

Post-Reformation Mausolea in Suffolk

Study Weekend for The Royal Archaeological Institute and the Mausolea & Monuments Trust, 16-18 May 2014

Blessed with glorious weather, the weekend was a huge success, starting with a visit to the remains of the mediaeval Charnel in the graveyard east of St Mary's Parish Church, Bury St Edmunds, where Dr Julian Litten ([Fig.1](#)), leader and planner of the Weekend, spoke eloquently about the building's fragments and its attached memorials, including that to Sarah Lloyd, hanged in 1800 for admitting her lover into her mistress's house for purposes of robbery: having fallen 'by the allurements of Vice and the treacherous snares of Seduction, she suffer'd a Just but Ignominious Death'. The stone records her supposedly last contrite words: 'may my example be a warning to Thousands'. Other tablets commemorate Henry Cockton (1807-53), whose fame rests on his novel, *Valentine Vox the Ventriloquist*, which appeared in instalments 1839-40 under the pseudonym 'Sherry', but is largely forgotten today, as is his *Sylvester Sound the Somnambulist* (1844), though both titles remained in print until the 1920s. His writings brought him little financial gain, and he was obliged to run a pub, the *Seven Stars* in Bury, but was ruined by unsuccessful speculation in a malting business. He died penniless, but the Royal Literary Fund paid his widow £25, and in 1856 a public appeal was launched to aid Cockton's surviving family. The memorial was erected in 1884. Another memorial on the surviving south wall of the Charnel commemorates Mary Haselton (1776-89), a young Roman Catholic, who, while in 'the Act of Prayer, was instantaneously killed by a flash of lightning' ([Fig.2](#)), and on the west wall is a tablet to Martha Gosnold (d.1598), daughter of Captain Bartholomew Gosnold (fl.1572-1607), the explorer and one of the founders of Jamestown, Virginia. Martha's Vineyard was named after her ([Fig.3](#)).

Although the remaining parts of the Charnel are not easy to read (Dr Litten appositely observed of the building that it looked 'terribly tired'), it appears to have consisted of a crypt where the bones were stacked, over which was a chapel where Masses would be said for the repose of the souls of those whose remains lay there. It may have been designed and built (c.1279-1301) by John of Northwold. Inside the walls is the Markham vault, a simple brick structure.

Appetised by this visit, the party (consisting mostly of the RAI, with 6 MMT members) repaired to the Athenaeum for a meal, where Dr Roger Bowdler, of English Heritage, gave a stimulating, amusing, fluent, erudite, post-prandial lecture on Post-Reformation British Mausolea, piquantly illustrated with numerous fascinating images, so the day ended on this high note ([Fig.4](#)).

The Saturday trip was by coach, departing from Bury, but the proposed visit to the C18 Reynolds Mausoleum at Felsham was abandoned, as it is ruined and stands in the middle of a field. However, the FitzGerald Mausoleum in St Michael's churchyard, Boulge (1861) compensated for this. In the Gothic style, of knapped flint with limestone dressings, it was designed by William Gilbee Habershon (1818/19-91) and Edward Habershon (fl. 1850-1901) (Alfred Robert Pite [1832-1911] did not become a partner of W.G. Habershon until 1863), and has a pyramidal roof of stone, cut to

resemble slates ([Fig.5](#)). It contains the bodies of members of the family of John Purcell FitzGerald (1775-1852), but the cadaver of Edward FitzGerald (formerly Purcell—1809-83), the curmudgeonly poet and translator of *the Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám*, lies beside the Mausoleum beneath a fine pink-granite ledger, possibly because of the family's attitude to his homosexuality ([Fig.6](#)). Around the Mausoleum is a finely made iron railing with gates, a fortunate survivor from the idiotic wartime depredations that were more concerned with social engineering and propaganda than with making armaments or anything else, because low-grade iron is useless for such purposes. The Church itself was extended to designs by the Habershons in the 1850s, and in 1867 further enlarged to designs by Habershon & Pite. The FitzGeralds are commemorated by several Gothic-Revival memorials ([Fig.7](#)), and there is some excellent stained-glass by Charles Eamer Kempe (1837-1907).

