

MMT NEWS

Issue No.12 June 2005 The Mausolea and Monuments Trust

This year will be an excellent one for the MMT. The restoration of two mausolea in our care is due to be completed.

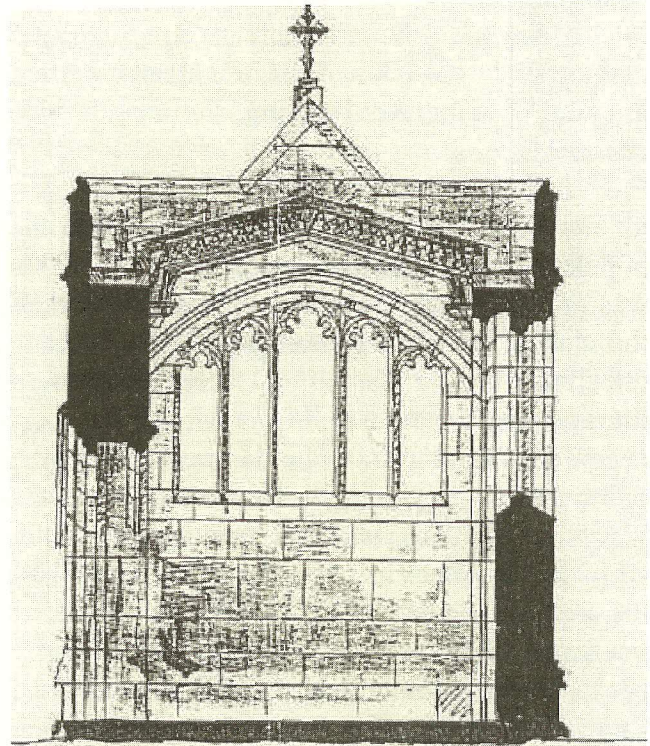
To the right is an original drawing of the Sacheverell Bateman Mausoleum at Morley in Derbyshire. This has been restored in memory of our foundress, Dr Jill Allibone.

The work, which has cost more than £60,000, has been funded by donations from her family and friends, as well as the generous help from English Heritage, the Glaziers Trust and the Barbara Whatmore Charitable Trust.

This achievement will be celebrated on

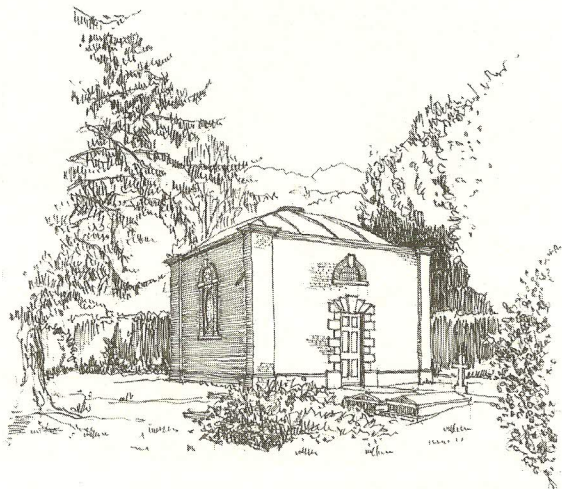
SATURDAY 2nd of JULY

There will be a short ceremony at 1.30 p.m.



Sacheverell Bateman Mausoleum, Morley

2005: THE MMT RESTORES TWO MAUSOLEA



Heathcote Mausoleum, Hursley, Hampshire

2005 will also see the repair of the roof and other work at the Heathcote Mausoleum, Hursley, in Hampshire. See drawing on left by Alan Coombes. Almost £50,000 has been raised by the MMT from a number of sources. These include major donations from Winchester City Council, Hampshire County Council, The Manifold Trust, Hampshire and the Islands Trust, and the Pilgrim Trust.

An Open Day will be held on
SATURDAY, 16th of JULY

At the event there will be two short talks, followed by a tour of the Mausoleum led by Dr Julian Litten.

Please let us know if you are coming.

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AN ITALIAN ANGEL AND HER PROGENY

Anyone who is much given to visiting cemeteries in the UK will have noticed a certain amount of repetition among the angels one encounters.

There were few angels in British cemeteries until the 1880s. Partly, this was because the population of British cemeteries before the 1850s was predominantly Low Church and Dissenting; the closure of urban churchyards in that decade effectively forced the High Church population into the cemeteries. Angels were frequently perceived as a Roman Catholic theme (although the pioneer of angels in church monuments, Flaxman, was a Swedenborgian), and thus regarded with suspicion by much of the population; they owe their later popularity in large part to the effects of the Anglo-Catholic revival. But it was also partly because of the limitations, real or perceived, of English sculptors; the three-dimensional figure sculptures of angels one finds before the 1880s are usually crude by comparison with their successors.

One distinctive and immediately recognisable angel provides a good example of the way in which particular models spread. This is the angel that appears on the tomb of Francesco Oneto (1812-1878) in the Cimitero Staglieno in Genoa, erected there in 1882. It is a female angel, carved to reveal the voluptuousness of its human model, with the suggestion of a navel – rather in defiance of orthodoxy. The hair is ringleted, and covered with a sort of Phrygian cap. The angel holds a trumpet, and stands in the posture of one waiting for an indeterminate period; her expression is contemplative and withdrawn.

The sculptor of the angel was Giulio Monteverde (1837-1917), who spent most of his career in Rome. Monteverde was a very successful sculptor, with an international clientele; one of his sculptures was commissioned for the chapel of the Recoleta Cemetery in Buenos Aires. There are other good pieces of his in the Staglieno, most notably the Celle monument of 1893, which shows a female figure struggling in the grasp of a



The Oneto angel, in the Staglieno Cemetery in Genoa, by Giulio Monteverde

bronze figure of death, whose cavernous skull features can be discerned under a veiling garment. And in the Cimitero Generale in Torino there is his life-size marble portrait of the cemetery's designer Carlo Sada (1878), to show his skills at straightforward realism.

