

# Monumental Brass Society

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BULLETIN 150

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

Contributions to 'Notes on books, articles and the internet' should also be sent to Caroline Metcalfe by 1st August 2022.

#### Useful Society contacts:

##### General enquiries, membership and subscriptions:

Penny Williams, Hon. Secretary  
15 St. Brides Road, Aberkenfig  
Bridgend, South Wales CF32 9PY  
Email: penny7441@hotmail.com

##### Contributions for the *Transactions*:

David Lepine, Hon. Editor  
38 Priory Close, Dartford, Kent DA1 2JE  
Email: davidn11455@gmail.com

##### 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 2022 became due. Please send £25.00 (associate/student £12.50, family £35.00) to the Hon. Treasurer, Robert Kinsey, 4 Pictor Close, Corsham, Wiltshire SN13 9XH. Payment can be made using the *PayPal* system via [mbs\\_brasses@yahoo.com](mailto:mbs_brasses@yahoo.com) or make cheques payable to the 'Monumental Brass Society'. Many thanks to all those members who have completed Gift Aid forms. Any U.K. tax-paying member can enable the Society to reclaim tax on their subscription. The appropriate form can be downloaded directly from [www.mbs-brasses.co.uk](http://www.mbs-brasses.co.uk). U.S. members preferring to pay in dollars can send a cheque for U.S. \$45.00 to Shirley Mattox at 1313 Jackson Street, Oshkosh, Wisconsin 54901, U.S.A.

## Editorial

I am most grateful for the contributions received from **Sally Badham**, **Jon Bayliss**, **Peter Flower**, **Kevin Herring** and **Rosalind Willatts**.

This is the last issue of the *Bulletin* to appear under my editorship. Most importantly, I wish to pay fulsome tribute to **Richard Busby** who is also retiring as the Honorary Reviews Editor having been responsible for the 'Notes on books, articles and the internet' section since issue number two (April 1973).

## Personalalia

It is with very deep regret that we report the death of **Leslie Smith** (1941-2022) who was elected an Honorary Member of the Society in 2009 and passed away on 29th May 2022. Les had been a member of the Society since 1968 and had served on the Executive Council from 1979 to 2009. He became Hon. Bulletin Editor in 1987, with *Bulletin* 47 (February 1988) the first to appear under his editorship. He was responsible for a total of sixty-five issues.

The Society also mourns the passing of **Christopher Bangs**, **Rhoda Goldberg**, **Anne Sutton**, **Sheila Wilson** and **Graham Wood** who had been members of the Society since 1994, 1980, 2011, 1966 and 1972 respectively.

We are very sorry to announce the death of **Valerie Stuchfield**, wife of our President, Martin. Valerie was a great support to Martin in all his endeavours and she was a charming and generous hostess. Some may remember the lavish refreshments that she provided for the presentation of the Letters Patent at the College of Arms in June 2012, and the afternoon tea at Lowe Hill House following the excursion during the Society's conference at Colchester in 2003. We offer sincere condolences to Martin and his family on behalf of all members.

Cover: Upper part of two small kneeling effigies from the brass to Willem van den Kerchove, 1539, and 2nd wife Josine van der Gracht, 1541, at Nieupoort, Belgium. The brass is illustrated in the *Oxford Portfolio*, I, pt.3 (1900), pl.5 (with incorrect frame inscription). The brass was subsequently damaged by fire and shelling of the church in October 1914. In March 1966 the upper part of the figure of an angel from this brass was purchased from the Brussels Antiquarian Fair by Monsieur Michel de Kerchove de Dentelghem (see *M.B.S. Trans.*, X, pt.5 (1969), pp.338-41). The fragment illustrated was purchased from a private European collector in May 2022.  
(photo: © Martin Stuchfield)

## President's farewell message

I have decided to retire as President having served in this capacity for eleven years (equal to Rev. Herbert Macklin and joint third longest behind Rev. R.W.M. Lewis (20 years) and Dr. H.K. Cameron (16 years)) together with managing the Society through the Covid-19 pandemic. The passing of my beloved wife Valerie has also been a significant determining factor since I am no longer able to benefit from her support.

This momentous decision has caused me to reflect on a wonderful association that dates back to 1970 when I joined the Society as a mere thirteen-year-old requiring our parish priest to provide a reference for membership.

I was first elected to the Executive Council at the 1982 A.G.M. held at the Tower of London when I was proposed by Derrick Chivers and seconded by the late Walter Mendelsson (Hon. Secretary 1974-94). I was appointed Hon. Minutes Secretary two years later during this initial three-year term. This was in the era prior to the invention of email and involved typing the minutes of Council meetings and subsequently driving to the Royal Institute of International Affairs at St. James's Square to facilitate the document being approved and signed by the Hon. Secretary. Corrections or mistakes required the arduous process to be repeated! Rita Grimes, the long-standing and exceptionally hard-working Hon. Assistant Secretary resigned in February 1985 shortly before my period on Council expired. I was formally appointed as Rita's successor at the October Council meeting with responsibility from 1st January 1986 for 'maintaining membership records, mailing and liaising with the *Bulletin* printers and preparing Council meeting minutes'. I renounced the customary Secretarial Honorarium that had recently been increased to £750. I continued to serve in this role for a period of six years learning hugely from Walter Mendelsson whom I understudied and respected greatly. He worked tirelessly for the Society and I became a very close friend to him and his delightful family. During the Presidency of John Page-Phillips (1985-92) it was generally accepted that I would succeed Walter as Hon. Secretary. However, events

took a wholly unexpected change of direction when I was asked to take responsibility for the Society's finances. I was elected Hon. Treasurer at the 1991 A.G.M.

Having stabilised the Society's finances, together with accurate financial reporting, I was elected as Hon. Secretary following Walter Mendelsson's retirement in 1994. I served two periods in office from 1994 to 2007 (when I was honoured with a life Vice-Presidency) and from 2009 to 2011 during which time it was a privilege and a pleasure to serve three distinguished Presidents namely the late Malcolm Norris (1992-95); Nigel Saul (1995-2002); and David Meara (2002-11).

Election as President followed at the A.G.M. held at East Horndon in my native county of Essex on 23rd July 2011. Only Rev. Herbert Macklin can claim the distinction of serving as Secretary, Treasurer and President.

I assumed responsibility as the unofficial editor of the *Bulletin* following the untimely death of my dear friend, William Lack, on 30th May 2019.<sup>1</sup> I have edited and produced a total of ten issues.

The undoubted highlight of my period as President was the Society receiving a grant of arms that were presented by (now Sir) Thomas Woodcock, Garter King of Arms and Hon. Heraldic Adviser, at a reception held at the College of Arms on 27th June 2012.<sup>2</sup>

A prime objective of the Society is to ensure the better preservation of monumental brasses, indents of lost brasses and incised slabs. It has been richly rewarding serving as Hon. Conservation Officer since 1999 and I intend to continue in this capacity.

It has been a huge privilege to serve the membership for the past forty years and I hope to thank as many of you as possible on 16th July at Saffron Walden where my brass rubbing career started when I was a mere twelve years of age!

**Martin Stuchfield**

<sup>1</sup> *M.B.S. Bulletin*, 141 (June 2019), p.804.

<sup>2</sup> *M.B.S. Bulletin*, 121 (October 2012), p.404; *M.B.S. Trans.*, XVIII (2013), pp.386-7.

## Diary of events

**Saturday, 16th July 2022**

### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

#### SAFFRON WALDEN, ESSEX

The formal business of the Annual General Meeting will be held in the Parish Rooms (located in the churchyard on the north side of St. Mary's church) at 11.00a.m.

The afternoon meeting is being held in association with the Essex Society for Archaeology and History and will be held in the church commencing at 2.00p.m. **Liz Allan** will speak on *The medieval town of Saffron Walden* followed by **David Lepine** on *'He fed his sheep well': the clerical brasses of St. Mary's, Saffron Walden.*

A lecture by **David Carrington** of the Skillington Workshop relating to the important monument commemorating Thomas Lord Audley, Lord Chancellor, 1544, will conclude the meeting.

*The church of St. Mary the Virgin is situated in Church Path, Saffron Walden. The postcode for satellite navigation is CB10 1JP. The nearest station is Audley End (served from London: Liverpool Street) which is 3 miles distant representing an approximate journey of 10 minutes by taxi. Please contact Penny Williams, Hon. Secretary (email: penny7441@hotmail.com) if you wish to share a taxi or are travelling by car and are prepared to pick someone up.*

**Friday-Sunday, 2nd-4th September 2022**

### CONFERENCE

#### KING'S LYNN, NORFOLK

The much-postponed conference, organised in collaboration with the Church Monuments Society, will be held at the Duke's Head Hotel in King's Lynn. The theme is *Status and Display* with excursions to the minster church of St. Margaret and the chapel of St. Nicholas in the town (Friday afternoon) and to the village churches of Oxborough, Narborough, Rougham and South Acre (Saturday), where a team of experts will introduce a remarkable series of medieval and early modern funerary monuments and brasses in north-west Norfolk.

