

MMT News

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Newsletter of The Mausolea and Monuments Trust, Registered Charity No 1063416

The Heathcote Mausoleum is one of the five buildings owned by the Mausolea and Monuments Trust. We are delighted to print a short history of the building, accompanied by photographs – see below. The MMT has recently engaged the services of an architect who is drawing up a schedule of works for the building, which will shortly go out to tender. We welcome all contributions, large or small, to help pay for repairs to this eloquent edifice.

The Heathcote Mausoleum

The old church crypt at Hursley, Hampshire (now sealed off) contains the remains of Richard Cromwell and his family plus a number of other Parliamentarian families. Thomas Heathcote bought the estate off the Cromwells in 1712. He thought the old church crypt was too small to accommodate *his* family so in 1771 he had the Mausoleum built in the churchyard. Those Heathcotes already in the crypt were transferred.

On entering the Mausoleum there are 35 spaces on each side, left and right; 38 are filled, each with an inscription, one of which is to Vice Admiral Francis Drake who died 1787 – he married an Elizabeth Heathcote. In the floor is a memorial to the Rev. Thomas Heathcote who died in 1811 and his wife Letitia, who died in 1802.



The Heathcote Mausoleum with Keble's tomb in the foreground

There is an anomaly with the inscription for William Heathcote 3rd Bt. According to the book "The Family of Heathcote", 1899, William was born 21 June 1746 which would make his age on death 73 not 72.

The family funeral hatchment was at one time affixed to the inside of the south wall. It was taken into the church and placed above the Victorian memorial to the 5th Bt. under the tower.

Thomas Heathcote's brother Samuel gave instructions that on his death he be

buried at double the depth, the grave diggers paid accordingly, within a few yards of the Mausoleum "which will be more snug than being pushed into one of those pigeon holes of that horrid place". His memorial can be seen on the east wall of the building. Other members of the family must have had similar views because there are twelve Heathcotes buried in various parts of the churchyard.



View of the mausoleum showing the domical form of the lead roof

Sir William, 5th Bt. died in 1881 and is interred in the family mausoleum. His widow sold the Estate to Joseph Baxendale, died in 1901 and was also interred in the mausoleum. There have been three internments since that date.

The Rev. Evelyn Heathcote	1908
Selina, the second daughter of Sir William Heathcote	1916
Helena, the third daughter of Sir William Heathcote	1925

Martin Waldren and Stan Rawden

A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Cemetery

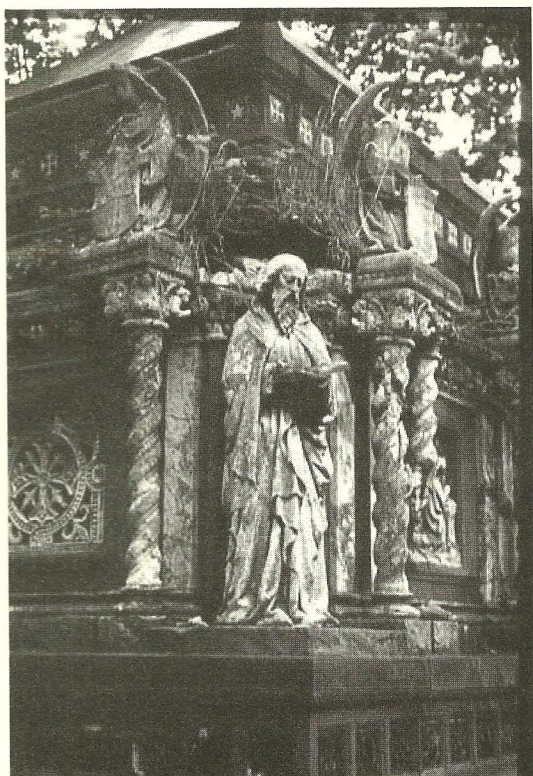
When I tell people what I do for a living I get one of two reactions. They either tell me how much they envy me, or else they question my sanity.

As Caseworker for the Mausolea and Monuments Trust, I spend a lot of my working hours in graveyards. I photograph mausolea, make notes of what condition they are in, and try to find out information about their architects, buildings and occupants. All of this information is then written up for the Gazetteer.

People sometimes get a very odd idea of what my job involves. I suppose it's understandable. I've been asked whether I work in a crypt. That's not quite how I'd describe the MMT office! Someone even asked me whether I wear a black cloak and fangs. Perhaps this wasn't the ideal moment to mention the evening I spent watching bats in Kensal Green Cemetery.

I soon learned that the main requisites for the job are strong boots and a sturdy pair of jeans. It's amazing how many mausolea are surrounded by a sea of mud or are knee-deep in nettles. Many of the cemeteries I visit have notices warning that the graves are unsafe. I sometimes wonder how I'd explain it to my doctor if I injured myself falling over a gravestone or got hit on the head by a falling gargoyle.

