

Madonna is memorial to his mother

A WALLASEY mother, one of the greatest benefactors to her parish of St. Peter and St. Paul, New Brighton, will be commemorated for all time in the new Stations of the Cross which her son has given to the church.

The mother, Mrs. Sarah Brabin, died in 1950. Both she and her husband were two of the most generous benefactors to the parish from 1915, and when she died her son, Mr. W. G. Brabin decided that his mother must never be forgotten.

He felt that the most

fitting memorial should be practical as well as beautiful and as the church had no Stations he decided on these.

Two years were spent searching the country for the right design and the right sculptor.

At last he met George Thomas — a young Catholic artist who was then struggling for recognition — and found that his work was just right.

Photograph used

As a lasting memorial to Mrs. Brabin, one of whose sons is Sir Daniel Brabin, the High Court judge, Thomas used her photograph as his model for the face of Our Lady.

On Thursday the Lord Mayor of Liverpool, Alderman D. J. Lewis and Lady Mayoress, Mrs. Lewis, were among the guests at the opening of an exhibition of the Stations at Liverpool's Bluecoat Chambers.

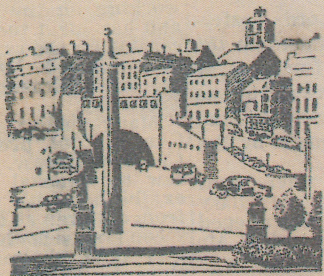
They will be on view for the next week before being erected at St. Peter and St. Paul's.



ABOVE: Sarah Brabin, benefactress of SS, Peter and Paul Church, New Brighton, is permanently commemorated in this face of Our Lady. RIGHT: sculptor George Thomas and donor Mr. W. G. Brabin, with one of the Stations as they are prepared for the public view.



CATHOLIC PICTORIAL
JUNE 10th 1962.



Knocking at pieces of stone yields more than dust

The copy of Evelyn Waugh's "A Handful of Dust," lying neglectedly in the studio of sculptor George Thomas, seemed yesterday to have acquired a symbolic significance. For in the last two years thirty-five-year-old Mr Thomas has chipped innumerable handfuls of dust from more than a ton of unyielding Portland stone.

And the results of his labours—fourteen relief carvings of the Stations of the Cross, destined for the Roman Catholic Church of St Peter and Paul, New Brighton—are being publicly exhibited in the gallery of the Bluecoat Chambers, Liverpool, from to-morrow.

The carvings, commissioned for the church by Mr W. G. Brabin, a wholesale butcher of New Brighton, are the first major work of this self-taught artist from Abergavenny who has made Liverpool his home for the past five years.

"A sculptor to-day has to rely on private commissions," he told me, "and very few of these are for secular works."

Found his aim

Mr Thomas, a chunky, untidy man with an abstracted air, came to sculpture by way of 12 years in the Royal Us. gallery and a period of aimless drifting. Falling under the spell of the work and family of Eric Gill, the famous sculptor and typographer, he experienced a sudden conversion.

"I started knocking at pieces of stone on my own, and then I realised this was for me." He worked in stonemasons' yards to



His first major commission completed, Mr George Thomas gets down to work on a small statuette of the Madonna and Child

gain experience of lettering, but he has developed his talent for carving entirely by himself.

His Stations of the Cross are strictly representational—"You can't expect people to stand on their heads to understand this sort of work"—and he keeps a firm check on the desire to

express his ideas in abstract forms.

"Before people will accept abstract work you have to prove to them that you have mastered the academic style"—a proof that the fluent lines and graceful compositions of his carvings amply supply.

Sculptor's work is her memorial

THESE Stations of the Cross, the work of George Thomas, are to be hung in the church of SS. Peter and Paul, New Brighton as a memorial to one of the parish's greatest benefactors—Mrs. Sarah Brabin, who died in 1950.

