

# Developing the Costume Research Image Library (CRIL) Phase Two – January to June 2007 Dr Jane Malcolm-Davies Textile Conservation Centre - Winchester School of Art

*The project reported here built on a previous pilot study of 16th century effigies in churches as a three-dimensional resource for costume research. The online database of 40 images in Hampshire churches was expanded with 36 images of effigies in Sussex churches adding further material to the decades already represented and widening the range of dates included. An initial survey of definitions for items of 16th century dress was undertaken to explore the feasibility of describing each effigy's garments in detail. The database was moved to a user-friendly web address ([www.tudoreffigies.co.uk](http://www.tudoreffigies.co.uk)) and now offers 76 effigies or groups of effigies for browsing or specific searching by date and/or gender.*

## **Introduction**

The pilot phase of the Costume Research Image Library (CRIL) project was undertaken in 2005/06. This produced an accessible online database of photographs of 40-plus Tudor effigies (or groups of effigies). The scope of this project was limited to representations of civilian dress (armoured and ecclesiastical figures were not included) executed in stone (wooden and brass figures were not included). An electronic database was designed and built to store photographs of the effigies and made available to online users via the internet. Each effigy or group of effigies was represented by a main photograph and a series of further images showing detailed views. All of these were of effigies in Hampshire churches. Phase two of the project proposed using the methodology developed during the pilot phase to expand the database to include Tudor effigies in Sussex churches. The date range represented by the Hampshire effigies was 1510 to 1601 although there were no effigies for 1541 to 1550 or 1591 to 1600. The greatest number of effigies were dated 1511 to 1520 or 1581 to 1590 (eight effigies for each decade), although most of the latter came from one monument at Titchfield which has five relevant figures on it. The Hampshire effigies included 23 female figures (or groups of effigies) and 15 male figures (or groups of effigies) plus two mixed gender groups. It was estimated that the database could be expanded from 39 to 66 effigies (or groups of effigies) showing civilian dress and that a more comprehensive date range would be available.

## **Methodology**

Pevsner's *Buildings of England* guide to Sussex was consulted via a CD-Rom version (Good, 2000) to ascertain the locations of monuments dated from 1485 to 1603, which was the definition of "Tudor" used for the project in phase one. The geographical locations of the churches with relevant monuments were plotted on the Ordnance Survey *Travel* map of Surrey, Hampshire and Sussex (travel map 18). A total of 11 field trips was planned with up to five churches a day in each itinerary. The purpose of each field trip was to find the churches, locate relevant effigies, photograph them and gather evidence as to the date of the monument and identity of the people represented.

A literature search was undertaken to expand the data on each effigy. Mosse's *The monumental effigies of Sussex: 1250 to 1650* (1933) proved an unexpected mine of useful (though somewhat outdated) information. A number of useful internet sites came to light in this phase of the research. The entire *Victoria County History* series is now available online at [www.british-history.ac.uk](http://www.british-history.ac.uk). This made biographical information much easier to gather than had been the case in phase one of the project.

A more sophisticated camera was used to take the photographs (a Konica Minolta Dimage X1), which produced better quality images than those in the pilot project. However, it did not allow such swift and efficient review of photographs after they were taken as the previous equipment. This lengthened the time spent at each church. The use of portable lighting had been proposed in the review of the pilot phase of the project. Most of the Sussex photography was undertaken during the summer months (in contrast to the pilot which began in October 2005). It became apparent that natural light was adequate for most effigies and that the extra burden of carrying and setting lights did not justify the marginal improvements they offered.

The pilot project report recommended investigating what appropriate, sensitive cleaning might be undertaken without causing undue wear and tear to the effigies. Discussions with the Council for the Care of Churches provided advice on this. Its "A to Z on church care" suggests soft brushes are the best treatment for stone memorials. However, gentle attempts at cleaning a few of the monuments showed how very fragile they are. It was decided that inexpert brushing was likely to be injurious to the effigies' longevity.

There were a number of refinements to the database interface recommended by the pilot project report. One was to facilitate rich text in the main effigy descriptions for bold, italic, and underlining and the insertion of hyperlinks to other web resources. These are now possible and have enhanced the bibliography section for each effigy making them more conventional in appearance. The descriptive and bibliographical text fields were separated because feedback from database users in the pilot phase suggested that certain words appearing in the bibliographies made specific searches unfeasible (for example, "book" made a search for books as dress accessories impossible). The locations (town/village and county) were added to the keywords field for all the effigies to facilitate a search by location rather than era or costume interest. A few organisational amendments were made to the existing Hampshire images before the Sussex images were added. Four men in armour were removed as main images in line with the research parameter for civilian dress only. One image was rescued from geographical obscurity owing to its text having failed to upload. This resulted in a firm total of 40 Hampshire effigies representing civilian dress being available online as opposed to the 44 recorded in the pilot project report.