The keynote lecture will be given on Friday evening by **Tobias Capwell** (Curator of Arms and Armour at the Wallace Collection, London) on

*Flowering and Decline: English effigies and armour in the late 15th century.* The lecture programme will continue on Sunday morning with papers by **Roger Bowdler** on *Rank Decay: 17th century vanitas monuments to persons of status*; **Nicholas Flory** on *Illustrissima ac potentissima princeps: The commemorative brass plaques of Isabella of Portugal and her Carthusian donations*; **Challe Hudson** on *Clothing for piety, fashion, and power: The costume of Lady Margaret Beaufort*; **Philip Muijtjens** on *Contention and resurrection: The tombs of Jean and Blanche of France in Royaumont*; **Robin Netherton** on *The sideless surcote: Elusive, illusive, allusive*; and **Jean Wilson** on *Not a leg to stand on: The monument to Robert Pierrepont, 1669, at West Dean, Wiltshire.*

The deadline for booking is 30th June 2022. For all enquiries please contact the C.M.S. President (Mark Downing) by email at [militarychurchmonuments@gmail.com](mailto:militarychurchmonuments@gmail.com).

**Saturday, 15th October 2022**

### GENERAL MEETING

#### TROTTON, SUSSEX

The autumn General Meeting will be held at Trotton and will provide an opportunity to view two nationally important brasses.

The programme will commence at 2.00p.m. with **Nigel Saul** speaking on *The Camoys family, the church and the brasses.* **Anne Curry**, who is Emeritus Professor of Medieval History at the University of Southampton with a special interest in the Hundred Years War and especially the Battle of Agincourt, will speak on *Thomas Camoys and the Hundred Years War.* Tea and an opportunity to view the brasses, monuments and spectacular wall paintings will follow. The afternoon will conclude with a talk by **Florence Eccleston** on *Sin and salvation: The wall paintings at Trotton.*

The church will be open prior to the meeting and all are welcome. The meeting is free with no booking required.

*The church at Trotton is situated on the A272 between Midhurst and Petersfield. The building is set back from a bend in the road just beyond the traffic lights and bridge over the River Rother. The postcode for satellite navigation is GU31 5EN. Car parking is available at nearby Trotton Farm by kind permission of the owners. Petersfield station (served from London: Waterloo) is 7 miles from the church.*

## General Meeting

### Virtual – 19th February 2022

The advantage of Zoom is that more people can attend than with in-person meetings, and so it was for the erudite talks by our Vice-President, **Paul Cockerham** on the incised effigial slabs of the Chalons-en-Champagne workshops, followed by **David Lepine** on the brass of William Kestevene (d.1361) at North Mimms, Hertfordshire. Some sixty people attended from all over Britain as well as France.

**Paul Cockerham** had enlightened us at the virtual meeting held in September 2021 on incised slabs in the lower Loire area of western France. He now took us to Chalons-en-Champagne (formerly Chalons-sur-Marne) 100 miles due east of Paris, surrounded by canals and rivers in wide open countryside. This was a prosperous medieval trading town with a cathedral and many churches, of which despite the vicissitudes of the French Revolution and subsequent political upheavals a few still remain. In them are the remains of some eighty large incised slabs often cut down to create flooring. Fortunately the antiquarian F.R. de Gaignieres in the later 17th century had made a collection of drawings of churches and tombstones which record in detail many of the slabs. Slabs exist from the 12th to the 17th centuries but with the greatest number from 1250 to 1450. Most are in the cathedral and the large church of Notre Dame, the former having more ecclesiastical slabs, the latter more civilians. They appear to be from a small local workshop with characteristics such as profile faces and portrait features which suggests the clients had close contact with the makers; the memorials were not 'off the shelf'. The talk made one want to go to Chalons and explore the town, its cathedral, churches and remaining slabs.

**David Lepine** then gave an inspiring talk on the brass of William de Kestevene (d.1361) at North Mimms, an ecclesiastic in mass vestments with a chalice covered by a paten on his breast, under an elaborate canopy. This is a beautiful Flemish brass, but it is small; the effigy is only 686 x 214 mm and the canopy 1203 x 512 mm in contrast to other full size Flemish figures such as

Sir Simon of Wensley, engraved c.1375, at Wensley, Yorkshire (N.R.) that measures 1630 x 510 mm. The North Mimms example is English in shape but Flemish in design. His vestments are plainer than those of Thomas de la Mare at St. Albans Abbey only a few miles away.



*William de Kestevene, rector 1344-1361 (d.1361),  
North Mimms, Hertfordshire (LSW.I).  
(photo: © Martin Stuchfield)*

Among the details highlighted was the brickwork in the canopy work. This is specifically Flemish bond with alternating stretchers and headers in each course, each header being placed centrally over a stretcher. The date of the brass predates the use of post-Roman brick in Britain. The stag between the feet could be a reference to Psalm 42 (As the hart panteth after the waterbrooks, so panteth my soul after thee O God). In the centre of the canopy is a figure of God the Father holding the soul of William de Kestevene. Above the figure of God and his flanking censing angels, behind the pinnacles, is a strange tiled roof reminiscent of medieval shrines. The figure and rich canopy stand on two lions with between them a shield, *A saltire between four crosses*. This base is not a shortened bracket; the cut-off form at the base balances the flat shrine roof at the top. The Kestevens, as the name indicates, were a Lincolnshire family but were not armigerous. For some eighty years they were Royal Clerks. As such they (prior to the establishment of the College of Arms) devised arms with ecclesiastical overtones; the same (nearly) are to be found on a seal at Westminster Abbey which is linked to the family. William had held various posts, such as controller of the King's lead and silver mining in Cornwall and Devon as well as

other livings before he was made rector of the more lucrative North Mimms. Here he already had links, having several years earlier acquired part of the manor. He was not rich but sufficiently affluent to commission a fine brass. Royal Clerks had a flair for spectacular monuments, for example Thomas Crosse at Leatherhead (see *M.B.S. Trans.*, XXII (2021), pp.27-46); [Henry] de Codyngtoun (d.1404) at Bottesford, Leicestershire; and William Ermyn (d.1401) at Castle Ashby, Northamptonshire.

Why a Flemish brass? It was suggested that the brass dated from shortly after the ravages of the Black Death which had affected the workshops of English brasses. In addition, St. Albans was within walking distance (eight miles) from North Mimms. Kestevene could have seen the great Flemish brass to Thomas de la Mare and commissioned his own via contacts at St. Albans.

Two stimulating and inspiring talks left members wanting to visit France and Hertfordshire. Our thanks go to the two speakers, **Paul Cockerham** and **David Lepine**, and to those who technically engineered the online meeting.

**Rosalind Willatts**



*Detail from the monumental brass to William de Kestevene, rector 1344-1361 (d.1361), North Mimms, Hertfordshire (LSW.I).  
(photo: © Martin Stuchfield)*

## General Meeting

### Stamford, Lincolnshire – 2nd April 2022

This was the first time for over two years that we were able to meet in person, now that Covid restrictions had ceased. The happy venue was the beautiful and ancient town of Stamford where the Great North Road crosses the River Welland at the edge of the fenland.

In the morning there was a visit to Browne's Hospital in Broad Street where they no longer have bull running, but a fair instead. This was founded in 1475 through the munificence of William Browne, a rich wool merchant of Stamford. As at St. Mary's Hospital at Chichester which the Society visited in 1988, the hospital still functions as an almshouse, but without the original cubicles. Amongst much 15th-century glass in the chapel is some showing his merchant's mark and an emblem of a stork with the words '+ me spede'. There is one large inscription brass (M.S.I) in the entrance passage relating to the foundation of the hospital.

There was plenty of time to explore the delightful town, its churches and brasses.

The afternoon was spent in All Saints' church – one of four great churches in the town – which dominates Red Lion Square, from where the sound of the annual fair penetrated the church. Although much of the interior was reformed in the late 19th century the medieval shell and 12th-century stiff-leaf capitals of the piers remain. The Browne family in the 15th century were responsible for alterations and the addition of the spire and south chapel – where there are fine effigial Browne brasses. William (d.1489) asked for his brass to be by the water stoup, but whether the slabs were always feet to north or were re-orientated when a large organ was added alongside in the south chapel is not known.

The meeting began with a period of silence as a tribute to Valerie Stuchfield, our President's wife, who had died shortly beforehand.