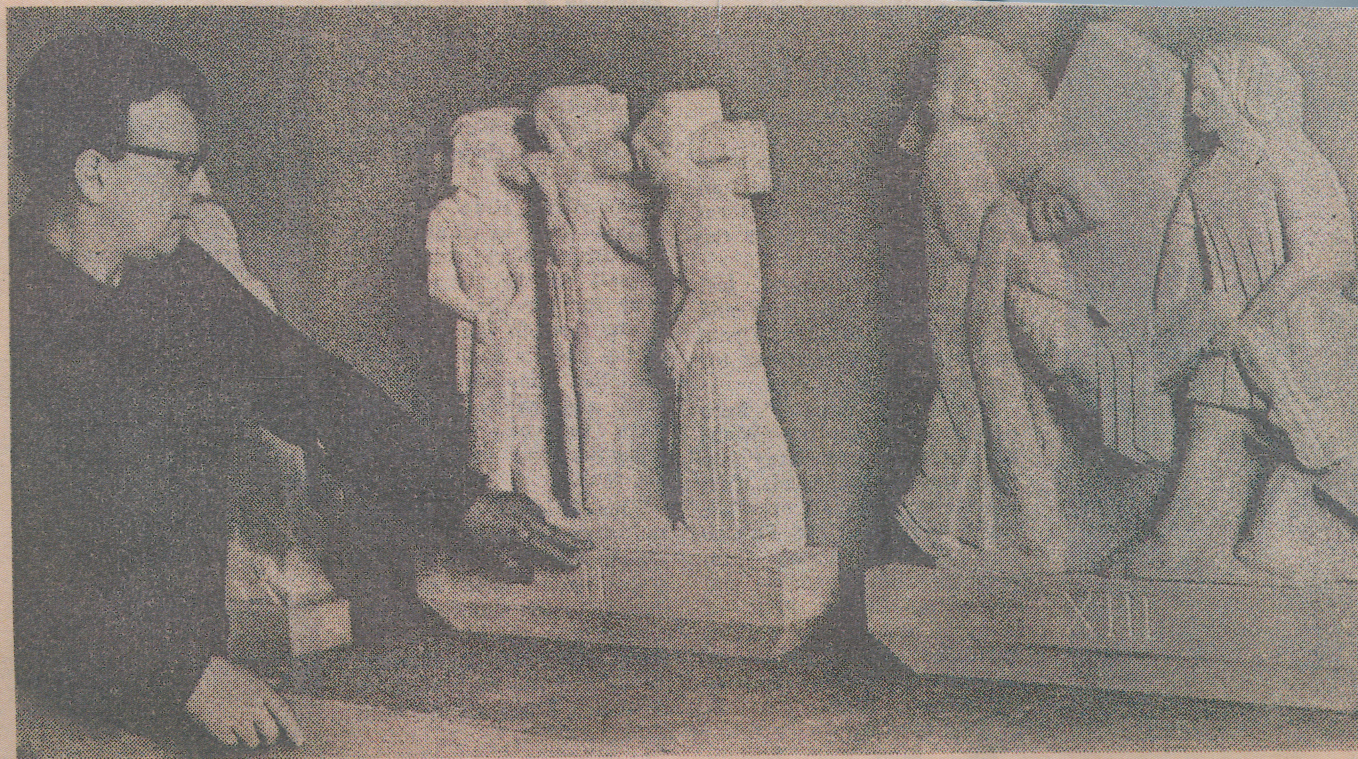
Her son, Mr W. G. Brabin, decided that as the church was without Stations of the Cross, these would be the most fitting memorial to his mother.

For two years he searched the country for the right design and the right sculptor.

He met Mr. George Thomas, a young Catholic artist and commissioned him to do the work.

As a lasting memorial to Mrs. Brabin, the sculptor used her photograph as the model for the face of Our Lady.

The Stations have been on view in Liverpool for the past week and are now due to be erected at SS. Peter and Paul.





Four, three, two, one . . . George Thomas in his studio.
(See "Bluecoat count-down.")

DAILY POST

JUNE 8. 67.

Bluecoat

count-down

Most artists pass through phases, and the Liverpool sculptor George Thomas is no exception. Only his current phase is one with a difference: he is passing through his blast-off period.

Which is why rockets will be a feature of his one-man exhibition at Liverpool's Bluecoat Chambers in September.

Fashioned from fibre glass, they have evolved from his previous interest in abstract

ARTIST IN HIS OWN RIGHT

By Patrick Cohen

GEORGE THOMAS, who is exhibiting in the Gallery in Bluecoats Chambers, Liverpool, his sculptural works of the Stations Of The Cross for SS. Peter and Paul, New Brighton, possesses a mature sense of the inner laws of his craft. For, probably more than any other art, the art of creating bas-reliefs demands a particular discipline and restraint. Any transgression into the pictorial or any applied exuberance of movement (the worst example of this is perhaps Carpeaux's famous Dance for the Paris Opera House) would be objectionable to our modern, rather chastened senses.

But Thomas is also an artist in his own right. He has an idiosyncratic sense of discovery, comparable with an original poet who chooses to stick to the rules of prosody. This struck me particularly when looking at his IXth

Station where he succeeds in conveying a feeling of the crushing weight of the Destiny of Man more so than that of Our Lord's own agony and humiliation.

The IXth Station is magnificently conceived, though I found a few details in this work a little too amorphous. I have a great sympathy for the IIIrd with its secretly implied poetry: a Roman soldier's face is covered by one arm of the Cross. Is he weeping?

His XIVth Station is a surprisingly confident statement. Here apparently Thomas has freed himself totally from the influence of his master Gill. It has the merit of every great piece of sculpture: the play of light and shade being pre-conceived as an integral part of the whole.

I think that some people standing before the most sacred scene of the Death on the Cross, would be astonished by the extreme tranquillity and "architecture" in Thomas's concept of this event. Nowadays the mind of the modern art lover is more geared toward the expressionist approach, or when it comes to the Old Master to the searing manner of a Matthias Gruenewald. There seems something in Thomas's nature that abhors this self-committing and committing approach. This he has in common with most of the great artists of the Mediterranean area, i.e., those artists to whom we owe our finest legacy.

THE CATHOLIC
HERALD
FRIDAY JUNE 15th