

Monumental Brass Society

FEBRUARY 2024



BULLETIN 155

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Hon. Treasurer's notice

On 1st January all subscriptions for 2024 became due. Please send £25.00 (associate/student £12.50, family £35.00) to the Hon. Treasurer, Robert Kinsey, 4 Pictor Close, Corsham, Wiltshire SN13 9XH. Payment can be made using the *PayPal* system via mbs_brasses@yahoo.com or make cheques payable to the 'Monumental Brass Society'. Many thanks to all those members who have completed Gift Aid forms. Any U.K. tax-paying member can enable the Society to reclaim tax on their subscription. The appropriate form can be downloaded directly from www.mbs-brasses.co.uk. U.S. members preferring to pay in dollars can send a cheque for U.S. \$45.00 to Shirley Mattox at 1313 Jackson Street, Oshkosh, Wisconsin 54901, U.S.A.

Editorial

As is traditional in volunteer societies, a few people are working hard to hold everything upright. They would welcome more involvement from the silent majority.

Our Treasurer, Robert Kinsey, would like to stand down after serving us superbly for what will be ten years at the 2024 A.G.M. in July. The Hon. Treasurer's role is an excellent way to augment your C.V. and acquire transferable skills such as online banking and charity administration. You will also learn about the Society and get to know fellow enthusiasts interested in brasses and incised slabs. The Hon. Treasurer is one of a team, and every support will be given. If you are interested, please contact our Hon. Secretary, Penny Williams.

Other ways to help:

- Suggesting venues with interesting brasses for future meetings;
- Writing about brasses that you have seen for the *Bulletin*;
- Writing articles for the more academic *Transactions*;
- Attending meetings, bringing friends and encouraging them to join the Society;
- Suggesting speakers for events, or offering to speak yourself; and
- Helping with 'meeting and greeting', serving teas and coffees at events, and (most important) washing up afterwards!

Stephen Freeth

Personalia

We welcome as a new members:

Clare Garvey, 44 South Downs Road, Altrincham, Greater Manchester WA14 3HN.

Ellie Pridgeon, 41 Appleton Grove, Wigan, Greater Manchester WN3 6NY.

It is with deep regret that we report the death of our Honorary Member **Richard Busby** who had been a member of the Society since 1967 (see pp.1099-1100).

Cover: Upper part of the figure of Joan Peryent, d.1415, at Digswell, Hertfordshire (LSW.I), the first brass rubbed by the late Richard Busby (see pp.1099-1100).

(photo: © Martin Stuchfield)

Diary of events

Saturday, 20th April 2024

GENERAL MEETING HEREFORD CATHEDRAL

The tour of the monuments of the cathedral led by **Nigel Saul** and the tour of the Mappa Mundi and Chained Library is now fully booked. To be placed on the waiting list email: rosemaryfitchett8@gmail.com.

The Cathedral contains a great many brasses or remains of brasses, described in detail in the booklet by Peter Heseltine and H. Martin Stuchfield, *The Monumental Brasses of Hereford Cathedral* (M.B.S., 2005). Electronic copies of this booklet will be supplied in advance of the meeting to each participant.

Saturday, 20th July 2024

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING BEDDINGTON, SURREY

The formal business of the A.G.M. will be held in St. Mary's church, Beddington at 11.00a.m. The afternoon meeting, which is free, with no booking required, will commence at 2.00p.m. **John Phillips** will speak on *The Carew Family and the Church*, and **Stephen Freeth** will speak about the brasses. We will then have tea, and an opportunity to view the brasses and the church.

St. Mary's Beddington is mostly 14th and 15th century, restored and enlarged by the architect Joseph Clarke in the 19th century. It has a Purbeck marble font of c.1200, and nine medieval misericords in the chancel. The interior is decorated in the Arts & Crafts style. The organ screen was made by William Morris & Co. in 1869.

The chancel contains important medieval brasses to the Carews, who lived in Carew Manor (now the Carew Academy) next to the church. For many years these brasses were inaccessible, but those in the main aisle have recently been uncovered, and the church authorities have agreed to dismantle the Victorian choir stalls to expose other brasses for our visit. The Carew Chapel also contains a stone tomb for Sir Richard Carew d.1520, and a tomb with alabaster effigy for Sir Francis Carew d.1611.

The postcode for satellite navigation is SM6 7NH. The church does not have a car park and parking can be difficult on sports days. There is some not-very-obvious public parking at the end of Church Road, behind Beddington Park Cottages. (Go past the church and the Manor/Academy, through the gates marked 'Weak Bridge' and round to the right. At the end of the curve, turn right towards 'Waddon Ponds'. The car park is at the end.)

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

Saturday, 14th September 2024

STUDY DAY

ST. ALBANS CATHEDRAL, HERTFORDSHIRE

The provisional theme is *St. Albans Abbey and its Medieval Monuments*. **Derrick Chivers** will give a tour of the indents and fragments of brasses to abbots. Other speakers will include **Nicholas Rogers** on *The Golden Book of St. Albans*; **David Lepine** on *The Delamare brass*; **David Carrington** on *The Restoration of St. Amphibalus' shrine*; **John Goodall** on *The Ramridge Chantry, including Duke Humphrey's tomb*; and **Norman James** on *The late medieval monastic community*.

The Society has booked a meeting room at the Cathedral and facilities for 50 members from 9.00a.m.-4.30p.m. More details will follow in due course, but it already looks to be a really important and interesting day.

Monday-Thursday, 1st-4th July 2024

INTERNATIONAL MEDIEVAL CONGRESS, LEEDS: appeal for help

This is the largest academic conference of its kind in Europe. The 2024 programme can be viewed at: <https://www.imc.leeds.ac.uk/imc-2024/imc-2024-programme>.

The M.B.S. will be attending the Historical and Archaeological Societies Fair in the University Union Foyer on Thursday, 4th July. It is a great opportunity to raise the Society's profile. If you fancy a day out helping then please contact John Lee at jsl500@york.ac.uk by 15th April.

Notices and news

Jonathan Ali Essay Prize – call for entries

An annual prize of £350 has been instituted by the Society in memory of Jonathan Ali (1969-2019), a distinguished journalist who was a member of the Society and cared greatly about it.

It is offered to the author or authors of the best piece of work on brasses or incised slabs published in a book, journal or online publication over the past three years. Essays on wider topics, but dealing principally with brasses and incised slabs will also be considered. The winner will be invited to submit a possible article to the Society's *Transactions*.

