

MMT News 7

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

November 2003

Restoring a Masterpiece

Teresa Sladen reports on progress at the Sacheverell Bateman Mausoleum



Architect Mark Parsons of Anthony Short and Partners plays detective at the Bateman Mausoleum

The restoration of the iron gates protecting the door of the Sacheverell-Bateman mausoleum is nearing completion. The work is being carried out under the supervision of our architect, Mark Parsons of Anthony Short and Partners, by Andrew Renwick of Ridgeway Forge.

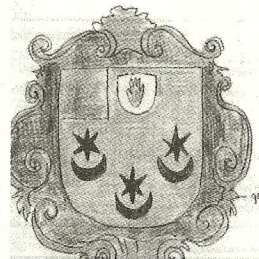
In addition to the repairs to the ironwork itself, the colours of the historic paintwork have been investigated. For this purpose, a paint conservator, Catherine Hassall, took in situ photographs of the gates, cut sections through the paint and analysed the historic layers. This

established that the original colour of the ironwork was dark green with a limited amount of gilding. The extent of the re-gilding to be carried out will be agreed with English Heritage.

The copper shield, which Mark is examining with a magnifying glass in the photograph, was much more elaborately decorated than the ironwork. The only parts of the shield not to receive a layer of initial gilding were the square in the upper left corner and the shield with the hand. The square was painted blue, and the background of the shield with the hand was painted white. The other coloured layers were applied over the gilding; the crescents, central star and the hand were painted red, and the recessed border of the shield black.

Mr Morgan-Owen, a local specialist, has also been consulted on the paintwork and, before going ahead with the redecoration of the shield, we will be asking Max Cravens Derby Armorial and other bodies, including the Royal College of Arms, about the precise colours we should use for the heraldry.

The final stage of the repair programme is the restoration of the fine stained glass windows by Burlison and Grylls. We are going out to tender on this now and will be putting the work in hand in the spring. With any luck all should be finished in time for a grand opening ceremony in the summer. All our friends will then be invited to celebrate the completion of this project carried out as a tribute to our late foundress, Jill Allibone.



