

BRASSES AT PENN AND EDLESBOROUGH

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At the request of the Vicar of Penn, Bucks., the Rev. O. Muspratt, M.A., the writer carried out a survey on 27th March, 1954, to advise on attention to the five monumental brasses now situated in the south chapel.

Though in several instances the slabs had flaked badly and one suffered damage from moving, on the whole the series of brasses to the Pen family, besides the one commemorating Elizabeth Rok, 1540 (MS. I),¹ were found in sound condition. The shield on the earliest Pen one—John Pen and wife Ursula (Walleston) with family, 1597 (MS. II)—and the remaining portion of his mutilated figure, however, were loose. This also applied to the inscription and part of the broken scroll above the shrouded effigy of Elizabeth Rok.

Removal in order to refix afforded the opportunity of inspecting the reverse of the plates, which was especially interesting as both brasses had been suspected of being palimpsest. This proved to be the case only with the shield of Pen impaling Walleston.² The reverse, as will be seen from the accompanying illustration (Plate 7), is cut from the brass to a gentleman in furred gown with gypciere pendant from the belt, *circa* 1520 (compare with illustration on page 53 of *M.B.S. Transactions*, Vol. IX, Part II, from the Fermer brass at Easton Neston).

As in the instance of several Bucks. palimpsests, the origin of reuse was probably London, utilising local monastic spoil.

The Rev. D. C. Rutter, M.A., has drawn the writer's attention to the similarity of the lettering on the inscription to John Pen, and indeed on the later ones, i.e. MS. III and IV, to that of the brass to Francis Style, 1646, at Little Missenden, proved to be palimpsest and reported upon in the *M.B.S. Transactions*, Vol. VIII, Part I, pages 34-36. Examination of the plate certainly inclines to the suggestion of reuse, but as all were so securely fixed there was no excuse for an investigation.

The thickness of plates removed is recorded as: shield, 3.25 mm., figure of John Pen, 2.5 mm.; inscription of Elizabeth Rok, 2.5 mm. average.

Chemical composition was:

	<i>Lead</i>	<i>Copper</i>	<i>Iron</i>	<i>Zinc</i>	<i>Tin</i>
	%	%	%	%	%
Shield, c. 1520 ...	11.7	68.0	0.0	18.4	0.1
Inscription, 1540...	Trace	75.2	0.6	23.0	0.2
Figure, 1597 ...	1.2	64.0	1.3	32.3	0.2

The initials cut into the "silver" on the Pen side of the shield should be noted. Those above the fesse seem to be "W 35" and those lower "F.L."

The plates have been refixed and the slab of Elizabeth Rok treated and

repaired as far as possible. Attention to the other slabs has been left to a local builder. A rubbing of the palimpsest shield, framed, has been placed near John Pen's brass.

EDLESBOROUGH

It had been long suspected that the brass, in an appropriated stone, commemorating John Rufford, Esq., and his wives, Brygett, Anne and Elynore, 1540 (MS. III), was palimpsest. This proved to be the case when the opportunity arose in October, 1954, of making an examination, prior to refixing the figures and inscription which had been working loose over a period of years.³ As will be seen from the illustration (Plate 8), the figures of John Rufford and his three wives are cut from a "life"-size effigy of a lady, seemingly habited in the costume of the first quarter of the fifteenth century. Certain peculiarities in the dress, however, occur dissimilar to known contemporary brasses; for instance, the crimped line nearing the bottom of the gown and the surplice-like sleeves are remarkably like those shown on figures of Benedictine monks. The nearest form of dress which the writer has found on brasses appears on the figure of Lady Peryent, 1414, at Digswell, Herts., and a lady unknown, c. 1420, at Horley, Surrey. Mr. R. H. Pearson, F.S.A., has also found a resemblance on the incised slab to Bussaert van Man, 1414, in the Musée Lapidaire des ruines de Saint-Bavon, Gand. The surface of the plate shows no signs of wear and, as one would expect, the engraving is bold and decisive.

