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THE BRASS OF ROGER ELMEBRYGGE (1437, M.S.V)
ST MARY'S, BEDDINGTON, SURREY

H. Martin Stuchfield Esq., Hon. Conservation Advisor to the Monumental Brass Society, visited the church on 5 October 2001 and met Rev. L. Selwyn Tillett and Mrs Heather Cosgrove (P.C.C. member). The brass, comprising an armoured effigy, an inscription in eight Latin verses and four shields, lay in a Victorian cement slab mostly covered by choir stalls on the south side of the Chancel (photos 1 and 2). It had been conserved and relaid by Mr Bryan Egan in 1967 ('Repairs', by B.S.H. Egan, *Transactions of the Monumental Brass Society*, vol. XI, p. 122). The effigy and inscription were well secured and bedded but the four shields were loose and vulnerable. All the plates had become seriously corroded. Mr Stuchfield described the condition of the brass in his report of 13 January 2002 and on 23 January 2002 I supplied quotations and specification to either relay the brass or mount it in a Cedar board. It was decided that it should be relaid in a new slab and I was commissioned with the metalwork. The brass was taken up by Mr Stuchfield on 19 September 2003 and delivered to me shortly afterwards.

The brass was described and illustrated by Mill Stephenson in 1912 ('A List of Monumental Brasses in Surrey', *Surrey Archaeological Collections*, XXV, pp. 65-7, reprinted in 1970, pp. 33-5), and has also been illustrated in *The Monumental Brasses of England: a series of engravings on wood*, by Charles Boutell, 1849, *Ancient Armour and Weapons in Europe*, by J. Hewitt, vol. III, 1860, p.445, *Transactions of the Monumental Brass Society*, vol. VI, 1913, p.288, and *A Cyclopaedia of Costume*, by J.R. Planché, vol. I, 1876, p.499. The brass has been categorised as a product of the London workshop known as 'series D' ('Monumental Brasses - A new classification of Military Effigies', by J.P.C. Kent, *British Archaeological Journal*, vol. XII (1949), p. 96).

The brass is shown before conservation in photo 3. The plates were first cleaned by soaking in white spirit after which stubborn dirt and corrosion were carefully removed from the obverses with a scalpel. The reverses were cleaned by scraping and abrasion as necessary.

The original rivet holes had all been countersunk for screws. I machined rivets with 8 to 9 mm diameter tapered heads from 42 mm brass OBA setscrews and then brass nuts and washers were fitted, tightened and locked with resin. The rivet heads were patinated before fitting. I repaired fractures and rejoined plates with soldered brass backing-plates.

The effigy, measuring 1000 x 355 mm overall, is engraved on four plates, the two halves of the helm and the dagger being on separate plates. The main part of the effigy measures 933 x 240 mm with mean thickness 3.3 mm (varying from 2.5 to 3.6 mm), the dexter side of the helm 100 x 174 mm with mean thickness 4.0 mm (varying from 3.8 to 4.1 mm), the sinister side of the helm 246 x 78 mm with mean thickness 2.5 mm (varying from 1.9 to 3.3 mm) and the dagger 125 x 33 mm with mean thickness 4.6 mm (varying from 4.5 to 4.7 mm). After cleaning I repaired a fracture in the waist of the effigy, two in the sword blade and three in the dagger. I fitted twelve rivets to the effigy, one to the dexter part of the helm and two each to the sinister part of the helm and the dagger. The repairs and new rivets can be seen in photo 4.

The inscription is mutilated, with the first words of the opening line and the last of the closing line broken away. It measures 240 x 468 mm with mean thickness 3.9 mm (varying from 3.5 to 4.3 mm). After cleaning I fitted five rivets (photo 4).

The upper sinister shield measures 150 x 120 mm with mean thickness 3.3 mm (varying from 3.2 to 3.6 mm) and the lower dexter shield 3.4 mm (varying from 3.2 to 3.6 mm). The other two shields are made of lead and are mutilated. The upper dexter shield, broken into six pieces, now measures 160 x 125 mm with thickness varying from 2 to 3 mm and the lower sinister shield 155 x 125 mm with thickness varying from 1.5 to 2.5 mm. After cleaning I reinforced the two lead shields with polyester resin and glassfibre and fitted two rivets to each shield. The new rivets and repairs can be seen in photo 4.

A new slab of Portland stone measuring 1525 x 1065 mm and 75 mm thick was procured by Messrs. Kenward and Sons of Greenford. I supplied them with templates from which they cut indents for the plates. The brass was relaid in the slab at Greenford on 16 March 2004. 12 mm diameter holes were drilled 50 mm deep in the slab for the new rivets and undercut. After a satisfactory dry-fit had been obtained, the reverses of the plates and the surfaces of the indents were coated with bituminous mastic, the holes filled with a polyester resin grout and the brass relaid (photo 5). The slab was laid in the chancel floor at Beddington on 18 March 2004.

The brasses have been waxed with *Renaissance* micro-crystalline wax and this treatment should be repeated sparingly at regular intervals, ideally every three or four months. Any corrosion should be removed by vigorous rubbing with a paraffin-soaked rag followed by *Renaissance* wax after the paraffin has dried.

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27 April 2004.



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