The first speaker was **John Lee** talking on *Lincolnshire wool merchants and their brasses*, concentrating on three families: Walter Pescod of

Boston, the Lyndewodes of Linwood, and the Brownes of Stamford. Although Lincolnshire wool did not attract high prices (was this because the wool though lustrous is coarse?) compared with that from Leominster in Herefordshire (whose wool from its Ryland sheep is softer and much finer), there was sufficient wool for the woolmen (middlemen) to create wealth by trading and exporting to Europe – via the Staple of Calais, created by the Crown.

The wealth can be seen today in the very large brasses, all from London workshops.



*William Browne, founder of Browne's Hospital (d.1489), in mantle, standing on wool packs, and wife Margaret, Stamford, All Saints, Lincolnshire (M.S.I).  
(photo: © Martin Stuchfield)*

The brass of Walter Pescod (d.1398) at Boston and his wife (lost) has a very elaborate composition (M.S.I). There are twelve figures of saints (two lost) in the side-shafts of the double triple canopy. Walter's tunic and mantle lining are semée with pescods. This slab is comparable to the woolmen William Grevel (d.1401), at Chipping Camden, Gloucestershire (LSW.I) and the lost brass of Thomas of Woodstock (d.1397) at Westminster Abbey. In the 13th century a third of English wool was exported via Boston. William was the leading Boston merchant. He founded a guild, from which one building remains. The Lyndewodes of Linwood (1.7 miles south of Market Rasen) were wealthy as indicated by their canopied brasses: to John (d.1419), and wife Alice, and to their son John (d.1421), also a woolman. The foot inscriptions are in raised lettering with both standing on woosacks, the latter bearing a merchant mark.

The third group of brasses is at Stamford, in both All Saints' and St. John's church nearby, which we were able to inspect. The Brownes, members of the Staple of Calais, were seriously wealthy over several generations and prominent in the town. Three brasses to couples, two large, are now mural at the east end of the north aisle including John standing on woosacks (d.1442), with his wife Margery (M.S.I), and their son John (d.1475) with his wife Agnes (M.S.IV). It is William, another son



Members engrossed in the lectures at  
All Saints, Stamford.  
(photo: © Rosalind Willatts)

(d.1489), who really left his mark on the town. He built Browne's Hospital and embellished All Saints'. The brass to him and his wife Margaret has lost much of its double canopy, but the figures and long inscription in twelve Latin verses are intact (M.S.II). In the roundel of Margaret's canopy is the Browne device, a stork with the motto '+ me spede'; the same is engraved twice between the verses of the inscription.

The next speaker was **Jon Bayliss** on *Fenland brasses*; a small group of local brasses from the late 15th and early 16th centuries identified by Sally Badham. It would seem that many of Fens 1 may have been engraved at Stamford by John Smith and are a continuation of the London C style. They are found at Stamford (St. John) and at Boston. The marble for the slabs was from quarries some ten miles north of Stamford, near Grimsthorpe. Some of Fens 2, such as to Nicholas and Katherine Byldysdon at Stamford (St. John), have similarities to the Coventry workshop. Did an engraver from Coventry set up workshops in Stamford? Further Fens 2 examples are located in Lincolnshire at Algarkirk (M.S.I), Holbeach (M.S.II) and Stallingborough (M.S.I) as well as indents at Boston, Crowland and Tattershall.

**David Lepine** then read a talk by **Alan Rogers**, the Stamford historian, on *Sites of burial in late medieval Stamford*. The town laid claim to fourteen churches, two monasteries and four friaries together with over thirty cells of religious houses, none of which had burial rights. Of the five hospitals only Browne's had a burial ground. The geographical location of Stamford was emphasised, i.e. on the main north-south route of England crossed by the east-west access from the port of Boston to Leicester, Coventry and the Midlands. It must also be remembered that the River Welland was then navigable up to the town. Fine glass can be seen in St. George's church, installed by William de Bruges, Garter King of Arms.

Our thanks go to All Saints' church and Browne's Hospital for their hospitality; to **Caroline Metcalfe** for organising the event; to **David Meara** for presiding over it; to our three speakers; and to the ladies of the church for providing tea.

**Rosalind Willatts**



## A brass at Ashby St. Ledgers reassessed

In 2006 Nigel Saul and I contributed an essay, 'The Catesby's Taste in Brasses', to the Society's volume, *The Catesby Family and their Brasses at Ashby St. Ledgers*, edited by the late Jerome Bertram. One of the brasses we addressed was the bottom half of a lady (M.S.VIII).<sup>1</sup> This had not been included in Robin Emmerson's important article on London styles (R. Emmerson, 'Monumental brasses: London design c.1420-85', *J. Brit. Archaeol. Assoc.*, 131 (1978), pp.50-78). Although I had a limited amount to work on, I attributed it to London Series B, wrongly as it turns out. I have recently heard from Robin Emmerson with a more definitive view on the style. He had looked up his annotated Mill Stephenson to see whether he had noticed it. Sure enough, there was a pencil comment, 'too little of it'. He told me that he agreed with his former self that it would be nice to have some more, but could not find a Series B hem that looked like it. Series B hems tend to standardisation much more than D ones, and the central fold of this hem seems to have been roughly centred on the left-hand of the two central vertical folds in the way that D engravers were in the habit of doing. It is thus definitively reassigned to the London D workshop.

Nigel and I concluded that 'the complete figure would have been in excess of one metre' and represented Margaret Catesby (d. after 1450) from the monument to her husband John (d.1437) and herself, for which she paid 37s. 4d. in 1448/9. As a result of Robin's assessment, it now appears likely that it belongs with the Series D civilian figure which, together with a part canopy, had found their way to the Northamptonshire Record Office (but which were returned to the church in 2007).<sup>2</sup> Robin's rough calculation suggested the surviving portion of the female figure was in the proportion of 4:3 with the lost portion, making the maximum allowance for the lost bit. That puts the length of the female effigy at just over 1000 mm, less than the 1075 mm of the male figure. The fit is very good indeed, which suggests that this is more than coincidence. It is thus clear that, in addition to Margaret's mutilated figure, John's civilian effigy and part of the canopy of this monument have also survived, providing considerably more of the original composition.



Portion of a female effigy, probably from the brass to John Catesby (d.1437), and wife Margaret (d. after 1450), Ashby St. Ledgers, Northamptonshire (M.S.VIII).  
(rubbing: © Sally Badham)

The final point to be made is that John and Margaret's brass conformed to the Catesby's taste for large and elaborate monuments from the prestigious London engraving workshops.

I apologise to the *County Series* authors for messing up their numbering!

**Sally Badham**

1 *The Catesby Family and their Brasses at Ashby St. Ledgers*, ed. by J.F.A. Bertram, Monumental Brass Society (London, 2006), fig.25, p.47.  
2 *Ibid.*, fig.8, p.19.

## A palimpsest discovery at Butterton, Staffordshire

The sundial in the churchyard of St. Bartholomew's at Butterton in Staffordshire has recently been restored. Maggie Rigby (churchwarden and chair of Butterton History Society) contacted Catherine Parker Heath, South West Peak Cultural Heritage Officer after finding a reference to it in late 18th-century accounts and a photograph showing the missing gnomon in place. After discussions the History Society adopted the sundial as part of the South West Peak Small Heritage Adoption Project with the aim of restoring it. Alistair Hunter of Macmillan Hunter Sundials was brought in to undertake the work. He removed the base plate with the aim of removing corrosion and revealing the original markings. The plate was very thin and was also engraved on the reverse with a Gothic script. In early June 2022, an appeal was made online for help reading the inscription and establishing its original context. I saw it on Twitter and immediately recognised the same lettering style as that found on brasses at Tideswell, Derbyshire. Further analysis quickly showed that the sundial is linked to two other previously recorded palimpsest pieces there, namely the reverse of the restored foot inscription to Sir Sampson Meverell (d.1462) and the reverse of the now lost inscription to Laurence Brierly, (d.1680) (LSW.II & 39).<sup>1</sup> Together the three comprise the majority of a verse epitaph to Bishop Robert Pursglove (d.1579), who was also buried at Tideswell (LSW.III).<sup>2</sup>

Much of Pursglove's original brass survives, including his effigy and marginal inscription with four evangelical symbols. The plate below the feet of his figure is a replacement with the same wording as the palimpsest pieces. The wide margin below the last line of one palimpsest piece shows that the palimpsest omits the concluding couplet and two lines of Latin verse. The palimpsest is evidently the work of Anthony Wall, who signed his work on the restored Meverell brass. The problem here is that the date of the restoration of the Meverell brass precedes the decision to set aside funds for the restoration of the Pursglove brass. John Statham wrote about the Meverell brass: 'about 1688 the brasses, with the following inscriptions, were stolen, and in the year 1702 I had the same exactly renewed'. Three years later, on 21st December 1705, the accounts of the



