffin and Stephenson continued work on revising the list of English brasses, and on the collections of rubbings in London and Cambridge. With the coming of peace in 1918, and in the difficult years that followed, the Society remained 'in mothballs', though some former members published useful work in the journals of local archaeological societies, e.g. F.J. Thacker, E.A.B. Barnard and J.F. Parker in Worcestershire; and H.C. Andrews in Hertfordshire.

The other personality from this period was Robert Holmes Edleston (1868-1953), Baron de Montalbo, an authority on Napoleon III, a keen horse breeder with a stud at Newmarket, lord of several manors and a devotee of brasses and incised slabs, British and Foreign. Known to his contemporaries as 'the Undertaker' because of his mode of dress, he and his 'man' (i.e. chauffeur) would motor round the country assembling a large collection of rubbings. Sometimes Edleston would only rub half of a brass, then pack up and return a few days –

or even weeks – later to complete it. Amongst his many published papers are two Supplements to Creeny's book on continental brasses, which he greatly admired. He had first met Creeny at Cambridge when the latter was President of the C.U.A.B.C.

Interest in brasses and incised slabs was thus 'kept alive' by M.B.S. members whilst the Society was in limbo. However, in 1934 a new phase in the history of the M.B.S. was to begin when a small group of people decided to revive it.

Revival: 1934-45

The date was 6th February 1934 – the location, an upper room between Kingsway and High Holborn in London. The purpose of the meeting – to revive the Monumental Brass Society after its twenty-year hibernation. Amongst those present were R.H. Pearson, V.J.B. Torr, W.J. Kaye, Augustus White and Rev. R.W.M. Lewis. The outcome of the meeting was a unanimous decision to resurrect the M.B.S. as soon as possible.

It is now clear that it was largely through the efforts of Reginald (Rex) Hammond Pearson (1878-1961), a Lancashire-born engineer with a special interest in the repair of brasses, that the Society's revival took place, though Walter Kaye (1871-1934) is also said to have had a very considerable share in the work. Within about one month of the above meeting the decision to revive the M.B.S. was made public, new members were sought and a more or less self appointed Executive Council was formed. A new departure, however, was the decision to appoint a Patron. This was Edgar Vincent, first and only Viscount D'Abernon (1857-1941), of the Manor House, Stoke D'Abernon, Surrey. He was a descendant of the famous Sir John D'Abernon, whose fine early brass needs no introduction.

In December 1934 the first issue of the revised *Transactions* was published. It included a statement of the priorities of the Society, some unaltered from 1914, others different or quite specific, e.g. (in random order):

- (a) the replacement of mural brasses removed from their slabs 'on varying, yet frivolous pretexts . . .' to their original matrices on the floor;

- (b) discouraging the ‘detrimental practice of keeping brasses polished to the brilliance of a doctor’s nameplate; and
- (c) ‘giving more attention to indents than before’.

The Society was seen by its Council as becoming ‘the recognised central Authority on matters affecting brasses and indents . . .’. In the latter context Pearson made use of his knowledge of metals and engineering to repair and relay loose or damaged brasses brought to the Society’s attention. In earlier days some repair work had been done by W.E. Gawthorp (1859-1936), whose firm was famous for making both modern figure brasses and memorial tablets, but by the mid-1930s he was too old to undertake the work himself. An unusual example of Pearson’s enthusiasm for removing loose brasses, especially palimpsests, occurred in 1935. The result was to reach the national press – though not quite in the way the Society would have wished.



Reginald (Rex) Hammond Pearson, F.S.A. (1878-1961). President of the M.B.S. 1960-1, Hon. Secretary 1934-61 and Treasurer 1934-57. It was Pearson who was largely responsible for the re-birth of the Society in 1934 after a twenty year break. He also carried out many repairs to brasses and had a special interest in palimpsests.

The famous Flemish-school brass at Topcliffe, North Yorkshire, had long been known to be palimpsest, but had been fixed to the wall of the nave. Pearson, with the permission of the Dean and Chapter of York, patrons of the living, encouraged its removal from the wall and it was taken down with the agreement of the incumbent. However, when Pearson requested permission to take the brass to his Croydon home to fit hinges to it, so that both sides could be inspected, this was refused, and it was deposited in an outhouse. This upset the churchwardens at Topcliffe, who complained to the York Consistory Court. The Chancellor granted them a Faculty to replace the brass on the wall, but criticised the incumbent and churchwardens as well as Pearson. In passing judgement on Pearson he described the wish to look at the back of the brass as ‘antiquarianism gone mad’.

Happily, however, such instances were rare in the Society’s history. On a more cheerful note, the Society was able to make an important contribution towards the cost of removing two huge Flemish brasses at King’s Lynn, Norfolk, to their present position of greater safety.

