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The Lond Or Loud Brass in St. Peter's Church, Bristol

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THE LOND OR LOUD BRASS IN ST. PETER'S CHURCH, BRISTOL.

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THIS monument, which is said to be the finest brass of a priest now remaining in the city of Bristol, is the last of many that existed in this church. As late as the year 1789, the date when Barrett published his *History of Bristol*, there were still in the church "brass figures" to John Esterfield and his wives, and Andrew Norton and his wives, but these have long disappeared. No mention is made by Barrett of the brass which is the subject of this paper, and which is of beautiful design and workmanship.

The brass has engraved on it the figure of a priest vested in the Eucharistic vestments, and bearing in his hands a chalice and the Host.

The figure is 69.9 centimetres long and 20.8 centimetres wide at the broadest place, 10 centimetres at the head, and 18.8 centimetres wide just above the feet.¹ Underneath, on a separate piece of metal, 45.5 centimetres wide and 9 centimetres deep, is the inscription. The length of the hands is worthy of notice, the left one being 8.1 centimetres long and the right 8.5 centimetres.

The priest is represented wearing an amice, the apparel of which encircling the neck is visible above the chasuble; an albe with apparels at the wrists and skirt, beneath which protrude the feet shod in pointed shoes; a stole, fanon, and chasuble of the usual fifteenth-century pattern, a full and comely vestment coming to a point below the knees, and thrown back at the wrists to give freedom to the arms. The narrow-fringed stole and fanon and the apparels are all ornamented with a diaper of lozenges, in which are four-leaved flowers.

¹ Ten centimetres are nearly equal to four inches.



The chalice has a partly cylindrical bowl, supported by three beads, and the knob is ornamented with angular facets. The foot is octagonal. Over the chalice is represented the Host surrounded by a glory. Careful examination suggests that at some time or other the brass was enamelled, as the lines are wide and deeply incised, and the incisions are in many cases almost as wide at the bottom as they are at the top. The few particles of what appeared to be enamel left in the incisions were not sufficient in quantity to admit of their being analysed, but they were certainly neither wax nor resin. The disc representing the Host is deeply depressed, and still contains a dark material firmly adherent to the metal. It seems not unlikely that it was originally jewelled or enamelled to represent a wafer.

The brass shows signs of having been tampered with at some time or other. A small portion at the bottom of the albe on the right side is missing, and it was evidently joined on to the main portion by lead run under it. The same method was adopted for repairing the inscription, which has been broken in two, doubtless at the same time. The back is covered with pitch.

The stone, a heavy slab of Pennant, the edges of which are much worn, is not improbably the original one, and the matrix shows the extent of the missing portion of the albe.

For many years the brass was fixed in the floor of the chapel, at the east end of the south aisle, longitudinally east and west, and parallel with the cadaver that lay between it and the Newton monument; but some years ago, when the cadaver was hidden away in the corner where it now is, the brass was placed in the floor of the same chapel, west of the Newton tomb. In 1906 it was removed to the south side of the north-east pier of the tower, where it has been covered by a glazed oak frame, to preserve it from damage.

The inscription reads as follows:—"Hic iacet Magist. Robtus Lond capellanus qui obiit xxiii die ffebruarii anno dni millmo cccclxi cuius anime propicietur deus. Amen." Of the history of Robert Lond (or possibly Loud) we know little.

Barrett asserts that he was rector of the church in 1446; but without corroboration, and in view of the well-known inaccuracy of Barrett in such matters, it is necessary to receive this statement with caution, especially as he mentions that Hugh Pavis was rector in 1450, and according to Latimer, Thomas Stevens was still rector in 1446. The earliest mention of Lond that I can find is in the Great Orphan Book of Wills at the Council House, Bristol. In the will of Thomas Bewflour, dated September 18th, 1426, there is the following clause, "lego dno Robto Londe scolemaistre vjs. viijd.," showing that Robert Lond was a schoolmaster in 1426; and that this Robert Lond and the Lond of the brass are one and the same person is borne out by two very interesting statements in William Wyrcestre's *Itinerary*, the MS. of which is now in the possession of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge. On MS. p. 95 we read:—

