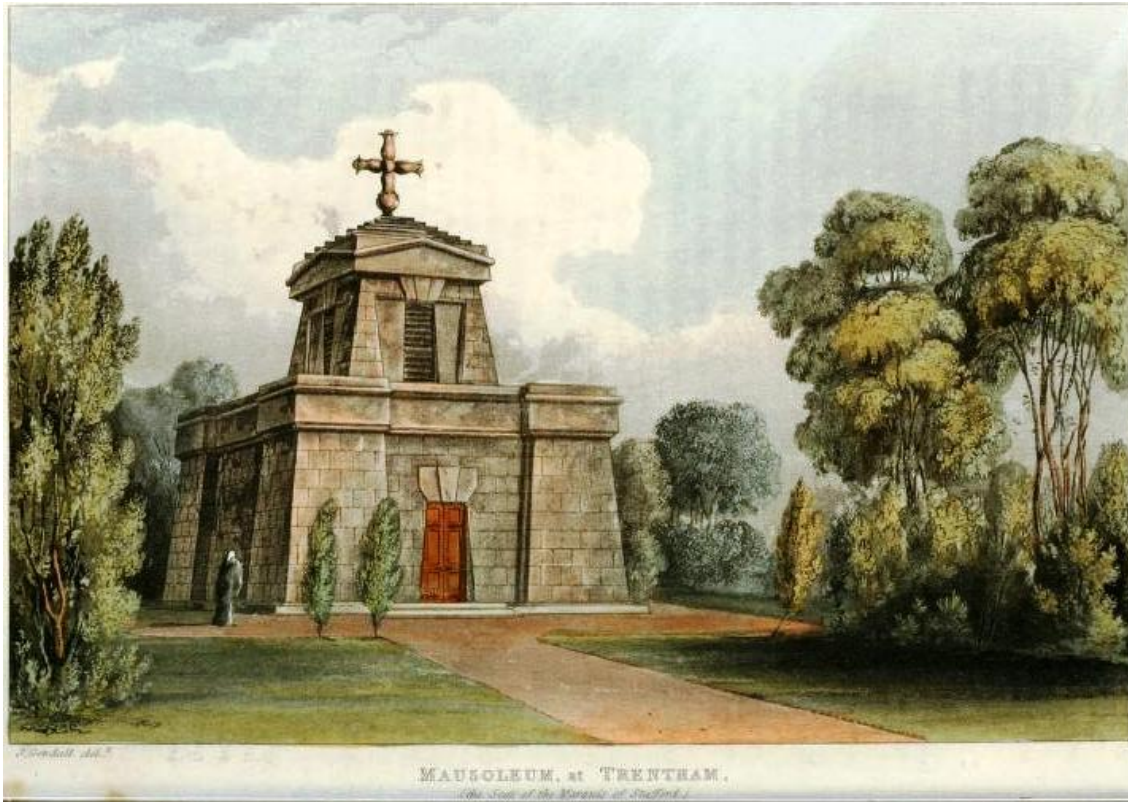


# An introduction to the TRENTHAM MAUSOLEUM



Trentham Mausoleum was designed in the early years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century as the private burial place of the Leveson-Gower family. Little has previously been written about this tomb that looks fit for an Egyptian pharaoh, but it offers a small hint of this area's hidden aristocratic past.

After a hundred years the building was abandoned by the noble family and after a further hundred years of disuse and neglect, Stoke on Trent City Council became its caretaker and took over responsibility for its restoration and upkeep.

Currently Trentham Mausoleum is the only Grade 1 listed building within the boundaries of the city of Stoke on Trent. Grade 1 buildings are of exceptional interest, as only 2.5% of listed buildings attract Grade 1 status. Listing both marks and celebrates a building's special architectural and historic interest and also brings it under the consideration of the planning system, so that it can be protected for future generations.

This is a brief guide to the Mausoleum building and the persons laid to rest within its walls.

## Background

In 1805 the Leveson-Gower family vault in St. Mary and All Saints Church at Trentham became full, following the burial of Lady Susan Leveson-Gower on 25<sup>th</sup> August. At the same time, the curate, John Chappell Woodhouse, declared the closure of the surrounding churchyard for further burials. George Granville Leveson-Gower, 2<sup>nd</sup> Marquess of Stafford, did not want the location of more graves in close proximity to Trentham Hall so the nearest and most suitable plot for a burial ground was on the east side of Stone Road, where a former parsonage had stood from 1716 until demolition in 1794.