*Palimpsest sundial, Butterton, Staffordshire.  
(photo: © Alistair Hunter)*

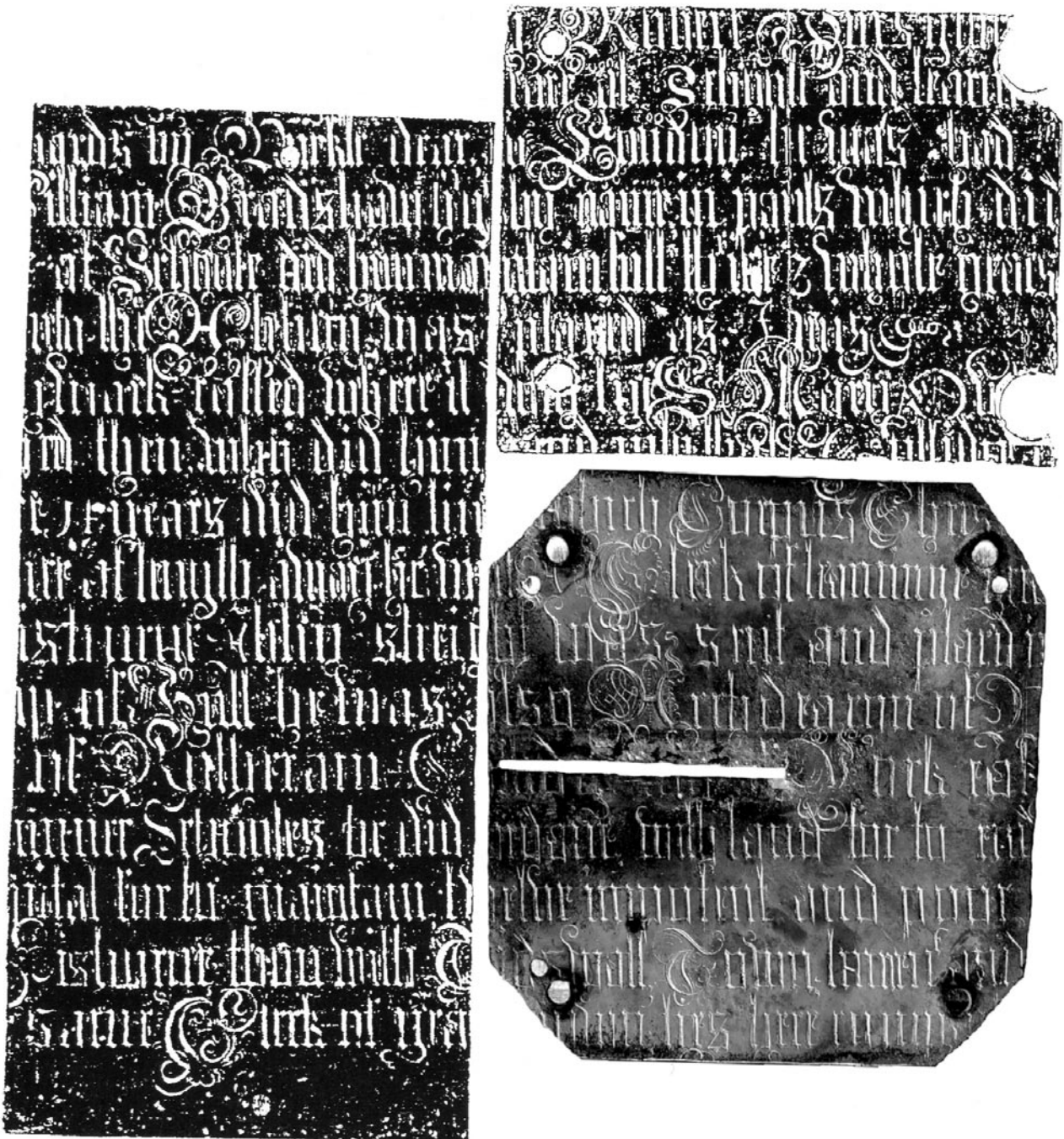
grammar school in Tideswell founded by Pursglove record an agreement to spend £2 4s. 10d. on his tomb: 'This is agreed shall be laid out for brasse, etc., for repaire of the Bishopp's Tombe wch is stolen off.' To complicate matters further, the third plate of the palimpsest had been used to commemorate Laurence Brierly, vicar of Tideswell from June 1663 until his death in January 1680/1. It had spent many years in a cupboard of a house in Tideswell before it was restored to the church, only to be stolen around 1980.

As previously stated, the palimpsest omits the final part of Pursglove's epitaph. Was it rejected on those grounds? Did Statham then have Wall add an additional plate to the Meverell brass? The restoration was complete without it. The original wording of the 1579 brass was recorded by the herald William Wyrley (d. 1618) and by the antiquary Ralph Sheldon in the early 1670s. Laurence Brierly's brass, on the other hand, may suggest that Wall was working on an earlier but aborted restoration of Pursglove's brass as there seems no reason why Brierly's commemoration should have been delayed for twenty years. Was the theft of around 1688 the only occasion that brasses at Tideswell were stolen in this period? The Foljambe brasses in the church disappeared in their entirety. That of John Foljambe (d. 1383 but

mistakenly given as 1358) was entirely renewed in 1875 but an earlier restoration giving the wording previously on the marginal inscription was put in place during much the same period as the other restorations and has been retained. The various restorations of brasses at Tideswell are a fascinating study.

### Jon Bayliss

- 1 *M.B.S. Trans.*, IV (1903), pp.316-9, illus. on p.317 (obv. and rev.); *M.B.S. Trans.*, XVII (2003), pp.93-5, illus. on p.94 (rev. with link); J. Page-Phillips, *Palimpsests: The Backs of Monumental Brasses*, 2 vols, (London, 1980), 46M1, p.91, pl.166 (rev.); J. Page-Phillips, '9th Appendix to *Palimpsests: The Backs of Monumental Brasses*', *M.B.S. Bulletin*, 104 (January 2007), M539-1, pp.lii-liii, pl.235 (rev. with link).
- 2 W. Lack, H.M. Stuchfield and P. Whittemore, *The Monumental Brasses of Derbyshire* (London, 1999), pp.201-9.



*Palimpsest reverse of inscription to Sir Sampson Meverell (d.1462), Tideswell, Derbyshire (LSW.I) (left) with link to the reverse of the now lost inscription to Laurence Brierly, vicar (d.1680), Tideswell, Derbyshire (LSW.39) and sundial at Butterton, Staffordshire (bottom right).*

(photo and rubbing: © Alistair Hunter and *M.B.S. Trans.*, XVII (2003), p.94)

## An early enthusiast: Reginald Grove

### Part II

#### Victorian beginnings

The beauty, design and craftsmanship of medieval brasses became appreciated by a wider group of enthusiasts in the last decade of the 19th century due to a variety of factors described in my article in *Bulletin 149* (February 2022). A strong influence was the Romantic movement which glorified the medieval period as a golden age of knightly chivalry, which monumental brasses in part depicted. Enthusiasts like Rev. Leonard Pollock and Rev. Herbert Macklin whose energy saw the formation in 1887 of the Cambridge University Association of Brass Collectors (C.U.A.B.C.) led to others becoming interested in these expressions of medieval design and art.

In the last *Bulletin* I described how my grandfather, Reginald Grove, became interested as a schoolboy in the 1880s largely due to the encouragement of Pollock and Macklin.

This article covers his role in the C.U.A.B.C. from 1887-90, after which he left Cambridge to attend medical school at Guy's Hospital in London.

#### Cambridge University Association of Brass Collectors

A year before Reginald went up to Cambridge, Macklin wrote an open letter in the *Cambridge Review*, the student weekly newspaper, to announce forming a society for those interested in brass rubbing. In the formal language of the period, he asked that 'any gentleman who feels interested in my suggestion kindly call on me in my rooms in St. John's College, G. New Court at 8.00p.m. on Thursday next. We might then arrange preliminaries and call a meeting at some early date'.<sup>1</sup>

It was hardly persuasive marketing but it had the desired effect. On 28th October 1886 the first meeting was held and 'it was resolved that an Association shall be formed of Cambridge University Brass Collectors.' The main objectives of the Association were agreed. A second meeting was held at the end of November with Macklin elected as the Honorary Secretary. A third meeting

followed at the beginning of December with its first task being to draw up a list of monumental brasses.<sup>2</sup>

Further publicity was given in January 1887 when *The Antiquary* journal printed another open letter from Macklin about the formation of the C.U.A.B.C., stating that 'all past and present members of the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge (who) were interested in this branch of archaeology . . .' were eligible to join. It was unfortunate that Oxford was not included in the title as some had misgivings that the Association was not truly open to all. This is reflected in the 1890-1 membership list with only one person from Oxford out of a total of 101 members.<sup>3</sup> The misleading name was finally corrected in January 1894 when it was renamed the Monumental Brass Society, but not before the Oxford Ladies Archaeological and Brass Rubbing Society was founded in 1891 and the Oxford University Brass Rubbing Society in 1893.<sup>4</sup>

During the Lent Term 1887, various membership rules were agreed, including that non-university men could become honorary members, that resident members (those at Cambridge) should pay a subscription of 2s. 6d. [equivalent of £15 today] and 'corresponding members' could become life members for 5/- [£30].<sup>5</sup> More meetings were held during the summer term and papers about aspects of brasses were presented by members.<sup>6</sup> Meetings were held in undergraduate rooms as well as those of Fellows who lived in college<sup>7</sup> or in the homes of those who did not.