The submissions will be judged by a panel of three judges applying the criteria of originality, significance, rigour and readability. The approximate length of submissions should be in the range of 6,000 to 15,000 words. Books will not be considered. Applications are welcome from individuals on their own behalf or on behalf of others, and from representatives of organisations. The judges themselves may make nominations. The closing date for the first round of submissions will be 31st March 2024.

For further information, see the Society's website: www.mbs-brasses.co.uk/publications-resources/jonathan-ali-essay-prize. Submissions are to be sent to ali-prize@mbs-brasses.co.uk.

Allan Barton videos

Members may enjoy the series of videos on the internet site YouTube by Allan Barton, an enthusiastic antiquary. There is a great deal about the monarchy, the Coronation and the tombs at Windsor. There are also some charming church tours. These include Buslingthorpe in Lincolnshire, and Oxborough and Salle in Norfolk. The tour of the C.C.T. church at Hales in Norfolk is especially delightful, and very atmospheric, with slow camera work on a lovely sunny day. Another gem is the visit to the Elizabethan armoury above the porch at Mendlesham in Suffolk, not normally accessible.

The Exhumation of Sir Robert: A Story for Christmas was his ghost story for Christmas 2023, and features a monumental brass at Theddlethorpe,

Lincolnshire (M.S.I). It tells of a dispute between two families in Theddlethorpe, the Salters and the de Hayntons. John Salter, a self-made aggressive bully, held lands next to the de Hayntons, led by kind and generous Sir Robert de Haynton, a veteran of Agincourt. Sir Robert died in February 1424, and John Salter then started encroaching on the de Haynton lands, taking advantage of Sir Robert's widow. And when he himself lay on his deathbed a few months later, in October 1424, he instructed his son William to bury him in the de Haynton chantry chapel in Theddlethorpe church.

The parish priest knew nothing of this and buried Salter in the south porch, whereupon William Salter the son bribed the sexton to accompany him to the church at dead of night. With light from lanterns, they lifted Sir Robert's tomb slab with its brass memorial, disinterred him, and with a great deal of effort swapped the two bodies over. Sir Robert's brass now covered John Salter. However both the sexton and William were plagued with guilt. William in particular kept hearing sounds of digging and dragging as he lay in bed at night, and saw the ghost of a man in armour standing above Robert's brass during Sunday Mass. They confessed, and were ordered by Lincoln Consistory Court to restore both graves to their former state.

What are we to make of this? The details may need more work. The images of the 'Consistory Court' pages are probably from stock and seem to be from a Bishop's Register, not a court book (and feature a different bishop, George, not Philip); the brass (M.S.I) certainly shows a man in armour but appears to be for Robert Hayton, esquire, not for Sir Robert de Haynton, knight; and the inscription says that Robert died in 'February 1424' which by the modern calendar is February 1425, i.e. after the death of John Salter! But it's a good story, well told, and beautifully illustrated with entertaining stock images from manuscripts, including a domestic cat sitting by a warm fireplace. And the whole video is only 13 minutes long.

Perhaps Allan Barton and the M.B.S. can work together to promote brasses?

The Flemish incised slab at Gressenhall, Norfolk, revealed

Indigenous workshops dominated the market for large and prestigious monumental brasses in early-14th-century England. In contrast, many of the finest incised and inlaid slabs were produced by the Tournai *tombiers*, examples being most common on the eastern coastal fringes of England. The disruption in the London brass-engraving industry caused by the Black Death provided the Tournai workshops with a renewed opportunity to penetrate the English market. The slab at Gressenhall, Norfolk, to a civilian and his wife is one such import, albeit a comparatively modest one.

Greenhill wrote a brief article on it in 1965.¹ This provides a detailed description of the slab along with a discussion of how it might have been transported to Gressenhall which, unlike most imported Flemish slabs, is located inland, 24 miles from the major Hanseatic port of Bishop's Lynn (now King's Lynn) and 42 miles from the other Hanseatic port at Yarmouth. However no mention is made of the patron, or why such a monument is in such an unlikely place.

The slab measures 2515 x 1270 mm, and is located on the floor of the south transept under a moveable pew but with one side hidden under a heavy wooden platform. Greenhill first visited the church in 1948, but could not move the wooden platform so could only view and rub the wife's figure. In 1963 he revisited the church with Rev. J.F. Williams.² On this occasion he had the support of the Rural Dean, Canon Noel Boston, F.S.A. of East Dereham.³ The wooden platform was taken up and Greenhill took a rubbing of the rest of the slab. Later the top boards were replaced by perspex to enable the slab to be viewed, albeit dimly; Jon Bayliss photographed it in this state in 2011. In the following year this was replaced by a wooden board, screwed down firmly.

There are two antiquarian illustrations of the slab. The first, dated 1741/2, is in the collection of the Norfolk antiquary Thomas Martin (Fig.1).⁴ The text reads, 'On a large Stone lying under the North chancell wall are these figures carv'd upon the Stone; only their Heads, Hands, Inscription & arms were of brass.' This is inaccurate in believing that all the

lost inlays were of brass. However it records the slab under the north chancel wall, not where it is now. The second illustration is a slightly inaccurate line drawing by C.J.W. Winter (Fig.2).⁵

In late 2021 Frank Wheaton gained permission to remove the wooden structure to reveal the slab below. After a preliminary visit, he returned in May 2022 with Derrick Chivers to make a more detailed record than Greenhill's. The entire covering structure was temporarily removed to allow rubbing and photography (Figs.3 and 4). Subsequently, Cameron Newham was allowed to make a high-quality photograph for this publication (Fig.5). Since then the wooden framework has been replaced and the slab re-covered. Visitors to the church will not see the slab or even guess that it is there. The church authorities plan to keep it permanently covered. This will however protect it for posterity.