The location gave the 2<sup>nd</sup> Marquess the opportunity to use the central part of the site for the construction of a family mausoleum. The surrounding burial ground intended for estate workers and villagers was laid out in 1807.

## Mausoleum architect - Charles Heathcote Tatham

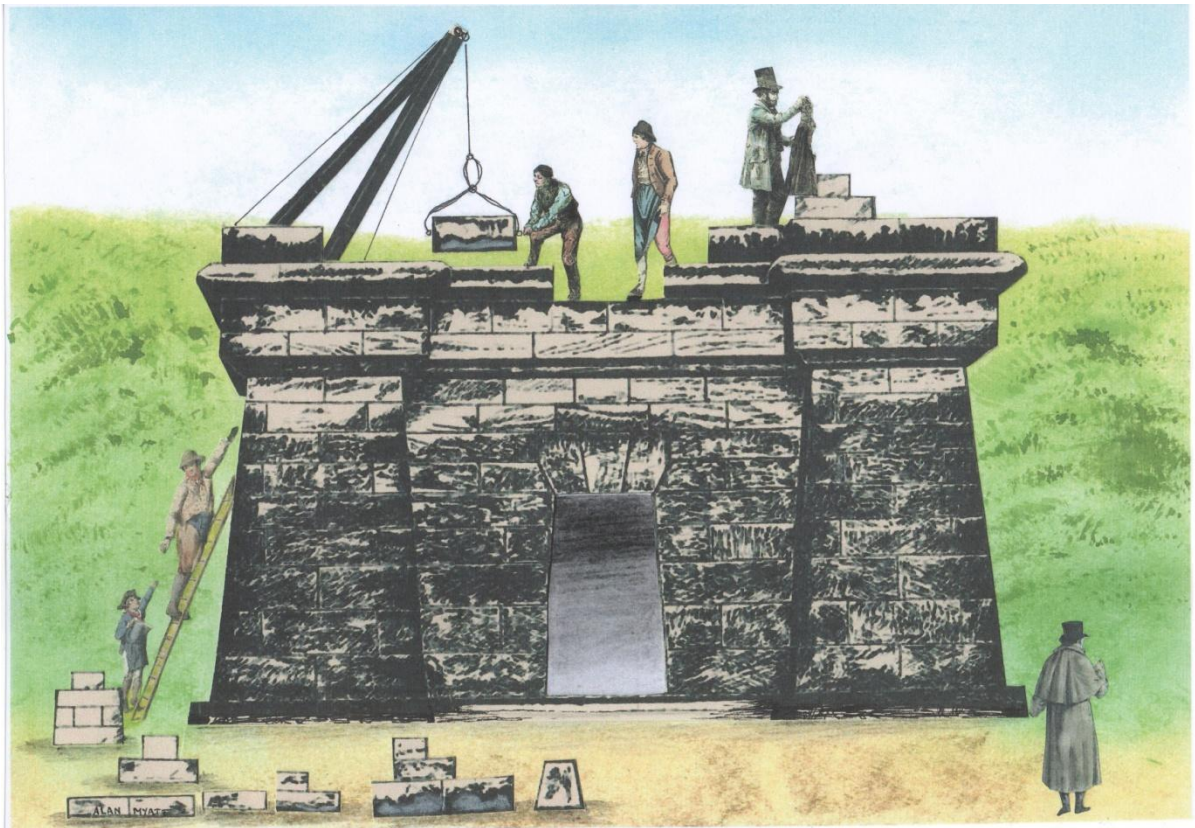


Portrait of Charles Heathcote Tatham by Thomas Kearsley  
National Galleries of Scotland [www.nationalgalleries.org/art-and-artists/64122/portrait-charles-heathcote-tatham-1772-1842](https://www.nationalgalleries.org/art-and-artists/64122/portrait-charles-heathcote-tatham-1772-1842)

The man chosen to design the mausoleum was the architect Charles Heathcote Tatham. Born in 1772, he began working for Henry Holland, architect to the nobility, in 1788. During the 1790s he became Holland's agent in Rome and made a study of antiquities and ornament. Importantly, one of his main patrons was Frederick Howard the 5th Earl of Carlisle, for whom he designed the sculpture gallery at Castle Howard in 1800-2.