In the years that followed the Society’s revival enthusiasm once more fired the M.B.S. membership; the *Transactions* and *Portfolio* appeared regularly, and the long awaited *Appendix* to Mill Stephenson’s *List* (edited by his old friends M.S. Giuseppi and Ralph Griffin) was published in 1938 as a memorial to him. He had published numerous articles on brasses and had done so much for the Society since its early days, yet his invaluable *List* and *Appendix* were, in Griffin’s words ‘the most lasting memorial (he) could have’. Blessed with a private income for most of his life, Stephenson used his considerable leisure time to benefit his chosen interests. The latter included not only brasses but Roman coins, and for 20 years he led the excavations of the Roman town of Silchester. He also did a lot of work for the Surrey Archaeological Society.

The Second World War, unlike the First, did not bring the Society’s work to an end. Council still met and the *Transactions* and *Portfolio* continued to appear under the guidance of those too old for military service or in reserved occupations. Indeed,



Rev. R.W.M. Lewis, M.A., F.S.A. (1866-1954). Attended some of the earliest meetings of the C.U.A.B.C., being Hon. Corresponding Secretary 1889-92 and Vice-President 1892. In 1934, when the Society was restarted, he became its President until his death in 1954.

few references to the War occurred in the Society's publications. Standards of publication, however, may have 'slipped' a little: a newcomer on Council, R.H. D'Elboux (1894-1961) wrote early in 1944 that he was 'not impressed' with one of the articles in the *Transactions*, nor with some of the illustrations in the *Portfolio*. He considered the Elmdon (Essex) brass 'so badly illustrated, that it is time to protest', and suggested 'a gentle note to Mr. Lewis (i.e. Rev. R.W.M. Lewis, President of the M.B.S. 1934-54) on the matter'. He concluded, interestingly: 'I would much sooner have a judiciously 'touched up' rubbing than an illustration as bad as that. Connor always used to touch up Griffin and Mill Stephenson's rubbings when they wished to illustrate'.

D'Elboux was himself a fine heraldic artist and prolific writer of articles, both for the *Transactions* and elsewhere. He could often be seen in the library of the Society of Antiquaries writing

several papers at the same time. A teacher at Bexhill Grammar School for over 25 years, he had won the Military Cross in World War I whilst serving with the East Kent Regiment. In the mid-1940s he and Mrs. Katharine A. Esdaile (1881-1950) were breaking new ground with their valuable studies of post-Reformation brasses. They jointly contributed an important article on the subject to the *Transactions* of 1944 and 1946, and Mrs. Esdaile was also the author of a number of books and other articles in her own right. She joined the Society in 1934 and served on Council for a number of years. The particular value of her work was its attribution of sculpture and brasses to particular artists or engravers. She was married to A.J.K. Esdaile (1880-1956), librarian, bibliographer and Secretary to the British Museum for 14 years.

Consolidation and Growth: 1945-60

By 1946 the Society had 151 personal and 30 institutional members. Though small, it had established itself nationally as an authoritative body, although on the matter of preservation and repair of brasses it always worked closely with the Council for the Care of Churches. In the same year D'Elboux edited the second edition of the Council for the Care of Churches advisory leaflet *The Care of Monumental Brasses and Ledger Slabs*. The first edition had been issued under Griffin's editorship in 1937. Essentially a practical document, it offered warnings about covering brasses with coconut matting or the like and polishing them with proprietary metal polishes.

At about the same time a significant new trend towards a much broader study of brasses was beginning. This drew on technical and stylistic factors, plus hitherto little-used documentary sources. Evidence of this trend in the late 1940s and mid-1950s is seen in the *Transactions* and elsewhere in papers by H.K. Cameron, F.A. Greenhill and younger members of the Society like Malcolm Norris and J.P.C. Kent. The latter's seminal paper (written whilst still an undergraduate) on the classification of military effigies on brasses used certain stylistic and design features to identify six series of English brasses laid down between c.1360 and c.1485. Kent later became a numismatist and drew on techniques already used in the study of coins and

in archaeology. When published in 1949 in the *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, his paper was a decade ahead of its time.

During the 1950s the M.B.S. membership grew considerably, yet the Society was still small enough for Rex Pearson to remain as both Hon. Secretary and Hon. Treasurer. He was ably supported by a 'hard core' of officers and members of Council, including Major H.F. Owen Evans, R.H. D'Elboux, F.A. Greenhill, V.J.B. Torr, Augustus White, A. Colin Cole (later Sir Colin Cole, Garter Principal King of Arms and Hon. Heraldic Adviser), H.K. Cameron and A.B. Connor. Council meetings were generally congenial affairs, interspersed with occasional outbursts from Torr.

