



The early-19th-century mausoleum was buried in the 1950s to protect it from vandals; now, excavation and restoration have begun

Hope springs eternal

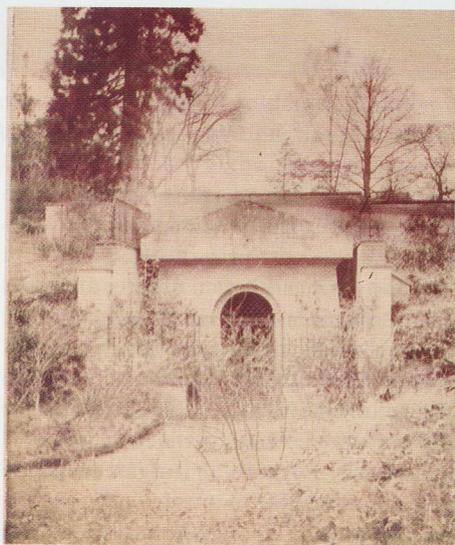
Thomas Hope's long-buried neo-Grecian mausoleum is to see the light again. Hannah Parham reports

ROME'S Protestant Cemetery was the ultimate resting place of many a frail northern European in the first quarter of the 19th century. Keats and Shelley are only the most famous of those commemorated in the graveyard, where Goethe buried his only son in 1830, erecting a tomb with a bronze portrait medallion by Bertel Thorvaldsen.

When Charles, the young son of Thomas Hope, died of a fever on a visit to Rome in 1817, the eminent art collector and connoisseur might have laid his boy to rest in the same Italian graveyard. Instead, Hope returned to his country house, The Deepdene near Dorking, and built a massive, archaic Grecian tomb in its extensive grounds.

It is the good luck of Hope enthusiasts today that he did so, as the mausoleum is now the only extant building commissioned by this influential promoter of neo-Classicism in Regency England. When Hope himself died on February 2, 1831, his body was interred in the new family mausoleum 'next to that of my ever lamented son Charles'.

Hope's famous town house on Duchess Street, Portland Place, London, was demolished in 1851. The Deepdene's park became



The Hope Mausoleum as it was in 1919

a golf course in 1897, and Dorking's suburbs began to encroach on its fringes. The Hope Mausoleum was sealed in 1957, and buried soon after to protect it from vandals, and the house itself, a highly important Italianate building, was pulled down in 1969.

Hope's star has burned brighter in recent years, culminating in the exhibition curated

by David Watkin and Philip Hewat-Jaboor at the V&A in 2008. The statutory listing of the Hope Mausoleum was increased to Grade II* in April this year, in recognition of its architectural interest as an early and elaborate Greek Revival-style tomb and of the significance of the man who built it. However, for all the revived interest in Hope, his mausoleum is in a forlorn state, part-buried and neglected.

This year, the Mausolea & Monuments Trust (MMT) embarked on a campaign for its rescue. In partnership with Mole Valley District Council, whose Tree and Countryside Officer Alexander Bagnall has been instrumental in generating interest in the project, the MMT aims to raise £200,000.

At the official launch at the Sir John Soane Museum, London WC2, in May, Prof Watkin gave a lecture on the architecture of The Deepdene, and MMT Chairman Roger Bowdler outlined the trust's plans. Meanwhile, excavation has begun and the mausoleum opened for the first time in nearly 50 years. The quality of the original craftsmanship and materials has ensured the interior is extraordinarily well preserved, complete with cast-iron openwork gates with a fish-scale fanlight: a fitting tribute to an outstanding man of taste.

In homage to Thomas Hope, the MMT intends to restore the Mausoleum, and fundraising has begun in earnest. To contribute, visit www.justgiving.com/HopeSpringsEternal. A guided tour of the Hope Mausoleum for members of the public will take place on August 14