

Boileau Mausoleum

Greek-revival mausoleum built on a square ground plan having pedimented facade. Stone slab roof with acroteria to roofline. White gault brick walls having caen stone dressings (base plinth, quoins, pediment). Square-headed doorway having caen stone surround with fluted pilasters and keystone carved with the family coat of arms. Single-leaf cast-iron panelled door.

Stone shelving to interior providing space for 12 internments though only the remains of Sir John and Lady Catherine Boileau are housed within.

The architect was Thomas Jeckyll and the mason Jeremiah Lofty of Hethersett. It is said that the Boileau mausoleum was loosely based on the now demolished Bevan Mausoleum formerly in Nunhead Cemetery. A few years later, Jeckyll adapted the design for the Harvey Mausoleum at Tharston in Norfolk.

Architect(s)

Thomas Jeckyll

Listing

Grade II (England and Wales)

Year Created

1856

Style

Greek Revival

History

The mausoleum was built for John Peter Boileau (d.1869), of the Ketteringham Estate in Norfolk and who was created Baronet in Queen Victoria's Coronation Honours in 1838.

The amusing history of his mausoleum is recorded in Owen Chadwick's vignette of nineteenth century village life Victorian Miniature. The account is paraphrased as follows.

Sir John's wife Lady Catherine suffered poor health and it was during one of her illnesses in 1853 that Sir John decided he ought to think about obtaining an appropriate burial place for the family.

Beneath the chancel of the church was a vault containing dilapidated coffins which Sir John mistakenly believed contained members of a local family that had become extinct some 150 years before. With what he thought was the consent of the Bishop and Vicar, he had these coffins removed and reburied in the churchyard, and the vault tidied up for his own family's use.

In the uproar that followed, Sir John, in his own words, got 'into a great difficulty' and was forced to give up the vault by Mr Pemberton, a close relative of family members buried there some 25 years before. Sir John managed to have some newspaper accounts of the affair suppressed, but the news quickly got out, and he received anonymous letters condemning his 'body snatching' activities and scurrilous songs were written locally about 'Resurrection Jack'. To appease the offended Mr Pemberton, Sir John was advised by the Dean of Norwich to pay for the six coffins to be returned to the vault which was then bricked up.

Sir John, deeply traumatised by these events, obtained a Faculty from the Diocese in 1854 to build a freestanding mausoleum as 'a burial place for himself and his descendants exclusive of all other persons whomsoever'.

In April 2008, the Boileau family and South Norfolk Buildings Preservation Trust handed the mausoleum into the guardianship of the Mausolea and Monuments Trust.

Condition

In the 1990s the mausoleum had been placed on the South Norfolk Council's Buildings-at-Risk Register.

In 2006, repairs were carried out by local stonemason Toby Dobson funded by generous grants from the South Norfolk Council's Buildings Preservation Trust and the Norfolk Churches Trust. Works included the re-pointing and re-bedding of displaced stone.

The mausoleum is currently in excellent condition (2009).

Sources

BoE: Norfolk 2, (1999), 455;
Owen Chadwick, *Victorian Miniature*, (1960);
NRO, DN/FCB 7, 194;
NRO, DN/CON 138;
Boileau's Diary 1850-55, NRO, Boi 69, 117 x 6;
and the family Journal 1845-61, NRO, MS 21469.
Leaflet entitled 'The Boileau Mausoleum' written by Dr Dr. M Parker for the MMT.

Links

[Norfolk Churches website](#)



Location

Churchyard of St Peter,
Ketteringham,
Norfolk
NR18 9RY