Between 1950 and 1956 repeated changes of Editor, or Joint Editor, of both the *Transactions* and *Portfolio* caused difficulties. However, in 1956 a former President of the Oxford University Archaeological Society, Rev. David Rutter, succeeded D'Elboux who had resigned because of ill health. Canon Rutter, as he became, continued as the Hon. Editor for just over twenty-five years. He arranged a change in the size of the *Transactions* from Octavo to Crown Quarto, which allowed for a large type and plate size, and was also to see the contents change from (his own words) 'articles which all readers, from the youngest to the oldest, could enjoy because of their general appeal', to more 'specialised and sophisticated' articles reflecting in-depth research, but of more limited appeal. The introduction by Dr. H.K. Cameron of the *M.B.S. Bulletin*, in 1972, did, however, do much to bridge this gap between specialist and non-specialist interests.

An innovation in the 1950s which was to become a permanent feature of the Society's calendar was the annual excursion. The first took place on 7th July 1956 and was organised by V.J.B. Torr in his beloved Kent. In his own words, however, it proved 'too heavy a job', and at Cobham an 'unexpected wedding' disrupted arrangements. Despite this, Torr, with help from H.A. James, continued to organise excursions until his death in 1965. Anyone who has arranged such an event will know of the pitfalls – and the importance of finding a good tea shop!

To a shy member like myself in the mid-1950s, the knowledge and authority of the 'big names' in the Society seemed immense. They were kind and friendly for the most part, and tolerated my inexperience with encouraging magnanimity. But my rubbings never achieved the blackness of the 'young bloods' like Malcolm Norris, John Page-Phillips and Roger Greenwood, nor the magnificence of the continental rubbings exhibited by Keith Cameron and other members. At one meeting I attended, an elderly clergyman with long white hair turned out to be the famous Dr. A.C. Bouquet, whose book *Church Brasses* (1956) was so criticised at the time.

I also took some brasses from Digswell, Hertfordshire, down to Rex Pearson's home in Addiscombe Road, Croydon, for cleaning and rivetting in 1955 – but somehow never managed to have one of Major and Mrs. Owen Evans' famous 'Oxford teas'!

The Sixties and After

The next twenty years were to witness a remarkable growth, both in the Society's membership and in the study – and sadly, commercial exploitation – of brasses. New research into the origin of brasses began in earnest, and the dating of the earliest surviving English figure brasses was questioned and reassessed. Work on palimpsest brasses, plus many new discoveries as brasses were relaid or repaired led eventually in 1980 to the publication by John Page-Phillips of his two-volume catalogue *Palimpsests: The Backs of Monumental Brasses*. Occasional illustrated *Supplements* continue to be published in the Society's *Bulletin*. On the continent, H.K. Cameron, Malcolm Norris and others were collecting data to supplement and update earlier research by M.B.S. members. Concurrently, the devotion to the study of incised slabs of F.A. Greenhill (with help from European members of the Society such as Mr. Dr. J. Belonje) produced many new discoveries, both within Western Europe and the United Kingdom.

Academic interest in brasses had, however, to coexist with another 'boom' in brass rubbing as a hobby. Personal membership of the Society rose from 284 in 1960 to nearly 400 by 1962, and continued to increase at the same rate throughout

the decade. This did much for the Society's finances, but placed an enormous administrative burden on its officers.

When John Coales took over as Hon. Secretary in 1966 he had anything up to fifty letters a week to answer, whilst the new Hon. Treasurer John Cottle, took on a greatly increased workload.

There are some people who will always try to exploit a situation for their own gain; they usually proved to be outsiders with no genuine interest in what they are exploiting. The popularity of brasses in the 1960s brought the blatant commercial use of



John Coales, O.B.E., F.S.A. (1931-2007). Hon. Secretary of the M.B.S. 1966-74 and Vice-President 1974-2002. He was appointed Patron in 2002 and invested with the O.B.E. (Civil Division) in 2007.

brass rubbings and reproductions of brasses, plus abuse of churches by 'fun rubbers', some of them purporting to be M.B.S. members simply to obtain permission to rub certain well known brasses. The press regularly reported the anguish of clergy and churchwardens who caught brass rubbers playing radios in church and eating their sandwiches on the altar steps. Many churches found that rubbings of their brasses were selling at local shops or big department stores, particularly in the U.S.A., for high prices. Brasses were also appearing on such consumer goods as postcards, table mats, gift wrappings and tea trays without consent, or any kind of royalty arrangement. Some churches countered by producing special forms to be signed by those making any rubbings, promising not to use them for commercial gain. Others simply increased brass rubbing charges, or banned rubbing altogether. The situation was largely resolved by the appearance of commercial brass rubbing centres, and by the purchase by some churches of high quality facsimilies of their own brasses to save wear and tear on the originals.

