

## **Wellington Monument**

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# WELLINGTON MONUMENT – A TOUR THROUGH SOME ASPECTS OF ITS HISTORY: ARCHIVAL RESEARCH FOR THE NATIONAL TRUST

WENDY LUTLEY

## INTRODUCTION

The Wellington Monument stands 3.5 km to the south of the town of Wellington, Somerset, on a prominent point of the escarpment that forms the northern part of the Blackdown Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). It has been held by the National Trust (NT) since 1933 and is a Grade II\* listed building.<sup>1</sup> At 53.3m (175feet) high it is now thought to potentially be the tallest three-sided 'obelisk' in the world.<sup>2</sup>

The idea of a project to research archival material on the Monument was conceived by Stephen Ponder, a Curator for the NT's South West Region. His search of the Somerset Heritage Centre (SHC) on-line catalogue of the South West Heritage Trust (then the Somerset Record Office) had revealed the potential of a considerable amount of archival material that had not yet been looked at by the NT. The research was carried out by Wendy Lutley, as a volunteer for the NT, between 2013 and 2017. It covered both primary and secondary material and included material originally held by Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society (SANHS). In 2014 the project was also extended to document material held by the Wellington Local History and Museum Society (Wellington Museum) and on NT archival files (1930s to the early 1970s). This article is based on that work.

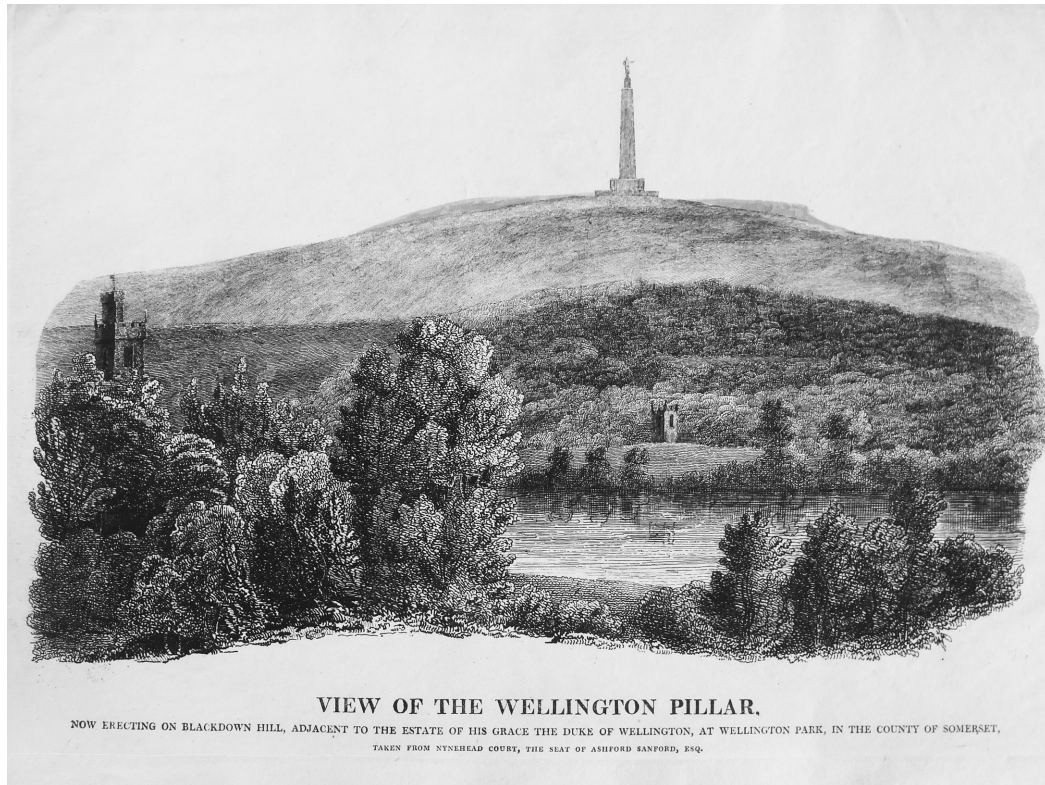
The principal aim of the project was to assist the NT in its understanding of the Monument to help inform its conservation management – rather than to research the Monument's history *per se*. An initial presentation on the research was given in May 2015 at a seminar to mark the bicentenary of the Battle of Waterloo, organised by SANHS, Wellington Museum and the NT. The event included a number of other presentations, including the reading of extracts from a diary charting Napoleon's advance across France, which set the scene for the considerable gratitude that the local

Somerset gentry must have felt towards the Duke of Wellington in the aftermath of his defeat of Napoleon in 1815.<sup>3</sup>

## THE LINK WITH NYNEHEAD PARK

Previous work on the Monument by local historians, such as by John Girdler and Robert Thorne, mention the first formal meeting to discuss the proposed Monument, held in September 1815 at the White Hart Inn, Wellington.<sup>4</sup> The meeting was chaired by William Ayshford Sanford of Nynehead Court<sup>5</sup> and a printed circular sets out the resolutions adopted.<sup>6</sup> The speeches at dinner, following the laying of the foundation stone in October 1817, confirm that the original concept came from William Sanford.<sup>7</sup> The Monument is 5.5 km to the south of Nynehead Court and copies of a print held in the Sanford family archives show the strong landscape link between the two locations (see Fig. 1).<sup>8</sup>