There are a few "blows" in the casting of the plates, showing up mostly on the reverse side. The thickness of the plates varies between 3 and 3.25 mm. Several of the rivet holes had been plugged with lead or brass. The appearance of the two plates was noticeably different and, as will be noticed from the particulars of the analysis of composition given later, there was a variation, though not pronounced. Another point observed was that the straight-cut line at the bottom of John Rufford's figure and the top of the plate for the wives represented the "end" of the older plates, so that in the instance of the bottom "half" the full size was utilised.

On the reverse of the inscription is a complete one to Dom John Ingylyby, 1499, reading:



As the inscription of John Ingylyby was not quite long enough for that to John Rufford and his wives, an extra piece was soldered on cut from a figure in banded mail of *circa* 1330. The fragment is too small for accurate identification but would appear to show a portion of the sleeve of the *hauketon* with ornamental border of *surcoat* and the shoulder band of a sword belt, cf. John de Northwode, c. 1330, Minster-in-Sheppy, Kent.

Somehow the border of the *surcoat* seems to have "gone wrong" and

suggests that the piece was made use of from workshop waste. The condition of the inscription is "mint". It is 3.5 mm. thick and beautifully engraved. One of the original rivet holes is plugged by a brass rivet as not required with the extended "new" inscription. As stated at the commencement, the marble slab is appropriated. The top of a matrix for a horned head-dress appears above the plate for John Rufford's wives. His figure does not conform to the indent having "clearance" all the way round and the original male figure would appear to have been habited in a mantle or gown. The date from the evidence of the head-dress of the wife may be assigned as *circa* 1460.

Above the heads of the effigies on the monument as reused appears a shield of arms in a battered state displaying the Rufford arms—silver, a chevron between three trefoils slipped sable. This was not disturbed as it was firmly fixed and, by the nature of the technique necessarily used to represent silver, would have been most likely thin and delicate. Under the inscription to John Rufford and his wives, as will be seen in the illustration,⁵ there is an indent for a group of children. From all appearances, these belong to the Rufford family. The stone has been reduced in length and is at present 5 ft. by 3 ft. 3 in. as it lies inverted, i.e. with the top to the east. The writer would suggest that originally it was situated before the altar in the Rufford chantry (north transept) which is now a vestry, besides containing the organ, and was moved together with the two other slabs, which are known to have been in the chancel, to the north aisle when the church was repaved throughout in the Victorian era. The Rufford family vault is now occupied by the heating apparatus.

The chemical analyses of composition reveal:

	<i>Tin</i>	<i>Lead</i>	<i>Copper</i>	<i>Iron</i>	<i>Zinc</i>
	%	%	%	%	%
Top of lady	3.26	5.03	77.80	0.60	14.01
Bottom of lady	3.35	4.87	76.90	0.70	14.18
Inscription	Trace	8.70	68.50	1.20	21.50
Fourteenth-century fragment	3.03	2.07	73.80	1.00	20.11

As with so many other palimpsest brasses in Buckinghamshire, the provenance appears likely to be loot from the monastic houses of London and district. Indeed, we have definite and indisputable evidence of this in the circumstance of the inscription which we know came from the Charterhouse of Jesus of Bethlehem, founded by King Henry V at Shene (Sheen), Surrey, 25th September, 1414.⁶ Of this house, Dom John Ingyly was, as stated in his inscription, Prior and was buried there though he was also Bishop of Llandaff.⁷ Under Queen Mary the Carthusians returned to Shene from Flanders, and the site, which had been granted to Edward Seymour, Earl of Hertford, and later Duke of Somerset, having reverted to the Crown, was restored to the monks. During the usurpation the chancel of the monks' church, not the nave which was turned into a kitchen, was pulled down and at that time no doubt the brass was "reaved" and sold for reuse.