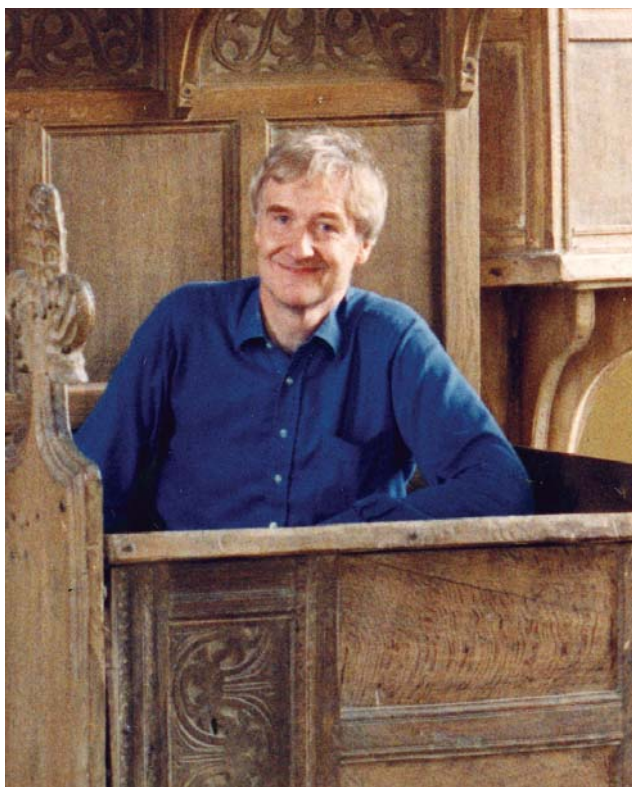
The Society's Council gratefully accepted the subscriptions of transient members, but was at the same time concerned at these new developments. A statement of policy was issued in April 1976, in conjunction with the Conservation Committee of the Council for Places of Worship (subsequently the Council for the Care of Churches and now the Archbishops' Council), discussing the rubbing of resin replicas of brasses as alternatives to the originals. It also set out the dangers of too much rubbing and of damage to brasses by certain methods of taking moulds for replicas. Finally, it attempted to encourage those taking moulds for commercial purposes to pay a royalty to the church(es) concerned.

Innovations

The latter 1960s and early-1970s saw four other important innovations by the Society. On 5th-7th September 1969 the first M.B.S. Conference was held at Somerville College, Oxford; amongst its objectives was the encouragement of 'interest in brasses to develop into research and by co-ordinating such research to avoid duplication of effort'. Apart from the formal lectures there was time for visits, brass rubbing and discussion.

Such was the Conference's success that others were held at Norwich (1970) and Canterbury (1971 – when a specially designed souvenir envelope, each hand-franked, was available), beginning an event which continues to the present day.

Secondly, on 26th September 1970 the first meeting took place, at John Page-Phillips' home in West London, of the Committee and volunteer 'County Controllers' who were to undertake a full scale revision of Mill Stephenson's *List of Monumental Brasses in the British Isles* (1926) and *Appendix* (1938). The idea was to check every entry in the latter, note any amendments, additions or discoveries on special record sheets provided, and return the completed sheets (including sketches of indents, etc.) to Walter Mendelsson, the Society's Hon. Secretary. For the first time not only indents but also modern figure brasses were to be listed, measured and recorded, and Roman Catholic and other places of worship searched. In the event, it was in Roman Catholic churches in particular that some remarkable 19th and early 20th century figure and other modern brasses were discovered.



J. Roger Greenwood, F.S.A. (1936-93). Vice-President of the M.B.S. from 1987 until his death in 1993. He was the first editor of the *Bulletin* and was subsequently appointed General Editor of the Mill Stephenson Revision in 1985.

With teams in many areas, it was thought that work would be largely completed within a few years. In 1973 the first draft of the revised list for Warwickshire appeared, edited by Stan Budd (1924-2004), and was published in 1976. Shortly afterwards, work by Miss Nancy Briggs' team in Essex was reaching its final stages, whilst a few other counties were well advanced. Occasionally revision teams joined forces to spend a weekend recording the large number of brasses and/or indents of a cathedral or abbey, such as on 19th and 20th May 1973 at Westminster Abbey, and later at Canterbury and St. Albans.

By 1980, however, momentum had slowed. Contact between some field workers and their local 'controller' was inadequate; standards of sketching indents and of recording varied from very good to mediocre; petrol costs were rising rapidly; and final editing and publication was too slow and costly. By 1985, the Executive Council was forced to revise its policy on publication in order to try and regain interest. Roger Greenwood was appointed General Editor of the revision, and new guidelines were laid down on compilation, format and publication. Revised entries were issued as they were edited, and were sent to members who requested them.

A third initiative arose from a need for a more informal link between members than the *Transactions*; Council decided it should be in the form of a *Bulletin*, and in December 1972 the first number appeared under the editorship of Roger Greenwood. A small editorial sub-committee of the Council also provided guidance. The first issue ran to 13 pages and was seen as a means of receiving as well as giving information, and for the exchange of ideas between members, rather than just as a series of official notices of meetings, excursions, etc.