His masterpiece is considered to be the Trentham Mausoleum, but he also designed a conservatory and single storey extension to Trentham Hall. He made plans for entrance lodges, an orangery, plus an Egyptian style greenhouse at Trentham, but those designs were not executed. He went on to design and build additions to many stately homes of England, but fell on hard times in the 1830s, before becoming warden of Trinity Hospital, Greenwich, where he died in 1842 and was buried under the hospital chapel.

## Mausoleum construction



Artist's impression of the building of the Mausoleum - Alan Myatt 2018

The mausoleum was constructed of ashlar stonework, possibly quarried at Hollington. The heavy sandstone blocks were probably transported here on wagons pulled by draught horses, passing through a number of tollgates on their route. The blocks would have been unloaded with the use of "A" frames and a device called a lewis, which gripped the stone tightly as it was lifted into place.

The mausoleum is built in a neo-classical style with Egyptian details. The corners of the building feature Greco-Egyptian pylon-like structures of a style particularly popular in the late 18th century. The entrance doorway is relatively small with wooden doors decorated by ornate metal work and topped with a heavy stone lintel. Above the base is a small bell tower, with louvered windows and a pyramidal roof, surmounted by a lead cross.

The Staffordshire Advertiser of 14<sup>th</sup> May 1808 carried the following report and description:

"The Marquis of Stafford has just completed at Trentham, a building of singular construction, being the only edifice of the sort in this country. It is a cemetery, after the manner of the Roman tombs, and like them, is situated on the roadside. The ancients usually built their tombs near the highway, which, while it reminded them of their ancestors, was also a warning to the traveller to mind his business, and not to loiter on the road. The building is of stone, of the most durable workmanship, and exhibits a style of grand and solid architecture, highly expressive of the subject. It is a square of 40 feet on the base, and rises pyramidically 40 feet high. The inside contains 40 catacombs under one groined arch of stone. The whole is lined with beautifully dark and highly polished marble. The building has been nearly three years in the hands of the workmen, under the direction of TATHAM, the architect. The Noble Marquis's other improvements at Trentham are upon the most liberal and magnificent scale."

In his Architectural Guide to the Buildings of England, 1974, Nikolaus Pevsner described the Mausoleum as "a formidable statement of neo-classical principal, almost brutalist in its exaggeratedly simple forms".

The path to the door of the mausoleum was lined with yew trees, which continued across the road towards the Hall and marked the route for funeral processions. Burial services were conducted in the mausoleum.



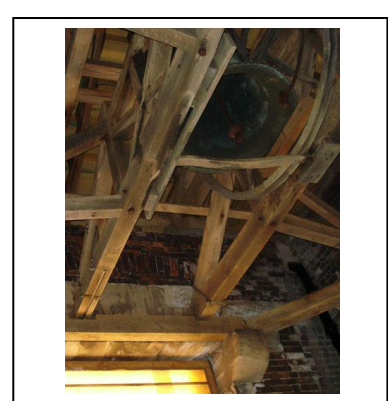
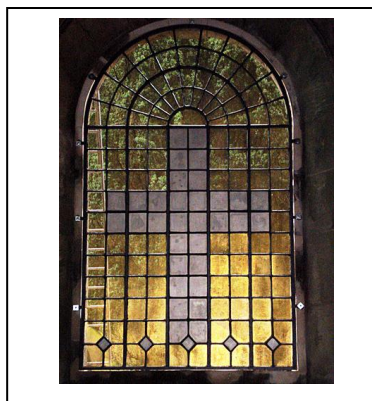
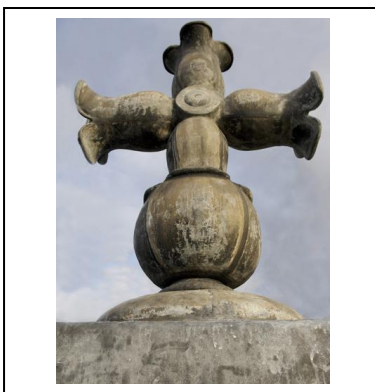
Engraving by G Cooper after the original drawings by C. H. Tatham, Architect  
Shows a perspective view, the interior elevation and plan  
Reproduced with permission of the William Salt Library, Stafford

### **Mausoleum interior**

The bell, cast in 1707, was brought to Trentham in 1767, following its removal from Wolstanton church, as part of a purchase agreement for Trentham church's redundant peal of six bells. It may have hung in the Hall or the church, possibly as a fire bell, until it was rehung in the bell tower of the mausoleum in 1808.