The print is undated, but the last line of the caption on a few copies indicates that the lake in the foreground had been constructed in 1816. It was formed by widening of the River Tone as part of Sanford's landscaping of Nynehead Park between 1810 and 1816. Sanford also had a bridge constructed over this widened section of the River Tone for a carriage way through his park. The bridge, which still exists today, has a date stone of 1817 and is aligned such that the Monument lies directly ahead in the view, when crossing it to the south. It was designed by Thomas Lee, Jr, the architect whose design was also selected for the Wellington Monument.<sup>9</sup> Nynehead Park is now a Grade II\* listed park and the bridge is a Grade II building.<sup>10</sup>



*Fig. 1 'View of the Wellington Pillar now erecting on Blackdown Hill' showing the view from Nynehead Court. Reproduced courtesy of SHC*

#### THE ENCLOSURE OF COMMON LAND

The Monument stands on an uncultivated remnant of former common land – an important consideration in terms of its conservation management.

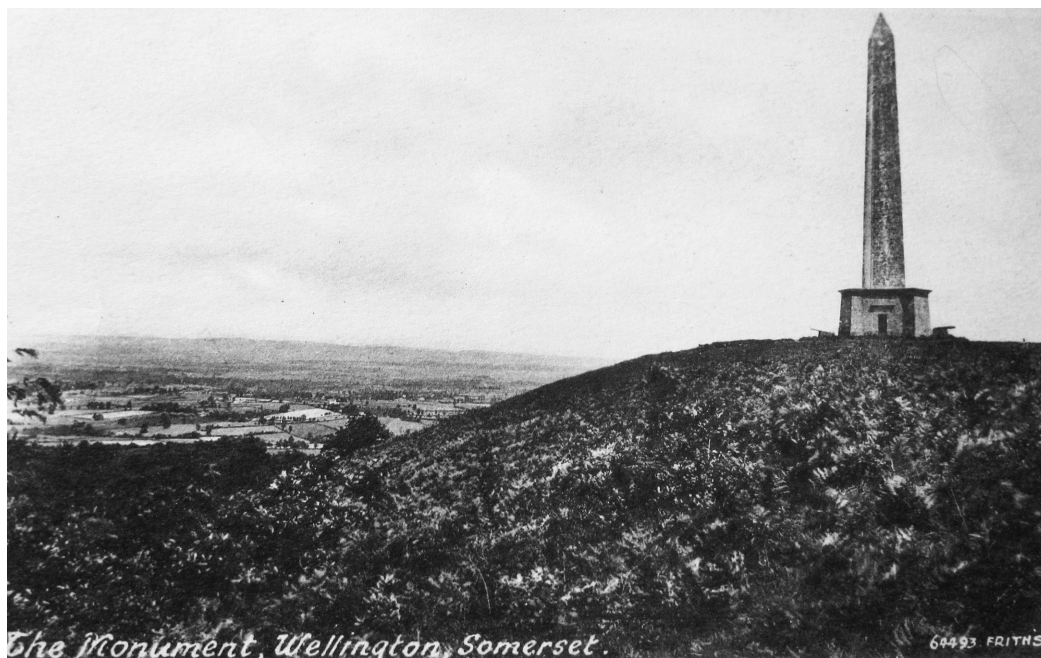
The earliest Ordnance Survey (OS) coverage is a drawing dating from 1802 held in the British Library which shows the area as open land and labels the site 'Beacon Hill'.<sup>11</sup> The land was then enclosed under an Act of Parliament in 1816, the process of which is well documented by archival material held at the SHC.<sup>12</sup> This includes an affidavit by W. Kinglake<sup>13</sup> confirming the Duke of Wellington's ownership as Lord of the Manor. The land had at that time been held for only a few years by the Duke, as part of an estate that had been purchased on his behalf to the south of the town of Wellington in 1813.<sup>14</sup>

A letter from the Duke to Lord Somerville, dated February 1816, indicates that the Duke was contacted initially in relation to acquiring the

land for the Monument project.<sup>15</sup> The process of Parliamentary enclosure was then evidently quite rapid, as by December 1816 the enclosed lots were up for auction.<sup>16</sup> Lot 1, covering 100 acres and the wider site of the Monument, was purchased by William Kinglake (who was apparently acting on behalf of Lord Somerville<sup>17</sup>), with the formal deed of conveyance, including some other smaller lots, not completed until the following year, December 1817.<sup>18</sup>

Lord Somerville appears to have then conveyed two parts of Lot 1, covering the circular area around the Monument itself and the strip of land subsequently to become the avenue, to the original trustees of the Monument in 1818, in what appears to be the original trust deed.<sup>19</sup>

The Wellington Tithe Map shows the further subdivision of Lot 1 that subsequently occurred, including the establishment of Monument Farm and its fields to the south.<sup>20</sup> The circular area



*Fig. 2 A postcard from the collection held by Wellington Museum. The cannon at the base of the Monument date the image between 1911 and 1941. Note the open aspect and remnant of heathland vegetation on the surrounding hilltop area. Reproduced courtesy of Wellington Museum*

around the Monument is shown on the Tithe Map as remaining uncultivated and has remained so since. It still retains remnants of its original heathland vegetation today. Early photographic postcards, mostly dating from the first half of the 1900s, show this open character, see for example Fig. 2.<sup>21</sup>

The area clearly continued to be grazed despite enclosure. The trustees' annual accounts for 1908 include a reference to a grazing arrangement with James Richards.<sup>22</sup> The NT also holds a document, dating from 1917, covering arrangements for grazing by James Richards of Monument Farm, while at least one early postcard shows sheep grazing the site. Grazing ceased in about 1959 when swiping of the central area started.<sup>23</sup> Since then tree and shrub cover has developed considerably in the peripheral areas.