The *Bulletin* has since appeared three times a year to this day. It has proved a very popular and successful vehicle for research in progress, for recording modern brasses, for shorter articles not suitable for the *Transactions*, and for the *Notes on Books and Articles* compiled by Richard Busby. Under its first two Hon. Editors it did sometimes reflect their own interests and researches, but it has remained a lively and valuable publication.

Roger Greenwood, John Blair, Richard Knowles and Leslie Smith edited 22, 13, 11 and 66 issues respectively, the present Hon. Editor, William Lack, taking over in January 2010.

The fourth major innovation was in the vital work of brass conservation. By 1966 the older generation of brass repairers like Pearson and Owen Evans had passed away, and another was taking its place. In that year Bryan Egan set up his repair workshop, since when he has repaired and/or refixed brasses in over 180 churches, sometimes just a single plate, quite often all the brasses in the building. On many occasions Society members have been on hand to assist. Details of much of the work done by the Egan workshop, which operated on a strictly commercial basis, appeared in 1981 in *The Repair of Monumental Brasses* by Bryan Egan and Martin Stuchfield; this was in addition to a number of detailed reports in the *Transactions* and *Bulletin*.



H.K. Cameron, M.A., B.Sc., Ph.D., F.R.S.C., F.S.A. (1907-85). President of the M.B.S. 1969-1985. Lecturing to the Society in the Beauchamp Chapel, St. Mary's, Warwick on 15th September 1973. (Photo.: Walter Mendelsson)

It had long been the wish of the Society's President, H.K. Cameron, that the Society should have its own repair workshop or laboratory. In 1973 Dr. Cameron obtained a grant from the Pilgrim Trust to help set up a laboratory for the repair and cleaning of brasses at Cambridge, where he lived and worked. Sometime afterwards an assistant, W.H. Hodge (formerly of church restorers Rattee and Kett Ltd.), was appointed to help share the growing burden of work. However, the Society being a charitable body, repairs could not be carried out on a commercial basis, or for profit. The laboratory could at best simply cover its costs in materials and travelling expenses. It had always therefore to rely almost entirely on donations to support its activities.

Throughout its existence the laboratory worked closely with the Metals Sub-Committee of the Council for the Care of Churches, and it was through the latter that William Lack of Plealey, Shropshire, gradually took over repairs and conservation work, though with Dr. Cameron remaining as Hon. Technical Adviser to the Society until his death in 1985. Details of the work of the laboratory appeared regularly in the Society's journals, annual reports etc. Mr. Lack has continued this practice, though all work now undertaken by him is on a wholly commercial basis.

The Publishing Boom

The wide popularity of brasses and brass rubbing in the late 1960s and early 1970s was also reflected in a plethora of reprints and other publications. Most important of these was the Society's own reprint in 1964, in one volume, of Mill Stephenson's *List and Appendix*. Other reprints came from a commercial publishing company, Kingsmead Reprints of Bath, most with new introductions by Society members. Some, like Kite's *Wiltshire* (1860) and Dunkin's *Cornwall* (1882), had originally been published in limited editions; others had appeared as articles in county archaeological journals, e.g. A.B. Connor's *Somerset* and Mill Stephenson's *Surrey*. In 1970 the Rev. Herbert Haines' *Manual for the Study of Monumental Brasses* (1861) was reissued in one volume, with a new biographical introduction by R.J. Busby. Again in 1975, another standard work

was reprinted, J.G. and L.A.B. Waller's *A Series of Monumental Brasses* (1864), with corrections and additions by John Goodall (1930-2005).

At the same time a new range of popular handbooks on brasses and brass rubbing appeared, including a few by Society members, only some of lasting value. More important was the revised and rewritten *Macklin's Monumental Brasses* by John Page-Phillips (1969 et seq), plus the growing number of booklets on brasses of one area or county, e.g. *Welsh Monumental Brasses* by J.M. Lewis (1974); *Dorset Brasses* by Doris Sibun (1974); and *The Brasses of Norfolk Churches* by Roger Greenwood and Malcolm Norris (1976). Of the larger works by Society members, there was *Craft and Design of Monumental Brasses* by Henry H. Trivick (1969), with its unusual gold and black illustrations; the long awaited and important books by Malcolm Norris *Monumental Brasses: The Craft* (1977) and *The Memorials* (1978), in three handsome volumes; and E.A. Greenhill's *Incised Effigial Slabs* (2 volumes, 1976). The latter was the result of a lifetime's study of incised slabs in Britain and Europe. Many of these books reflected the increasing interest during this period in studying brasses in relation to allied arts and crafts.

Finally, there was H.K. Cameron's *List of Monumental Brasses on the Continent of Europe*, first published by the Society in 1970 and reprinted later with additions. This remains the only comprehensive list available, though illustrated books and studies of continental brasses in particular regions or countries in Europe continue to be published abroad.

