

TWO BRASSES

I. A NEWLY-FOUND BRASS FROM HERNE CHURCH

By H. E. GOUGH

IN the spring of 1962 a row of old cottages next to the Vicarage at Herne was demolished to improve the sight-line at the north entrance to the village, and to make way for the erection, by Herne Bay U.D.C., of a group of flats.

During the demolition a blackened metal plate, $4\frac{1}{2}$ in. \times $6\frac{3}{4}$ in., was discovered, and after passing through several hands reached the writer, who recognized it as part of a memorial brass, and suggested its date as about 1600.

Even before cleaning, the plate could be seen to bear the incised standing figures of a boy or young man in a long gown, and a girl with a ruff and a draped full skirt, both facing left in an attitude of prayer typical of many brasses in Kent churches and elsewhere between 1590 and 1620.¹ See Plate I.

The plate was complete in itself, and had a rivet hole close to each corner. One corner was slightly bent up as though the brass had been forcibly removed from its fixing, there was a double depression by the boy's left ear shaped like the claw of a small "jimmy", and a cut about $\frac{1}{2}$ in. long ran down the girl's left arm, made by a heavy sharp edge. All this damage seemed to be of long standing; otherwise the plate was in good condition, and showed little sign of wear.

On the assumption that it came from Herne Church, about a hundred yards away from the site of the find, it seemed likely that it should be associated with the only memorial of the same style in the church.

Herne church possesses an interesting series of brasses from ca. 1430 down to 1604/5, which have frequently been described, from Weever to the present time. The latest in the series is that of John Sea of Underdowne and his two wives: Martha, daughter of Thomas Hamond of St. Albans, Nonington, and Sara, daughter of Thomas Boys of Barfreston. The ladies, ranged on each side facing their husband are dressed in identical costume, even to the quilted sleeves and embroidered skirts. It seems, as Capes suggested,² that the second wife "not only stepped

¹ For related examples in Kent and elsewhere, see Appendix, p. 151.

² *Jnl. Brit. Arch. Assn.*, XII, 80, quotes by the Rev. J. R. Buchanan, *Memorials of Herne* (1887), p. 43.



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into the first wife's shoes, but . . . might have appropriated to her own use the entire wardrobe”.

The three figures, each about 21 in. tall, are all in the hands-together praying position, with their eyes open. The inscription records the two marriages of John Sea, and the number of his children, six boys and three girls by the first wife, and one boy and one girl by the second, and gives the date of Sea's death, “23 Febrvrij Anno Dni 1604” (i.e. 1605).

The slab to which the brasses are fixed is 3 ft. wide by 5 ft. 8½ in. long, and is set in the modern tiled floor of the North chancel—now often called the “Milles Chapel”—near the door in the parclose screen.

At each corner of the slab there was originally a shield: 1. Sea impaling Hamond; 2. Sea impaling Boys; 3. As 2; 4. As 1. Shield No. 2 has long been missing—its absence was noted by Z. Cozens in 1793,¹ and at some time between 1887 and 1914² the two lower shields have been displaced and awkwardly reset, upside down and in the wrong relative positions, nearer the inscription.

At some time, too, during its existence, perhaps when the floor was tiled, the slab has been broken below the inscription and relaid unevenly, so that the upper end of the lower half is now badly worn. There remains, however, partly visible, the trace of an indent, a little wider than the inscription plate, and it is into the lower left hand corner of this that the original shield No. 4 has been set. While No. 3 is presumably in the same indent, this is not apparent, due to the uneven wear, while the top edge is also lost in the worn surface. The lower edge of the indent is 9¾ in. below the inscription, while its left edge is 5¼ in. from the edge of the slab, so that if symmetrically placed, it would contain a plate or plates with an overall width of 25½ in.

Griffin and Stephenson³ state that two plates of children are missing from the Sea brass, but it does not appear that they had any positive evidence of this. It was probably inferred from the wording of the inscription and this trace of an indent.

It is probable, therefore, that originally (in 1605), Sea's eleven children were represented on two plates on the lower part of the slab, the nine children of his first marriage on the left facing right like their mother, and the two youngest on the right looking left, in the way

¹ Z. Cozens, *A Tour through the Isle of Thanet and some other Parts of East Kent* (1793), p. 447. John Philipot's notebook (B.M. Harl. 3917, f. 32b) mentions “a Monument of Mr. See whose wyfe was a Haman of St. Albones” but does not add any further description. I am grateful to Mr. C. R. Counce for these references.

² Buchanan, *loc. cit.*, gives the same order as Cozens, but E. Dwelly, *Dwelly's Parish Records* vol. 3, *Kent M. I.* (Herne Bay, 1914), p. 57, describes the arrangement as at present.

³ R. Griffin and M. Stephenson, *A List of Monumental Brasses remaining in the County of Kent in 1922*, p. 120-1.

common to brasses of the period where two wives are shown. The size of the indent inferred from the remaining traces would accommodate eleven children on the scale of those on the plate now discovered.