#### THE ORIGINAL DESIGN

A second formal meeting was held in London in January 1816, chaired by Lord Somerville. A number of resolutions were agreed, including establishing

a prize of fifty guineas for the successful design, which was to be selected after one year.<sup>24</sup>

A news sheet, published apparently immediately prior to the laying of the foundation stone on 20 October 1817, gives a description of the design selected (although not actually mentioning the architect Thomas Lee Jnr).<sup>25</sup> The design included: a basement with a circular flight of steps 80 feet in diameter (not apparently constructed); a triangular basal plinth (with its angles ornamented with cannon from the Battle of Waterloo, the cannon also never added); a vaulted corridor between the plinth and shaft; a triangular shaft, including a staircase within its interior; and at the top a statue of the Duke of Wellington on a circular pedestal (both again apparently never constructed).<sup>26</sup>

Details of construction techniques and potential materials are then given in Lord Somerville's address at the laying of the foundation stone.<sup>27</sup> The dimensions differ slightly from those given in the earlier news sheet, while those given by Donaldson, a colleague of the architect Thomas Lee Jnr, writing in 1838 after the untimely death of Lee at a still relatively young age, differ slightly again.<sup>28</sup> So the



design was evidently modified to some degree in its execution, as well as never being fully completed.

Both Somerville and Donaldson's descriptions suggest considerable care was taken in this first phase of construction, although it is not clear if Donaldson ever visited the Monument. Somerville mentions that the structural soundness of the triangular design had been checked by Scottish contacts, including quoting a letter of support from Edinburgh which suggests the Monument may have been built without external scaffolding:

*"The circular vacuum in the centre, presenting an arch to every point of pressure, is considered essential to add strength, as well as to afford facility for constructing a stair case, and will render the scaffolding easy; by which means it may be entirely built from the inside, according to the practice of the Scottish masons. It is recommended to pour hot lime on the top of the walls ..."*

Somerville also says: *'The best artificers have been procured, who have been accustomed to work hard stones and flints'*.

Donaldson mentions that: *'the whole was constructed without scaffolding, he invented an admirable crane by which he raised the blocks of stone'* and *'The construction generally consists of rubble work faced with ashlar; but at heights of 10 feet each there is a regular course of well bonded construction.'*

A report by local architect, Charles Giles, written in 1853, is the first detailed description of what actually was built in this first phase.<sup>29</sup> Fig. 5 below, although dating from 1955, is also helpful in understanding how the Monument is constructed of flint rubble behind a layer of square cut facing stone or 'ashlar'.

#### *Local building materials*

The Monument is largely constructed of local vernacular building materials – another important consideration for future conservation work.

A document dated September 1817 (the month before the laying of the foundation stone) sets out questions and answers covering potential building materials, including flint for walls, lime, sand, granite, Halberton stone, brickwork and associated transport costs. It also refers to at least some flint being available from the ground on site.<sup>30</sup> It seems unlikely however that either granite or Halberton stone were ever used.<sup>31</sup>

Giles' report of 1853 mentioned above is the earliest indication that the facing stone for this first phase of building was *'a variety of greensand stone formation, from the neighbourhood of Whitestaunton'*. Giles also indicates that *'the staircase and newel are of Hamdon Hill stone'*.

There is further mention of Whitestaunton as the source of the facing stone in a letter, dated August 1890, from C. Elton, the Lord of the Manor of Whitestaunton, who says:

*'I believe that the monument was made of Whitestaunton stone, and any more stone that is required would of course be available from the same place, but I am told that not very much rebuilding will have to be done.'*<sup>32</sup>

De la Beche, writing in 1839 in the first Geological Survey Memoir for the area, says:

*'Chalk flints and greensand chert are often employed in the construction of common houses and walls; and, in one instance, the Wellington Monument on the Black Down Hills, they have been used in works of more architectural appearance.'*<sup>33</sup>

It is not however until the later more detailed memoir, by Ussher in 1906, that there is specific mention of *Northay*, within Whitestaunton parish, as the source locality for stone for the Monument, but Ussher still mentions only flint and chert.<sup>34</sup>

The late Hugh Prudden's book *Geology and Landscape of Taunton Deane* provides background to help understand the local geology.<sup>35</sup> See especially Chapter 33, which explains that the escarpment on which the Monument stands is formed by the Cretaceous Upper Greensand, which in this western part area of the Blackdown Hills overlies Permian-Triassic strata of the Vale of Taunton Deane below.

The Upper Greensand varies in its character, both horizontally and laterally across the Hills, from loosely consolidated sands to more firmly consolidated strata, including hard bands of chert. In the eastern part of the Blackdowns a formation referred to in Prudden as the *'Calcareous gritstone'* forms the uppermost beds directly below the Chalk. This was quarried for building stone formerly in the area around Chard and in Whitestaunton parish. See fig. 25.2 in Prudden for a reproduction of a print from Woodward, 1887, with an illustration of the strata in the vicinity of Chard.<sup>36</sup> Prudden also explains how Ham Stone, valued for its ease of

working, was brought into the area from Ham Hill to the east, near Yeovil.