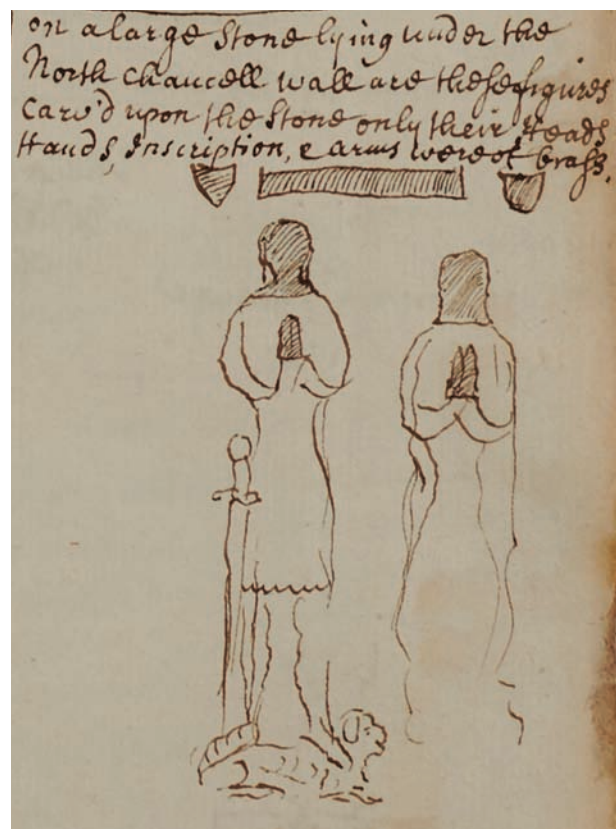


Fig.1. Sketch dated 1741/2 of the Flemish slab at Gressenhall, Norfolk.

Thomas Martin's Collection, Norfolk Record Office, Rye MS.17, II, f.172r

(photo: © Theresa Palfrey, N.R.O.)

The edges of the slab are either obscured by cement or butt hard against the wooden housing, and we do not know whether there was a marginal inscription. But neither of the antiquarian drawings show any additional components, so it is likely that what we see now is all that there ever was. The main features are a man in civil dress and his wife. He wears a tight-fitting supertunic probably reaching below the knees (although here the slab is badly damaged) and with unusually long tippets. At his waist is a belt with a purse and dagger. He has a hood around his shoulders, and fashionable pointed boots. Close comparators indicate a date in the 1350s or very early 1360s.⁶ The woman is shown in a full-length supertunic, also with very long tippets; the slightly hip-shot stance probably narrows this date range down to c.1350-60.



Fig.2. Drawing of the Flemish slab at Gressenhall by C.J.W. Winter, c.1880. (photo: © Frank Wheaton)

Most of the composition is incised but both sets of heads and hands and probably the shields beside the inscription were originally inlaid with material of a different colour. The remaining crumbs of the inlay of the heads and hands were analysed for Greenhill by Keith Cameron and found to be a mixture of calcite and quartz.⁷ This could have been a residue of marble.

Greenhill thought that the inscription above the figures was also inlaid with marble or similar material. However it has a smoother base, and faint scars of at least three round plugs which would have held rivets. This suggests that it originally held a brass plate. This is unparalleled on Flemish work. The possibility that this brass plate was a later addition to *appropriate* the monument is probably ruled out by the lack of evidence for any other inscription. Maybe the slab was ordered from Tournai with the intention of adding an inscription sourced in England. It is doubtful that the lost plate was made in Norfolk, although there is evidence for locally-made cross slabs.⁸ The patron perhaps went to one of the London workshops. The London A workshop was responsible for the fillet inscription to William and Margery Bateman, c.1345, in the Norfolk Museums Service (from Heigham, St. Bartholomew); while London B inscriptions are at Holme Hale, to Esmonde de Illeye, d.1349, his wife and children, probably engraved in the late 1350s, and at Ludham, to Thomas de Honyngg, d.1351, rector of Potter Heigham, which may have been made later in the 1350s. One- or two-line inscription plates from the London workshops with dates up to 1360 are found as far afield as Dorset, Kent and Northamptonshire.

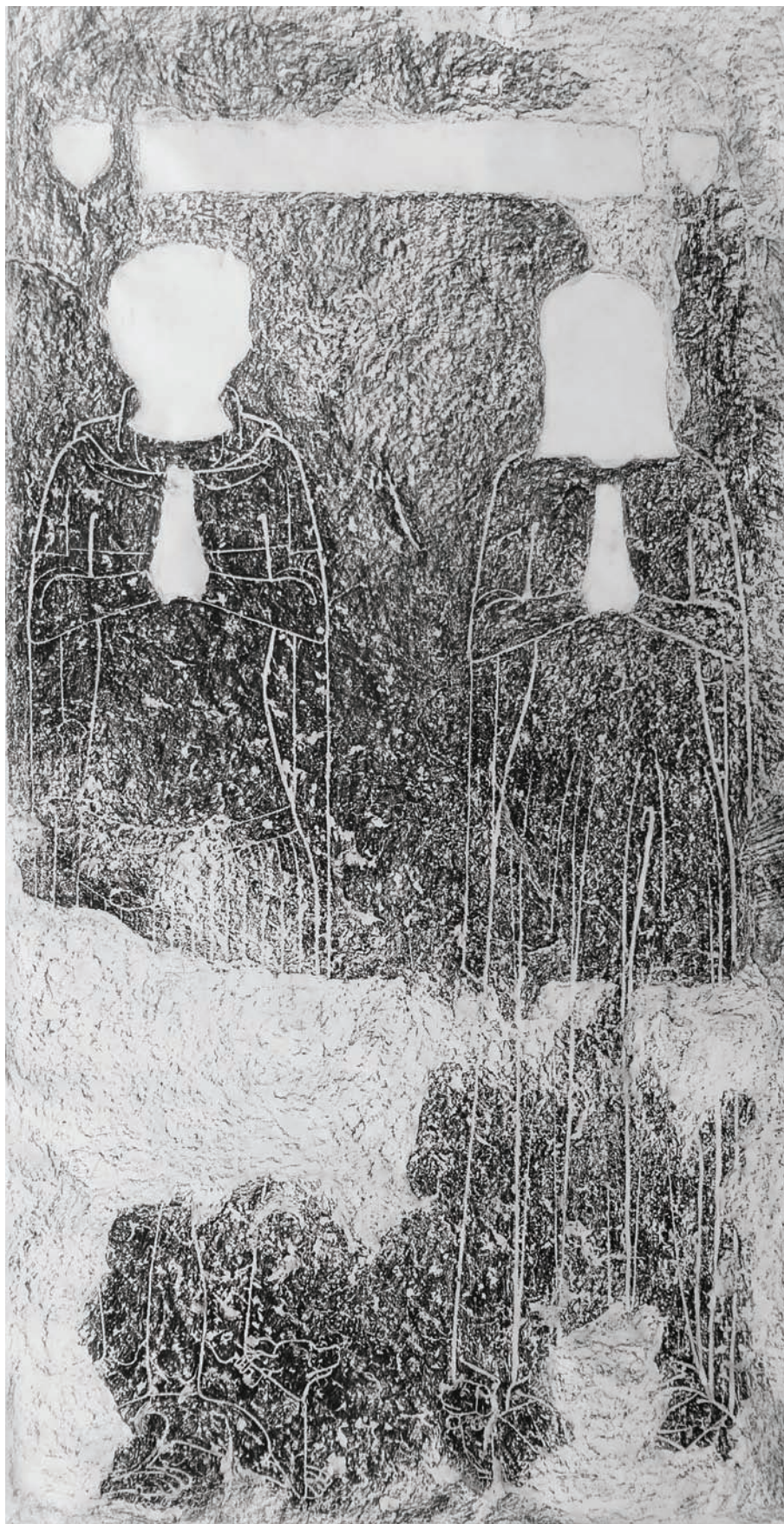
Greenhill could not identify the person commemorated, but he may have been a merchant trading via the Hanse out of Lynn or less likely Lowestoft, and with links to the Tournai workshops, who opted for burial in his native parish. The Flemish brass at Topcliffe, Yorkshire, to Thomas de Topcliffe, d.1362, and his wife Mabel, d.1391 provides an exemplar. Nothing is known of him, but his toponymic surname indicates that his home parish was Topcliffe. The dress and the Flemish origin of his brass indicate that he was a merchant, presumably working from the Hanseatic town of Hull, some 80 miles from Topcliffe.

