

Bronze Casting of the Hands of Robert and Elizabeth Browning



Robert's Hand Holding Elizabeth's



Elizabeth's Hand Holding Robert's



Hosmer's inscription on Robert's wrist reading

*Hands of Robert and Elizabeth Barrett Browning
cast by
Harriet Hosmer Rome 1853*

The life-size hands were given to St Marylebone Parish Church on June 20th 2011 by Arthur Kincaid. Their history, as recounted by Mr Kincaid, is as follows:

"The hands are the work of American sculptress Harriet Hosmer (1830 – 1908) who knew Robert and Elizabeth during their life in Florence.

The hands were done from a cast, which means, I think, that every copy is technically an original. I first saw them at the Armstrong Browning library at Baylor University in Texas. In the face of the library saying they disapproved of proliferation of this item, I got permission to have a copy made, at the request of the curator there for Casa Guidi and a, at the same time, had one made for myself and my first wife, Margaret (Meg Douglas). We were both, by then, involved in the new Browning Society of London. I was editor of Browning Society Notes. We went to Basingstoke to pick the copies up.

Years later, when we separated, the hands went with Meg and we remained friends until her death in 2009 from cancer. Not long before her death, anticipating it, she gave them to me with the request that I seek out the most appropriate place to have them.

Our previous contact with St Marylebone Parish Church in connection with the Browning Society led me to think that – if the parish church did not already have a copy – it would be the most appropriate place for them, particularly since the Brownings were married there." Arthur Kincaid, 21st June 2011