Next on the list came St Andrew's Church, Little Glemham, where the Mausoleum of the North family projects from the north side of the building. There appears, according to the monument (by William Holland [*fl.* 1704-18]) to Catherine North (d.1715) in the chancel to have been a mausoleum (or perhaps only a burial-vault) on the site at least as early as the beginning of C18, but the present structure above ground is a brick box with a Greek Doric interior and segmental vaulted ceiling, given its present appearance in c.1810 when Dudley Long North (1748-1829) caused it to be erected to designs perhaps by John Harvey (*fl.* 1785-c.1835) to function as a family pew above the vault itself. Unfortunately, the entire mausoleum/family pew was under restoration during the visit, so the statue (1833) of North by John Gibson (1790-1866) could not be seen, nor could the 1929 north window by Margaret Edith Aldrich Rope (1891-1988), and even the exterior was shrouded in scaffolding and coverings. There are several fine funerary monuments in the Church.

An agreeable luncheon was laid on at the Lion, Little Glemham, a hostelry where the local ales are well-kept and delicious, and the little garden to the rear offered a delightful venue for a welcome break in glorious sunshine—Summer had indeed arrived to bless the Weekend.

Soon the party was off again, this time to Hacheston, where the Church of All Saints stands in a capacious churchyard. Inside the building is a Gothic wall-monument to Walter Arcedeckne by Gaffin of London, and it was with the Arcedeckne (pronounced 'archdeacon') family that the visit was concerned. With connections in Ireland and Jamaica, some members of the family were of mixed race, yet this does not seem to have done them much harm at all, and one member of the family is commemorated in a fine window by Kempe. In the churchyard stands the rectangular Mausoleum erected by Chaloner Arcedeckne (1743-1809), whose mother was Elizabeth Kersey (d. c.1743), of African extraction. Of white Suffolk bricks, the side elevations have blind semicircular-headed arcades, and the end elevations have recessed segmental arches of gauged brickwork ([Fig.8](#)). A delightful little building, it was once surrounded with iron railings, and appears to have been designed by John White (1747-1813), who worked on Glevering Hall (1792-4) for Chaloner Arcedeckne.

Then came an enchanting surprise, set, not in a churchyard, but in the front garden of a house in Framlingham. This was the tiny Mausoleum ([Fig.9](#)) of Thomas Mills (1623-1703), a Dissenter, who settled in Framlingham as a wheelwright's assistant, later inheriting the business, and, through a fortunate marriage to a wealthy widow, consolidated his fortune which continues to this day to benefit others. Not wishing to be interred in the Anglican burial-ground, he chose to be deposited in a tomb-house (it looks more like a Gothic garden-building than a funereal structure) on the site of the wheelwright's shop where he had first been employed. He lies under an altar-tomb on which is a stone slab inscribed with very fine lettering recording Mills's benevolence in founding the almshouses near by as well as gifts to six other towns. Also commemorated is the name of Mills's servant, William Mayhew ([Fig.10](#)), who was interred there as well, without any 'office or form', his body wrapped in linen, in 1713. The footprint of the building (and possibly at least some of the brick walls) would seem to be of 18th- or early-19th-century date, but as the structure is hidden under stucco, and the style of the mouldings, etc., is entirely early-19th-century Gothic, the building was probably largely rebuilt on its original foundations in the first decade of the 19th century, perhaps on the centenary of Mills's or Mayhew's death? The style of the lettering on the slab is certainly of very early 18th-century date, but the lettering on the external inscription-panel would seem to point to the early 1800s.

