

Guisse Mausoleum, Elmore Church, Glos.

# MAUSOLUS

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE MAUSOLEA & MONUMENTS TRUST

SUMMER 2012



The Mausolea & Monuments Trust  
70 Cowcross Street  
London EC1M 6EJ

020 7608 1441

[www.mausolea-monuments.org.uk](http://www.mausolea-monuments.org.uk)

The Guisse Mausoleum at Elmore, Gloucestershire, photographed before its dramatic collapse in 1915

ISSN 2042-3071

**Patrons**

Professor James Stevens Curl  
Tim Knox

**Honorary Secretary**

John St. Brioc Hooper

**Trustees**

**Roger Bowdler (Chairman)**

Carolyn Cocke (Membership Secretary)  
Piers Feltham  
Robert Heathcote  
Ian Johnson (Treasurer)  
Hannah Parham  
Gavin Stamp  
Pat Thomas  
Charles Wagner

*Mausolus* is published twice a year by the Mausolea & Monuments Trust. All contents © MMT 2012 except where otherwise indicated.

Members and others are warmly encouraged to contribute photos, news and features to:

**Ms. Hannah Parham**

**62 Lamb's Conduit Street**

**London WC1N 3LW**

[hannah.parham@insall-architects.co.uk](mailto:hannah.parham@insall-architects.co.uk)

# The (Dis)Guise(d) Mausoleum at Elmore

*Charles Wagner*

One of the aspirations of our foundress Jill Allibone was that the Mausolea & Monuments Trust should become owner of last resort for the unloved but important listed mausolea in Britain. Since Jill's untimely death in 1998, the Trust has added one mausoleum, the Boileau Mausoleum in Norfolk, to the collection of five friendless structures of which she acquired the title deeds. Of these, the Bateman Mausoleum in Derbyshire, the Heathcote Mausoleum in Hampshire, and the Wynne-Ellis and Nash Mausolea in Kent are all in a reasonably good state of repair. Only the Guise Mausoleum, in the Vale of the Severn, south of Gloucester, was taken on by the Trust as a ruin and continues to decay.

So why did Jill assume responsibility for this structure, which had been reduced to a ruin by a major collapse during evening prayer one Sunday in 1915 and has suffered nearly 75 years of decay since? The Guise family still

owns the part of the churchyard on which the remains of the structure have been laid out, as well as their nearby ancestral home - Elmore Court - and much of the land in the parish. Over the years, the ruin has gradually disappeared into undergrowth and the rising ground level, presenting a considerable challenge to its conservators. Jill's motive was that the baronet at this time had little interest in this important aspect of his inheritance and, in the early 1990s, the building had become a *cause célèbre* for the Georgian Group.

For many years, the mausoleum attracted hardly any attention. In the 1970 Buildings of England volume *Gloucestershire: the Vale of the Severn and the Forest of Dean*, though the churchyard merits a paragraph, the tomb gets barely a footnote 'Also the ruined remains of a C18 mausoleum'. When the parish was surveyed as part of the revision of listed buildings in the 1980s it was not recognised as of sufficient architectural or historic importance to add to the list.

Sir Howard Colvin changed all this in 1991 when he wrote an article in the Journal of the Georgian Group, *A Roman Mausoleum in Gloucestershire: the Guise monument at Elmore*. He became interested in the mausoleum just as members of the Georgian Group expressed concern about its ongoing decay. This led to the mausoleum being spot-listed in 1991 at Grade II. The description, drawing on Colvin's article reads:

'Mausoleum. 1733 for Sir John Guise. Limestone ashlar. Square Plan. Neo-classical style. Baseless Roman Doric column attached to piers which supported 4 semi-circular arches beneath entablature and pyramid top. In his will of 1732 Sir John Guise chose a Roman prototype illustrated in Roland Freart's *Parallèle de l'architecture*

## From the Chairman

The principal activity of late has been the improvement of the web-site.

All of the super work Teresa and David Sladen did in getting the original gazetteer up and running has now been greatly augmented by its modernisation and imminent re-launching in an expanded and more easily searchable form. Carrie Cocke and Hannah Parham have led on behalf of the trustees, and the results are impressive. Our stalwart volunteer, John Beattie, has added considerably to the contents too.

So much more information is now available, through this and other web sources such as English Heritage's National Heritage

List for England. Discoveries still remain to be made, however, so do let us know of graveyard highlights you encounter: Mausolus will be happy to host the most interesting.

Other activities worth noting are the on-going HLF application for the Hope Mausoleum at the Deepdene, and initial discussions about the Guise Mausoleum at Elmore.

Speaking of the latter, this raises the interesting issue of when collapse goes just a bit too far. Members of the MMT will be no strangers to the concept of 'pleasing decay' (attributed to John Piper, writing in 1948), but the issue of reinstatement is surely worth pursuing sometimes. Just occasionally, resurrection can take place before the Last Trump sounds.