Sketch of Sacheverell Bateman coat of arms

Wilson Mausoleum, Warter, East Riding of Yorkshire

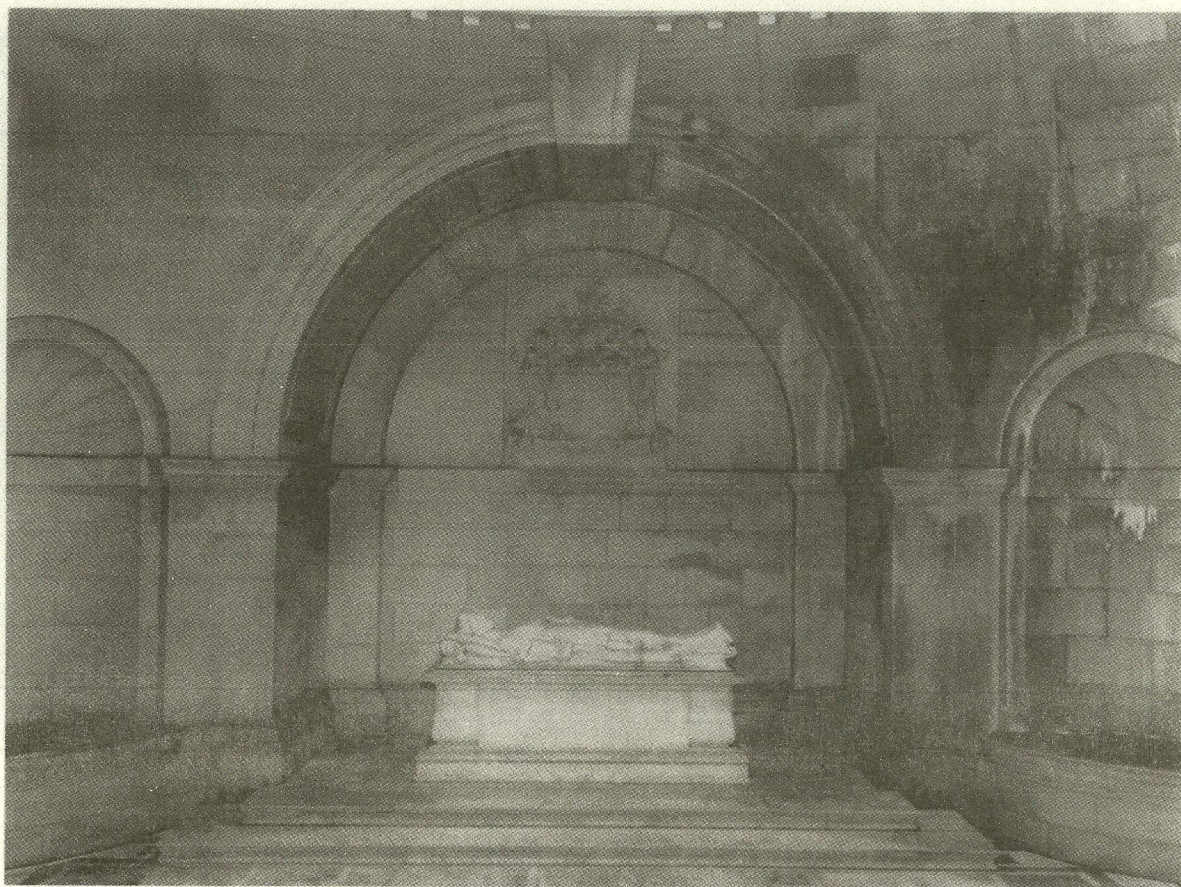
Few Mausolea were erected in the twentieth century therefore the demolition in 1966 of the splendid Classical mausoleum attached to the church of St James, Warter, less than sixty years after it was built, was particularly regrettable. It was built in 1907-08 in memory of Lady Isabel Wilson, daughter of the 7th Duke of Roxburghe and wife of Guy Wilson, second son of Charles Wilson of Warter Priory, head of Thomas Wilson and Sons of Hull, then considered the largest private shipping company in the world. Charles Wilson, created Baron Nunburnholme in 1906, had bought the Warter estate from Lord Muncaster in 1878.

The church, rebuilt in 1862-63 to the designs of W G Habershon and A R Pite, has a prominent spire which makes a striking contribution to the landscape. It contains Edwardian monuments and stained glass of national importance designed by three leading Arts and Crafts artists, including items from the demolished mausoleum commemorating three members of the Wilson family whose deaths occurred over a short period.

The first was Lady Isabel Wilson who died in October 1905 at the age of 26, after giving birth to a stillborn child. Married for little over a year, the tragedy of her early death had a great impact on the family and the community as the newspaper report of her funeral recounts. 'Every blind in Warter village was drawn, and all sounds were hushed except that of the tolling of the bell. The tenantry, the employees on the estate, and the villagers awaited the arrival of the body...' [The coffin was carried by the estate gamekeepers for over a mile from Warter Priory to the church.]... 'At last the steady tramping of feet was heard, and round the turning in the road came the stalwart keepers carrying their burden shoulder high. Behind it walked the gentlemen mourners, and though a cold wind blew from the north, each was uncovered.' Of the burial it was noted that 'the bottom of the grave and the sides were lined with flowers, principally lilies, chrysanthemums, violets, and white Michaelmas daisies... Mr Guy Wilson, detached from the others, stood at the very edge of the open grave. His head was bowed, but he endured the trying ordeal like the British soldier that he is.' Guy had served in the Boer War and received the DSO.