The Gressenhall slab has little elaboration such as architecture, whereas almost all the extensive series of imported mercantile slabs at Boston, Lincolnshire, demonstrate more design flair. One unusual feature for a mercantile man is the shields either side of the inscription. These normally point to armigerous status, although in this case they may not have been heraldic. The comparator at Wyberton, Lincolnshire, to Adam de Franton, d.1325, has four shields with merchant's marks. It is even possible that arms *and* merchant's marks were depicted, as on the brasses of Adam de Walsokne, d.1349, and Robert Braunche, d.1364 at King's Lynn. If the Gressenhall shields held heraldry, the person commemorated came from a high-status family.

The Church of the Assumption is about a mile outside the village, and has been Gressenhall's parish church since at least 1344, when the first identifiable rector, John de Rothing was installed.⁹ Blomefield says that the Ferrour family possessed Hereford manor in the parish in the late 15th century.¹⁰ The rest of the parish was in the possession of the Foliots, who bore *Gules a bend argent*, and subsequently by the mid 14th century by the Hastings family, who bore *Or a maunch gules*. The chapel in the north transept is called Ferrour's chantry or chapel, while that in which the slab is currently located is known as the Hastings chapel. This might indicate that the man commemorated by the slab was a Hastings.



Fig.3. Dismantling the woodwork at Gressenhall to enable full recording of the Flemish slab, May 2022.
(photo: © Frank Wheaton)



*Fig. 4. Rubbing of the entire Flemish slab at Gressenhall, Norfolk.
(rubbing: © Derrick Chivers)*



*Fig.5. Image of the Flemish slab using photogrammetry at Gressenhall, Norfolk.
(photo: © Cameron Newham)*

However the slab is not in its original position. In 1844 it lay in the chancel north of the communion table and partially covered by the rails, a compatible position to that recorded by Martin in 1741/2.¹¹ The south chapel did formerly contain a brass for a Hastings, for John Hastings, d.1471 and his wife Anne. First recorded by the anonymous Chorographer of Norfolk in c.1605,¹² Blomefield subsequently recorded it in the chapel pavement: '*a large marble stone, disrobed of its effigies, brass shields and ornaments; on a brass plate remaining* [he here quotes the inscription]'.¹³ However this slab had gone from the chapel by 1844.¹⁴ Sometime later, most likely at the 1880 restoration, the Flemish slab replaced it. Presumably the damage which it now bears occurred during its removal from the chancel.

Who was commemorated by the Flemish slab, which originally took pride of place in the chancel? It would surely be for a member of the dominant family in Gressenhall in the 1350s. As noted earlier the Foliots were the principal landowners. Sir Richard Foliot, who died without issue in 1325, left as co-heirs his two sisters. They inherited Norfolk lands in Elsing, Weasenham and Gressenhall. The elder sister was Margaret, wife of Sir John de Camoys. The slab surely cannot have been their monument; a man of his high status would not have been shown in civil dress. The younger sister, Margery, then aged 16½, in 1330 or shortly before married Sir Hugh de Hastings, the son of Sir John de Hastings, Lord Abergavenny, by Isabel, daughter of Hugh le Despenser, earl of Winchester.¹⁵ On Margery's marriage, her sister Margaret and Sir John de Camoys surrendered their interest in the Norfolk lands to Margery and Hugh; this included Elsing and Gressenhall. The pair did not live in Gressenhall, instead settling down at Elsing. Sir Hugh, d.1347, is well known for his magnificent brass there.

The Gressenhall slab likely commemorates a kinsman of Sir Hugh. He was heir to his elder brother Thomas, d.1331, and was succeeded by his son Sir Hugh II, d.1369. There was a younger brother, John, but he did not die until 1393. None of these death dates corresponds with the stylistic date of the Gressenhall slab. No Hastings are known who died in the 1350s or 60s, but the family pedigree is notoriously

unreliable and incomplete. It seems most likely that the Flemish slab commemorates a member of the Hastings family, although his name and relationship to Sir Hugh cannot be determined.

Many people have contributed to this reassessment, most particularly Derrick Chivers, Cameron Newham and Frank Wheaton. The support in the parish of Canon Heather Butcher and Sally Cross was invaluable. Simon Cotton, Theresa Palfrey and Martin Stuchfield have also helped, and Paul Cockerham provided helpful comments on an earlier draft of this paper.