"At Newyate ubi quondam scola grammatica *per* magistrum Robertum Land principalem didaschilum cum (?) Leyland magistro grammaticorum in oxonia dicebatur fuisse flos grammaticorum et poetarum temporibus annis plurimis revolutis et tempore quo primo veni ad oxoniam universitatem scolatizandi obiit in termino pasche anno christi 1432 circa mensem Junii quando generalis eclipsis die sancti Botulphi accidebat."¹

Further on, p. 130 MS., is the following:—

"1469. Mr. Robert lond obiit grammaticus ville Bristoll die 23 februaryi."²

These extracts show that Robert Lond was a well-known schoolmaster or grammarian in Bristol between 1426 and 1469,

¹ This eclipse happened on St. Botolph's Day, June 17th, 1433. It was total at Inverness for four minutes and a half about three o'clock, and would have been a large partial eclipse in the south of England. The date in the manuscript is clearly 1432, and the old topographer has made a mistake.

² The date 1469 is inserted in the margin of the manuscript, and may not have been part of the original entry; it seems, however, to be in the same handwriting.

but this latter date is probably incorrect. It seems practically certain that the Master Robert Lond of the brass and Master Robert Lond the schoolmaster are one and the same person. The only discrepancy is in the date of death. Wyrcestre gives it as 1469, and the inscription on the brass is 1461. This latter is, no doubt, the proper one. The dates agree as to the month, day of the month, century and decade, and it is probable that Wyrcestre wrote it from memory, and made a mistake. He was not always accurate in such details. For example, in the first of the entries quoted he dates John Leyland's death four years later than it actually took place, and it was quite easy to make a slip of the pen in the figures 1469, the figure "9" not being unlike the figure "j"; or it is possible that on the brass the final \times of the figure lxix was by accident omitted.

The last reference to Lond is in the Accounts of St. Ewen's for the year 1455-6 (published in *Trans. B. & G. Arch. Soc.*, vol. xv.). In a list of contributions towards the cost of a silver cross, is the following entry:—"Item of Mr Robert Lond iiiid."

It may, I think, be fairly concluded that the brass in St. Peter's was erected to the memory of a priest named Robert Londe, who was the master of a grammar school carried on for some years at Newgate, in St. Peter's parish. He seems to have been associated as a teacher with the celebrated John Leland, who carried on a very well-known grammar school in Peckwaters Inn, afterwards united with Vine Hall. This John Leland had a great reputation as a grammarian, which gave rise to the following line:—

" Ut Rosa flos florum sic Leland grammaticorum."

He was the author of several treatises on grammar, &c. He died in 1428, and was buried in the lady chapel of St. Frideswide's.

What time Lond left Oxford is not known. No university records of a date earlier than 1449 remain, and the college registers are few and imperfect. He came to Bristol some time

earlier than 1426. At his school, which was one of that great class of chantry grammar schools which existed all over England, it was doubtless true of him as of Leyland, that he taught not only the boys of noble parentage, but also the sons of the townspeople. The teaching would have been the customary instruction of the time—in grammar and the Roman authors, which the scholars had to construe probably in French as well as English. The masters, we are told, had to take care that their charges were daily instructed and chastised, to “see what was defective in them.”

Lond is described in the inscription on the brass as capellanus. He must have been a chaplain in the church, and he had to perform the duties pertaining to the office, as well as those of master to the school. If the brass be in any way a faithful portrait, he was a tall, gentle-faced old man, with a high forehead and a dignified and striking face; and if this be a true index to his character, it is not unreasonable to presume that the respect in which he was held led to the erection over his remains of a monument like the one placed over those of his friend, John Leyland:—“*et marmore epitaphium Latinum æræ laminæ insculptum.*”