Warter Mausoleum in January 1966, prior to demolition. Photograph RCHM/NMR. Crown Copyright



Interior of the Warter Mausoleum. Photograph RCHM/ NMR. Crown Copyright

The outpouring of grief at the tragic loss of a young wife resulted, not for the first time, in the building of a mausoleum. The architect was John Bilson (1856-1943) of Hull, a vice-president of the Royal Archaeological Institute and a highly accomplished architectural historian, who is best remembered for his church restorations and a series of secondary schools including Hymers College, Hull. Although he rarely worked in the Classical style, Bilson achieved what he rightly considered his masterpiece with the mausoleum at Warter. A restrained Baroque building with shallow dome and lunette windows, it had a simple Classical interior that provided the perfect setting for Sir George Frampton's exquisite memorial to Lady Isabel Wilson. Her reclining figure on a table tomb, placed in an arched recess in the north wall, could be seen from the church through a handsome wrought-iron gate. Frampton, who was knighted the year that this memorial was completed, no doubt suggested that Robert Anning Bell, with whom he had shared a studio, should design the stained glass to fill the large lunette windows on the east and west sides of the mausoleum. Bell's designs, telling of the tragic death of the wife and child, shown in the east window being carried to heaven by a group of

angels, and the chivalry of the bereaved husband portrayed in both windows as a medieval knight, were executed in strong colours that filled the interior when the sun shone.

The mausoleum was uncompleted in October 1907 when Lord Nunburnholme died, to be followed the next year by the death in Paris of his youngest son George Valerian Wilson, aged 23. Both were commemorated in Warter church by superb monuments and stained glass by Frampton and Anning Bell, but the father and son were buried in the Italian gardens at Warter Priory where memorials were erected with bronze



Effigy of Isabel Wilson on table tomb (detail). NMR/ RCHM. © Crown



Stained Glass by Robert Anning Bell at west end of Warter Mausoleum. RCHM/NMR. Crown copyright

statues by Gilbert Mayes, former pupil of Sir George Frampton and future Master of the Art Workers' Guild. When the estate was sold in 1929 the remains of Lord Nunburnholme and his son were removed from the gardens, along with the memorials, to the village churchyard near the mausoleum, where Bayes' evocative statues still stand.

By the late 1950's the mausoleum was in a poor state after years of neglect, and when in 1964 it was made clear by the trustees of the Nunburnholme family that they were 'unable or unwilling' to pay for repairs, it was decided that there was no alternative but demolition. Two years later the architect George Pace reported that although the dome and upper stonework of the mausoleum had 'suffered heavy damage due to the action of damp and frost, following lack of elementary maintenance,' the main walls were in reasonable repair. He concluded that 'as the mausoleum is of some interest and as it is a rather rare manifestation of a short lived phase in English social development, it is important to retain as much of the building as is economically possible.' He recommended that the dome and upper stonework should be removed and a simple hat-like roof placed over the walls. George Pace's advice was not taken and later that year or early in 1967 the mausoleum was demolished, but not before the Royal Commission on Historic Monuments had carried out a photographic survey.

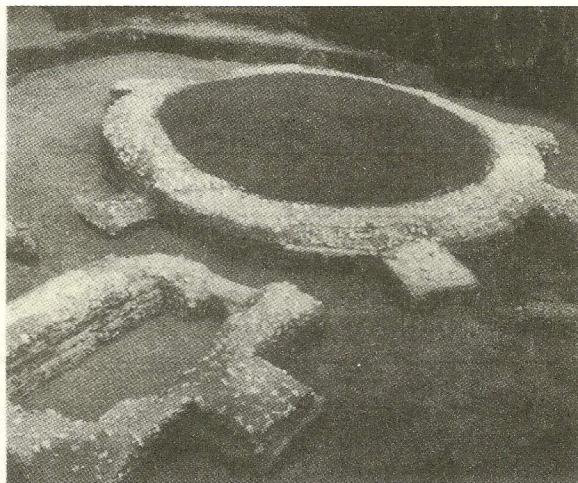
Happily it was decided to place Lady Isabel's monument in the church in front of the now blocked entrance to the mausoleum, with the fine wrought iron gates as a backdrop. Robert Anning Bell's superb semi-circular stained glass windows were carefully removed and stored in packing-cases in the church tower where they remained until 1999 when the church, made redundant nine years earlier and threatened with demolition, was given along with the greater part of the churchyard to the Yorkshire Wolds Buildings Preservation Trust.