John Sea of Underdown, from whose monument the plate has been shown to have come, was of an old-established family in Herne. Various spelt See, Sey, Saie, or Sea, and in earlier periods prefixed with A, At or Atte, the name can be traced for several generations. The Herne wills printed in *Arch. Cant.*, XXVIII and XXX, with others still unpublished in the Kent Archives Office, supplemented by manorial records and references in Hasted,¹ establish a pedigree which differs from that published by Mr. C. R. Councer in *Arch. Cant.*, LIII, p. 92, as regards the position of William See who died in 1544, possessed of the manors of Buckland and Underdown.² These were left to his sons, John (born ca. 1538) and Robert, respectively. Underdown seems to have come to John when Robert died intestate.

John Sea's first marriage to Martha, daughter of Thomas Hamond took place at Nonington on 30 January, 1569-70³ and there is a record of the burial there of Jane See, daughter of John (a child) in October, 1572. No baptisms are found there, since a note in the Register says: "Here several sheets are missing from the transcripts between September 1571 and October 1577"⁴ It would seem that Sea was living at Nonington for a few years after his marriage, but he had moved back to Herne by 1575, when Register entries begin to appear there.

John, bapt. December 18 ; bur. December 24, 1575

Margarett, bapt. March 10, 1576/7 ; bur. April 5, 1601

Edward, bapt. October 26, 1578

Willyam, bapt. December 6, 1579

Fyneux, bapt. December 21, 1580 ; bur. October 22, 1602

Thomas, bapt. July 19, 1584 ; bur. September 9, 1587

"John Sea a crysomer buried", January 15, 1585/6⁵

This entry is quickly followed in the Burial Register by "Martha the wife of Mr. John Sea buried Februarij 3"⁶

Of the issue of the first marriage, all the boys and two of the three girls are thus accounted for. The other girl, Alice, probably born at Nonington, survived at least until 1616, and is mentioned in the wills of her father, stepmother and brother Edward.⁷

Sea's second marriage was to Sara, widow of Richard Milles⁸ and

¹ E. Hasted, *History of Kent*, Folio ed.; vol. II, 737-8 ; vol. III, 619-20.

² *Arch. Cant.*, XXX, 122.

³ Nonington Parish Register, by courtesy of the Vicar, the Rev. P. M. Townend.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Herne Parish Register, by courtesy of the Vicar, the Rev. H. G. Collins.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ K.A.O. PRC Cons. Reg. 40 f. 147 ; Reg. 40 f. 236 ; Reg. 42 f. 425.

⁸ W. Berry, *Pedigrees of the Families of the County of Kent* (1830), d. 445.

the eldest child of Thomas Boys of Barfreston. She was baptised at Eythorne in November, 1560, and was the sister of John Boys, Dean of Canterbury (1619-25). Her brother Thomas Boys of Hoad Court, Blean, married Sarah, daughter of another Dean, Richard Rogers (1584-97).

John Sea and Mrs. Sara Milles were married at Herne on 27th June, 1586.¹ The children of this marriage were John, baptised 25th June, 1587, and Sara, 30th June, 1588 ; at the date fixed for the brass by Sea's death in 1605, John was thus 17½ and his sister 16½.

John Sea died on 23rd February, 1605. In his will he asked to be buried "in the chauncell comonlye called Saint John's Chauncell right before the pewe wherein I use to sitt". His widow Sara died at Tilmanstone in 1609. The Seas' connection with Underdown—today known as Strode Park—ended when Edward Sea, his eldest surviving son, conveyed the property to Robert Knowler. In 1616, in his will Edward referred to Knowler as his "good freind and loving kinsman" but it is not clear what the relationship was.

I am further indebted to the Vicar of Nonington, for pointing out another entry in his Register, among the burials for 1661 :

"John Sea, gent. April 6"

This may well provide the date of death of the boy portrayed on the newly found brass, and indicated that he lived to his 74th year. From his will² it seems he was then living with John Boys at Fredville, and his specific bequests are but three : "Item I given unto my beloved Cosin Elizabeth Boys wife of my honored Cosin John Boys of ffredvyll . . . my little white purse in my chest with all that is within it. Item I give unto my cosin Thomas Mojors of Lambeth gent all my wearing apparrell except my blewish coat and suit that I daylie weare which I give unto Stephen Belsy." Everything else he left to John Boys, who was also his executor.

The last we hear of Sara Sea is in 1616 when from her brother's will we learn that she was now the wife of William Boys, gent., providing yet another link between the two families, but one which the Boys pedigree in Berry's *County Genealogy* does not mention.

APPENDIX

Kentish and other brasses closely related in style and workmanship to that of John Sea of Underdowne, 1605.