Further detail of the building stones from the Upper Greensand can be found in Barr, 2006.<sup>37</sup> The 'Calcareous gritstone' (Barr's Building Stone Type 13) appears to be absent in the north western part of the Blackdowns, where the Monument is situated, but it is only a relatively few miles from Whitestaunton to the Monument and the route is without a significant hill climb. Barr also explains that the stone, which is not of the best quality for its weathering qualities, is variable between its quarried localities. It hardens on exposure and is further protected from weathering by the development of a characteristic lichen crust. Whitestaunton stone was presumably chosen as the best available at the time for the Monument's ashlar, within the financial constraints of the project, whilst not being of the best quality for such an exposed position.

Carter mentions several old quarries in his 1981 parish survey of Whitestaunton, but with no detail or reference to the Monument. Unfortunately, no further archival material has been located to provide any documentary evidence on the actual quarry(ies) used for the Monument's facing stone.<sup>38</sup>

#### *Lime mortar*

Lord Somerville refers in his address to the potential use of hot lime (see quote above) and to the potential availability of different limes, although it is not known which was actually used: '*Poppel lime is to be found within 2 miles. Aberthaw or Watchet lime ... is within 17 miles*'. Prudden (*op. cit.* note 35) explains that '*poppel*' lime was formerly derived from the Budleigh Pebble Beds, which occur within the Permo-Triassic strata a short distance to the north west of the Monument, '*poppel*' or '*popple*' being dialect for pebble.

#### RAISING THE FUNDS

There are several archival documents which include contemporary or later printed lists of the original donors<sup>39</sup> or that record incoming donations and expenditure during the first years of construction.<sup>40</sup> Amongst the donors are the Duke of Cambridge (the youngest son of King George III and a friend of William Sanford)<sup>41</sup> and Field Marshal Prince Blücher, the Prussian General who came to Wellington's assistance at the Battle of Waterloo.<sup>42</sup> Most donations appear to be from the families of local landed gentry and members of the Somerset

Militia, the latter a regiment for home defence (and not therefore involved in any overseas campaigns such as the Battle of Waterloo itself) as explained by Kerr.<sup>43</sup> The wider public appear only to be represented by an entry indicating 'The Servants at Heatherton Park'.

The latest entry for any of the statements of account is February 1819, after which no further financial statements have been located.<sup>44</sup> A letter from William Adair, one of the treasurers for the Monument, dated just prior to this, in November 1818, says:

*'I rode up to the Pillar on Friday last, which is now upwards of 42 feet in height and if the weather continues mild and open, the Clerk of Works hopes to get it up to near 50 feet this season.'*<sup>45</sup>

Presumably work continued for some further time after early 1819, as Giles gives 121ft for the height when describing what was finally built in this first phase.<sup>46</sup>

#### THE ROLE OF GEORGE RONALDSON

Towards the end of some of the lists of donors the names of 'Thomas Lee', 'Ronaldson' and 'Patterson' can be seen. Both Lee and Ronaldson are also shown as receiving payments, as well as a 'Clerk of works'. Lee's role as the original architect is well recognized. Ronaldson's role is clarified in three documents, where it emerges that he was almost certainly in charge of building on the ground for the first phase of the Monument's construction and that he had been brought from Scotland specifically for that purpose.

The first is a letter from Thomas Lee to William Ayshford Sanford, dated March 1818, where Lee asks: '*Will you be good enough to let Ronaldson have 10.0.0 to pay the men or amount for quarrying the Stone and on account of his own and Pattersons Wages.*'<sup>47</sup> The second is a letter from George Ronaldson written in July 1830, concerning a dispute that had occurred between himself and William Kinglake, and asking for an earlier agreement to be honoured for his travel expenses to Scotland:

*'I shall leave here as soon as it may be practicable. I must therefore beg leave to remind the Hon Treasurer of the agreement entered into*

*by the late Lord Somerville ... re: my and family travelling expenses to Scotland*'.<sup>48</sup>

This 1830 correspondence also includes a copy letter from William Kinglake to Thomas Lee, dating from 1824, from which it emerges that in 1824 the trustees reached an agreement with Kinglake for him to install the staircase in the Monument and physically enclose the land around it in return for him acquiring an interest in the land. Presumably the original funds had been used and this was an arrangement to allow a greater degree of completion of the Monument. The third document is a voucher indicating that Ronaldson had built the staircase by 1829.<sup>49</sup> This suggests that the Hamstone staircase may have been added after the walls had been raised.

