

MMT News 7

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

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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.

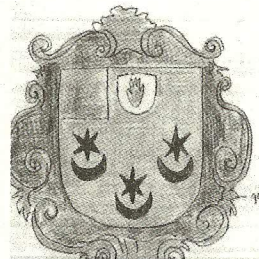
In addition to the repairs to the ironwork itself, the colours of the historic paintwork have been investigated. For this purpose, a paint conservator, Catherine Hassall, took in situ photographs of the gates, cut sections through the paint and analysed the historic layers. This

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 Armorials 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

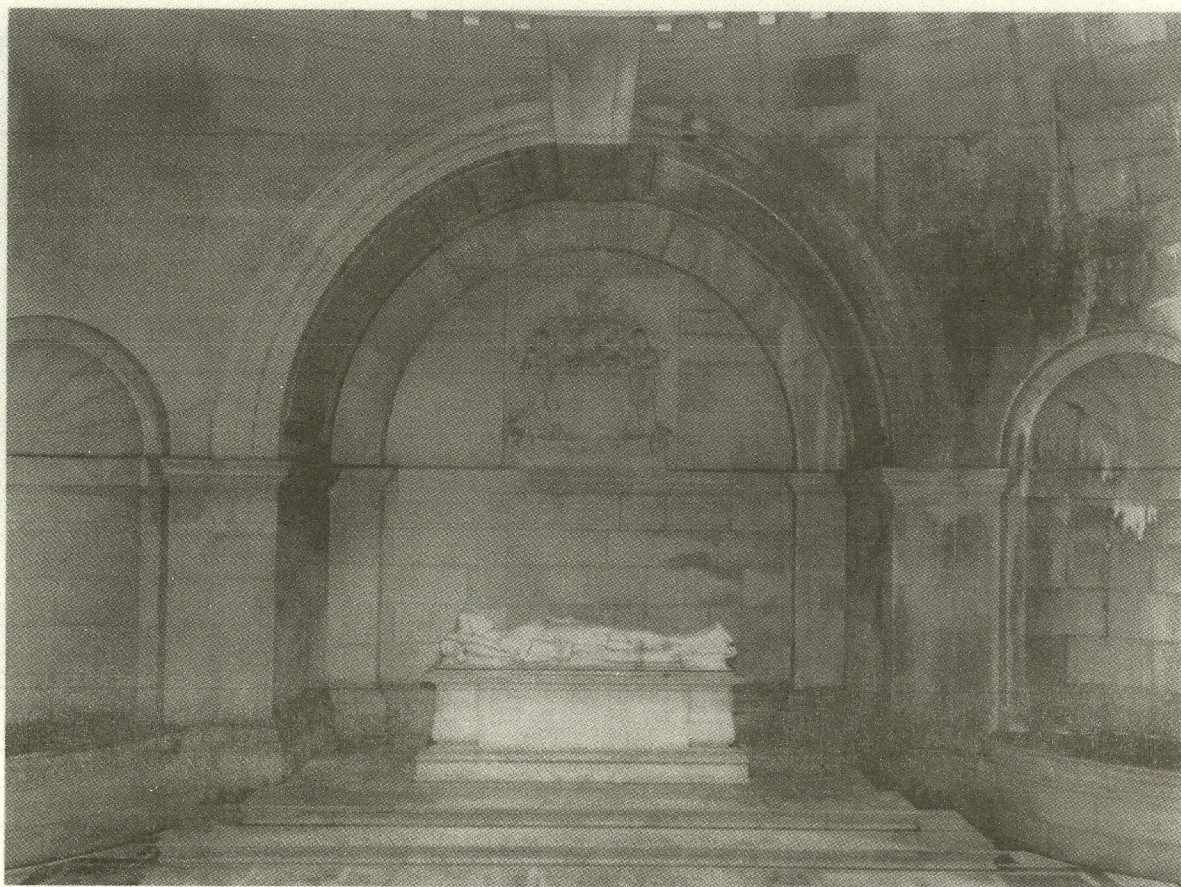
Few Mausolea were erected in the twentieth century therefore the demolition in 1966 of the splendid Classical mausoleum attached to the church of St James, Warter, less than sixty years after it was built, was particularly regrettable. It was built in 1907-08 in memory of Lady Isabel Wilson, daughter 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