Thanks to the promptings of Dr Susan Wilson, the coach stopped in the main square of Framlingham in order to permit the purchase of ice-creams, a windfall of considerable magnitude for the startled proprietor of an excellent ice-cream emporium, whose products were of excellent quality ([Fig.11](#)). As it was a very warm day, this boon was much appreciated by the party, some members of which also took the opportunity to buy some curious ephemera, including a large black artificial flower, immediately christened 'Triffid', selected, apparently, for future decoration on a hat.

Another Garden-Mausoleum was visited, this time that of Absalom Feavearyear (c.1788-1852), Carpenter, at Wingfield. A simple rectangular brick building ([Fig.12](#)), considerably distressed by tree-roots, rabbit-burrows, and other problems, it resembles nothing more than a garden-outhouse, with fewer architectural pretensions than Mills's charming Gothic confection, but the structure needs urgent attention and careful restoration, probably a rebuild (if lime-mortar had been used, the bricks could probably mostly be saved, and once secure foundations were laid, the structure could quickly go up again to shelter the headstones within). There are, in fact, three such stones, and a sculpture in low relief showing Feavearyear working with an axe, his house in the background with one single-storey wing having an open door. Feavearyear's headstone is in the centre of one wall opposite the door, and is flanked by two others ([Fig.13](#)): one for his son (also Absalom) and the other for Thirza, the son's wife (also his cousin) from 1840, neither of whom is entombed within, for they are interred in the local Anglican churchyard. The elder Feavearyear appears to have had a quarrel with the incumbent of the Parish (possibly over payment of tithes), hence his deposit on his own land, independent of any church. References on the headstone to 'conflict' with the 'world, the flesh, and the devil' suggest some sort of problem, as does the oblique nod to the dens of thieves, moneylenders, and

merchants in the Temple, pointing, perhaps, to dislike of the incumbent almost certainly prompted by financial matters.

After this very curious little building, the present writer suggested that a visit to St Andrew's Church at Wingfield should not be missed, for it contains the exceptionally fine and lavishly decorated south chapel of St Margaret, as well as the funerary monuments of the de la Pole and Wingfield families. Although definitely NOT post-Reformation, these wonderful mediaeval artefacts in an architectural setting of considerable splendour were greatly appreciated by the group, and comments about the diversion were very positive.

The last port of call for the day was the large Church of St Mary the Virgin at Redgrave, set high on an eminence in a capacious churchyard. Inside is an impressive array of hatchments and an important series of monuments, including the tall, outstanding black-and-white marble tomb-chest of indisputably Netherlandish appearance by Bernard Janssen (*fl.*1600-27) which supports effigies of Sir Nicholas Bacon, Bart. (c.1543-1624) and his wife, Anne Butts (d.1616) made by Nicholas Stone (c.1587-1647) in 1616 ([Fig.14](#)). Stone also did the tablet to Dorothy Lady Gawdy (d. 1621), but the visit was primarily to inspect the Bacon/Holt Mausoleum erected in 1626 on the north side of the chancel by order of Sir Edmund Bacon, Bart. (d.1649) to serve as a family pew/mausoleum, one of several such structures in East Anglia of similar date ([Fig.15](#)). The opening to the pew/mausoleum was filled in when the huge Baroque monument to Sir John Holt (1642-1710), Chief Justice of King's Bench from 1689, was erected. Holt acquired the Redgrave Estate in 1702, and had the coffins of the Bacons transferred to a new vault at the west end of the church. The pew became redundant when the monument (by Thomas Green [c.1659-c.1730] of Camberwell) was put up (1715-17): this is essentially an architectural composition, with Holt clad in his judicial robes flanked by the allegorical Virtues, Justice and Truth, unconvincingly shown in *contrapposto* pose, where the sculptor's skills in anatomical exactitude are shown to be deficient, though the gambolling cherubs above are rather jolly ([Fig.16](#)). Access to the vault below was through the chancel-floor, and many of the party descended the ladder to view the structure: this was facilitated by the generosity of the surviving Holt-Wilson descendant, who came to meet the group at the Church. Supper was laid on by the locals and served in the Church: this was greatly appreciated. The evening ended with the drive back to Bury in the gathering dusk.