#### Reginald joins

Reginald made contact with Macklin immediately on his arrival at Cambridge and attended a general meeting of the Association, held in the rooms of an undergraduate in Trinity College a few weeks after the start of term. At the meeting, it was agreed to publish the 'transactions' of the Association two or three times each term; this was an ambitious target.

By the time the group met again the following month,<sup>8</sup> a series of pamphlets had been produced and were on sale price 6d. The meeting was held at

St. John's in Macklin's rooms when one enthusiast called Bloom 'read a paper' on churches in Narborough and Southacre in Norfolk.<sup>9</sup> Another student, John Allen and Reginald were then elected joint editors for the pamphlets which were to be produced.<sup>10</sup> The first of these was shown at this meeting. It consisted of eight pages and contained a paper by Murray, another member, on 'Vestments and some other "magazine" matters. We have called it *Transactions*.<sup>11</sup> Allen was two years older than Reginald and in his final year. As a fresher, Reginald had got off to a flying start and was keen to get involved.

### Joint Editor of the *Transactions*

The first issues were quite modest and looked more like pamphlets. By issue no.6 the Editorial, rather tongue in cheek, commented that 'some members . . . have weighed the old pamphlet against a sixpenny-piece, and found it wanting'. Their comparison was the *Cambridge Review* which cost 6d and generally ran to over 30 pages. Responding to the criticism, the joint editors pulled out the stops and issue no.7 ran to thirty-two pages and had an illustration. As membership increased and revenue grew, more pictures and a Notes and Queries section were added.<sup>12</sup>

It was not until March the following year, in 1888, that the next meeting was held, again at St. John's. A paper was read by L.H. Cooley, who was then Secretary, on 'Brasses of Ladies', illustrated by rubbings that he had taken.<sup>13</sup> The Association was next due to meet at the beginning of May.

### 'Plenty of work to be done, but nobody to do it'

Macklin wrote in his diary that 'the C.U.A.B.C. ought to have met in Grove's rooms at Sidney, but hardly anyone turned up and the meeting was postponed', much to Reginald and the others' disappointment. Macklin continued in his diary that he 'strolled with Murray debating the prospects of the Association. Corresponding members are on the increase and residents on the decrease. Plenty of work to be done, but nobody to do it. What the dickens are we to do, I don't know?' he said.<sup>14</sup> It was the heartfelt cry of many a pioneer!

At the end of the month another meeting was held at St. John's, this time in S.H. Worsley's rooms. 'Palimpsest Brasses' was the subject of a paper from T.L. Murray from Trinity. He explained that this was

a process when brasses were taken from their original slabs and later engraved to show another figure (usually by turning over and using the reverse).

By now it was the time of year to hold annual elections for officers and T.L. Murray was elected as Vice-President, Macklin as Honorary Secretary and Reginald and J.E. Kershaw from Queens' as joint Editors.<sup>15</sup> Allen was in his final term and preparing for his Tripos exams, so stepping down from editing was understandable.<sup>16</sup>

### Reginald: Honorary Managing Secretary

The first meeting of the Association in the Michaelmas Term 1888 was a 'private business meeting held . . . in Mr. W. Macklin's rooms'. Financially the Association was struggling as the published *Transactions* had proved a financial failure, although in other respects successful.

It was now decided to split the role of Secretary into two because of the growth in corresponding members. Reginald and his colleague resigned as Editors as did the Assistant Secretary. Reginald was then elected Honorary Managing Secretary on a temporary basis and Macklin made Honorary Corresponding Secretary. Reginald had responsibility for members at Cambridge and Macklin for those not resident. The Vice-President continued to be Murray. The annual subscription for resident members remained at 2s. 6d.<sup>17</sup> Macklin's diary said that 'between us we have to make an effort to collect all moneys due to the Association'.<sup>18</sup>

The Association met the following month at the Lecture Theatre of the Archaeological Society. The speaker was Andrew Oliver,<sup>19</sup> a 'corresponding member'. He gave a talk on English Brasses of the 14th and 15th centuries and the walls of the lecture hall were covered with his rubbings to illustrate his talk.<sup>20</sup>

At the next meeting held in the Lent Term 1889 in Macklin's rooms, the main interest was a 'fine photo-lithograph of a rubbing by F.M. Beloe, (another) corresponding member, of the great Anglo-Flemish Braunch brass at King's Lynn'. The report carried by the *Cambridge Review* stated that 'it is of exquisite workmanship and especially famous for the 'peacock feast' portrayed in the lower part of the composition'.<sup>21</sup>

### A 'somewhat scanty audience'

Reginald was the speaker at the next meeting on the topic 'Inscriptions'.<sup>22</sup> He described the many forms of words and letters found on brasses. His talk generated an interesting discussion although in his diary Macklin commented that it was to 'a somewhat scanty audience'.<sup>23</sup> This must have been a disappointment to Reginald.

### More talks

In the Summer Term 1889 the Association met again in Reginald's rooms when two papers were read and discussed. Macklin felt that 'the meeting was a success'.<sup>24</sup> The first paper was entitled 'Notes of Staffordshire Brasses' by J.H. Rimmer who was now, apparently Hon. Corresponding Secretary. The second paper was on Isleham church, read by Macklin, in which he showed a plan of the church as well as all the brasses there.<sup>25</sup> Macklin was encouraged that there were those emerging who were prepared to take on some of the work of the Association: Russell of Trinity and Lewis of Queens' are the most promising new members of the C.U.A.B.C., he confided in his diary.

### A new Vice-President

A further meeting took place at the end of that month in Macklin's rooms.<sup>26</sup> T.L. Murray resigned as it was his last term at Cambridge. 'Warm and hearty votes of thanks were passed for the way in which he had fulfilled his post on the Committee', it was noted. As per the constitution, all the other officers resigned and then elections were held – Lewis from Queens' to the Committee, Russell to be Managing Secretary and Treasurer, and Macklin to be Corresponding Secretary. Reginald was appointed Vice-President – a great honour. The President, Rev. W.F. Greeny, lived in Norwich and was not able to attend meetings, so the Vice-President's role was particularly important. The meeting concluded with a paper read by R.H. Russell (now Honorary Managing Secretary having taken on Reginald's post) on 'Some Brasses of Buckinghamshire'.<sup>27</sup> This was the last meeting of the term.

### Visiting churches

'Young' Macklin<sup>28</sup> (as Reginald rather cheekily, but affectionately called him in his diary) suggested a number of churches to visit to build up his collection of brass rubbings; one was the church at Hildersham. Reginald wrote to the rector in

June 1889 but received a disappointing reply telling him that unfortunately he could not take any rubbings from the 'Paris brasses' as this was not permitted and he could not 'give him the required leave'.<sup>29</sup> Generally, Reginald's experience was that he was warmly welcomed by the clergy who seemed only too keen to chat and show him round.

### Macklin's departure

A committee meeting was held early in November 1889 in Russell's rooms to plan ahead for the year. Macklin had left Cambridge in the summer and had moved to London to prepare for his ordination.<sup>30</sup> He had agreed to remain on the Committee as the Corresponding Secretary, being now a corresponding member himself. On a brief visit to Cambridge for a couple of days he attended the November meeting and wrote in his diary '(a) pleasant time of it'. But he clearly realised that Reginald was struggling, no doubt missing Macklin's enthusiastic presence. The next day 'after Hall and Chapel, went to see Grove who needed cheering up as to the future prospects of the C.U.A.B.C'.<sup>31</sup>

The first meeting of the Association for the Michaelmas Term was not until mid-November. Held in Russell's rooms, Lionel Lewis from Queens'<sup>32</sup> spoke about 'Thanet Brasses' which he illustrated with his own rubbings shown by pedigree and heraldry.<sup>33</sup> His home was in Margate, so visiting the Isle of Thanet in his holidays was easy.

