THE FOLLIES TRUST

The Follies Trust is setting about the conservation of the two amazing pyramid mausolea in Maudlin's burial ground on the Dublin road, Naas, Co Kildare. The Follies Trust was founded by Primrose Wilson CBE in 2006 after a lifetime dedicated to architectural appreciation and conservation throughout the island of Ireland. She is President and former chairman of the Ulster Architectural Heritage Society, was vice chairman of the Irish Georgian Society, served on the board of the Irish Architectural Archive, the Irish Heritage Trust, the Heritage Council, the National Heritage Memorial Fund and numerous other conservation bodies. She is currently on the board of the Irish Landmark Trust, the Buildings of Ireland Charitable Trust, the Ulster Historic Churches Trust and the Armagh Robinson Library.

Follies became a logical extension of Primrose's commitment to conservation of our historic built heritage. They are often neglected and unappreciated but are an important part of the intricate fabric of our history. As James Howley says in his book *The Follies and Garden Buildings of Ireland*: 'Follies and garden buildings fail totally to comply with any neat recognizable group because they are so inconsistent, a feature that contributes greatly to their charm.'

Since 2006, the Follies Trust has conserved 26 folly structures in Ireland, of which several have been mausolea, published 6 books, held numerous educational lectures and arranged visits to follies all around the country. The Trust is recognised as a charity, has no paid staff and no office. It therefore delivers its programme of fund raising and conservation through the voluntary commitment, hard work, advice and good will of its trustees and other supporters. However, in order to plan, oversee and deliver best practice conservation projects the Trust always employs conservation professionals. For the Maudlin's burial ground mausolea, Blackwood Associates of Dublin are fulfilling that role.

One of the Trust's publications, *The Beresford Obelisk, a Legacy in Stone in the Roe Valley,* was produced in 2015 to mark the conservation by the Trust of a fine obelisk at Limavady in Co Londonderry. One of the chapters is by Ana Dolan, a senior conservation architect with the National Monuments Service of the Office of Public Works. It provides a fascinating history of obelisks and gives a useful insight into all the building works of the ancient Egyptians of which the most famous are the Great Pyramids of Giza.

THE FOLLIES TRUST'S PROGRAMME FOR CONSERVATION OF THE MAUSOLEA

One of the fundamental difficulties with trying to conserve and maintain mausolea is that ownership cannot be readily allocated. Does the church body which owns the site also own the structure, or does it belong to the family which built it? Very often that family may have died out. The Trust has followed a process whereby it advertises nationally and locally to try to identify family interest. If there is no response, the Trust negotiates with the church body, which in this instance is the Representative Church Body (RCB) of the Church of Ireland. For this project, the Trust advertised, without response, and has therefore obtained agreement from the RCB to carry out appropriate conservation work.

This work will involve removal of vegetation, including invasive roots, repair and renewal of damaged stonework, complete re-pointing of joints using hot lime mortar to render the structure waterproof and repair of the iron doors. One of the major costs involved is the necessary scaffolding.

The cost is estimated at around €65,000 including VAT and professional fees. The Follies Trust has so far raised €30,000 from two UK based charitable trusts. St David's church of Ireland parish in Naas has made a generous contribution and applications for grant aid have been made to other bodies. If these come to fruition, the Trust will still be short of around €7000. It would therefore very much welcome any contributions which you may wish to make to support this worthwhile and interesting conservation programme. Please contact us at www.follies-trust.org

THE PYRAMID MAUSOLEA
IN MAUDLIN'S
BURIAL GROUND, NAAS

'NAAS IS UNIQUE.

NOWHERE ELSE IN THESE ISLANDS ARE THERE TWO LARGE PYRAMIDS IN CLOSE PROXIMITY.

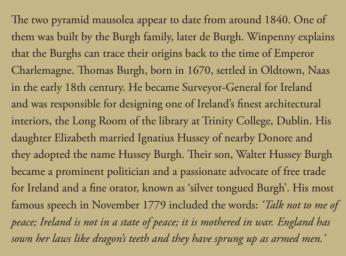**THEY NEED TO BE CONSERVED'.**

So says David Winpenny in his magisterial study of pyramid structures entitled *Up to a Point.*

The two pyramid mausolea appear to date from around 1840. One of them was built by the Burgh family, later de Burgh. Winpenny explains that the Burghs can trace their origins back to the time of Emperor Charlemagne. Thomas Burgh, born in 1670, settled in Oldtown, Naas in the early 18th century. He became Surveyor-General for Ireland and was responsible for designing one of Ireland's finest architectural interiors, the Long Room of the library at Trinity College, Dublin. His daughter Elizabeth married Ignatius Hussey of nearby Donore and they adopted the name Hussey Burgh. Their son, Walter Hussey Burgh became a prominent politician and a passionate advocate of free trade for Ireland and a fine orator, known as 'silver tongued Burgh'. His most famous speech in November 1779 included the words: *'Talk not to me of peace; Ireland is not in a state of peace; it is mothered in war. England has sown her laws like dragon's teeth and they have sprung up as armed men.'*

His grandson, also Walter Hussey Burgh, who became High Sheriff of Co Kildare in 1839, married Elizabeth Jane Fitzgerald of Shepperton, Co Clare. She bore him one son and seven daughters but died in 1834

aged only 33. She was interred in the pyramid mausoleum erected by him at the west end of the Maudlin's burial ground (to your right when you walk through the impressive entrance gateway off the Dublin road). There is a fine tribute to her in the inscription on the rear face of the structure.

The second mausoleum has no inscription so we cannot be sure who erected it. However it is almost identical in design to the Burgh one, apart from having a brick lined interior instead of the stone interior to the Burgh mausoleum.

It would be splendid if a definitive answer could be found to this mystery. Perhaps something further may come to light as a result of the conservation work to both mausolea!

A further interesting footnote about the name Maudlin was provided by Andrew Tierney's lecture for the Follies Trust in St David's church, Naas on 30th January this year. He explained that Maudlin is derived from St Mary of Magdala, (a city on the shores of the Sea of Galilee), better known as Mary Magdalene, the patron saint of lepers. When translated into French, Magdalene became Madeleine which, when retranslated into middle English, became Maudeleyn and then later shortened to Maudlin. The description of anyone being 'maudlin' derives from depictions in medieval religious paintings of St Mary weeping.