

## **Monument # 5 Thomas Radcliffe Armigeri † ?**

### **The Works**

The wall-mounted monument is large in scale and constructed exclusively from white marble, with black paint to the heraldic shield and in the lightly scratched inscription. The monument was cleaned using a combination of solvents, Solvol Autosol, Sepiolite-clay and steam.

#### **1 Monument Description**

- 1.1 The monument which projects an impressive distance from the wall, comprises of a white marble shield, above a large, lightly-incised inscription with a foliate border carved in the round. A sarcophagus with minor and major gadrooning top and bottom is flanked by a pair of seated, winged cherubs, complete with drapery swags between. A horizontal moulded course sits above a pair of moulded feet, below that is another moulded course of the same width, with a central, load-bearing corbel in the form of a winged skull beneath.

#### **2 Location**

- 2.1 The monument is located on the south elevation of tower. The bottom bed is 3.10m above finished floor level.

#### **3 Condition Assessment**

- 3.1 Once a fixed access scaffold was erected, a fingertip survey of all surfaces was possible. A photographic survey was undertaken before works commenced.
- 3.2 All individual elements were very solid, with no signs of resonance when banged with a clenched fist. Both sides of the foliate swags appear to have been damaged historically and joined together crudely, evidenced by stepped joints and misalignment. Despite this, all the individual elements were sound and displayed no signs of movement either historic or progressive. The angled heraldic shield which looked alarming from floor level is very solid, having been secured with molten lead into the ashlar and the rear of the marble and is likely to be canted over at such an angle to allow viewing from ground level. There were no signs of separation to either entry points. What little surface corrosion was present on the substantial iron-fixing was treated to prevent progressive deterioration.
- 3.3 The white marble has survived relatively well, with isolated areas of original surface polish remaining on areas that would have been easy to polish such as the concave moulding on the upper section of the sarcophagus. There are no signs of textural breakdown on this superior quality marble.

#### **4 Conservation Works**

##### **Cleaning**

- 4.1 All elements underwent a preliminary dry clean with a vacuum cleaner to remove the heavy layers of dust from the monument and areas above it as far as possible, and then the whole was de-greased.

- 4.2 A series of cleaning and solubility trials were conducted on representative areas of the marble and the brown coloured coating that has been applied principally to the gadrooning, the cherubs, the lower horizontal moulding and the winged skull.
- 4.3 The whole monument was degreased with acetone applied on cotton wool pads which removed much of the greasy accretion. All elements, excluding the inscription were then cleaned with a poultice of Sepiolite clay mixed with clean water, left for at least twenty-four hours and over the course of a weekend for areas where dirt was anticipated as being stubborn. Upon removal of the poultice the softened dirt was reduced/removed with low-pressure steam (a dental descaler). Areas of carving were cleaned further with 'Solvol Autosol' applied on tooth-brushes to restore some of the lustre to the marble and slow down soiling on these slightly rougher areas that had not been finished in the same manner as the plain moulded elements.
- 4.4 During the cleaning process a brown accretion/coating became apparent as it was not responding to any of the cleaning processes, including the mildly abrasive Solvol Autosol. The coating was quite thick and brittle and had the appearance of shellac under magnification. Where it was not well adhered to the substrate, very small areas could be removed with the steam cleaner, but at the risk of playing the steam over the surface too long, such that it starts to look over-clean. The fact that the material did not respond to any of the cleaning techniques or materials would indicate it was shellac that had fully cross-linked making it insoluble now.
- 4.5 The black paint to the canted heraldic shield was not fugative and well adhered to the substrate. The painted surfaces were cleaned by rolling cotton-wool swabs dampened with de-ionised water over the delicate surface but to not disturb the paint beneath.
- 4.6 The winged skull did respond well to the different cleaning techniques but residual remains can be seen on the wing tips and proper right side of the skull.
- 4.7 The inscription was only lightly scratched, not incised into the surface of the marble and great care was taken to clean up to and around the lettering with the Solvol Autosol followed by white spirit.

## **5 Pointing**

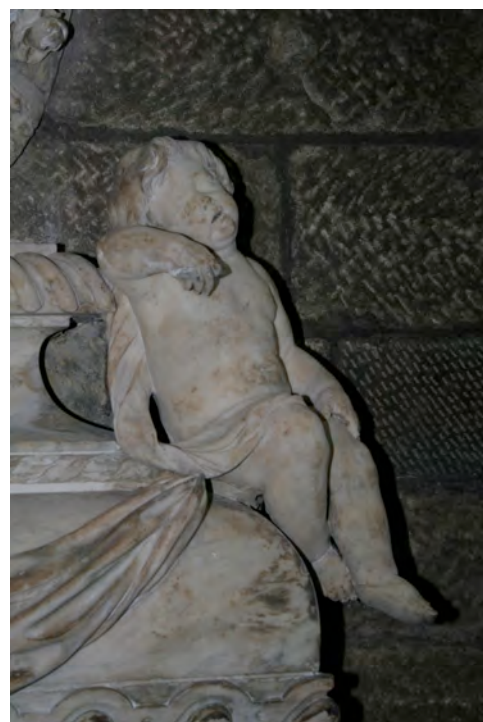
- 5.1 The tender documents called for all jointing mortar between the rear surface of the monument and the wall to be replaced. The mortar was found to be in a sound condition, with no separation lines and therefore its removal was difficult to justify, with its removal likely to have been counter-productive using percussive means around now brittle, aged marble.
- 5.2 There were two areas totalling 850mm where mortar was defective, on the horizontal joint above the viewers' right-hand drapery and the intersection between the monument and wall on the left return edge adjacent with the cherub. These areas were carefully pared back with scalpels and replaced with a mortar of lime putty (with 10% calcined china-clay) and building sand with the larger particles sieved out. This was in the ratio of 1 : 2.5 and placed into the pre-dampened joints and tended for three days to prevent premature drying.