The next meeting was held in Reginald's rooms at Sidney, on a Friday evening. As Vice-President he steered the meeting through the business agenda when a large amount of time was spent on a motion for taking 'early steps towards publishing a complete list of Cambridgeshire Brasses'. A new corresponding secretary was elected to replace Macklin, who had managed to return to Cambridge for this meeting. 'A warm vote of thanks was passed for his long and energetic services'.<sup>34</sup> Macklin's successor was R.W.M. Lewis from Corpus Christi. Finally, at 9.45p.m. Macklin read a paper on 'academical [*sic*] costumes of the Middle Ages,' illustrated by many brasses from both Oxford and Cambridge, with some from a few country churches. Macklin felt his talk was a success.<sup>35</sup>

Did not get to King's as usual today, as I thought  
 I ought to go to support the first hymn sung in  
 Sidney Chapel for a long time: it was a great  
 success. After it went to King's & just saw  
 Tommy & George.  
 In the afternoon reading at the Union, brought  
 Beale back to tea. Again went to chapel.  
 After that a good many men came up for cocon  
 & then took White & Hayes off to church at S.  
 Edwards: afterwards had a C.U.A.B.C. commit  
 meeting at Russell's, when we fixed on a  
 great many extraordinary things.  
 Wrote this up & to bed.

*Extract from the diary of Reginald Grove (20th April 1890).*

*(photo: © Peter Flower)*

In April 1890 one Committee meeting 'fixed on a great many extraordinary things'. But it was not all plain sailing and after another meeting at the end of the month Reginald felt that 'it was rather rot; got away at about 10.30p.m. and went to bed tired out'.

### Spreading the word

The C.U.A.B.C. Committee was keen to publicise its work and a small exhibition was held one wet Friday afternoon in May 1890. 'It was very good and (I) enjoyed it very much but the people that came were only just enough to pay expenses', Reginald wrote. The following day he was very pleased that a clergyman called Hawkes Mason bought one item, and went to breakfast with him, together with Russell and Lewis. He got on well with Hawkes Mason who was 'a very good sort of parson'. But with exams looming, Reginald felt he had to step down from the Committee and he resigned on 6th June 1890. He had certainly played an important part in laying the foundations of the Association.<sup>36</sup>

### C.U.A.B.C. rules

An undated copy of the rules of the Association is in the Grove family archive. Rev. W.F. Creeny is shown as President<sup>37</sup> and the rule book probably dates from Reginald's last term in 1890. As previously mentioned, there were two classes of members – resident members of Cambridge University as full members and others as corresponding members. At least two meetings per term had to be held 'at which rubbings of brasses be compared and exhibited, papers read or topics connected with brasses discussed'. The annual subscription was still 2s. 6d. for resident members but corresponding members now paid 10s. [£60] which gave life membership. The aim of the society was to assist in preserving monumental brasses; exchange information; keep a record of all publications, articles etc; form a collection of rubbings of interesting brasses; and compile an accurate list of all English brasses with a view to publication.

**A day's brass rubbing**

After finishing his examinations at the end of the summer term in 1890, Reginald combined his enjoyment of cycling with that of brass rubbing with a day trip in July. Starting from Cambridge at ten one Friday morning, he met up with Pollock on the way to Sawtry stopping off at Little Gidding. They had a light lunch in a cottage and spent two hours in the church. 'It is full of brass work and brass inscriptions and altogether was very interesting, especially after having read John Inglesant which I must now read again.'<sup>38</sup>

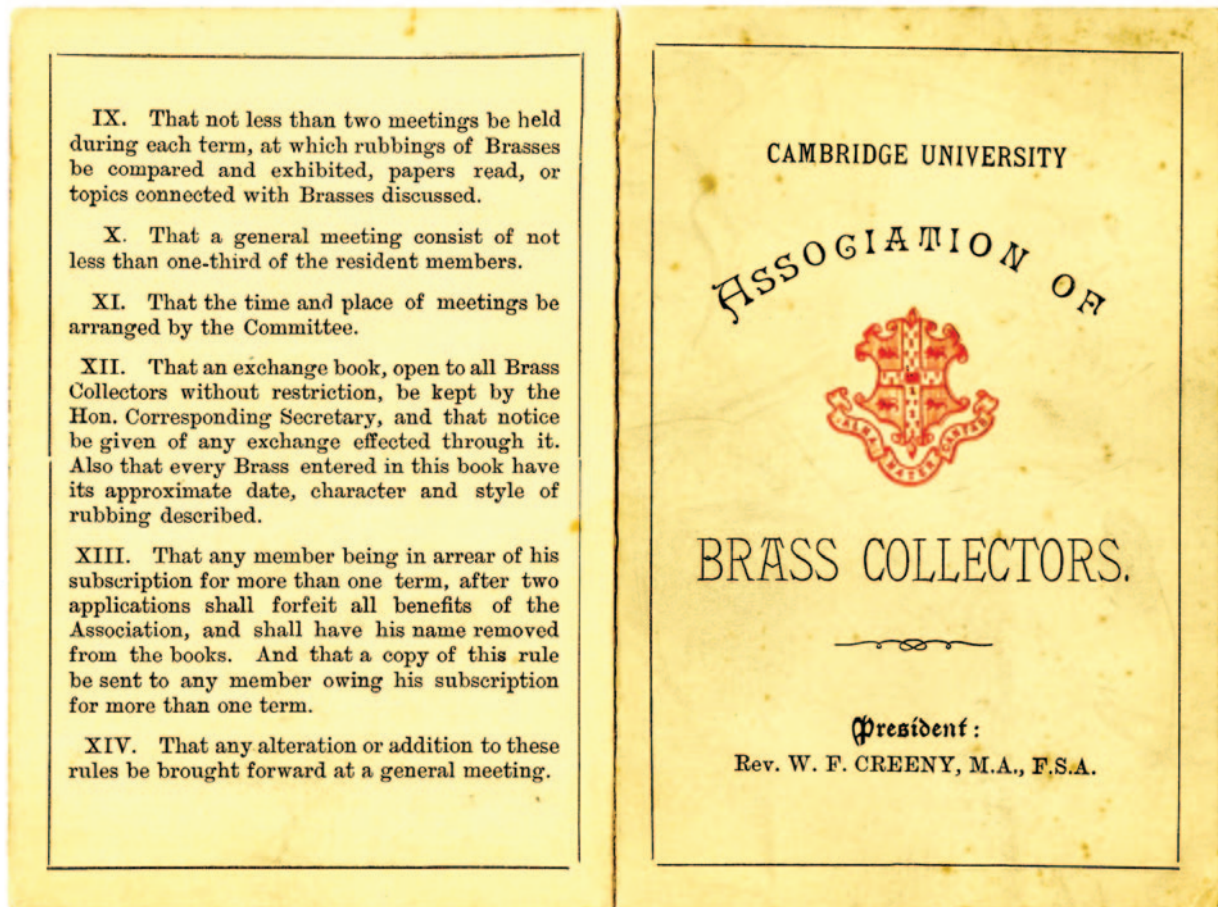
They then went on to Sawtry, rubbed the brass there, and afterwards 'were asked by the parson, a Mr. Clark, in to tea'. Reginald felt that 'they were very jolly people, that comes through having a clergyman with me, then went on, dropped Pollock off at Woodwalton going into the village with him. Got home at 7.15p.m.'<sup>39</sup>

His round trip was about 60 miles.

Reginald's enthusiasm for brass rubbing was later superseded by a keen interest in stereoscopic photography. He was President of The Stereoscopic Society from 1925-48 and became well known for the quality and composition of his work over many years. One of his subject areas was the interiors of old churches; no doubt he looked over the monumental brasses too.

