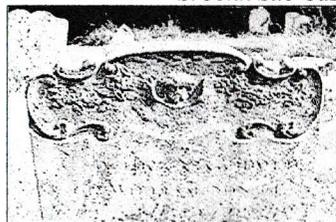
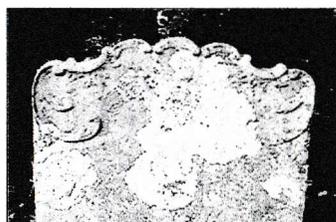


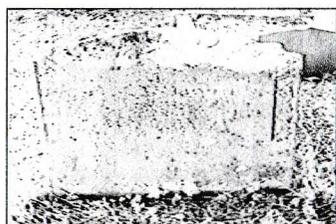
St John Sub Castro Church - Monumental Sculptures



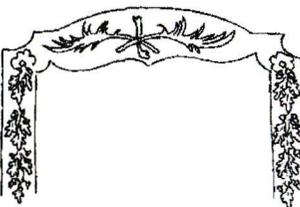
No. 681  
William Edwards  
Age 10  
Dec 1791



No. 631  
Jane / John Ewen  
Aged 63 & 67  
Oct 1778  
Mar 1792



No. 574  
Stephen Stephens  
Aged 71  
Mar 1805



**Historical Timeline**

Churchyard sculpture can be evaluated against an historical background:

- Age of illiteracy before 1540:** very few could read, no inscription on tombstones.
- Age of fear c1540 to 1670:** population living under the ever-present threat of imminent death from causes not yet understood such as smallpox, cholera and of course the plague. Epitaph was more important and the necessity to prepare for sudden earthly extinction.
- Age of Symbolism c1670 to 1775:** Emblems of imagery more prominent than decorated features but stones were small. From 1720 to 1775 churchyard sculpture reached its golden age, blossoming into a great production of symbolic emblems – Only a 50-year period.
- Age of decoration c1775 to 1825:** Decorative features, especially the Urn were more prominent than emblems or symbolism
- Age of unreality c1825 to 1890:** The Victorian period that produced many magnificent memorials – the deceased did not die but simply “fell asleep”



Drawings by Carl Hogsden & Anouk Freyconon  
Text & Digital Photographs by Christopher G Swarbrooke  
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Memorial Stones to be found around the Old Parish Church of

**ST JOHN SUB CASTRO LEWES.**

**Monumental sculpture and engraving fall into three main categories: -**

**Personal** – Decorative motives concerned with the expression of personal identity such as Heraldic shields and motifs made up from elements of the names of the person commemorated. These were the first to appear on stones, with regular occurrences from the early 16th century to the end of the 17<sup>th</sup>.

**Symbolic – known as Vanities** - split into two categories –

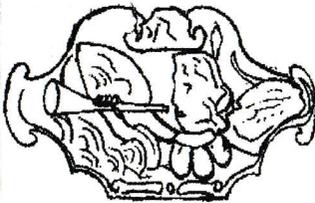
**Mortality:** Vanities were intended to be reminders of mortality, and may refer directly to the funeral such as the coffin or to the future of the physical body such as a skull, the gravediggers tools, skull and crossed bones, deaths dart or even a snuffed candlestick); or more obliquely to humanity and earthly things such as an hourglass, sundial or an axe chopping down a tree.

**Immortality:** The **Cherub** was one of series of motives representing immortality together with the **Anchor** (symbol of hope), **Crown of glory** (worn by Christians on their entry into Heaven), **Trumpets** (as played on the day of Judgment), **Palm Leaves** (symbol of the passion). The other aspect was the resurrection which often took the form of elaborate compositions such as angels lifting a coffin lid, or winged cherubs sometimes blowing trumpets. Although the skull appeared from the second half of the 16th century, most of the vanity motifs did not occur until the mid 17th century. Several early modern memorials were decorated with elaborate allegorical scenes depicting the fate of the body and soul. Christian symbols, such as crosses, angels, books, scrolls, doves and the letters IHS occur surprisingly infrequently, and not at all until the middle of the 19th century, probably because of the Catholic associations of such symbols.

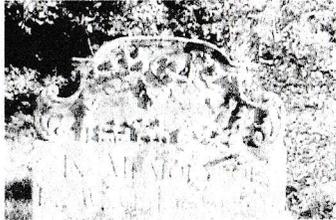
**Ornamental** – decoration ranging from foliage and flower motifs, (i.e. ivy, laurel and any general foliage of a dubious botanical accuracy), garlands, draperies, etc. to folded linen, strap and ribbon decoration and architectural elements such as columns, pediments and figures. Romantic symbols (hearts and flowers), along with those which invoke the classical (pilasters and urns) have the longest distribution chronologically, from the 18th century to the early 20th century.

The churchyard adjacent to the Old Church (*on the right of the main footpath*) is rich in stones depicting some or all of the above symbols as shown overleaf:

St John Sub Castro Church - Monumental Sculptures

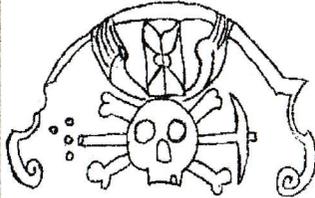
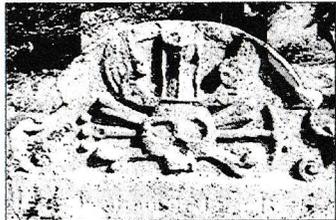


**No. 688**  
Mark Sharp  
Aged 65  
Feb 1703

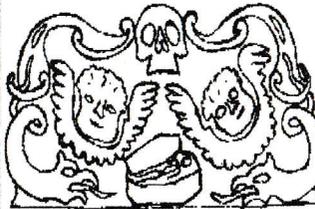


**No. 687**  
John & Sarah  
Ward  
Aged 75 / 76  
1717 / 18

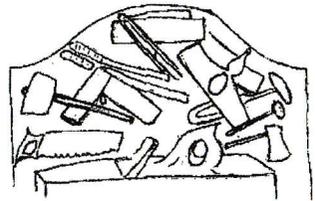
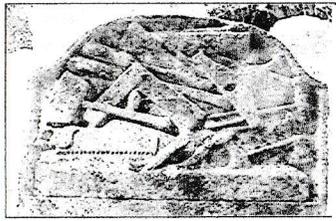
'Sheperd'



**No. 685**  
John Sharp  
Aged 58  
Nov 1737



**No. 640**  
Thomas Ridge  
Aged 24  
Feb 1735

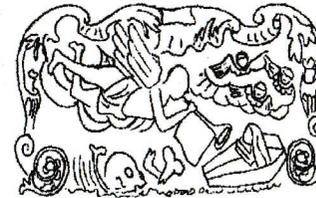


**No.743**  
Footstone of  
Mark Sharpe  
As above  
  
Tools of Trade

St John Sub Castro Church - Monumental Sculptures

**No. 743**  
Headstone of  
Mark Sharp  
Aged 71  
Nov 1743

'Carpenter'



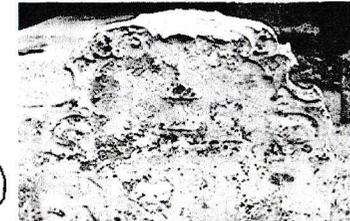
**No. 702**  
Nathaniel  
Taylor  
Aged 33  
Aug 1749

Wine Cooper



**No. 676**  
Mary Sharp  
Aged 63  
Aug 1753

(Wife of Mark)



**No. 679**  
Ann Chilton  
Aged 28  
April 1772



**No. 53**  
Sarah Hockham  
Aged 80  
Jun 1791