I've got used to comments from baffled gravediggers ("Here again are you, love?") and tactful enquiries from suspicious security guards ("Can I help you, Madam? I notice you've been wandering around this cemetery for some time ..."). I spent so long in one churchyard that an anxious curate asked me if I was in any trouble and whether I needed to see a priest. An optimistic youth once tried to proposition me in an East End cemetery, but I politely declined his offer. On another occasion I was peering into a vandalised mausoleum when I heard a car slow down on the road behind me. I turned round to see two policemen watching me intently as they drove slowly past. When they saw my camera, they decided I was a harmless eccentric and drove off.



A detail of the Berens Mausoleum in West Norwood Cemetery

There can't be many people who've been shut in a cemetery in the course of their

job, but once I was just that little bit too late getting to the cemetery gates. Luckily I wasn't alone – one of the crematorium staff was waiting forlornly at the gate too. We were about to phone the caretaker for help when we realised that a gang of teenagers were waiting outside the gates with cans of lager, determined to get in for a secret drinking session. Initiative was called for! Lying through our teeth, we told them that another entrance half a mile down the road might be open for them, then made our escape.

Then there was the time I got locked in a cemetery loo. With the Chapel of Rest one side of me and a row of new-dug graves the other, I didn't dare shout "Help! I'm shut in! Get me out of here!" for fear of giving some unwary mourner a heart attack.

But there have been lots of pleasant experiences. London cemeteries are havens for wildlife. Tower Hamlets Cemetery is now a nature reserve, Kensal Green has owls, bats and foxes, and Abney Park even has a hedgehog-spotting scheme. An almost-tame fox followed me around Willesden Jewish Cemetery, and I often see dragonflies, butterflies and all kinds of birds. On a sunny summer day, it's the best job in the world – though it sounds a little ambiguous when I say I'd rather be in a cemetery than stuck in an office all day.

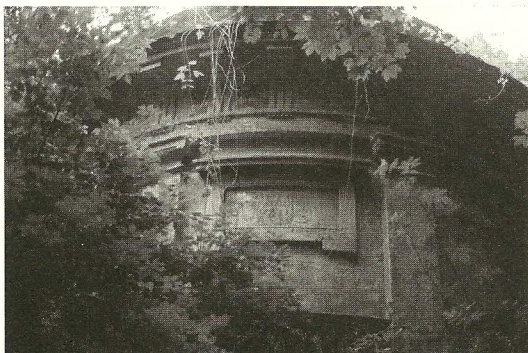
I even have a good excuse to visit a pub as part of my work. Not that I need an excuse, but the Sassoon Mausoleum in Brighton is now disused, and has been converted into a bar. Given that the MMT office is in Hanbury Street, it seems appropriate that the pub's name is the Hanbury Arms.

Chris Willis

Our Chairman has suggested we have an item devoted to "miserable Mausolea" in each issue of our Newsletter.

Raikes Mausoleum, East Riding of Yorkshire

Robert Raikes (1765-1837) was a Hull banker who lived at Welton Hall. He built the mausoleum for himself and his family in 1818. It is a fine classical building, cylindrical in form, with crisply cut detail. There are some fifty Georgian mausolea in England the majority of which are relatively plain rectangular structures with low-pitched roofs and pediments. The number of those which imitate the more unusual forms of ancient Roman tombs is far smaller. The Raikes mausoleum is one such and, for this reason, of particular interest.



The Raikes Mausoleum, Welton Dale, East Yorks

In 1972 Pevsner described it as "overlooking a charming dell", but it is now totally surrounded with trees whose roots are undermining the structure. The steps are already at crazy angles and if something is not done soon the rest of the building will begin to fail. Letters have been sent to English Heritage, the

Conservation Officer for the East Riding, and a member of the Raikes family. We will report any news in our next issue.

Book Review

"Mausoleums" by Lynne Pearson
A Shire Book, 2001. Price: £3.50

The thoughtful essay at the beginning of this book provides a concise and highly readable account of the history of mausoleums. It starts of course with the tomb of King Mausolos of Halicarnassos but ends less predictably with the virtual memorials now being designed on the internet. Interestingly, Dr Pearson sees the construction of the earliest mausoleums in Scotland and England in the 16th and 17th centuries respectively, as the "first stage in the long drawn out process of retrieving death from the clutches of the church."

The gazetteer which follows provides the reader with a tempting selection of mausoleums scattered throughout England, Scotland and Wales. Those illustrated show the wide variety of architectural forms and decorative details employed in the design of such monuments. It is this, and the ideas they seek to convey, that makes their study so rewarding. For whether the symbolism is restrained and formal or bold and flamboyant, mausoleums are the most personal of buildings. Anyone with an interest in the subject will find this small book an excellent introduction to funerary buildings and the part they play in the commemoration of the dead.

Teresa Sladen