The Yorkshire Wolds Buildings Preservation Trust is now seeking funds to carry out the necessary repairs to the church, and provide a kitchen and toilets and improved lighting, to enable its increased use as an educational, cultural and heritage centre for the Yorkshire Wolds. The trust also needs financial help to restore the glass from the mausoleum so that it can be put on display in the church and elsewhere. If you wish to visit St James' Church, Warter, or contribute to the appeal for restoration of the mausoleum glass please contact: David Neave, 29 Wood Lane, Beverley, HU17 8BS. (email: d.r.neave@hull.ac.uk) or Phil Thomas, 13 South Parade, York, YO23 1BF.

David Neave

The Question at Keston

Keston Roman Tombs were open to the public on Sunday 21st September as part of London Open House weekend. They lie within the borough of Bromley. As can be seen from the photograph, the circular building is a substantial thing in itself. It has been restored to resemble what it once looked like: though its three or four feet in height stand in for its probable original height of 20 feet or more. These facts and findings are all reported in the two volumes of the Kent Archaeological Rescue Unit's Report entitled: *The Roman Villa Site at Keston, Kent*, especially the Second Report, written by Brian Philp et al.



Keston tombs. Photograph by B. Philp

Although the circular mausoleum itself is on land owned by Bromley Borough Council, this land is surrounded by private property. Hence it was a lucky break to be able to visit on Open House day. (Hopefully this may be possible in future years as well.)

While enjoying the tour and the explanations of the excavations, your reporter did not get round to asking the question, whether this is actually a mausoleum or should it be called a tomb? R F Jessup in "Barrows and Walled Cemeteries in Roman Britain," (*The Journal of the British Archaeological Association* Vol XXII, 1959), after giving a full description, states that "the building may be a tomb, or possibly a mausoleum of some note: there can be little doubt that it was robbed of its original contents." Some dictionaries define mausoleum as a large, stately tomb. However, it is also possible to define a mausoleum as "a house for the dead." In that case the house should have a door, or at least an entrance. One may question whether the building at Keston does have an entrance.

Then again, what remains is a circular structure as indeed are some famous mausolea in Rome. But as was explained on open day, the circular structure was filled with earth, so that access was from the top, and the whole thing was without a roof. This may suggest it was more like a tumulus type of tomb. (See Howard Colvin, "Architecture and the After-Life," chapters 2-4; on page 47 a plan of the mausoleum at West Mersea, Essex, is illustrated) In the opinion of Brian Philp et al, the gap in the east side of the circular structure at Keston, which has been called a doorway, may only be a gap made when the tomb was robbed. So: no doorway, and no floor, and no roof either. Not really a "house for the dead." In that case we may prefer to call it a tomb.

David Sladen

A Big Thank You to the Pilgrim Trust

It is largely thanks to the generous support provided by the Pilgrim Trust that the MMT has been able to develop and pursue its aims in recent years. In 1999 the Trust made us a grant of £20,000 enabling us to employ a part-time Caseworker to research the survival of mausolea in England and assess their significance and state of repair. Since then the MMT has examined some 430 buildings of this type, with only 9 of those known to exist as yet unseen. We will be publishing our *Gazetteer of Mausolea in England* in 2004.

Now this task is almost complete, we need to expand our field of activities, set up a formal membership scheme, improve our Newsletter and other forms of communication, and establish ourselves as an effective force within the conservation movement. To do all this we require a proper office environment and updated equipment. Once more the Pilgrim Trust has come to our rescue and offered help. As a result we are moving to Alan Baxter Associates' offices at 70 Cowcross Street. This is a huge step forward for the MMT, and we are enormously grateful to the Pilgrim Trust for making it possible.