We may never know the full details of what occurred from 1819 to 1824. However, it is worth noting that Lord Somerville had died in 1819 and William Sanford retired to Lynton in c. 1820.<sup>50</sup> Thus two prime movers of the original project were no longer involved, while William Kinglake evidently continued to play an important role. Indeed, a

letter from a Daniel Warren in 1831 indicates that the Duke of Wellington had visited the Monument at some point prior to that and been introduced to William Kinglake.<sup>51</sup> Prior to the location of this letter in 2015, by Colin Spackman, Hon Curator of Wellington Museum, it had not been clear if the Duke had ever visited the Monument. He was only reported to have commented '*That thing don't take, eh?*' when viewing it – which may have been at a distance.<sup>52</sup>

A watercolour illustration produced by Peter Orlando Hutchinson of Sidmouth between 1830 and 1840 provides an insight of what the Monument looked like at this stage (see Fig. 3).<sup>53</sup> This is much as described subsequently by Giles in 1853.<sup>54</sup>

#### THE 1850s

There was revived interest in completing and repairing the Monument following the death of the Duke of Wellington in 1852. The Illustrated London News included an article on the town in December 1852, which includes an engraved drawing of the



Fig. 3 The Monument as recorded in a watercolour drawing by Peter Orlando Hutchinson in the 1830s. Reproduced with the kind permission of Devon Archives and Local Studies Service



Fig. 4 'Proposed design for the restoration of the Wellington pillar, Wellington. Messrs Goodridge Architects, Bath'. Lithograph. A copy is held by SHC

incomplete Monument.<sup>55</sup> A further illustration of the Monument, as it stood at that time, can be found in the frontispiece of the pamphlet produced by Arthur Kinglake, in advance of the meeting held in January 1853 to consider the Monument's completion and chaired by Lord Portman.<sup>56</sup>

This pamphlet includes the report already mentioned by local architect, Charles Giles, with a description of the Monument as it then stood, together with recommendations for its repair and completion in a style much simpler than the original design. Giles discussed his thinking in advance with Frances Dickinson<sup>57</sup> and his suggested approach, of a simple pillar without the terminal statue as originally conceived by Thomas Lee, was evidently adopted. A different architect was selected however to produce the detail of the design. This is indicated by a fine, but undated, lithographic print of the proposal (see Fig. 4).<sup>58</sup>

Henry Goodridge had designed the Hood Memorial on the Polden Hills, Somerset, built in 1831.<sup>59</sup> The selection of Goodridge and Son as architects, and mention of David Aust as builder at that time, is confirmed in *Part V* of an article in the Wellington Weekly News on the history of the Monument, published in 1894. The same article also quotes a report given by Sir A. A. Hood at a meeting in April 1854, as chairman of the organising committee, indicating that the work had by then largely been completed:

*'Your committee is happy to state that the original building has been thoroughly and substantially repaired, raised to a height of 170 feet and ... that the base is the only portion not yet completed.'*<sup>60</sup>

Unfortunately, no more detailed information has been located to document exactly how the height of the shaft was extended upwards to 170 ft at this time. Similarly, it is not clear to what degree refacing or restoration of the ashlar (options referred to by Giles in his report) took place, or to what degree the curtain wall may have been modified, although the addition then of the Monument's current neo-Egyptian detail can be deduced from the lithograph.

## THE MYSTERY OF THE GRANITE BLOCK

Thereafter there is a gap in the story of the Monument, with virtually no material located until the final stage of building in the 1890s. There is an

illustration, dated 1864, of the transportation of a block of granite from the Cheesewring Quarry in Cornwall to the Wellington Monument, a copy of which is held in the SHC.<sup>61</sup> The caption makes no reference to Somerset and the mystery is solved by a note in the Somerset Geology Group Newsletter, July 2001, where the late Hugh Prudden, its former secretary, explains that he did not use it in his book *Geology and Landscape of Taunton Deane* (op. cit. note 35), because he had referred the matter on to Prof Colin Bristow in Cornwall who:

*'kindly went back to the quarry records; it was, in fact, on its way to Wellington's estate near Reading.'*

## THE 1890s

The state of repair of the Monument and lack of clarity as to its ownership were beginning to cause concerns again by 1889. Local discussion is reflected in the columns of the Wellington Weekly News, by then firmly established as the local newspaper. One such correspondent was Edward Jeboult of Taunton, writing on behalf of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB).<sup>62</sup>

A meeting was organised in Aug 1890 at which a report by E. T. Howard a local architect, was presented:

*'At the request of Mr O. G. Walter (chairman of the Wellington Local Board) I have surveyed the Wellington Monument on Blackdown Hills. The structure is in a very dilapidated and I might say dangerous condition. The top part of the column extending for about 27 feet downwards is very much damaged, many of the stones being displaced and altogether much shattered. In my opinion the top of the column to this extent should be taken down and rebuilt. The slab covering of the base is also in a very dilapidated condition and requires several new stones ...'*

This was followed by discussion and the appointment of a committee to progress matters.<sup>63</sup> William Ayshford Sanford, grandson of the original William, was clearly involved in this phase of the Monument's story, as the letter concerning potential availability of stone from Whitestaunton, referred to above, was written to him in the same month.<sup>64</sup>

The work finally agreed upon was carried out



by Blackburn of Nottingham and completed by October 1892 when:

*'the men employed upon it met together at the Monument Farm for supper in celebration of the completion of their work.'*<sup>65</sup>

A search of Nottingham trade directories for that period confirms the firm as: *'Joseph Blackburn, Electrical Engineer, lightning conductor manufacturer and contractor'*.<sup>66</sup>

Thus, the Monument as we know it today was completed, while discussion also took place with the Charity Commission (established in 1853) to progress a formal scheme to replace the original documentation and any lack of clarity that had arisen in the interim. A draft scheme was prepared and discussed at a meeting in Wellington in November 1893, where a number of minor amendments were proposed.<sup>67</sup>

