

MMT News

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

Miserable Mausoleum 2

Several years ago, in 1997-98, the MMT attempted to highlight the plight of the Hope Mausoleum in the grounds of The Deepdene, near Dorking in Surrey.

The Hope Mausoleum, built and consecrated in 1818, is an austere and massive structure with inward sloping walls and a heavy over-sailing pediment (which once bore a bronze 'religious symbol'). It is pierced only by an arched door, closed by an iron or bronze grille, and stood in an enclosure defended by simple ironwork.



The Hope Mausoleum before its burial

It was here where Thomas Hope, the celebrated collector and arbiter of taste, was buried in 1831, followed by other members of his family. The last interment was that of the 6th Duke of

Newcastle in 1941. In 1954 the mausoleum was permanently sealed up and buried in earth up to the level of the roof. The buried mausoleum and surrounding land was bequeathed to the urban district of Dorking in the will of the 7th Duke of Newcastle in 1960, in order to preserve the land as a public open space. As such it is still owned (freehold) and administered by Mole Valley District Council.

Some years ago we went in search of Hope's Mausoleum and found it in the overgrown woods, only its pediment emerging from the earth like some Etruscan tomb. The MMT hoped to persuade Mole Valley to help us excavate the tomb and restore both it and its setting. The Council was initially supportive of the idea, as was the Dorking and District Preservation Society; this group is presently attempting to restore parts of the former gardens of The Deepdene, and have commissioned a Restoration and Management Plan to do so. The Hope Mausoleum is one which is close to the heart of the MMT, and we would dearly love to restore it to its former state. We are now once again looking into the feasibility of its exhumation, restoration, and long term care. *Tim Knox*

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