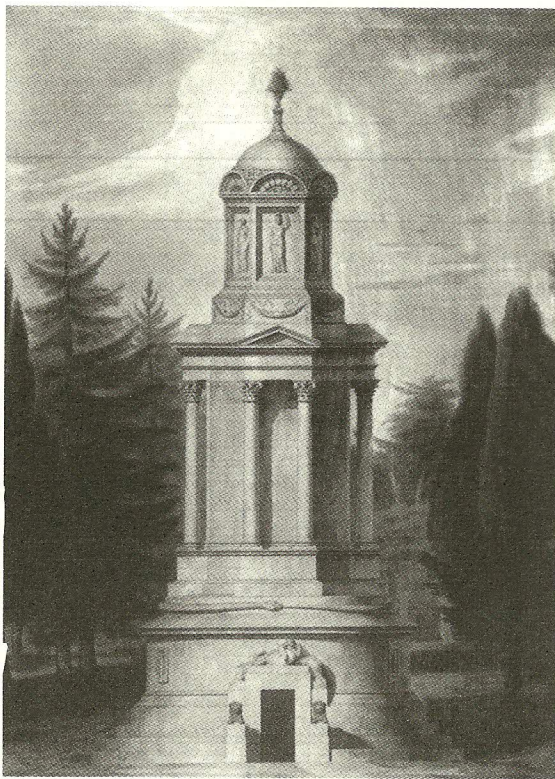
Teresa Sladen

Exhibition: 'Architecture Unshackled', George Dance the Younger, 1741-1825

At Sir John Soane's Museum until 3 January 2004

Described by C.R. Cockerell as 'the most complete poet-architect of his day', George Dance the Younger stands out as one of the pioneers of his profession. John Soane, his pupil and friend, saw him as 'one of the most accomplished architects of the English school' and praised the 'great fertility of invention' that infused his work. This exhibition, the first on this major architect since 1972, provides a chance for modern observers to appreciate the range and variety of Dance's work.

During his career Dance produced a series of groundbreaking designs for public and private buildings. He held the important post of Architect to the Corporation of London from 1768 (the only outstanding architect to have occupied this position), but produced much of his best work independent of the City. His earliest commission, the church of All Hallows, London Wall (1765-7)



George Dance the Younger, Design for a mausoleum in a park-like setting (1785). By Courtesy of the Trustees of Sir John Soane's Museum

was the first Neo-Classical building erected in Britain. Newgate Gaol (1770-80), with its forbidding exterior pierced by a doorway overhung with iron shackles, was widely acknowledged as a masterpiece.

Dance, in common with many of his contemporaries including James Wyatt and Robert Adam, executed designs for commemorative and burial structures. Such projects offered a unique opportunity for architectural experimentation without certain domestic restrictions such as lighting and heating. None of Dance's tomb designs were built and the identity of the intended occupant for the grand multi-tiered mausoleum (pictured) remains a mystery.

'Architecture Unshackled' runs until 3 January 2004 at Sir John Soane's Museum, London. Admission is free. For more information visit www.soane.org or telephone 020 7405 2107.

Mausolea on the Move Notes from the Hon. Secretary

Well not quite, but we are about to move the office into a more permanent home at Cowcross Street, EC1. Up to now, we have been the guest of Mr Will Palin, one of our council members, who has kindly lent us space in his house in Spitalfields. We are extremely grateful to Will and offer him our sincerest thanks.

Our move to Cowcross Street will bring all the Trust's files and documents together under one roof and should make for more efficient running of the administration. Although my work for the Trust is ongoing, it is my aim to have one designated day of the week when I will be on hand personally to respond to your calls.

Our new address will be:
70 Cowcross Street
London
EC1M 6EJ
Tel: 020 7608 1441
Email: mausolea@btinternet.com

More information will be published in the next Newsletter - so watch this space!

John St Brioc Hooper