

BRASSES AND MONUMENTAL SLABS IN
SUNDRIDGE CHURCH.

A LETTER BY THE LATE HERBERT HAINES, EDITOR OF
A Manual of Monumental Brasses.

THE slab towards the west [in the high chancel] was inlaid with a very handsome foliated brass cross, rising from four or five steps. Around is an inscription in [Lombardic] capital letters, partly obliterated. Each letter was separately inlaid in brass with two brass dots between each word; one of these dots (the upper one after the name) still remains, but every other portion of brass has disappeared. The inscription begins at the centre of the top of the slab:

+ VOVS : KE : PAR[R ?] : ICI : PASSET : PYR : LALME :
[DE ? IO]HAN : DELARYE : P[RI ?]ET : [KE ?] : PO[VR] : LAME :
PRIERA : SIS : VINT : IOVRS : [DE : PARDOVN ?]AVERA :

In English: "You who here by pass, for the soul of John Delarue pray. He who for his soul shall pray [120 *i.e.*] six times twenty days of pardon shall have."

The other [Lombardic] slab, nearer to the east end, is more defaced and was never inlaid with brass, but the letters were simply incised in the stone:

. . . . MESIRE : HVWE : DE : FORCHAME : GYST : ISI : DEVX :
DE : S : ALME : E[Y]T : M[ERCY].

"Sir, or perhaps Master (Mesire), Hugh de Forcham lies here. God have mercy on his soul." The letters and words in brackets are chiefly conjectural, the originals being defaced.

The brass in the chancel, lying immediately west of that of Roger Isley, 1429, is probably in memory of one of the same family who died about the year 1460, or a little earlier. The figure is one of the best illustrations of civilian costume of the period that we have remaining, and was probably engraved by the same artist as a figure at Taplow Church, Bucks, commemorating Richard Manfeld, who died in 1455.

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The brass on the north side of the chancel, near the stove, of which the inscription is lost, is to the memory of Sir Thomas Isley, who died in or about 1520, and his lady, Elizabeth, daughter of Sir Richard Guldeford, with their ten sons and three daughters. The lady died in or about 1515.

From a hasty glance at the church I conclude that the original building was in the Early English style (or erected early in the thirteenth century), with Perpendicular or fifteenth-century windows inserted; but two good original lancet windows, now blocked up, remain in the chancel. The aisles have been raised in the fifteenth century, so that the original quatrefoil clerestory windows are enclosed by the new roof; a similar instance may be seen at Ledbury, Herefordshire. In the chancel is an original Early English piscina, or water drain, and recess on the south side.

At the east end of the north aisle is a Purbeck marble tomb, which had formerly kneeling figures in brass, with scrolls issuing from the mouths, inlaid at the back beneath the canopy. On the panels beneath are shields of a peculiar shape, on which other shields of brass were originally fastened; now all lost. The tomb appears to be of the date of the commencement of the sixteenth century.

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December 20th, 1871.