Sally Badham

- 1 E.A. Greenhill, 'An Incised Slab at Gressenhall', *Norfolk Archaeology*, XXXIII, pt.4 (1965), pp.423-6.
- 2 The date is given in his manuscript notes, currently in the custody of Paul Cockerham.
- 3 Noel Boston was one of the Church of England's great 'characters', with a steam railway in his vicarage garden at East Dereham, and a collection of antique fully-functioning firearms in the house. He also wrote ghost stories, one of them based upon an early-16th-century brass inscription in his collection. I hope to tell members more about both the ghost story and the inscription in a future *Bulletin*. – Editor.
- 4 Norfolk Record Office, Rye MS. 17, II, ff.172-4.
- 5 C.J.W. Winter, *A Selection of Illustrations of Norfolk and Norwich Antiquities* (1888). This was issued in parts and many surviving copies, including that in the Library of the Society of Antiquaries of London, lack the relevant part. A copy owned by Frank Wheaton however includes it.
- 6 M. Scott, *A Visual History of Costume: The Fourteenth & Fifteenth Centuries* (London, 1986), pp.35-7.
- 7 Currently placed loose inside these indents of heads and hands are lino-cuts with convincing versions of the former components. These are surely by Malcolm Norris. A talented amateur artist and an authority on brasses and incised slabs, he is known to have experimented with lino-cuts while a student at Oxford.
- 8 J. Blair, 'English Monumental Brasses before the Black Death: Types, Patterns and Workshops', in *The Earliest English Brasses*, ed. J. Coales (London, 1987), pp.133-75.
- 9 The dedication of Gressenhall church is given in two wills: 1441 John Bokelyn (Norwich Consistory Court Doke 159), '*sepeliend' in cancella ecclesie assumptonis beate marie de Gressenhalle*', and 1518 John Schwe (NCC Gloys 250), his body to be buried in '*ye church of our Lady of the assumption in Gressenhale*'. I thank Simon Cotton for these references.
- 10 F. Blomefield, 'Launditch Hundred: Gressenhale', in *An Essay Towards a Topographical History of the County of Norfolk*, IX (London, 1808), pp.510-20 [British History Online, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/topographical-hist-norfolk/vol9/pp510-520>, accessed 29th May 2022].
- 11 G.A. Carthew, *The Hundred of Launditch and Deanery of Brisley in the county of Norfolk: evidences and topographical notes from public records, heralds' visitations, wills, court rolls, old charters, parish registers, town books, and other private sources: digested and arranged as materials for parochial, manorial, and family history*, 3 vols (Norwich, 1877-79), III, pp.449-50.
- 12 C.M. Hood, *The Chorography of Norfolk* (Norwich, 1938), pp.174-5.
- 13 See also Norfolk Record Office, Rye MS. 17, II, f.173v.
- 14 The 1471 indent, showing a man in armour and his wife standing on a bracket under a canopy with saints in the sides, is now near the entrance to the church, filled with cement.
- 15 Blomefield, *op. cit.*

The Van Thielt slab at St. Olave, Hart Street, London

In 1987 our member Jerome Bertram described and drew a broken Flemish incised slab in the churchyard of the City of London church of St. Olave, Hart Street (*M.B.S. Trans.*, XIV (1987), pp.146-7). Jerome's drawing is reproduced here (Fig.1). This slab commemorated Augustine van Thielt, d.1515, and his wife and daughters, with various dates of death up to 1548. The slab is black limestone, and measures 1700 x 950 mm. The inscription is oddly concentric, starting on the outside edges of the slab and continuing through two inner rectangles of additional lettering. In the middle is van Thielt's merchant's mark.

Jerome Bertram noticed that the inscription had been filled in by different craftsmen at more than one time, as different members of the family died and their names were added. He also said that 'the slab is not mentioned in any sources, and it is possible that it comes from another church'. How right he was! It has recently become clear that the entire slab is palimpsest, and that the van Thielt inscription is the reverse, or former, side from a continental church. The later side bears one single large shield, *Party per bend*, for Capponi, and commemorates Piero Capponi, a Florentine merchant and banker, who died of the plague in St. Olave's parish in 1582.

Until World War II the obverse of the slab was part of Capponi's monument in St. Olave's, being the floor slab with his coat of arms which marked his grave and which accompanied his very fine kneeling stone effigy in an aedicule on the adjoining wall. This effigy is still to be seen in the church. One antiquary who noticed the slab was the artist Thomas Fisher, who drew it c.1800-10. His sketch is now in London Metropolitan Archives (London Picture Archive website, record 5326). St. Olave's church was bombed in the War, and though Capponi's effigy was rescued and restored, the slab was removed in many pieces and dumped in the churchyard, the wrong way up, so that only the van Thielt side was visible.

With the assistance of our member Derrick Chivers, the parish is currently raising funds to

conserve the Capponi slab and fix it on the wall near Capponi's effigy, next to a plaster cast facsimile of the van Thielt reverse. The current state of the slab, with the Capponi shield, can be seen in Fig.2. This project has been quietly progressing for many years, and is a welcome example of a parish which values its monuments. Derrick Chivers should be congratulated for helping to push things forward over such a long period.

The M.B.S. Council at its meeting in February 2024 granted £1,000 from the Conservation Fund towards the project, an unusually large sum which reflected the importance of the slab and the Society's interest in incised slabs as well as brasses. It also recognised the significant effort by the parish. Further grants have been made by the Francis Coales Foundation and others. The church is now most of the way to raising the funds needed. It hopes to start work in mid 2024, and to complete the project by the end of the year.

The church has sent the following guidance in case any members wish to support this project on an individual basis. This guidance is very useful as the current revision and migration of the church website to a new platform means that it does not yet make any mention of the project:

'The cost of the work will be £26,000. So far, nearly 70% of this figure has been pledged by generous donors, but we still have some way to go. We welcome individual donations. These can be made in two ways:

1. Online at <https://saintolave.com/giving>. Our website is currently being updated, so to make sure donations are correctly attributed to this project, it would be most helpful if the donor could also email admin@saintolave.com.

2. By cheque, made payable to St. Olave Hart Street P.C.C. (please write 'Capponi' on the reverse) and sent to: Administrator, St. Olave's Church, 8 Hart Street, London EC3R 7NB.'

Stephen Freeth



*Fig.2. The Capponi slab in its current broken state.
(photo: © St. Olave, Hart Street parish)*



Fig 1. John Webbe (d.1570/1) and wife Anne, Salisbury, St. Thomas, Wiltshire (M.S.I.)
 (photo: © Maria Anna Rogers)

A tangle of Webbes

A recent holiday in Salisbury provided the opportunity to view the brass of my wife's 10 x great-granduncle John Webbe (d.1571) in St. Thomas's, Salisbury (Fig.1). The brass, a product of the Lytcott workshop, seems straightforward. It depicts John, in a gown, and his wife Anne, with two groups of children (three boys and three girls) below them, between four shields (one now missing), and with a marginal inscription in English, parts of which are lost.¹ However further investigation of the Webbe family reveals a more complicated situation.