## THE 1900s

The Monument continued to require repair, with many photos from the twentieth century showing staining, where the lime mortar had washed out from between and behind the facing ashlar (see, for example, Fig. 6). Repointing is thought to have been carried out as early as 1906–08. A photo exists, apparently from this time, showing mason, Sid Cottrell, at work on the project, while suspended high on the side of the Monument in a bosun's chair. Sid worked for Harry Hill, a local builder from Wellington, and was well known locally for his head for heights.<sup>68</sup>

## THE CANNON

The story of the cannon has been covered by several local historians, but it is worth noting here that

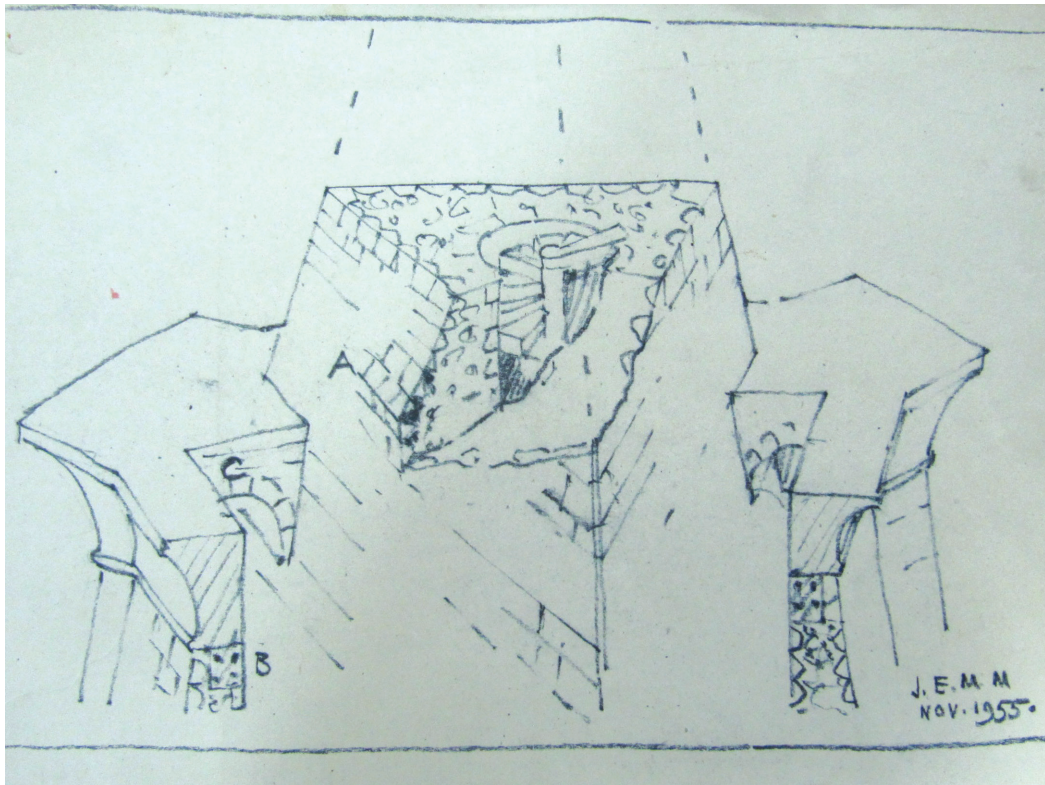


Fig. 5 A three-dimensional sketch of the construction of the Monument made by the NT's architect, John Macgregor, in 1955. It clearly illustrates the flint rubble interior behind the facing stone.

Reproduced courtesy of the NT

their presence or absence at the base can be useful in dating photographs of the Monument. Those showing more than one cannon at the base date between 1911 and 1941. See, for example, Fig 2. Four cannon were finally brought from Exeter Quay in 1911 (but were not from the Battle of Waterloo).<sup>69</sup> They were then removed for scrap metal in 1941 as part of supporting the Second World War effort. A handwritten notecard on the NT files from this time indicates that Professor G. M. Trevelyan thought that the Duke of Wellington would have said ‘*Let everything go in*’.<sup>70</sup> One replacement cannon was then brought from Exeter and installed at the Monument in 1986 by the Wellington Rotary Club.<sup>71</sup>

### THE 1930s

The NT acquired the Monument in 1933, having first commissioned John Macgregor, an architect appointed via the SPAB, to carry out an inspection in late 1932.<sup>72</sup> Macgregor acted as the NT’s architect for the Monument from 1933 until 1969, during which time he supervised substantive repair work, particularly in the 1950s. See Fig. 5 for a three-dimensional sketch produced by him in the 1950s. Macgregor is regarded as an important conservation architect of his period, who worked with SPAB to save several historic buildings.<sup>73</sup> He was closely associated with ‘Ferguson’s Gang’, a group of anonymous NT supporters and was known by them as ‘the Artichoke’.<sup>74</sup>

The NT established a local management committee to ensure continuity from the former charitable trust in the first decades of its ownership. A representative of the Fox family was amongst those initially invited to serve. By 1950 Julian Fox was acting as the committee’s secretary, a role that he held until the early 1970s, while the maintenance team, from Fox’s Mill in Wellington, assisted periodically with tasks such as repairs to the Monument’s access track.<sup>75</sup>

### RECREATIONAL USE

The original proposal for the Monument included the establishment of an annual ‘Waterloo Fair’ to be held at or near the site. The first fair took place on 18 June 1819, with the poster for it advertising ‘*rustic sports such as wrestling, backsword playing, donkey racing, jumping in a bag*’, with the event

attracting some controversy even before it took place.<sup>76</sup> No evidence has emerged of it continuing in subsequent years.