Dom John Ingyly was Provincial and chief visitor of the Order of the English Province.⁸

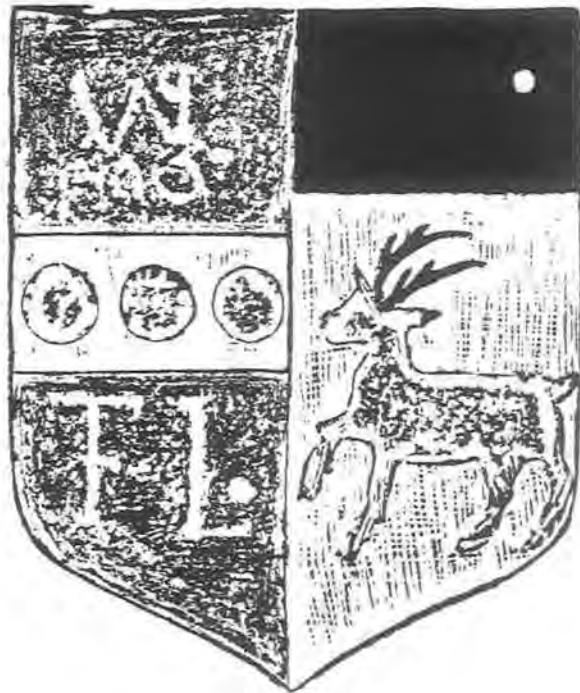
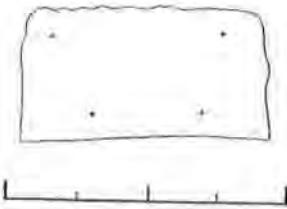


PLATE 7. PENN. Obverse and reverse of shield of brass to John Pen and his wife Ursula (Walleston), 1597.

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Of the Rufford man for the Soules of John Rufford son & here of John
Rufford whose name was & whose his wife the which John deceasid
the day of in the yeare of a lord god ed
In whose Soule and all Cristen Soules Amen



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PLATE 8. EDLESBOROUGH. The Rufford brass, 1540. with reverse of the figures.

It is interesting to note that Edlesborough church had a Carthusian connection other than the accidental one relating to the palimpsest inscription, for the advowson was granted by Patent of King Richard II in 1392 to "Priori et Conventui Novi Domus Matris Dei prope Lond. Ordinis Carthusian". For such action the King was made a confrater of the London Charterhouse.⁹

After cleaning and repairing, the brass plates have been refixed and linocuts of the reverses, skilfully made by Mr. Malcolm Norris, M.A., are to be mounted in a frame placed in a convenient position for the interest of visitors.

The writer would place on record appreciation to Mr. E. Clive Rouse, M.B.E., F.S.A., for his help; to Mr. R. J. Brown, B.Sc., of Nuffield Central Laboratories, for arranging for the analysis of the samples of metal, as on former occasions; and for the interest of the incumbent, the Rev. Denys H. Jones, M.A., who not only made the "discovery" of the palimpsest possible, but assisted in the same enthusiastic way in the matter of the brass as displayed in other ways relating to the restoration of the noble fane of Edlesborough church.

¹ Illustrated in *M.B.S. Portfolio*, Vol. V, plate 17.

² Silver on a fesse sable three plates, PEN (PENN) of Stoke Poges, Bucks., from Minety, Glos., and Penn's Lodge, Wilts. Impaling sable a hart silver (sometimes ermine) attired gold with a chief gold (WALLESTON of Chenies, Bucks.).

³ The record of the firm of Gawthorp & Co. quoted in the *M.B.S. Transactions*, Vol. VII, refers to this brass as being partly re-riveted and secured in 1929, but no evidence of this was discovered, all the rivets being the originals; and it is evident that the figures and inscription had not been out of their indents.

⁴ 7th September. Note the employment of Arabic numerals.

⁵ Not previously illustrated.

⁶ Foundation stone laid by Benedict, Bishop of Bangor (1414-18), on command of Henry (Beaufort) Cardinal and Bishop of Winchester.

⁷ Consecrated Bishop of Llandaff, September, 1496. (Ref. *Handbook of British Chronology*, Ed. F. M. Powicke, p. 200.)

⁸ See *The Carthusian Order in England*, Miss E. Margaret Thompson, London, S.P.C.K., 1930.

⁹ Ref. *Land Revenue Miscellaneous Book*, 61, f. 16.

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