Sunday began as a scorching morning (the present writer had to resort to having his snuff-handkerchief knotted and placed on his head to protect it from the sun [[Fig.17](#)]) in the Abbey grounds at Bury, where the party saw the remains of what had been one of the most ambitious monastic establishments in the country, containing the huge and spectacular Shrine of St Edmund, King and Martyr (841-69/70), whose relics are now enshrined within the Basilica of St-Sernin, Toulouse. Following a group-photograph taken in the centre of the remains of the crypt, Dr Litten expounded on the other Saints once entombed at Bury, including St Jurmin or Germinus (d.c.750), St Botolph (d.680), St Saba (or Sebert) (d.616), St Nicasius (d.407), and 'child-martyr', St Robert of Bury St Edmunds, whose murder in 1181 furnished an excuse for a pogrom against innocent Jews (an unpleasantly not infrequent occurrence in the 12th century,

as in, e.g., Lincoln). In the course of the morning Tim Tatton-Brown revealed that despite important archaeological probings carried out some years ago, none of that material had actually been disseminated, and he lamented the fact that the whole site had never been fully investigated in a methodical way and the results made available in publications. Such intelligence shocked the party to the extent that a ripple of disbelief was distinctly audible.

After luncheon, the last Mausoleum to be visited was again a brick protrusion attached to the north side of All Saints, Boxted, a beautifully sited Church with a delightful churchyard from which stunning views could be had looking eastwards down into the valley ([Fig.18](#)). Unfortunately, although arrangements had been made to get into the building at an appointed time, it was locked, and all attempts to raise help were in vain, so what could have been the high point of the trip, the Poley monuments and pew, could not be viewed ([Fig.19](#)).

All in all, it was a hugely enjoyable weekend, packed with good fellowship and interesting and beautiful things. Hearty thanks were given to Dr Litten and others for organising an informative programme packed with interesting things.

Professor James Stevens Curl MRIA, FSA (Joint Patron of the Mausolea & Monuments Trust) **27.v.MMXIV**