Modern Brasses

With a few exceptions, the Society largely ignored the many figure and other brasses of the Gothic Revival and after until the early 1970s. The first paper given on the subject to the Society for many years was by Richard Busby in January 1973, and did much to encourage a fresh look at the revived work. In addition, the Mill Stephenson revision brought many fine examples to light, notably in Roman Catholic churches and chapels, e.g. Oscott, Staffordshire, and St. Edmund's College, Old Hall Green, near Ware, Hertfordshire. In 1978 and again in 1983 the Society's conference devoted

much of its content to papers on modern brasses, as well as having talks and demonstrations by noted engravers and designers, e.g. Francis Cooper and Christopher Ironside. Also in 1983, David Meara's book *Victorian Memorial Brasses* was published, representing a landmark in the study of a subject once almost taboo within the Society.

Into the Eighties

The 1980s saw a fall in the popularity of 'fun rubbing' and a consequent drop in membership of the Society. With it, however, has come increasing specialisation, reflected both in the *Transactions* and, to a lesser extent, at general meetings and conferences. New research on schools of brasses or engravers, on the origin of brasses, on the study of lettering on inscriptions, on 'latoners', and on indents and lost brasses, has replaced the strong genealogical and heraldic content of the articles of the post-war decades.

There has also been much greater awareness and use of collections of early rubbings, drawings, sketches, etc., in both local and national archives (in the tradition of Ralph Griffin), together with greater use of records of firms like John Hardman of Birmingham (who designed and made brasses from c.1840 to 1914), and of wills and other documents associated with brasses – existing and lost, British and continental. Not only the iconography and imagery used on brasses, but the very stones in which they are set, have been re-examined in depth. Similar work has also been carried out on continental brasses, ancient and modern, and on the Flemish School in particular.

The Executive Council has thus had the difficult task of striking a balance in the Society's publications and activities between the interested 'amateur' member, who supports meetings, excursions, fund raising projects, etc., but who takes no more active role, and the more 'informed' members doing research. Generally, the balance is right, but it has at times been a delicate one. Had the President and Council not resisted, the Society might have become just a brass-rubbing society by now. Like many specialist societies and groups, the M.B.S. needs a regular intake of younger or more active members to help shoulder the work and to ensure 'new blood' on Council. Every Society has its hard core of people who effectively keep it

going, plus a small but devoted band of helpers who arrange fund raising activities or do the less exciting, yet essential work like producing and distributing publications and organising teas at meetings. The M.B.S. is no exception, and has been very fortunate in the support given by such people amongst its membership.

The last 25 years: 1987-2012

Since the Society's centenary in 1987, there have been important changes in both direction and outlook. Some have been made to reflect the rapid changes in on-line and computer technology, others to reshape the focus of the Society, its officers, Council and membership.

Clearly the main objectives of the Society as proposed in 1887 and again in 1934 have stayed fundamentally unchanged, but it has been possible, for example, in the last quarter century to accelerate and publish more frequent and much expanded revisions of Mill Stephenson's county lists of brasses. The Society's *Transactions*, *Bulletin* and other publications have also benefited from advances in desktop publishing (see below). There has also been a greater need in recent years to both pool and share information, meetings, conferences and Study Days with other societies, notably the Church Monuments Society, whose first President and co-founder in 1979 was the late Claude Blair (1922-2010) who for many years was a member and later Vice-President of our Society. Early fears that the M.B.S. would lose members to the new society have been largely unfounded, and both have worked well together to avoid unnecessary duplication or overlap of effort or publication.

Publications

These have remained the bedrock of the Society. The *Transactions* have seen two significant changes in design since the retirement as Hon. Editor of David Rutter in 1982 after 25 years service. From Volume XVI, Part 1 of 1986, the stiff grey cover was replaced with a stiff white, illustrated cover under Stephen Freeth's editorship (Hon. Editor 1982-91). The 'Portfolio of Small Plates' was introduced in 1984 to replace the long running and much larger *Portfolio* and has now become an established feature. However, a *Portfolio* was revived in March 2000 in an

identical large format, but with the addition of accompanying notes, usually by Society members who also supplied many of the rubbings used as illustrations. Published privately under the editorship of William Lack and Philip Whittemore and, latterly Martin Stuchfield, these annual portfolios have the title *A Series of Monumental Brasses, Indents and Incised Slabs from the 13th to the 20th Century*.

The second major change came with Volume XVIII, Part 1 in 2009, when a new black laminated cover with colour illustration first appeared. It also carried more colour plates than previously, though these had begun to appear regularly two years earlier and very occasionally in the 1980s. Glossier paper and a new typeface made for easier reading and greater clarity. Since 1991 there have been two other editors, Jerome Bertram and Nicholas Rogers currently. Regular features include the annual conservation reports by William Lack and a recently expanded reviews section; publication of the Society's annual accounts ceased with the 2002 issue, as they appeared with the separately issued Annual Report. Most importantly the *Transactions* have retained balance and continuity, and have under successive editors maintained a high standard of scholarly articles, which reflect new research and emphasis, as well as the changing nature of the membership's interests.