Local historian, Arthur Humphreys, provides a glimpse of early recreational use, describing outings to the Monument in his boyhood in the 1870s, which might include ascending the Monument, games around its base and then journeying back down the hill to Wellington on foot ‘*through lovely greenery to the Woodman’s Cottage where you could have tea and unlimited clotted cream*’.<sup>77</sup>

By the early 1900s bicycling and amateur photography were both becoming more accessible and the Monument appears to have been an increasingly popular destination. In August 1905 the Monument featured as the final destination of an excursion of the ‘Taunton Field Club and Conversazione’, including tea at Monument Farm. The event was reported in the local newspaper and is also recorded separately in a photograph.<sup>78</sup> Fig 6 dates from a few years earlier.<sup>79</sup>

Outings by car were dominating the scene by the 1960s. Correspondence from local management committee secretary, Julian Fox, indicates that as many as 200 cars had been at the Monument on summer weekends in 1967 and that it had been ‘*really a joy to see so many people enjoying the fresh air and the area as a whole*’.<sup>80</sup> This number of cars was however clearly becoming a difficulty immediately around the Monument, hence subsequent management by the NT to control vehicular access.

It is still possible to walk to the Monument and back from the town of Wellington via public footpaths and small roads, despite the construction of the M5 motorway between the two in the 1970s. Taunton Deane Borough Council published a leaflet describing such a circular route in recent decades.<sup>81</sup>

Today the Monument is a popular local destination for the short walk along its approach avenue, from the NT car park near the road, to the open area surrounding the pillar itself. It is regularly visited by local people, not only from Wellington, but also from adjacent settlements in Devon, such as Hemmock and Clayhidon. Many local people still also remember the thrill of climbing the narrow and dark circular staircase to the top in their younger days – as does the author.



*Fig. 6 Enjoying the Monument in 1900/01. The group are posed at the gate and former stile leading to Monument Farm and an accompanying photo suggests they had arrived by bicycle. Staining from washed out lime mortar can be seen on the shaft of the Monument.  
Reproduced courtesy of SHC*

#### OTHER ASPECTS AND GAPS

There are many other aspects of potential interest within the archival material on the Monument. It would be possible, for example, to look in more detail at the range of local people and organisations involved over the years. This appears to have developed from largely the local landed gentry in the first half of the 1800s to a much wider range of individuals by the late 1800s, as society developed through the Victorian era.

Conversely, there are many gaps in our knowledge, with no original architectural drawings located for any of the three main phases of building in the 1800s. This research has also touched only briefly on the history of conservation work undertaken since the NT acquired the Monument

in the 1930s. It has, for example, not covered work in more recent decades, such as that carried out by Carøe and Partners in the 1980s.

#### NOTES AND REFERENCES

The transcription of documents and interpretation of information in this article are those of the author: my apologies for any inadvertent inaccuracies or misinterpretation that may have occurred. This paper is drawn from a working report that documents all the archival material located (both primary and secondary sources) and which is held by the NT to support its conservation management. Newspapers were not searched directly as so many of the archives consulted included newspaper cuttings.