The earliest known member of the family is John Webbe's grandfather William. In his will, made on 13th July 1523 and proved on 14th August the same year, he styles himself 'William Kellowe or William Webbe of the Citie of new Sarum mercer or merchaunt'.² He reveals that he was christened in the church of St. Laurence, Shaftesbury. It has been suggested that he was an illegitimate member of the Keilway family of Dorset.³ His alias, which became the family surname, clearly derived from his involvement in the cloth trade, which made him one of the wealthiest citizens of Salisbury. He also dealt in other goods; the Southampton brokage books show that in 1491/2 he was importing steel, fruit and tennis balls.⁴ In 1487 he became one of the Twenty-Four, the oligarchy which governed Salisbury and elected its Members of Parliament. He was M.P. in 1504 and 1510 and served four times as mayor. He contributed to the rebuilding of St. Thomas's church, including a bequest of £6 13s. 4d., for which he asked his name to be recorded in the 'siluer boke'. What appears to be his merchant mark occurs on a capital.⁵ His will reveals that he was buried at the east end of the nave under what was almost certainly a brass:

And my wrechid body to be buried within the parishe churche of saint Thomas Bisshop and martir vnder a stone of marbill which I late bought where vnder lyeth Johane Edithe and Johane my wyves before the Crucifix.

William's son and heir William Webbe II was, like his father, active in civic and political service. He became one of the Twenty-Four in 1523, served as mayor in 1533-4 and 1553-4, and was returned

as an M.P. for Salisbury in 1529 and 1536.⁶ He was active in overseas trade, acting as an assistant at the Merchant Adventurers' Synxon (St. John's) mart in the Netherlands in 1523. In 1540 he was employing a factor at the port of San Lucar near Seville. He married Catherine, daughter and heiress of John Abarough, another prominent Salisbury merchant, by whom he had two sons, John and William, and six daughters. He invested in land, purchasing property in Cornwall, Hampshire and Wiltshire. His most significant acquisition was the manor of Odstock, south of Salisbury, which was to become the main residence of the Webbe family.

As Claire Cross has noted, Salisbury was markedly resistant to religious change in the 16th century, doing the bare minimum to comply with religious legislation.⁷ It comes as something of a shock to see in the churchwardens' accounts of St. Thomas's for 1547-8 a record of the despoliation of brasses in the church:

For brasse which was vpon graves & tombes of brasse and a laver of brasse altogethers weynge ij C at xviijs the hundred S^{ma} xxxvijs.⁸

William Webbe II was one of the commissioners for the sale of church goods in the reign of Edward VI, but his will, made on 22nd January 1553/4, at the beginning of Queen Mary's reign, reveals that he had used his position to preserve church property. He bequeathed to St. Thomas's 'all suche vestementes as I lately bought by vertue of a Commission sent downe for the sale of the same by the late king Edwarde the sixte'. He made arrangements for doles at his burial, his month's mind and his year's mind, left 20 shillings a year to be paid annually for twenty years towards the maintenance of the Morrow Mass and the Jesus Mass, and another 20 shillings for twenty years for the maintenance of clerks and singing men. He asked to be buried 'as nighe to the place where my Father lieth as may be', but left no instructions as to what form his monument should take.

John Webbe, the man commemorated by the brass, served as M.P. for Salisbury in 1559, together with his younger brother William Webbe III,

and was mayor in 1560-1, but was less involved in civic life than his father and grandfather.⁹ After a first, short-lived marriage to a daughter of one Towerson,¹⁰ John had married Anne, daughter of Nicholas Wilford (or Wylford), a London merchant taylor.¹¹ Towards the end of his life John Webbe constructed a house at Odstock. The surviving wing incorporates a stone with the Webbe coat of arms, the initials of John and his wife Anne and the date 1567.¹² Of the same date is a remarkable survival, a domestic clock made for John Webbe by the otherwise unknown clockmaker James Porrvis.¹³ John was relatively young, aged about forty, when he made his will on 25th January 1570/1. All his children were under full age. John, the eldest son, was then aged fourteen.

John Webbe asked to be buried either where his father was interred or in the choir of St. Thomas's. He then gave instructions for the construction of 'one good and substanciall vaulte' of brick in his burial place, eight foot long, six foot wide and

eight foot deep. This is followed by detailed but slightly obscure directions regarding the making of his monument:

And after my bodie buried, my will and mynde ys, that my saied Executour [his wife Anne] shall cause a marble stone which I bought of one Thomas white mason nowe being vnder the gate called st Annes gate of Salisburie aforesaied to be laied vpon the sayed vaulte, And that my saied wife shall cause the Latten or brasse which is fixed vpon the stone which lieth vpon the graue of my sayed father and of my grandfather to be sett & fixed vpon the stone which I haue devised as aforesaied to be laied vpon the sayed vaulte and that there shalbe mencion made vpon the saied stone in Copper or latten faier written aswell of the daye and yere of the dethe or decease of my saied late father as also of the daye and yere of the dethe or decease of me the saied John Webbe by a good and perfecte workeman.

Thomas White, the Salisbury mason who had supplied the Purbeck marble slab for the brass, then lying under St. Anne's Gate (Fig.2), is



Fig.2. St. Anne's Gate, Salisbury.
(photo: © Edmund Rogers)

recorded in an undated document carrying out repairs in St. Edmund's, Salisbury.¹⁴ The proposed incorporation of the brasses from the tombs of his father and grandfather into John's own monument is curious and was not in the end carried out. The brass supplied by the Lytcott workshop in London is a notable palimpsest. Kite reports that an inscription 'of much bolder character' was observed on the reverse of a portion of the border fillet that had come loose and provides a tantalising illustration of a single letter in a display *textura* script.¹⁵ The entire brass was conserved in 1982 when the earlier reused work was recorded (Fig.3).¹⁶ One of the shields, Webbe impaling Abarough, remembers the marriage of John's father, William Webbe II (Fig.4).