The *Bulletin* has remained a vital link both between members and in tandem with the *Transactions*. Whilst it may not have fulfilled all of the combined expectations of its founder and then President Dr. Keith Cameron, it has proved a showcase for the activities and interests of the Society. Items include new discoveries or losses of brasses; thematic issues; notes/short reviews of new publications and research; information on relevant internet sites; as well as reflecting the ups and occasional downs of the Society. The most recent innovation, in January 2010, has been the extensive use of colour in the *Bulletin*, matching that of the *Transactions* and greatly enhancing its appearance.

Writing in the *Bulletin* ten years ago (No.91, September 2002) the retiring President, Nigel Saul, reflected on its many attributes, but noted that if

there had been any disappointment, it was that the membership had failed to use it as a medium for discussion, speculative articles and dialogue. There have been some examples of members reporting on their research and/or asking for assistance, but overall such items tend now to end up in on-line forums or other such outlets.

There have been a number of Occasional Publications since 1987 including:

- No.1 *Monumental Brasses: A Sixteenth Century Workshop* by John Page-Phillips (1999);
- No.2 *Drawings of Monumental Brasses and Incised Slabs by the Waller Brothers 1837-44* edited by Robert Hutchinson (2001); and
- No.3 *The Catesby Family and their Brasses at Ashby St. Ledgers* edited by Jerome Bertram (2006).

In addition, the Society published *The Earliest English Brasses: Patronage, Style and Workshops 1270-1350* edited by John Coales (1987). This, and the last two occasional publications above include specialist contributions from a number of M.B.S. members.

Several other recent books by Society members, but published commercially, include: *A.W.N. Pugin and the Revival of Monumental Brasses* by David Meara (Mansell, 1991); *Monumental Brasses as Art and History* edited by Jerome Bertram (Alan Sutton, 1996); *Early Incised Slabs and Brasses from the London Marblers* by Sally Badham and Malcolm Norris (Society of Antiquaries of London, 1999); *Death, Art, and Memory in Medieval England: The Cobham Family and their Monuments 1300-1500* by Nigel Saul (Oxford University Press, 2001); *A Bestiary of Brass* by Peter Heseltine (Heart of Albion Press, 2006); *Modern Memorial Brasses 1880-2001* by David Meara (Shaun Tyas, 2008); *English Church Monuments in the Middle Ages: History and Representation* by Nigel Saul (Oxford University Press, 2009); and for more popular reading, a revised and rewritten edition of *Monumental Brasses* by Sally Badham and Martin Stuchfield (Shire Publications, 2009).

As in the *Transactions*, these publications all represent recent trends in both widening the focus and context of monumental brasses, and placing them in an art-historical as well as religious background.

The County Series

In April 1992 the first of the revised, expanded and illustrated county lists of brasses for Bedfordshire was published. The idea was to record both existing and lost brasses and indents from the very earliest up to the time of publication, including external brasses (found in abundance, for example, in the Gloucestershire volume) plus recent small markers in churchyards, usually simply recording name(s) and dates, as well as small plates on fixtures or fittings inside the building. Written, photographic and documentary sources, plus rubbings (contemporary and in historical national collections) are all used to record items, making this as complete a record as possible. Very large numbers of Victorian and modern figure brasses, some very fine, have been discovered and recorded for the first time, notably in Roman Catholic buildings. When eventually all the English counties have been recorded and published, the printed versions will form a major source of information, and the fieldwork records, which transcribe inscriptions in full, will form a unique national database.

The volumes are being published alphabetically using the county names and boundaries much as they were in Stephenson's original *List* (1926) and *Appendix* (1938). Volumes have been published every one or two years, with some volumes like Gloucestershire, Hampshire and the Isle of Wight running to over 500 pages and Hertfordshire to over 750 pages. Essex had so many entries it had to be issued in two volumes, totalling over 900 pages, including the valuable introduction, bibliography and name index (common to all volumes). The seventeenth volume covering Huntingdonshire (2012) is the first to include some colour reproductions, of Dugdale's drawings of lost brasses in Peterborough Cathedral.

Since the beginning, *The County Series* has been produced by William Lack, H. Martin Stuchfield and Philip Whittemore, but could not have been completed without the fieldwork, rubbings,

research and determination of many Society members. The volumes have all been printed and distributed privately by Martin Stuchfield to subscribers and purchasers. Originally published under the aegis of the M.B.S., in 2007 publication was transferred to the imprint of *The County Series*. Reviews of most volumes appear on the Society's website (see below). Malcolm Norris could see the usefulness of *The County Series* and was a great encouragement and support. Mill Stephenson, had he still been with us, would have been delighted and overwhelmed by this project and its results!

