

MISCELLANEOUS GLOSSARY

Advowson: the right to present a vacant benefice.

Altar tomb (chest tomb): brick or stone oblong box-like monument on top of which the brass effigies lie. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, if the tomb was placed against the wall, the brasses were often placed on the wall at the back.

Black letter: various kinds of Gothic or Old English printing styles, popular from c.1360-1590.

Bracket brass: one with a straight shaft rising usually from steps to a bracket or splayed at the top on which stand the figures, usually of the persons commemorated, but occasionally of saints.

Chamfer inscription: an inscription placed on the beveled edge of an altar tomb.

Chrysom: a length of linen or other fabric worn over the underclothes by a baby for a month after it was baptized until the mother was "churched" or purified by the priest. During that month, the baby was referred to as a chrysom, and if it died during that time, it was buried in its chrysom garment.

Crockett: the plant form on the canopy that curves up and away from the surface of the gable.

Cusps: the semi-circular segments just below the soffit of the arch of a canopy.

Evangelistic symbols: mystical symbols of an angel, winged lion, winged ox, and eagle representing respectively the four Evangelists Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

Finial: the top ornamental feature of a canopy.

Foot inscription: an inscription placed just below the feet of the major effigies on a brass.

Fylfot: the swastika figure often worked into the orphreys of vestments. Originally an Indian symbol, by the Middle Ages it had become meaningless and was used indiscriminately facing left or right.

Gable: the pointed roof-like feature of the canopy, (see also pediment).

Gregorian calendar: see New Style.

Groin: the curved line formed by the intersection of two vaults of a canopy.

Indent: a shaped depression cut into a stone slab to take the brass.

Lombardic letters: broad, well-formed capital letters, each usually a separate piece of brass set in its own matrix; common up to c.1360.

Marginal inscription: an inscription placed on a metal fillet around the inner edge of the stone slab and enclosing the brass effigies.

Matrix: see indent.

Messuage: a dwelling house with its outbuildings and adjoining lands.

New Style (N.S.) calendar: The Gregorian Calendar on which the new year begins on January 1. In most countries, it succeeded the Julian or Old Style calendar during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, but due to religious differences, most Protestant states did not adopt it until the eighteenth century. England adopted the new calendar under the Chesterfield Act of 1751 which decreed that the following January 1 would be the first day of 1752 and eliminated an accumulated error of eleven days from the calendar of 1751, Wednesday, September 2, being following by Thursday, September 14.

Oculus: circular central portion of the pediment of a canopy.

Ogee-shaped arch: the S-shaped outer edge of each side of the gable of an arch.

Old Style (O.S.): the Julian calendar, introduced by Julius Caesar in 45 B.C. and in general use throughout Europe in the Middle Ages. In England, the standard practice from the twelfth century was to begin the new year on March 25 which was Lady Day. For example, the year 1426 ran from March 25 to the following March 24. By our present reckoning, that period from January 1 to March 24 would be termed part of the year 1427.

Palimpsest: a reused brass, particularly one where the sheet of metal has been reversed and re-engraved. A brass, however, may also be palimpsest by appropriation of an earlier brass to a later person to be commemorated.

Pediment: the gable-like feature of a canopy, including soffit, cusps, etc.

Pinnacle: the small vertical structure of the canopy emerging from a shaft.

Prayer desk (prie-dieu or faldstool): a small desk before which a person kneels to pray. On brasses its top is usually covered with a cloth on which lies an open book, presumably the Bible.

Scroll: scroll-like fillets of metal issuing from the mouth or hands of an effigy, usually bearing a brief prayer or phrase from the Scriptures.

Side-shaft: the shaft, often buttressed, on other side of the canopy.

Soffit: the underside of the pediment, usually a rounded arch. On brasses, it is invariably engraved with a row of quatrefoils.

Spandrels: triangular-shaped spaces, usually filled with trefoils between the exterior curves of two adjoining arches.

Supercanopy: a second canopy, usually square-topped and battlemented, surmounting an ogee-shaped canopy.

Tabernacle: niches containing figures of saints or the Trinity, usually a part of the supercanopy.

Vault: the arched roof of a canopy.