During the early years of the twentieth century, copies of the Oneto angel began to spread throughout Europe, indeed throughout the world. She can be found in Pisa, in Munich, in Monte Carlo, and no doubt many other places I have yet



Bellefontaine Cemetery, St Louis, Missouri

to look. In the Cementerio Chacarita in Buenos Aires, she stands atop a large mausoleum. In the Bellefontaine Cemetery in St Louis, Missouri, there are two versions of her: one in bronze, sans trumpet, and within sight of that, a marble copy inside a mausoleum, this time wingless and no longer immediately apparent as an angel. The story that was told me in St Louis is that the sculpture depicted the beloved of the man in the mausoleum; apparently no one had looked further up the hill to see the same figure in a different material.

There is much about the distribution of Italian sculptures around Europe and the world that remains to be discovered, but as far as England was concerned there was a small group of companies with offices in London and Italy that offered memorial sculptures by catalogue. When these catalogues can be found today, in the archives of monumental masons' firms, they usually have their covers and title pages removed - presumably so that clients would not realize that their local masons were ordering their models from wholesalers. The activity of the wholesale firms explains the repetition of various angels in cemeteries around the UK.

The Oneto angel was offered, after the First World War, by ISMC - the Italian Sculptural Marble Company (formerly the Italian Marble Sculpture Company). In the 1920s the Oneto angel reached Britain, advertised in their catalogue as model no. 15592, and two copies of it were placed in London cemeteries: in Norwood (on the grave of a Dr King, in 1926), and in

Wandsworth.

The fortunes of the Oneto angel continued into the second half of the twentieth century. The most recent version that I have found was in the cemetery in Carrara. One might have thought that Carrara, as the centre of the Italian marble industry, would have a wonderful cemetery full of magnificent monuments, but no. While it may have the most majestic setting of any European cemetery, framed with views of the mountains that are gradually getting sliced up for the monumental industry, there are hardly any monuments that are sculpturally interesting. All the good stuff gets exported; it's the factory seconds that are left at home.

But here, in this unpropitious place, I found what I take to be the last gasp of the Oneto tradition. Our angel had shrunk to a figure only about two feet high, and the features, in common with much marble statuary produced today, looked as though they were the product not so much of the sculptor's chisel as of the mason's hammer. But in posture, accoutrements, and general design it was undoubtedly based on Monteverde's angel.

Brent Elliott



The angel in Norwood Cemetery



Tim Knox - A Word of Farewell

This is just a short note to take my leave of the Mausolea and Monuments Trust, of which I have been privileged to be a Trustee

for eight years and a Chairman for almost five. Back in 1997, I was one of those who met in Dr Jill Allibone's stylish flat in Gloucester Road, where, liberally supplied with red wine and surveyed by a dubious-looking African grey parrot, we founded the MMT. The MMT was Jill's idea, but she was adamant that the fledgling Trust should include some 'young ones' as she flatteringly termed us, so that they could 'carry on the good work when we are gone'. Sadly, Jill died in 1998, but under the Chairmanship of Teresa Sladen the MMT continued to steadily grow in size and influence. I took over in 2000, and have had tremendous fun raising funds to restore mausolea, organising events, and keeping the show on the road until the end of 2004, when I decided to step down.

In a way it is a bit of a wrench to give up the MMT, but I am a firm believer in only being involved in organisations if you can actually devote time to them. For the last two and a half years I have found it increasingly difficult to fit in my *gubernatorial* duties as Chairman, let alone attend meetings, so when I was offered my new job as the Director of Sir John Soane's Museum it seemed a good time to retire from the MMT. I shall miss the Trust – which I once described as 'perhaps Britain's most specialised architectural charity', with its host of mournfully decayed but deserving mausolea - but am reassured that I leave it in the very capable hands of Dr Thomas Cocke, who has been a resourceful and highly supportive Trustee of the MMT since 1998. Fresh champions, like the fresh young blood Jill *thought* she was getting in 1997, keep amenity societies like the MMT lively and relevant, so I have no doubt that Tom will re-galvanise our Trust with new

ideas and energy. I am grateful to him for taking the MMT on, as I am to all the Trustees and Committee members who keep the Trust going by their enthusiasm and hard work, particularly our past Chairman, Teresa Sladen, our Hon. Treasurer, Ian Johnson, and our Hon. Secretary, John St Brioc Hooper. It has been a pleasure being involved in the MMT and thank you so much for all your loyal support. I intend to keep in touch.

Tim Knox

And Hello! from Thomas Cocke

It is a great honour to follow Tim Knox as Chairman of the MMT. Even before I knew of the MMT's existence, I was aware through my job as Secretary of the Council for the Care of Churches that mausolea were a class of monuments extremely at risk but hard to help.

Statute is clear that they belong to the heirs at law of the deceased, so parishes are justified in turning their backs; yet few heirs know their responsibilities and fewer act on them. I had also organised the restoration of a substantial family vault in Cheshire, and discovered that some of the family would be happier with it bulldozed!

This is an exciting time for the MMT, as we progress from the heady but risky early days with little organisation, to the more settled existence with our office in Alan Baxter's building, and our Hon Sec John Hooper who keeps it all going.



Thomas Cocke

PLEASE JOIN and become a member of the MMT if you have not already done so. We greatly need and value your support.