Claire Cross states that John 'opted for a decisively protestant preamble' for his will.¹⁷ In fact, the credal statement is one that could be made by both Catholics and Protestants. He provided for twenty poor men and twenty poor women attending his burial to have gowns and cassocks of Bristol frieze. A weekly dole of bread was to be given to the prisoners in Salisbury's two gaols for a year after his decease. For five years after his death the churchwardens of St. Thomas's were to distribute a two-shilling dole of bread each Sunday while standing in the nave near the burial place of his father. Such commemorative doles were the nearest Elizabethan testators could come to publicly requesting prayers for the deceased. A large number of relatives and friends were assigned

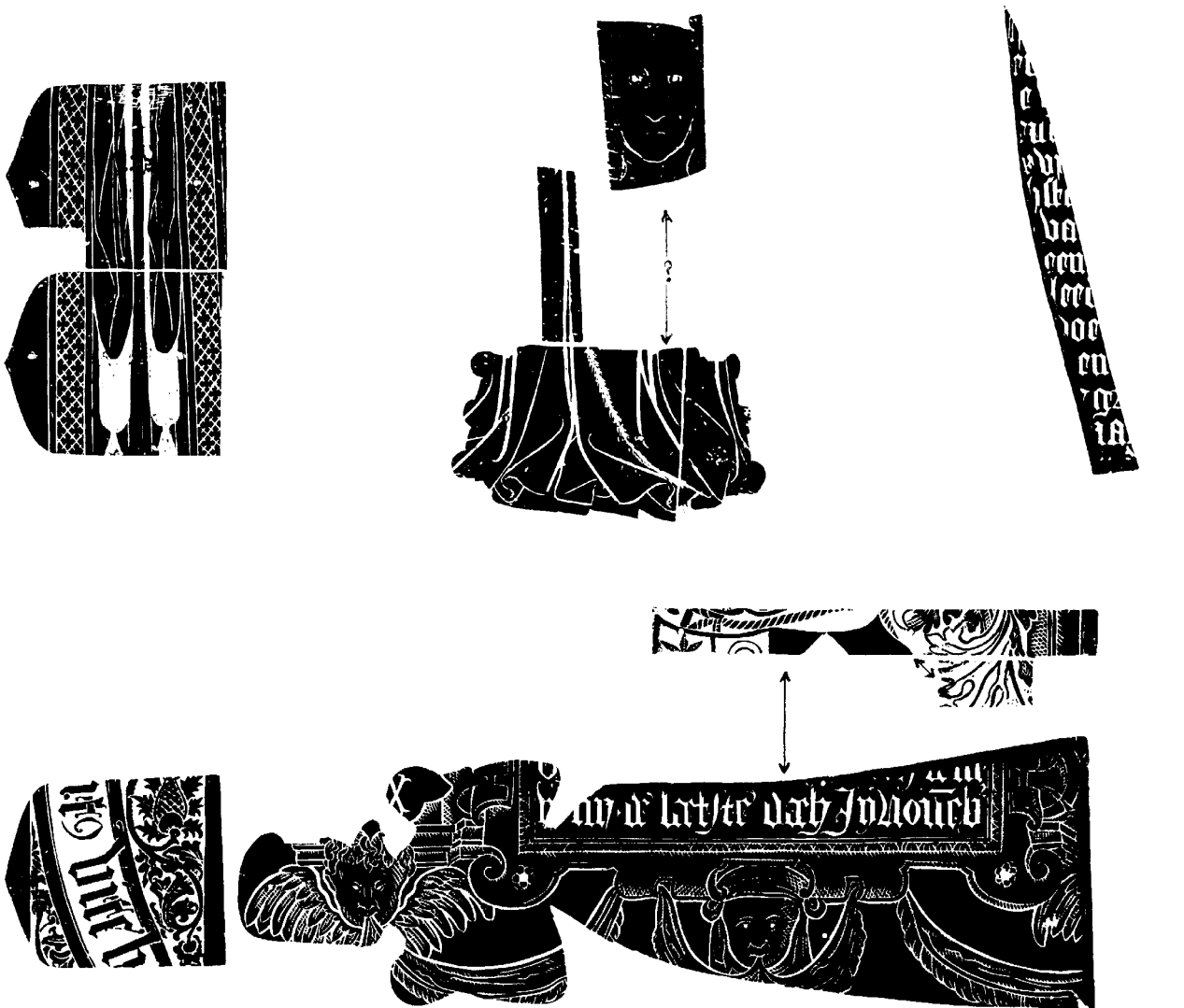


Fig.3. The palimpsest reverse of the Webbe brass discovered in 1982, Salisbury, St. Thomas, Wiltshire (M.S.I).
(rubbing: © William Lack)



Fig 4. Shield, Webbe impaling Abarough, from the brass commemorating John Webbe (d.1570/1) and wife Anne, Salisbury, St. Thomas, Wiltshire (M.S.I). (photo: © Maria Anna Rogers)

black cloth for mourning, the length and price of which was specified. In a codicil of 28th January, made like the will in London, he left 20 shillings to Christ's Hospital. From his will it is difficult to detect John Webbe's religious position at the time of his death. A hint as to his sympathies may be the substitution of a cross for the number XII on the Porrvis clock, which Robey and Gillibrand link to the recitation of the Angelus at noon.¹⁸

Soon after John Webbe's death on 1st February 1570/1 his widow remarried, in St. George, Botolph Lane, London (her father's parish) on 3rd December 1571.¹⁹ Her new husband was Gabriel White, esquire, of North Charford, Hampshire, one of the many sons of Sir Thomas White of South Warnborough, Hampshire (d.1566). He was a brother-in-law of John White, the last Catholic bishop of Winchester.²⁰ When she came to write her will on 9th July 1602 she began with a clear statement of faith:

...beseechinge Jesus Christe my sauour through the merittes of his passion soe to strengthen me and in all my agonies and Temptacions of deathe as I may not onely stedfastly persevere and abide in the saide beleefe but allsoe that I may haue through him continually perfect faith hope and Charitye.

She willed to be buried at Odstock but had not forgotten St. Thomas's, Salisbury, leaving 20 shillings to the church. In an echo of one of her first husband's bequests she also requested a two-shilling dole of bread to the poor in the nave each Sunday for two years after her death.²¹ She was still alive in 1613 and her will was not proved until 13th February 1614/5.²²