The arched window at the rear depicts a cross in lilac stained glass. Above the inside doorway is the family coat of arms and the inscription "MDCCCVIII", signifying the completion date of 1808.

The interior plan is based on a Greek cross and the two side vaults were originally occupied with 20 catacombs to accommodate the coffins. When coffins were deposited the openings were sealed with a marble headstone. The vaults were removed after the coffins were interred in the ground in the early 1900s.



Reproduced from images on <http://www.bencharchitects.co.uk/?i=168408>

### **The 2<sup>nd</sup> Marquis of Stafford and 1<sup>st</sup> Duke of Sutherland**

George Granville Leveson-Gower, 2nd Marquess of Stafford built the mausoleum, at a cost of £5,068. 12 shillings, but never made use of it himself. In 1775 he had married Elizabeth, Countess of Sutherland, which brought him vast estates in Scotland and a major family seat, Dunrobin Castle. In 1803 he inherited the substantial revenues of the Bridgewater Canal from his uncle the Duke of Bridgewater and later the same year his father died, so he inherited the family estates, including Lilleshall and Trentham and their vast mineral resources. In the early 19th century his family was probably the richest in Britain.

He served as MP for Newcastle under Lyme and was Ambassador to Paris before entering the Lords, where he supported catholic emancipation and later voted for the Reform Bill. For these services he was made 1st Duke of Sutherland in January 1833, but died in July 1833 at Dunrobin Castle. He was buried at Dornoch Cathedral, the burial place of his wife's ancestors, the Earls of Sutherland.

Between 1835 and 1837, Elizabeth, Duchess-Countess of Sutherland, paid for extensive restoration of the cathedral, including the building of the Sutherland burial vault, under the chancel floor. The Duke's body was reinterred and she was laid to rest there in 1839. A statue of the 1st Duke, dated 1834, crowns Monument Hill overlooking his former estate of Trentham.

## **Interments in the Mausoleum**

Although completed in 1808, the mausoleum was not used until 1832. The first four interments were young children.

**1832** -The first to be placed in the catacombs was Blanche Julia Leveson-Gower. She was the daughter of George, Earl Gower and his wife Harriet Howard and grand-daughter of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Marquess. Blanche died in London, aged one year and eight months.

**1839** - The next was Lady Victoria Sutherland-Leveson-Gower, Blanche's sister, aged 1 year. Victoria was the godchild of Queen Victoria, to whom her mother, Duchess Harriet, was Mistress of the Robes.

**1849** - Ten years later, Blanche and Victoria's sister, Alexandrina Sutherland-Leveson-Gower was laid to rest. She died at Trentham Hall aged one year. She had been named after the Queen, whose first name was Alexandrina.

**1858** - Another child, George Granville Sutherland-Leveson-Gower, Earl Gower, was placed in the catacombs. He was the eldest son of the 3rd Duke. He died suddenly and unexpectedly aged 7. The premature death of their first son caused the family deep grief, and his funeral at Trentham was a very private affair.

**1861** - The first head of the noble family to be placed in the mausoleum was George Granville Sutherland-Leveson-Gower, the 2nd Duke of Sutherland. Aged 74, he died at Trentham Hall and was laid in the catacombs on Saturday 9th March 1861. Six hundred tenants from Trentham and Lilleshall formed a file on either side of the approach as the funeral procession entered the mausoleum. Great care was taken to prevent crowds, but large numbers gathered on a fine day to catch a glimpse of the proceedings.

**1868** - The Dowager Duchess Harriet Sutherland-Leveson-Gower followed her husband in October 1868. Aged 62, she died at Stafford House, their London residence and was brought to Trentham Station by train. As Mistress of the Robes and friend and confidante to Queen Victoria her funeral was a grander affair than her husband's funeral seven years earlier. Mr William Gladstone the Prime Minister acted as one of the pall bearers. The Prince of Wales laid the royal wreath.