References : B=W. Belcher, *Kentish Brasses*, Vol. I (1888), II (1905). G=R. Griffin and M. Stephenson, *List of Brasses . . . in Kent in 1922*. V=Victoria and Albert Museum, Dept. of Engraving, *List of Rubbings of Brasses* (1915).

¹ Herne Parish Register.

² K.A.O. PRC. Cons. Reg. 53 f. 144.

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Date	Name	Where	Ref.
c. 1590	Ellen Rogers (?)	Dartford, Kent	B. I, 91 G. p. 95, VIII
1596	J. Tedcastell and wife	Barking, Essex	V. pl. 42 and p. 30
1596	M. Rust	Necton, Norf.	V. pl. 45 and p. 50
1598	J. Evrenden and wives	Biddenden, Kent	B. II, 28 G. p. 61, VII
1599	Anon and wife	Harrow, Middx.	V. pl. 42 and p. 31
1601	R. Thornhill and wives	Bromley, Kent	B. I, 39 ; II, 49 G. p. 70, III
1605	Richard Manning and wife	St. Mary Cray, Kent	B. I, 80 G. p. 91, III
1605	John Sea and wives	Herne, Kent	B. I, 129 G. 120, IX V. pl. 43 and p. 32
1605	Richard Manning	St. Mary Cray, Kent	B. II, 79 G. p. 91, IV
1606	Aphra Hawkins	Fordwich, Kent	B. I, 119 G. p. 110, II
1607	Elizabeth Rowe	Pembury, Kent	B. II, 343 G. p. 153, I
1607	J. Verzeline and wife	Downe, Kent	B. II, 132 G. p. 100, V V. pl. 43 and p. 32
1608	Clement Stuppeny	Lydd, Kent	B. II, 271 G. p. 135, XIV
1609	J. Seyliard and wives	Biddenden, Kent	B. II, 27 G. p. 62, VIII
1610	J. Haywarde	Faversham	B. II, 157 G. p. 107, XVIII
1612	Wm. Clerke and wife	Wrotham	B. I, 222 G. p. 189, VII
1613	Bennet Finch	Preston-next- Faversham	B. I, 182 G. p. 157, III
1613	Rev. V. Huffam and wife	Dover, St. James	B. II, 128 G. p. 98, I
1615	Dorothy Plumley	Hoo	B. II, 220 G. p. 124, VII
1618	Rev. Wm. Palke and wife	High Halstow	B. II, 184 G. p. 116, II

Notes. The date offered for Ellen Rogers seems too early in relation to this series.

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The embroidery on the skirt of M. Rust of Necton, Norfolk, is almost identical with that of *Sea's wives*, and is evidence of the use of some sort of "pattern-book" so far afield.

Richard Thornhill and his two wives is the closest of the parallels shown in the above list. The embroidery is lacking, but the attitude of the figures, and the style of lettering used are very similar to the *Sea brass*, while the plates of children, in positions copying those of the parents, and grouped according to the position of their respective mothers, is exactly that which is suggested by the newly found plate at Herne.

The brass to Dorothy Plumley is unique in being signed "Done by James Plumley her sonne" and is presumably a local copy of the, by then, familiar style.

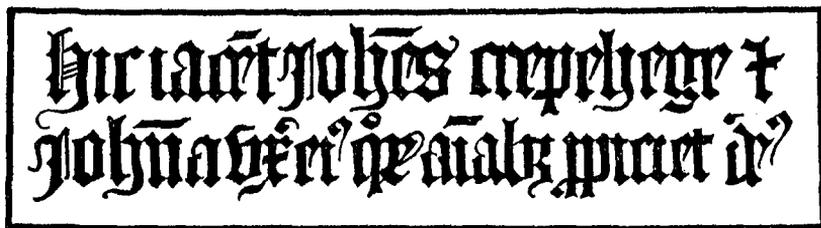
THE CREPEHEGE BRASS AT DARENTH

By JOHN E. L. CAIGER

In the church of St. Margaret, Darenth, Kent, are two small inscription brasses, one of which is to Mary Bridges who died in 1617 and another, more ancient, to John Crepehege and his wife, Joan.

This last named brass is particularly interesting. It occupies an obscure position on the floor of the nave and for this reason and the fact that it is not recorded in two well known works on Kentish brasses¹ it has been neglected or missed by most antiquaries. John Thorpe² gives an engraving of it, taken from a rough sketch he made in 1768. The sketch is very crude and fails to illustrate the style of lettering accurately.

The brass has been relaid since Thorpe's time and is now secured by three rivets to the floor at the extreme eastern end of the south aisle. There are now, unfortunately, three fractures to the plate directly adjoining the right-hand rivet entry. The small brass plate, 10 in. by 2½ in. contains a two line inscription in black letter and is reproduced below :



¹ Macklin. Belcher.

² *Cust. Roff.*, Pl. XIII, Fig. 3, p. 104.