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- 1 For a description, with blazon of the shields and transcription of the inscription, see E. Kite, *The Monumental Brasses of Wiltshire* (London, 1860), pp.57-9, pl.XXII.
- 2 TNA: PRO, PROB 11/21/199.
- 3 <https://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1509-1558/member/webbe-william-1466-1523> [accessed 30th January 2024].
- 4 J. Hare, 'Some Salisbury Merchants in the Reign of Henry VII', *Sarum Chronicle*, XX (2020), p.57.
- 5 Hare, 'Some Salisbury Merchants', pl. on p.61.
- 6 <https://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1509-1558/member/webbe-william-ii-1499-1554> [accessed 30th January 2024].
- 7 C. Cross, 'From Medieval Catholic Piety to Civil War Protestantism: the Impact of the Reformation in Two Salisbury Parishes', *Sarum Chronicle*, XIII (2013), pp.99-115.
- 8 *Churchwardens' Accounts of S. Edmund & S. Thomas, Sarum 1443-1702*, ed. H.J.F. Swayne (Salisbury, 1896), p.275.
- 9 <https://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1558-1603/member/webbe-john-1532-71> [accessed 30th January 2024].
- 10 Probably a sister of the London skinner and Guinea trader William Towerson (d.1584), who is mentioned in John Webbe's will.
- 11 On Nicholas Wilford, see <https://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1509-1558/member/wilford-nicholas-1495-1551> [accessed 30th January 2024].
- 12 H. Wright, *The Webbs of Odstock 1466-1876* (Stratton-on-the-Fosse, 2019), pl.3.
- 13 J. Robey and L. Gillibrand, 'The Porrvis clock of 1567: the earliest surviving domestic clock made in England', *Antiquarian Horology*, XXXIV, no.4 (2013), pp.503-18.
- 14 *Churchwardens' Accounts*, ed. Swayne, p.130.
- 15 Kite, *Wiltshire*, p.58.
- 16 *M.B.S. Trans.*, XIII, pt.5 (1984), pp.439-40; and '2nd Issue of Addenda to Palimpsests', p.x and pls.190-1 (216L1-11), published with *M.B.S. Bulletin*, 38 (February 1985). The single letter illustrated by Kite was on the reverse of the upper sinister shield, not the marginal inscription.
- 17 Cross, 'From Medieval Catholic Piety to Civil War Protestantism', p.106.
- 18 Robey and Gillibrand, 'Porrvis clock', p.515.
- 19 LMA, P69/GEO/A/001/MS04791.
- 20 <https://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1558-1603/member/white-sir-thomas-1507-66> [accessed 30th January 2024].
- 21 TNA: PRO, PROB 11/125/167. An identical declaration of faith is in the will of Gabriel White (d.1593), made in 1591 (TNA: PRO, PROB 11/83/145).
- 22 Wright, *The Webbs of Odstock*, p.56.

In memoriam: Richard James Busby (1938-2023)

Our Honorary Member, Richard Busby, passed away peacefully in The Freeman Hospital, Newcastle on 6th October 2023, aged 85. Richard will be especially remembered for compiling the *Notes on Books and Articles* section of the *Bulletin* from issue 4 (December 1973) to issue 149 (February 2022), a remarkable contribution spanning almost half a century.

Richard grew up in Hertfordshire and was always very grateful to his parents and family for encouraging him in all his interests. Following his formal education, he qualified as an Associate of the Library Association and spent his entire career in the service of Hertfordshire Library Service.

Richard was proud of the fact that in 1954 the brass commemorating John Peryent, and wife Joan, 1415, at Digswell, Hertfordshire (LSW.I) was the first that he rubbed. He married his first wife Janet Kay Williamson (1939-2004) in Digswell church in 1961, the weekend before substantial alterations took place that completely transformed the medieval building.

Richard first came to notice when he continued the series *Sidelights on Brasses in Hertfordshire Churches* that had been commenced in 1930 by Herbert Caleb Andrews (1874-1947) in the *Transactions* of the East Herts. Archaeological Society. Running in almost consecutive volumes from 1930 until 1952-4, the unfinished series ended at Eastwick. Richard continued the series (not only describing lost brasses or indents but also including illustrations together with antiquarian drawings where relevant) for Essendon (1955-7), Flamstead (1958-61), Furneaux Pelham (1968) and Great Gaddesden (1970), the latter two places appearing in *Hertfordshire Archaeology*.

Richard joined the Society in 1967 and two years later published *A Beginner's Guide to Brass Rubbing* at the height of the interest in brasses and brass rubbing. The book was hugely successful as a practical guide for the beginner. No other book provided essential details on the technique of brass rubbing such as the materials required, how to obtain permission, and cataloguing and indexing a collection. Many young members of my vintage took advantage of the appendix listing



Fig.1. Richard Busby rubbing the brass commemorating John Peryent, 1442, at Digswell, Hertfordshire (LSW.II).
(photo: © S.R. Oldland)

the ‘best brasses in the British Isles’ and attempted to visit every church listed. The book caused controversy for its section on producing aluminium foil rubbings.

A Companion Guide to Brasses and Brass Rubbing appeared in 1973. Richard in his introduction lamented the recent popularity of the craze of brass rubbing, highlighting ‘more and more bans on rubbing, both in the United Kingdom, and more recently, on the continent’. However he made it clear that his first book ‘set down some basic standards and methods to help those new to the subject to learn the techniques of making good rubbings for enjoyment’. His *Companion Guide* was aimed at those who had benefitted. The appendices are particularly useful, especially the ground-breaking ‘Who was Who’ that remains a constant source of reference. The other major innovation was the inclusion of text and illustrations relating to brasses from the 18th and 19th centuries that were mistakenly considered an irrelevance at the time.

Richard was involved from 1970 in the Society’s full-scale revision of the standard *List of Monumental Brasses in the British Isles* by Mill Stephenson that had been published in 1926 with a posthumous appendix in 1938. He served as Hon. Local Secretary for Hertfordshire until

he moved to Hexham, Northumberland in 2008 with his second wife Wendy. It is a matter of profound regret that the Hertfordshire *County Series* volume was not dedicated to him. This was an unforgivable oversight and accordingly I wrote to him in the most apologetic terms immediately the volume was published in 2009. Richard’s response was typically gracious.

Richard served on the Executive Council from 1972-5 and 2005-8. He was responsible for compiling *The Monumental Brass Society: A Short History 1887-1987* during the Society’s centenary year. He revised and updated the publication in 2012 when the Society celebrated its 125th birthday. Richard’s scholarship was recognized with his election as a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of London in June 1999 and Honorary Membership of the M.B.S. in 2007.

Happily settled into Northumberland life, he took a considerable interest in the lives of those honoured in the stained glass windows of St. Andrew’s church at Corbridge. Two years of painstaking historical research resulted in the publication of *Stories behind the Glass* in 2015. Appropriately Richard’s funeral took place in the church on 25th October 2023.

Martin Stuchfield



Fig.2. Richard Busby outside Corbridge Church, Northumberland in 2015.
(photo: © Hexham Courant)