

Vida and Michael Beaven brass rubbings collection

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circa 1970s-1990s



Title Statement

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Guide to Vida and Michael Beaven brass rubbings collection C0284

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Profile Description

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Descriptive Summary

Unit ID

C0284

Unit ID

/repositories/2/resources/418

Unit Date

circa 1970s-1990s

Language

English

Abstract

A collection of eight rubbings depicting four individual monumental brasses from churches in Cambridgeshire, England.

Creator

Beaven, Vida

Creator

Beaven, Michael A.

Extent

4 Linear Feet 8 rubbings, 4 tube boxes inside 1 large box

Physical Location

OS R 3, C 5, S 1 - OS R 4, C 1, S 1

Repository

George Mason University. Libraries. Special Collections Research Center

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

There are no access restrictions.

Use Restrictions

Public Domain. There are no known restrictions.

Acquisition Information

Donated by Vida and Michael Beaven in 2015.

Processing Information

EAD markup completed by Jordan Patty in April 2016.

Processing completed by Meghan Glasbrenner from November 2025 - January 2026. Rehousing and preservation services provided by Amy Sullivan. Finding aid completed by Meghan Glasbrenner in March 2026.

Preferred Citation

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Biographical and Historical Information

Dr. Michael A. Beaven was born in London, England, on December 4, 1936, and earned his Bachelor of Pharmacy (B. Pharm) and Ph.D. in Medicinal Chemistry from the University of London. An expert in mast cell biology, Dr. Beaven began working at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) as a Visiting Fellow in 1962 in the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI), but rose quickly to become a tenured scientist and Deputy Chief of the NHLBI's Laboratory of Molecular Immunology. After 47 years with the NHLBI, Dr. Beaven formally retired in 2010, but assumed the role of NIH Scientist Emeritus and continued to work with the organization for another 7 years. He married his wife Vida circa 1964 and the couple would remain married for the next 53 years until he passed away on April 8, 2017 at the age of 80.

Monumental brasses, sometimes known simply as "brasses," are a type of sepulchral memorial that was popularized in 13th century Europe, particularly in England and the rest of the British Isles. Consisting of slabs of engraved brass, these memorials typically feature idealized, youthful figures of the deceased, alongside animals and heraldic imagery. In England, they are often found in the oldest local church of the area, called the parish church. Brass rubbing is a technique used to reproduce the engraving on a monumental brass. Rubbings are made by carefully pressing paper onto the surface of the brass and gently rubbing over this with a waxy crayon (typically heelball/cobbler's wax) to reproduce the image onto the paper.

Scope and Content

A collection of eight rubbings depicting four individual monumental brasses from churches in Cambridgeshire, England. All rubbings are black on white and use similar paper, but range in size and the

amount of the monumental brass reproduced. Dates in the inventory refer to the inferred estimate for when the rubbings were created; information on the monumental brass subjects and original creation dates can be found in the Scope and Contents note for each boxed rubbing.

Related Materials

The Special Collections Research Center also holds the Bernard Brenner brass rubbings collection.

Hamline University, Southern Oregon University, and the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign hold brass rubbings collections.

Keywords

Brass rubbing

Brasses

Heraldry -- Great Britain

Middle Ages

Cambridgeshire (England)

Bibliography

Gottesman, Michael. 2017. "Remembrances: Mike Beaven (1936-2017)." NIH Intramural Research Program, June 22. <https://irp.nih.gov/blog/post/2017/06/remembrances-mike-beaven-1936-2017>.

Arrangement

Items are arranged by subject of the rubbing.

Description of Subordinate Components

John Blodwell from Church of the Holy Trinity in Balsham, Cambridgeshire, England

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/393936

Unit Date circa 1970s-1990s

Mixed Materials Rubbing 1 (box)

Scope and Contents

Box contains two rubbings, each showing approximately 75% of the full length brass. Black on White. Monumental brass created circa 1462. John Blodwell was former Rector of the church. Brass has been moved from its original position which was likely above John Blodwell's body outside the Chancel and in the Nave of the church.

Robert de Paris (also spelled Parys) and his widow Alienora (also spelled Eleanor) Busteler from Holy Trinity Church in Hildersham, Cambridgeshire, England

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/393937

Unit Date circa 1970s-1990s

Mixed Materials Rubbing 2 (box)

Scope and Contents

Box contains two rubbings, one of the full brass and one on smaller paper detailing a side piece only. Black on White. Monumental brass created circa 1379-1408.

John Sleford from Church of the Holy Trinity in Balsham, Cambridgeshire, England

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/393938

Unit Date circa 1970s-1990s

Mixed Materials Rubbing 3 (box)

Scope and Contents

Box contains three rubbings, one of the full brass and two partials. Black on White. Monumental brass created circa 1401. John Sleford was a former Rector of the church. Brass has been moved from its original

position which was likely above John Sleaford's body just inside the Chancel of the church.

Unidentified priest from Trinity Hall Chapel, University of Cambridge in Cambridge, Cambridgeshire, England

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/393939

Unit Date circa 1970s-1990s

Mixed Materials Rubbing 4 (box)

Scope and Contents

Identification of rubbing is tentative based on research and comparison to existing rubbings. Black on White. Monumental Brass created circa 1530-1550.