**Peter Flower**

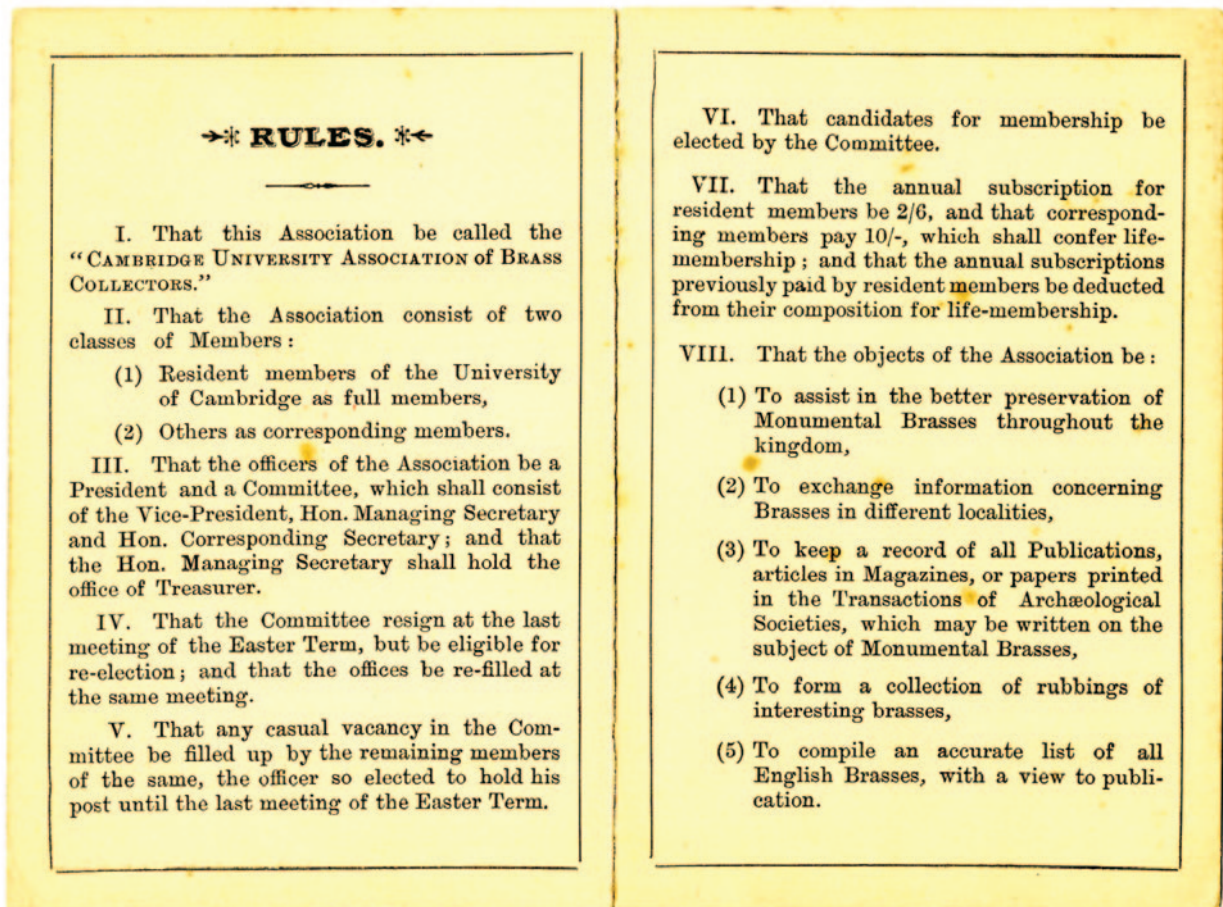
- 1 *The Cambridge Review* (27th October 1886).
- 2 *The Cambridge Review* (3rd November 1886, 24th November 1886 and 8th December 1886).
- 3 See also note 38.
- 4 R.J. Busby, *Monumental Brass Society 1887-2012: A Short History* (London, 2012), pp.1-4.
- 5 *The Cambridge Review* (9th February 1887).
- 6 *The Cambridge Review* (23rd February 1887, 18th May 1887 and 23rd May 1887).
- 7 One of these was Sir Donald Macalister, a Fellow of St. John's who was a lecturer in medicine, under whom Reginald studied.
- 8 *The Cambridge Review* (18th November 1887).
- 9 In Macklin's diary he commented that 'it was interesting but over heraldic'.
- 10 *The Cambridge Review* (23rd November 1887).
- 11 Macklin diary (18th November 1887).
- 12 Busby, *Short History*, p.2.



*Rule Book of the Cambridge University Association of Brass Collectors (C.U.A.B.C.) (c.1890). (photo: © Peter Flower)*



- 13 Macklin diary (7th March 1888).  
 14 Macklin diary (11th May 1888).  
 15 Macklin in his diary said that 'Murray president, ego and Worsley secretary and sub secretary, Grove and Kershaw editors' so the report in *The Cambridge Review* (31st May 1888), p.229 must have been incorrect.  
 16 Allen went into the church on graduating and in 1904 felt a call to the mission field in Zululand. Two years later he became Honorary Chaplain to the Zululand Mounted Rifles. He later took up positions in two churches in Johannesburg.  
 17 *C.U.A.B.C. Trans.*, I, pt.7 (February 1890), p.16 and *The Cambridge Review* (1st November 1888).  
 18 Macklin diary (26th October 1888).  
 19 Andrew Oliver was a member of the C.U.A.B.C. who lived in Bedford Row, London. Reginald knew him well. Oliver was very knowledgeable about continental as well as English brasses and gave lectures on the subject. One published article was entitled 'Notes on Flemish Brasses in England' (1889).  
 20 *The Cambridge Review* (6th December 1888).  
 21 *The Cambridge Review* (14th February 1889).  
 22 *The Cambridge Review* (28th February 1889).  
 23 Macklin diary (26th February 1889).  
 24 Macklin diary (17th May 1889).  
 25 This was held on Friday, 17th May 1889 as noted in *C.U.A.B.C. Trans.*, I, pt.7 (February 1890), p.16 as well as in Macklin's diary but the meeting was not reported in *The Cambridge Review*.  
 26 Macklin diary (31st May 1889).  
 27 *C.U.A.B.C. Trans.*, I, pt.7 (February 1890), p.17.  
 28 Macklin was three years older than Reginald.  
 29 Letter to Reginald Grove (24th June 1889).  
 30 Macklin was ordained deacon in December 1889 and priest the following year in Truro. He was the chaplain of Dartmoor Prison from 1891 to 1894, and then curate at Somersham with Pidley and Colne in Huntingdonshire from 1894-7 where his friendship with Reginald continued. Sadly, he died at the early age of 51. *Venn*, p.275.  
 31 Macklin diary (7th November 1889).  
 32 Lewis was later ordained into the church and held a number of posts. He became the founder of Our Dumb Friends' League and an antivivisectionist.  
 33 *C.U.A.B.C. Trans.*, I, pt.7 (February 1890), p.17.  
 34 *C.U.A.B.C. Trans.*, I, pt.7 (February 1890), p.17.  
 35 Macklin diary (5th December 1889).  
 36 *C.U.A.B.C. Trans.*, I (1887-91) has a list of 101 members including Reginald. 14 were undergraduates from Caius, Corpus Christi, Emmanuel, Peterhouse, Selwyn, Sidney, St. John's and Trinity. Only Reginald was from Sidney. As his address is shown as Sidney Sussex College the list was for 1890, rather than 1891. Interestingly, two women were members: Miss Wilkinson of Park Side, Cambridge and Miss A.G.E. Carthew of 15a Kensington Palace Gardens in Knightsbridge. They must have been 'corresponding members'.  
 37 Greeny was President from 1887-97 and was the vicar of St. Michael-at-Thorn, Norwich.  
 38 The Ferrier family established a small community at Little Gidding during a turbulent period of religious division in the 17th century. It featured prominently in the popular 1881 historical novel *John Inglesant* by Joseph Henry Shorthouse which Reginald mentions.  
 39 Pollock was still the curate at All Saints, St. Ives, but lived in Woodwalton, eleven miles from St. Ives.



*Rule Book of the Cambridge University Association of Brass Collectors (C.U.A.B.C.) (c.1890).*  
 (photo: © Peter Flower)

## Johann Rode (d.1477) and his brass at St. Petri Dom, Bremen, Germany



*Johann Rode, provost, 1477, Bremen, Germany (HKC.1).  
(photo: © Henrike Weyh, curator of Bremen Cathedral Museum)*

The fine brass to Provost Rode is now mounted on a wall in St. Peter's Cathedral Museum, having been expertly conserved and rebated into an inert hardwood.<sup>1</sup> It measures 1860 x 560 mm and was originally set in a slate slab (*schieferplatte*) 3000 x 1900 mm, located near a font in the western part of the nave of the cathedral. The burial place of Rode is generally considered to be tomb 11, discovered in December 1973 in the centre of the western part of the nave between the 2nd and 3rd pairs of pillars. The grave itself was opened in 1974 revealing the remains of a clergyman wearing a rich chasuble but with no episcopal regalia. A scientific investigation concluded that the remnants of textiles probably came from the second half of the 15th century. Rode's nephew, Prince Archbishop Johann Rode III (Johann d. Jüngere) was buried to the east of his uncle and recorded in the *Ratsdenkelbuch* on 7th December 1511. The slab relating to Provost Rode's brass originally included a marginal inscription, long since lost. In 1766 Cassel asked his readers if anyone knew of the inscription. The text is not recorded and none of the German sources mention whether there were evangelical symbols in the corners. The slab itself was probably moved either prior to, or during, a major 19th century restoration of the cathedral and put in storage, with its whereabouts, if it still exists, unknown.<sup>2</sup>

The provost is attired in mass vestments including a very full chasuble, which together with a cushion as a headrest, is exquisitely, almost excessively designed, with pomegranate and pineapple motifs. The 'Y' shaped orphrey, amice and ends of the stole depict saints including SS. Peter and Paul on the shoulders, and below the hands what appears to be part of St. Thomas with a spear as his attribute and St. Bartholomew with his flaying knife. On the ends of the stole, probably St. Matthew with an axe, and St. Jude(?) holding a book and carpenter's square. Unusually his tonsure is stippled. He gazes downwards with a chalice on his breast with crossed hands below.<sup>3</sup> The principal lines of the engraving are boldly incised. A shield blazoned with the Rode arms (*Azure, a winged jousting helm sinister Or*) is centrally

positioned just above the feet which rest on two playful lions.