Conservation

This continues to be an important role of the Society, with grants averaging between £100 and £250 already made to a large number of churches. Occasionally larger amounts are given, e.g. Ludford, Shropshire, but this is unusual with the limited funds available. Applications are channelled through Martin Stuchfield (Hon. Conservation Officer since 1999), who prepares a detailed report for the parish, and the work is carried out by William Lack, whose reports of completed work appears annually in our *Transactions*.

Website

Few societies and institutions can flourish these days without publicity and information on-line. The Society's website www.mbs-brasses.co.uk was begun in 2001 through the initiative of Sally Badham, who oversaw its development and growth for several years, before handing over to the present Hon. Internet Publicity Officer, Jon Bayliss. From modest beginnings, the site is now regularly updated and includes not only news and information about the Society; a brief history of brasses; how to make rubbings and dabbings; and a thematic picture library. Society publications are also listed, recent issues of the *Bulletin* can be read, and each volume of *The County Series* listed with a link to reviews of individual volumes by Richard Busby. Finally, there is a bibliography of brasses, British and continental, and the valuable *Brass of the Month* portal, featuring specific brasses with rubbings and photographs; the latter often in colour and with accompanying text usually compiled by a Society member. Begun in February 2003, 116 brasses have been featured up

to September 2012. Other features include an on-line bookstall run under the name Aspiring Church Books; indexes to M.B.S. publications; links to other sites and a contact list.

Activities

These have remained basically the same, with an annual excursion, weekend conference and regular general meetings (now usually held in specific churches, cathedrals or museums). In May 1996 the first joint symposium was held with the Church Monuments Society. The Annual General Meeting has often been held since October 2007 at a new venue, the Royal Foundation of St. Katharine in Limehouse, instead of the Art Workers' Guild in Holborn or the Institute of Historical Research, London University, but occasionally at other venues, e.g. Peterborough Cathedral (2010) and Lincoln Cathedral (2012).

One fairly recent innovation has been a series of Study Days, e.g. Cobham, Kent (1998); Ashby St. Ledgers, Northamptonshire (2003); Northleach,



Malcolm Norris, B.A., M.Soc.Sc., Ph.D., F.S.A. (1931-95) and John Page-Phillips, M.A., F.S.A. (1930-92) examine a brass together. Norris and Page-Phillips served as President of the M.B.S. from 1992-5 and 1985-92 respectively.

Gloucestershire (2006); Boston, Lincolnshire (2009); Long Melford, Suffolk (2010); and St. George's Chapel, Windsor (2011); some later resulting in a specialist publication. All have been very well received and attended.

In 1995 a long awaited agreement was made with the University of Birmingham to store the Society's large and diverse collection of books, manuscript items and rubbings. It is aptly named the Malcolm Norris Research Centre after our late President, who was instrumental in negotiating the arrangement. It is hoped the contents will eventually be listed online, making access and use wider.

Membership and Personalia

The continuing trend of declining numbers of 'fun rubbers' joining the Society has continued, but has been off-set by a fairly stable overall personal membership, averaging in recent years at between 350 and 400, including institutional members.

Since 1987 the Society has seen the deaths of three Presidents (H.K. Cameron (1907-85); John Page-Phillips (1930-92); and Malcolm Norris (1931-95)); and six Vice-Presidents (David Rutter (1925-91); John Cottle (1924-92); Roger Greenwood (1936-93); Walter Mendelsson (1930-2000); Nancy Edwards (née Briggs) (1929-2009); and Claude Blair (1922-2010), several having served some 20 years or more in office. Two Hon. Heraldic Advisers have also died – Sir Anthony Wagner (1908-95) and Sir Colin Cole, (1922-2001). In addition,

the Society has lost two Patrons. Baron Michael Ramsey, Archbishop of Canterbury, appropriately a life-long student of brasses, who died in 1988 and John Coales (1931-2007). The latter served as Hon. Secretary (1966-74) and a Vice-President (1974-2002) prior to his appointment as Patron in 2002.

Conclusion

The last 25 years have seen many changes and innovations. The Society cannot be said to have stood still and not adapted accordingly. No modern special interest Society like the M.B.S. can operate in isolation, not just broadening its outlook and activities, but also continuing to reflect in its publications, both traditional and new research by its members and others. Whilst the broad objectives of the Society have remained much the same as those of its founders in 1887, the way these aims can be achieved and communicated has been capable of extension and improvement and can only be applauded. Whilst some key activities like conservation receive little publicity, beyond the parishes that benefit and in our *Transactions*, the creation of our website has done much to raise our profile nationally and internationally. The Society's future looks an optimistic one, and whilst our founder Rev. Herbert Macklin would be amazed at modern developments, he would surely be delighted that from such small beginnings it has reached the point it has today in 2012.



Walter Mendelsson, F.S.A. (1930-2000). Hon. Secretary of the M.B.S. 1974-94. Brass rubbing in 1966 at Stoke-by-Nayland, Suffolk.

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