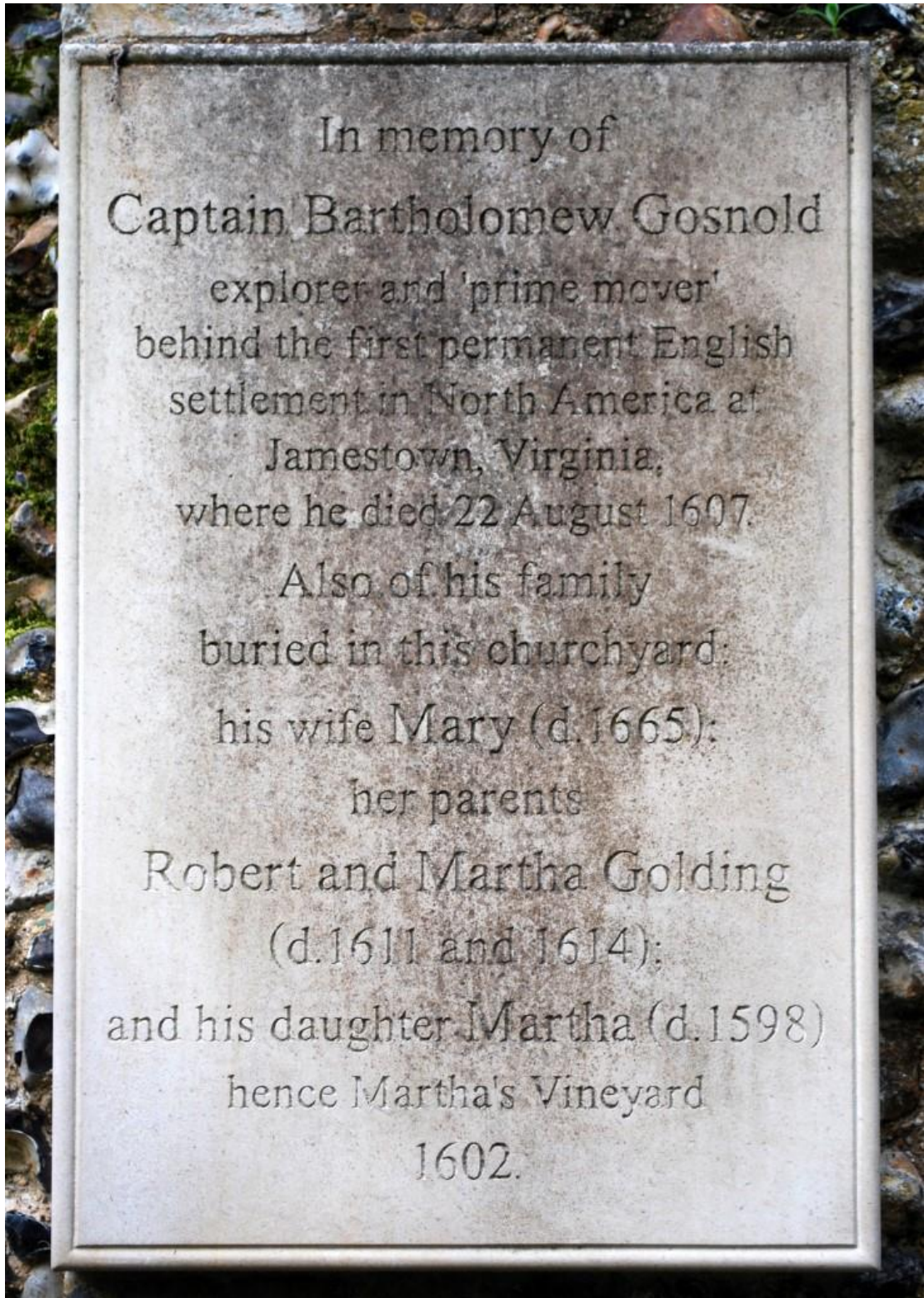
All photographs courtesy of Professor Stevens Curl



Fig 1 Dr Julian Litten holding forth outside the Charnel



Fig 2 Memorial to Mary Haselton, killed by lightning



In memory of
Captain Bartholomew Gosnold
explorer and 'prime mover'
behind the first permanent English
settlement in North America at
Jamestown, Virginia,
where he died 22 August 1607.
Also of his family
buried in this churchyard:
his wife Mary (d. 1665):
her parents
Robert and Martha Golding
(d. 1611 and 1614):
and his daughter Martha (d. 1598)
hence Martha's Vineyard
1602.

Fig 3 Memorial to Captain Bartholomew Gosnold and family



Fig 4 Dr Roger Bowdler speaking in the Athenaeum after dinner



Fig 5 FitzGerald vault at Boulge



Fig 6 Grave of Edward FitzGerald



Fig 7 Gothic Revival memorials to the FitzGerald family at Boulge



Fig 8 Arcedeckne Mausoleum at Hacheston



Fig 9 Mills Mausoleum at Framlingham



Fig 10 Inscription on the Mills Mausoleum to William Mayhew



Fig 11 Members of the group in Framlingham



Fig 12 Feavearyear Mausoleum at Wingfield



Fig 13 Interior of the Feavearyear Mausoleum



Fig 14 Monument to Sir Nicholas Bacon and his wife by Nicholas Stone in Redgrave Church



Fig 15 Exterior of the Bacon/Holt Mausoleum at Redgrave



Fig 16 Baroque monument of Sir John Holt by Thomas Green in Redgrave Church



Fig 17 James Stevens Curl in the remains of the Abbey at Bury St Edmunds



Fig 18 Poley Mausoleum and part of the north aisle of All Saints Church, Boxted, showing the valley beyond



Fig 19 Dr Litten and some members of the party in Boxted Churchyard