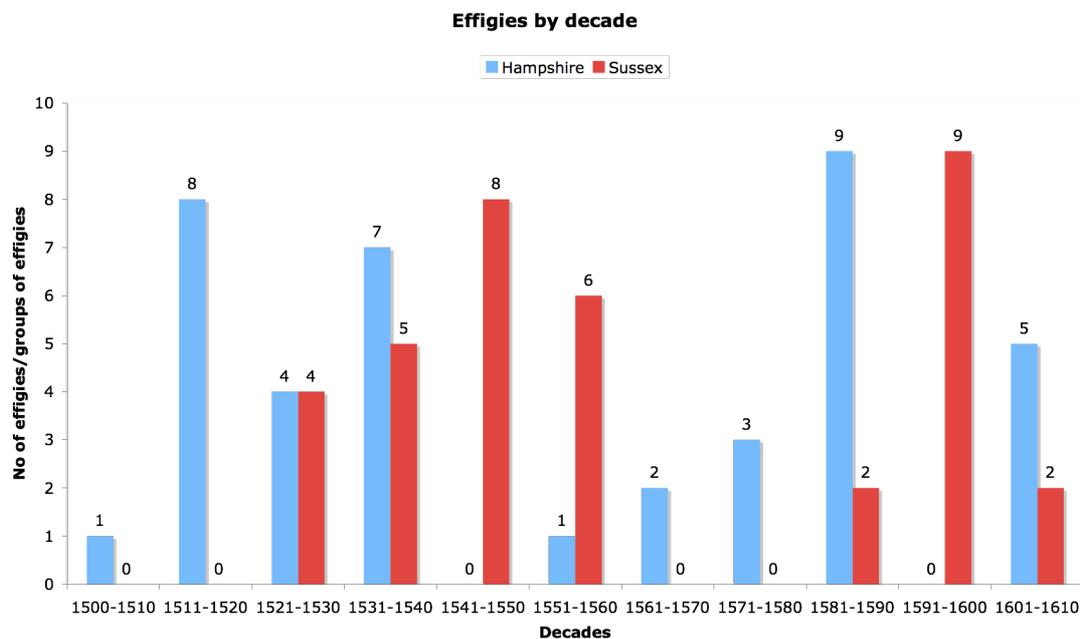
The need to describe the effigies' dress in detail prompted an initial review of costume glossaries and dictionaries: including, for example, Ribeiro and Cumming (1989); Turner Wilcox (1969); and Cunnington (1960 & 1970). Three examples of dress typical of the 16th century were tested in a range of resources. The three terms were "French hood", "hose" and "farthingale". Definitions were contradictory in some cases, cursory in others, and, for the most part, lacking contemporary references to support them. Another source for dress terminology is the vocabulary developed by the International Council of Museums (ICOM) in the 1970s. These terms were developed for curatorial use in museum collections and proved inadequate to the task of distinguishing between layers of dress or individual garments specific to the 16th century. The terms used are generic to all eras of history and tend to reflect what is extant in the archaeological record (most of which is post-16th century). However, the ICOM vocabulary does offer the benefit of being trilingual (English, French and German), which may be a useful aspiration for an internationally available research resource such as the effigy database.

The next phase of the project was to test the enlarged database to see if the three potential ways of studying dress using the effigies (identified during the pilot phase) were improved: tracking changes through time, comparing features of dress, and contrasting

features of dress. The final task was to publicise the expanded database to existing users and widen the range of researchers to whom it is available. It was intended that feedback be invited from all and specifically sought from new users.

## Results

The Sussex search yielded a further 17 monuments with effigies in 15 churches. There were 36 effigies (or groups of effigies) in civilian dress relevant to this project. Of these, 24 were female and 12 male. The Tudor effigies database now offers 76 main images, which is 10 more than the project estimate. The total number of detailed views added was 151, although some of these are necessarily repeats (for example, the same view of the full monument is used for all its effigies). There were eight churches with no useful effigies, one church where a major restoration project made the monuments inaccessible, and one church which could not be located.



Decades which were previously unrepresented in the database such as 1541 to 1550 and 1591 to 1600 are now illustrated by eight and nine effigies respectively (see chart above). The ten years from 1521 to 1530 have twice as many images as was the case in the pilot phase (up from four to eight) and there are seven effigies for 1551 to 1560, where previously there was only one. These additional effigies have expanded the eras through which features of dress may be studied with tracking, comparing and contrasting the images.

