

Bishop Mews – when did he acquire his facial injury?

The following question comes up from time to time: when did Bishop Mews acquire the injury to his cheek which he covered with a silk black patch? Some suggest that he acquired the injury at the Battle of Nasby (1645), whilst fighting for King Charles I in the Civil War, others suggest it was at the Battle of Sedgemoor (6 July 1685) during the Monmouth rebellion. Examination of engravings suggest that the injury may have been acquired before the Battle of Sedgemoor.

The image below is dated c. 1684 and shows Mews with his patch.



David Loggan, plumbago on vellum, circa 1684, NPG 1872, © National Portrait Gallery, London

(Source: <https://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/portrait/mw04386/Peter-Mews?LinkID=mp03066&role=sit&rNo=1>. Image accessed 22/02/23)

Reproduced under Creative Commons Licence: <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/>

The next image is of the Order of procession at the coronation of James II (23 April 1685), showing the queen, Mary of Modena, under a canopy, with various attendants, including the Bishops of London and Winchester. Mews is to the right of the queen (wearing elaborate dress) and his face bears the black patch.

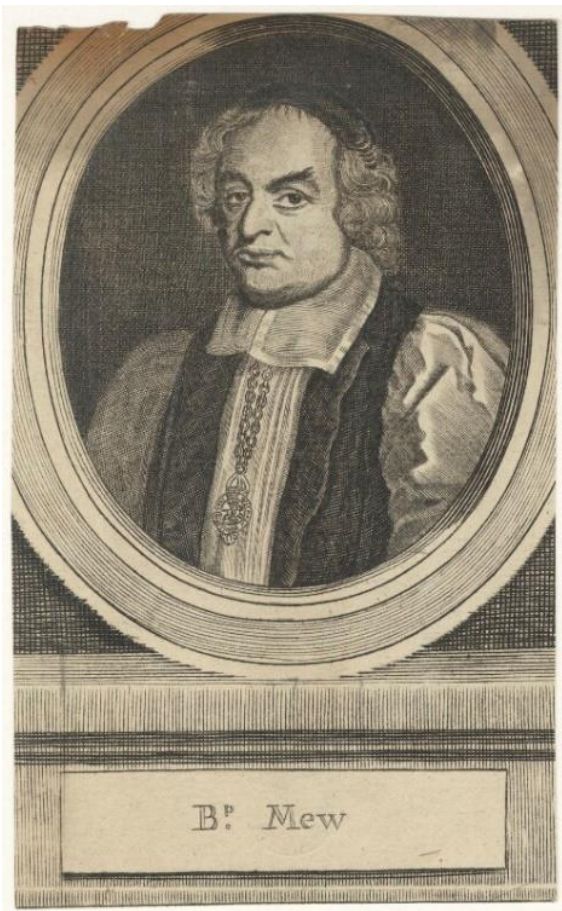


© The Trustees of the British Museum. Asset number 826602001. (London, 1687). Engraving

(Source: https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/P_1849-0315-124 image accessed 22/02/23)

We have to be careful in interpreting these images as definitively showing that Mews received his injury before the Battle of Sedgemoor. The first image is dated c. 1684, ie before the battle of Sedgemoor, but it is dated as 'circa'. The second image is dated 1687 but records an event also prior to the Battle of Sedgemoor. Had the engraver of the Coronation Procession seen Mews at the time of the event or not until he engraved it and thus after the Battle of Sedgemoor?

The image overleaf is dated to mid 18th century and shows Mews with no patch.



© National Portrait Gallery, London, NPG D29533, after Unknown artist, line engraving, mid 18th century

(Source: <https://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/portrait/mw137002/Peter-Mews?LinkID=mp03066&role=sit&rNo=3>. Image accessed 22/02/23)

Reproduced under Creative Commons Licence: <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/>

The following are links to other images of Peter Mews but are undated and therefore of no help in pinning down when he acquired his injury.

<https://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/person/mp03066/peter-mews>