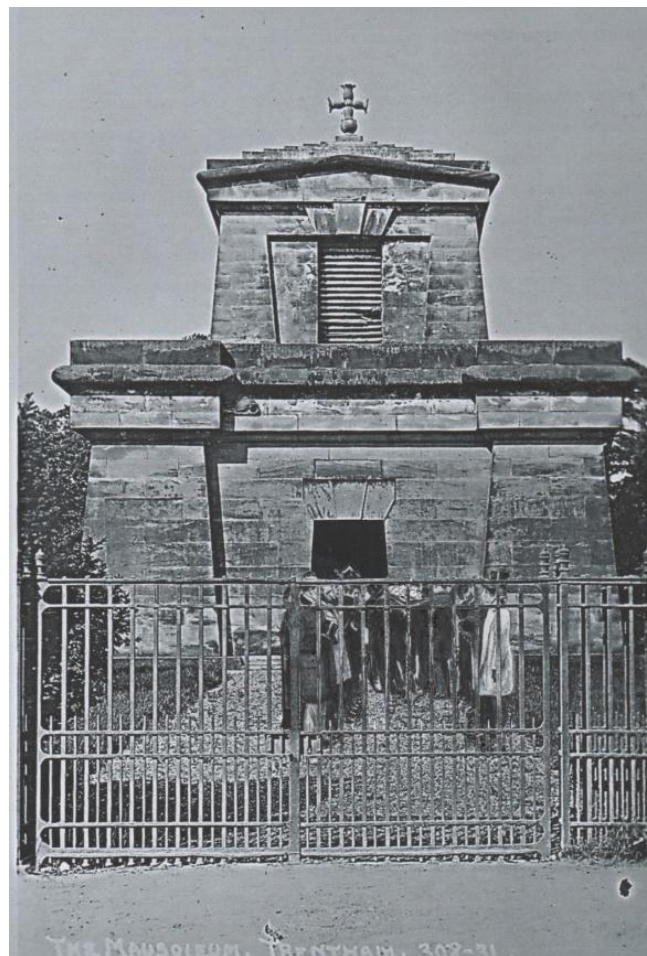
**1874** - Lord Albert Sutherland-Leveson-Gower was an unexpected occupant at Trentham in 1874. He was the 3rd son of the 2nd Duke of Sutherland. An army officer, he was only 31 years of age when he died at his father-in-law's house at Beaudesert near Lichfield. His remains were brought to Trentham by special train. They were met at Trentham by the Marquess of Stafford and Lord Ronald Gower and all the heads of departments at Trentham Hall. He was the last to be placed in the catacombs.

**1892** - The 3rd Duke, George Granville William Sutherland-Leveson-Gower, died of a burst stomach ulcer at Dunrobin and his body was brought to Trentham by train. He was taken from the Hall on 30th September to be laid in the earth at the mausoleum, as was his expressed wish. It was raining heavily, but still, large crowds gathered around the mausoleum. He had been a controversial figure, disliked by Queen Victoria for his uncouth ways. His wife was Anne Hay-Mackenzie, Countess of Cromartie in her own right. She was Mistress of the Robes to the Queen. The Duke conducted an open affair with the wife of one of his stewards, which caused Anne to live apart at Torquay. She died in 1888 and was laid to rest in Babbacombe Cemetery. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Duke married his mistress Mary Caroline Blair shortly after his wife's death, causing a sensation among Victorian society, which demanded a period of mourning.

**1893** - Lord Francis Mackenzie Sutherland-Leveson-Gower, Earl of Cromartie, a title inherited from his mother, died aged 41, not long after the death of his father the 3rd Duke. He caught a severe chill whilst on his yacht around the North of Scotland. He was laid to rest in the earth beside his father, on a bitterly cold day on 29th November 1893.

**1904** – *Following a request from Cromartie, the 4th Duke, to the Diocese of Lichfield, permission was granted to remove seven bodies from the vaults in the mausoleum. Cromartie placed a tablet in the Mausoleum to commemorate the fact that the 2nd Duke of Sutherland, his wife, children and grandchild, having been first entombed in the stone built sepulchres in the Mausoleum, had been removed and buried in the earth on 7th February 1905. The same year the Sutherlands quit Trentham Hall, which was finally demolished in 1911-12.*

**1912** - The last person to be interred was the 3rd Duke's second wife Mary Caroline, the Dowager Duchess of Sutherland, commonly known as Duchess Blair. The Duke had left his fortune to her, much to the annoyance of the family, who took her to court to contest it. She spent 6 weeks in Holloway Prison for contempt after burning private papers. A settlement was reached but the Sutherland family never spoke to her again. She died in Leeds on 25th May 1912 and was taken to be buried with her former husband at the mausoleum. The village showed great disrespect by not drawing their blinds as her coffin passed from the station at Trentham to the mausoleum. Duchess Blair has no epitaph in the mausoleum and it was rumoured she was removed to Scotland under cover of darkness!



Artist's impression of a small private funeral procession – Alan Myatt 2018