The pilot project report showed that Hampshire effigies permitted women's sleeves to be tracked through three decades using images dated c1510, c1520 and c1530. The Sussex effigies extends the range to the 1540s and 1550s. The expanded database facilitates more comparisons of contemporary style, as illustrated by the doubling of images for the final decade (1601 to 1610). Although there are still only two monuments, one is in Hampshire and the other in Sussex. Before phase two was complete, there was no comparative data for the Hampshire effigy. The main female figures on the monuments, Constance Lucy and Elizabeth Cheyney, are dated 1601 and 1603 respectively. A careful study of the features of their dress (despite the former being painted and the latter badly damaged by fire) reveals similar characteristics in, for example, the arrangement of the hair, ruff and gown collar. Contrasting dress during the same decade was illustrated in the pilot project report by two images from 1531 to 1540. The Hampshire effigies included two full-length and three other views of relevant women (three-quarter-length or partial). The

Sussex images added two further three-quarter-length views and one partial view. Given that portraiture for early 16th century women usually shows the upper body only, these are significant additions to the research resources available for dress at this period.

Feedback from users is currently being collected for future phases of the project to improve the content and interface of the database in line with users' requirements.

A paper on the pilot phase of the CRIL Tudor effigies project was given at the Arts & Humanities Research Centre for Textile Conservation and Textile Studies conference, *Textiles and Text: Re-establishing the links between archival and object-based research*, in June 2006. A version of it is available from Archetype Publishing as part of the conference postprints (October 2007). An article about the project was also submitted to *Church Monuments*, the journal of the Society of Church Archaeologists. It was refereed and accepted for publication in the 2008 edition.

### **Limitations of the project**

During the pilot project, many churches in Hampshire were accessible without prior arrangement largely thanks to the support of Andrew Lloyd-Webber's Open Churches Trust. This charity provides financial help for churches to install security measures (such as CCTV and alarm systems) which help them stay open without the need for volunteers to supervise visitors. Most Sussex churches were unlocked but a higher proportion were not open than was the case in Hampshire. This necessitated several return trips and arrangements with churchwardens for access at specified times. Field trips with appointments were much less efficient than a day unconstrained by time. Only three churches could be included in a day's work without risking late arrivals or missed appointments.

Some monuments are damaged or weathered to the extent that the details of dress are obscure. In these cases, it is difficult to determine how useful an image will be. The Bellingham family's monument at Hangleton was included in the database because it has many figures and an unusual representation of bodies in shrouds. However, the garments in which the family is depicted are impossible to discern, which makes the monument's usefulness in the Costume Research Image Library questionable. Effigies at Rustington (St Peter and St Paul) and Chichester (St Andrew) were not uploaded to the database owing to their current state of repair (see Rustington's monument below).



The paucity of reliable evidence on which to date effigies requires a note of caution. This project used readily accessible sources such as church guide books, Pevsner's guides and the *Victoria County History* series of volumes. However, it is clear in several instances that the date of a monument is at variance with the style of dress worn by the figures. An example of this is the Pelham monument at Lewes, which is popularly dated 1559 (the date of Sir Nicholas Pelham's death). However, the women's clothes are considerably later in style. Sir Nicholas's wife, Anne, wears a "bonnet with rear lappet folded forwards"

(Mosse, 1933, 128), the contemporary term for which was a "bongrace" head-dress (Cunnington, 1970, 74) and she has a farthingale. Both these items are more typical of the 1590s than the 1560s (although they are recorded earlier in the century).

## Recommendations

The database will be much improved by the addition of detailed descriptions of the garments worn by the effigies. This will necessitate a thorough investigation of contemporary terms for items of dress and the compilation of a specific glossary for the database to ensure visitors are aware of how the terminology is being applied.

The usefulness of the search function would be much improved by the availability of thumbnail images when results are displayed. This would provide an instant visual survey making immediate insights into similarities and contrasts in dress possible.

Rigorous investigation of all potential sources of information must be undertaken to ascertain the date at which monuments were built in order that dress may be interpreted with confidence.

The database will be much improved by the addition of effigies from more counties. The decades 1500 to 1520, 1541 to 1550 and 1561 to 1580 are currently represented by effigies from one county only. Further examples will permit comparative studies which are not possible at present.

## Conclusion

The Sussex effigies have expanded the usefulness of the Costume Research Image Library, technical improvements to the database have made it easier to maintain and access, and new insights have been gained into the process of researching effigies, especially the importance of careful dating.

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## Biography

Dr Jane Malcolm-Davies is co-author of *The Tudor Tailor: reconstructing 16<sup>th</sup> century dress*, published by Batsford in April 2006. She is director of JMD&Co, the company responsible for managing costumed interpretation at Hampton Court Palace from July 1992 to March 2004. Jane now advises Historic Scotland on the use of costumed interpretation, runs evaluation programmes for The National Trust's education service, and trains front-of-house staff for the Royal Collection and English Heritage. She was lecturer in leisure management at the University of Surrey, where she specialised in heritage issues until March 2005. Her doctorate (awarded 2002) investigated investment in resources for reproduction costume at historic sites in Canada, Sweden, the UK and the US.

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