The engraving displays clear Flemish influence but the relative heaviness of the features (a portrait brass (?)), treatment of the lions, the lack of a regular bottom border, and positioning of the shield are typically German. The obvious skill in the engraving is reminiscent of the high quality brass to Johannes Luneborch (or Lüneburg) (d.1461) in the Katharinenkirche at Lübeck; a Hanseatic city like Bremen and not far away, with established brass production, much of it from bell and cannon foundries.<sup>4</sup> Dr. Cameron considers it difficult to recognise any other brass as being by the same hand whereas Malcolm Norris in the first instance groups Rode's brass with those to Bishop Andrzej Bniński (d.1479) at Poznan Cathedral, Poland (HKC.1A) and St. Henry of Finland at Nousiainen, Finland.<sup>5</sup> Both these brasses are of later Flemish origin, heavily influenced by the Flemish School of a century earlier. Saints populate the side shafts of canopies and above the figures, there are Lombardic inscriptions with rose motif borders, and evangelical symbols and shields set in quadrilobes in the corners and sides. It is difficult to place Rode's brass with these two since it lacks so much of what makes these distinctive, especially the elaborate canopies. In addition both brasses have standardised 'Flemish' facial features, whereas Rode's are indicative of a portrait brass. In a later work the position of Malcolm Norris is modified rather than changed. He considers Rode's brass as based on 14th-century Flemish design but stops short of it being undoubtedly Flemish, instead inviting the possibility of a Lübeck imitation alongside his preferred Flemish provenance by conceding to uncertainty.<sup>6</sup> Apart from this uncertainty of school, if indeed there was one, there is no clue as to the actual workshop or identity of the artist responsible for its design.

Rode has traditionally been considered to be from a patrician family by earlier German sources. Ellwanger has reviewed the evidence, and is unable to establish a pedigree with the identity of his parents and siblings uncertain.<sup>7</sup> There are records of several Rode families (de Rode, Rode *alias* Wale and Roding). He considers these sources as too keen to refute Renner's claim that his nephew, the Prince Archbishop had a grandfather who was a shoemaker, and regarding that ancestry as too

lowly for someone in high office. If anything, the opportunities for the family's ecclesiastical and secular advancement in Bremen arose through the elder Rode's roles at the Curia in Rome. What is known is that Councillor Heinrich Rode was the Prince Archbishop's brother and therefore nephew of Provost Rode, who gave his children a residence in Borgfeld. Heinrich had married Beke von Gröpelingen and they had six children. At one stage Provost Rode was her guardian. Margarete Rode was the Prince Archbishop's sister, married to Heinrich Stenouw, mayor of Bremen from 1486-1508.

A valuable source of information about Rode's life and career comes from the Vatican's annual Register of Supplications or Supplicas.<sup>8</sup> In the case of potential appointments to clerical offices there would have been a petition to the pontiff for the appropriate commission. Each application would contain some information about the petitioner and offices already held. For example in his early career Rode appears for the first time in an approved Supplication of 11th May 1419 in which he describes himself as a cleric from Bremen and writer of the Register of Supplicas (he appears to have been in Rome from around this time, where he spent a large part of his adult life).<sup>9</sup> He asks Pope Martin V for a commission to become canon and prebendary of St. Angarii church in Bremen following the death of Burchard de Bersen. The post was not taken up immediately, apparently due to disputed claims. Not until a further supplication of 6th May 1422 concerning the deanery of St. Angarii, did Rode describe himself as a canon and prebendary. During Pope Martin V's papacy up to 1430, there were twelve supplications from Rode including the following:

- 7th July 1423: Canon and Prebendary of St. Angarii, Bremen;
- 16th September 1421: Vicarium of Ramesloh;
- 11th July 1424: Canon and Prebendary of St. Willehadi, Bremen;
- 4th December 1427: Provost of St. Willehadi, Bremen, relinquished in 1430;
- 7th September 1430: Canon and Prebendary of Bremen Cathedral.
- 20th March 1431: Canon and Prebendary of St. Marien Cathedral, Hamburg, available by exchange for the Vicarium of Ramesloh in 1430.<sup>10</sup>



Johann Rode, provost, 1477, Bremen, Germany (HKC.1).  
(rubbing: © M.B.S. Portfolio, pt.3, V (June 1937), pl.14)

In the Supplication Register of 22nd January 1420, he describes himself as 24 years old, meaning he was born in 1396. In another Supplication of 18th June 1425 he refers to himself for the first time as Magister and Abbreviator.<sup>11</sup> He was probably not a Decretorum Doctor (D.C.L.) but a Magister in Artibus (M.A.) and possibly a Theologiae Baccalaureus (S.T.B.) as well as a priest. When he received his degree and was ordained is unknown. During the pontificate of Eugen IV (1431-37) Rode's Supplications reduce to three. He spends time in Rome, apart from a brief period in 1432 when he returned to Bremen after a twelve-year absence. He appears to be back in Rome again by 1433, again based on Supplication evidence, then from 1440-48 back in Bremen. In 1452 he is promoted by the Pope from Corrector Bullarius (Proof Reader of Papal Bulls) to Protonotary and by 1453 has the title 'Camerarius protonotarionis participantium'.<sup>12</sup>

Rode was then given a challenging role by Pope Calixtus III to try and settle 'The Prelates' War', an historical dispute between the Council of Lüneburg and the clerical supremos of the saltworks in this Hanseatic city, whose pans

produced about eighty per cent of the town salt. The Council was in debt and demanded half of their income. The clerics relied on a contract of 1388-91 which set a ceiling of 1,000 marks per annum, which the Pope supported. The dispute escalated and in March 1453 the city was placed under interdict. The old Council was replaced and its assets used to address the debt. Pope Calixtus III recognised the new Council but the Emperor and Hanseatic League helped the old Council to return and the new members were imprisoned, prompting reprisals from the Papacy in a Bull in 1457 which Rode was accused of forging. King Christian I of Denmark became involved as another arbitrator alongside Rode, by this time described as a Provost, and the Bishops of Schwerin and Lübeck. Agreement was eventually reached in December 1461 and reprisals were lifted.<sup>13</sup>

Rode remained in Bremen as Provost of St. Peter's Cathedral until his death, the date of which is generally considered to be 9th December 1477, as recorded in the *Necrologia et Obituaria* of St. Angarii church in Bremen.<sup>14</sup>

**Kevin Herring**

- 1 Museum Inventory no.133. In room 7 of the museum extension. Illustrated in *Das Dom Museum in Bremen*, fig.4, p.27; *Hospitium Ecclesiae Band 21*, p.109; *M.B.S. Portfolio*, pt.3, V (June 1937), pl.14; *Norris, Memorials*, fig.117; and *Monumental Brasses: The Portfolio Plates of the Monumental Brass Society 1894-1984* (1988), pl.211.
- 2 Prior to the major cathedral restoration of 1888-1901 the brass was lifted from its slab and mounted for decorative purposes on the door of a safe in the sacristy.
- 3 *M.B.S. Trans.*, pt.5, VII (1938), p.213. Rode's posture is to be found on the Flemish brasses to Sir Simon of Wensley, engraved c.1375, at Wensley, Yorkshire (N.R.); to an unknown priest in mass vestments, engraved c.1350, at St. Severin, Köln; and the brass to Bishops Gottfried and Friedrich von Bülow, 1375, at Schwerin, Germany (HKC.2).
- 4 *M.B.S. Trans.*, pt.6, XVII (2008), figs.1-2, pp.550-559
- 5 *M.B.S. Trans.*, pt.5, VII (1938), pp.213-4; and M.W. Norris, 'The Schools of Brasses in Germany' in the *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, 3rd series, XIX (1956), pp.34-52..
- 6 M. Norris, *Monumental Brasses: The Memorials* (London, 1977), I, p.101.
- 7 W. Ellwanger, 'Johannes Rode (d.1477)' in *Blätter der Maus Heft 34* (April 2010), pp.31-2.
- 8 *Ibid.*, p.9.
- 9 *Repertorium Germanica Online*, IV 08994.
- 10 *Ibid.* IV, 1743, 2754, 2295, 3458; V, 8560.
- 11 *Ellwanger*, p.11.
- 12 W. Von Hoffmann, 'Forschungen zur Geschichte', Band 2 (1914); chapter II, no.14, p.77 in reprint (Turin, 1971).
- 13 *Ellwanger*, pp.24-5.
- 14 The entry in St. Angarii *Necrologia et Obituaria* V id. XII reads: 'Memoria magistri Johannis Roden litterarum apostolicarum corrector ecclesieque bremensis prepositi peragetur cum tractu "dies ire" procurator ministrabit I marca campanario grossum'. In the margin is the date Anno domini M IIII c LXX VII. St. Angarii's church was destroyed in World War II.