## **6 Heraldic Shield**

- 6.1 The substantial iron fixing (15mm thick) spanning between the marble shield and adjacent walling was removed of loose corrosion products with nylon abrasive pad, before treating twice with Jenolite (Orthophosphoric acid) the next day, two coats of a 10%w/v solution of Paraloid B72 dissolved in Acetone and I.M.S 50 : 50 were applied by brush to hinder future corrosion.



General views of the monument before and after all treatments, note the overall brown cast to the monument before commencing work and how the delicate foliate border around the inscription panel is completely lost.



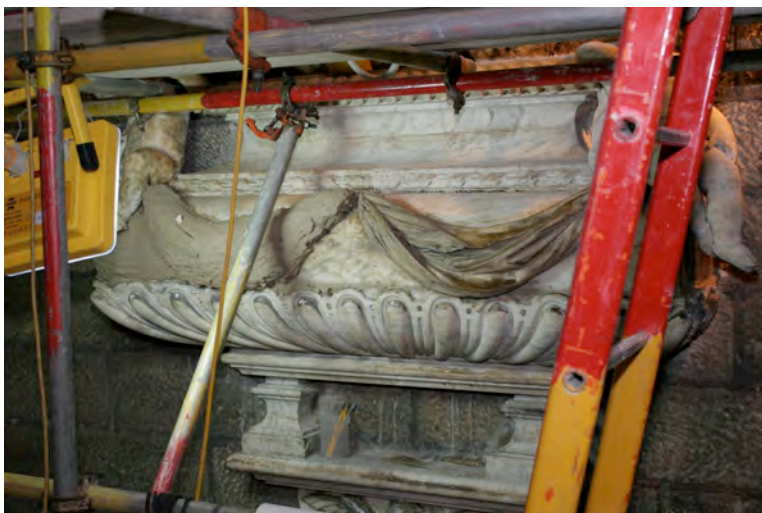
General view of the right-hand cherub before and after treatment, note the residual brown marking which did not respond to any of the different treatments. Unfortunately this contrast is now enhanced due to the success of cleaning over the remainder of the monument.



The winged skull before any treatments, note how the detail on this particularly fine carving is lost. Note also the extent of the brown coating to the moulding immediately above.



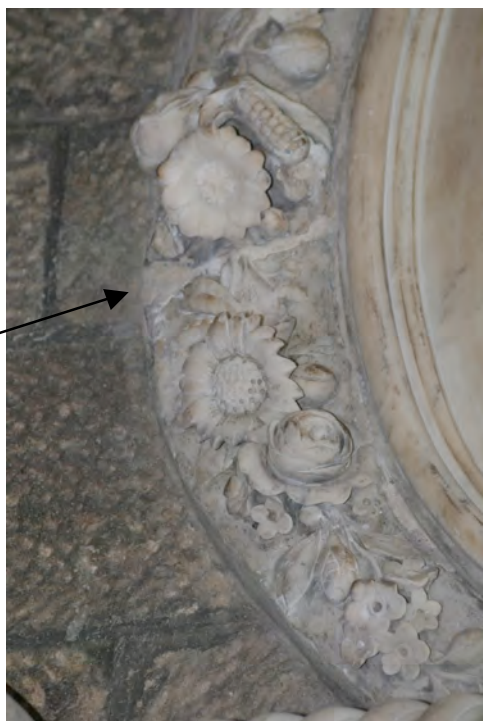
After all treatments, note the fine, dark-grey veining in the marble is visible once again. The heavy brown coating has largely gone from the moulding above, with only tenacious remains.



Context view showing the Sepiolite clay in place, on the left-hand swag having just been removed from the right. Once the poultice was removed completely, the areas were steam-cleaned to reduce the softened dirt.



General view of the whole monument and the foliate border during poulticing. This was required twice on those areas carved in the round, due to the inability to 'finish' them in the same manner as flat/moulded marble, with the marble being rougher in texture, on a microscopic level. The steam cleaner used is in the foreground. Note despite the angle of the top shield it is held firmly by solid fixings and entry pinto the walling and marble respectively.



Close up views of the level of detail to the foliate border, which could not be appreciated before cleaning. The carving is well executed with several of the stems pierced completely, highlighting the skill and care of the carver. Note one of the joints mentioned in the report which have all been rather crudely re-joined despite being solid.