- <sup>1</sup> Historic England, National Heritage List for England
- <sup>2</sup> NT records. See also Barnes, R., 2004: *The Obelisk – A Monumental Feature in Britain*, Frontier Publishing, for a history of the obelisk in Britain. Barnes describes the Wellington Monument, Somerset, as an ‘obeliscal’ monument, as strictly speaking an obelisk is four-sided. He notes that it would be the largest obelisk in Britain if four-sided.
- <sup>3</sup> Diary extracts read by John Page for SANHS from: Booth, J., 1815: *The Battle of Waterloo, a series of accounts by a near observer 1815, with circumstantial details, previous, during, and after the battle, from a variety of authentic and original sources*, reprinted 2015, Osprey Publishing.
- <sup>4</sup> Girdler, J., 2001: *The Wellington Monument in Somerset: its History and Construction, 1815–2000*, published by Wellington Museum and still available there for purchase; and SHC: PAM 446: Thorne, R. L., 1950: *The Wellington Monument, its Origin and History collected from Authentic Records*, revised by Thorne in 1971, self-published booklet. See also SHC: DD\THR/13/2: Various notes by R. L. Thorne 1976.
- <sup>5</sup> William Ayshford Sanford, 1772–1833. See Nynehead and District Local History Society, 2003: *The Book of Nynehead – A Village on the River Tone*, Halsgrove, for further information on the Sanford family and Nynehead.
- <sup>6</sup> SHC: DD\SF/15/4/5: Printed circular containing a copy of resolutions adopted at a Public Meeting at the White Hart Inn, Wellington, concerning the erection of the Wellington Monument.
- <sup>7</sup> Report of speeches made at the dinner following the laying of the Monument’s foundation stone in October 1817, as reported on pp. 24–25 of Kinglake, A., 1853: *Letter to Lord Portman, with Some Particulars respecting the Wellington Monument, in Somersetshire*. SHC: GRN0321196. Copy 13 13844555, Tite 113–26. William Sanford is credited with the original idea and, in replying to the compliment, admits to the ‘impressive spectacle which the Monument would afford for his domain’, whilst at the same time referring to the wider support for the project. My thanks to David Rabson for drawing my attention to this text.
- <sup>8</sup> SHC: DD\SF/18/1/2: *View of the Wellington Pillar now erecting on Blackdown Hill*.
- <sup>9</sup> Thomas Lee, Jnr, 1794–1834. See Colvin, H. M., 1954: *A Biographical Dictionary of English Architects, 1660–1840*. Other buildings in the South West designed by Lee include the NT’s Arlington Court, 1822. Lee’s father, Thomas Lee, 1756–1836, was also an architect, who had retired to Barnstaple. Further details of Thomas Lee Jr’s life and work are given in: Donaldson, T. L., 1838: *Memoir of Thomas Lee Junior Esquire Architect, deceased 1834*, Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) archives: RIBA/MS. SP/4/8: a 42-page paper, read at a RIBA meeting in Dec 1837; and Rothwell, J., 1993: *Thomas Lee, Junior Architect – his life and works*, History of Art dissertation, University of Warwick. Both Donaldson and Rothwell indicate that Lee was involved in activity that led to the formation of RIBA. The catalogue for the Royal Academy of Art exhibition of 1818 also lists, on p46, Thomas Lee as exhibiting in that year ‘No 1036: View of the National Pillar now erecting by general subscription upon Blackdown-Hill, near Wellington, in Somersetshire, to commemorate the Victories of His Grace the Duke of Wellington, with the bridge lately erected by W A Sanford Esq in the grounds of Ninehead Court. T. Lee Jun.’ So there was evidently a further illustration of the Monument that showed the Nynehead bridge as well.
- <sup>10</sup> Historic England, National Heritage List for England. See also p. 51 of Nynehead and District Local History Society, 2003 (*op. cit.* note 5) for the landscaping of Nynehead Park.
- <sup>11</sup> British Library on-line map archive: OS drawings, sheet 44, 1802. Later OS maps indicate a bench mark at 900ft (274.3 metres), which can still be seen a short way up on the north-east facing part of the Monument’s curtain wall (Colin Spackman *pers. comm.*, 2015).
- <sup>12</sup> SHC: DD\CH/100/1 & /2 and SHC: Q\RDc/48: documents relating to the enclosure of common land on Wellington Hill.
- <sup>13</sup> William Kinglake, a Taunton solicitor and father of the author and historian, Alexander William Kinglake, 1809–1891. Alexander became well known for his book, *Eothen*, and his history of the Crimea War. He was MP for Bridgwater, 1857–68. His archives are held by Cambridge University Library, see its on-line catalogue.
- <sup>14</sup> Humphreys, A., 1889: *The Materials for the History of Wellington*, pp. 203–204 and Colin Spackman *pers. comm.*, 2015.
- <sup>15</sup> Kinglake, A., 1853, *op. cit.* note 7, includes a printed transcription of this letter. The original has not been located. Lord Somerville, John Southey, 1765–1819, 15<sup>th</sup> baron, was a well-known agriculturalist, see British Biographical Archive.
- <sup>16</sup> SHC: DD\CH/100/1 includes a poster, dated November 1816, for the auction.
- <sup>17</sup> SHC: DD\X\HFD/2: letters from Lord Somerville to William Kinglake, 1805–1818.
- <sup>18</sup> SHC: DD\AY/26: Kinglake family papers, including a deed headed *The Commissioner of the Wellington Enclosure, 6 December 1817, to W. Kinglake and His Trustee, release in fee of parcels of the commons*. The date of this conveyance is a few weeks after the laying of the foundation stone in October 1817, although the land had presumably been secured at, or following, the auction in December 1816.



- <sup>19</sup> SHC: DD\SF/15/4/7: Copy release re Wellington Monument, a handwritten copy of a document dated November 1818, produced at an unknown date prior to 1881, with no plan. The NT holds a typed transcript of what appears to be the same document, produced at some point prior to 1895, which includes a diagrammatic plan of the 12 acres comprising the circular area and avenue.
- <sup>20</sup> SHC: D\D\Rt/A/367: Wellington tithe map and apportionment, 1839–42.
- <sup>21</sup> Wellington Museum collection: A1021c: postcard of the Wellington Monument.
- <sup>22</sup> SHC: DD\C/338: Charity Commissioners accounts for charities in Somerset, bundle for charities in the Wellington area, including accounts for Wellington Monument for: 1908; 1916–19; and 1927–30.
- <sup>23</sup> NT archival files: 1960: Local committee annual report for 1959, by Julian Fox, secretary.
- <sup>24</sup> Referred to in SHC: DD\SF/17/2/34: Address of the Right Hon Lord John Somerville at the laying of foundation stone of the Wellington Monument, 1817.
- <sup>25</sup> Photocopy held by Wellington Museum, undated.
- <sup>26</sup> The basement was also to have incorporated three dwellings proposed for veterans, which were never built.
- <sup>27</sup> SHC: DD\SF/17/2/34: *op. cit.* note 24.
- <sup>28</sup> Donaldson, T. L., 1838: *op. cit.* note 9. The paper also describes how Lee was drowned in what appears to be a tragic accident when swimming one morning at Morteheo.
- <sup>29</sup> Giles, C., 1853: pp. 5-7 in Kinglake, A., 1853, *op. cit.* note 7.
- <sup>30</sup> SHC: DD\SF/1/1/90: Court book for the Manor of Culmstock, Devon, re-used by William Ayshford Sanford for memoranda including a page with a *Copy of questions and answers sent to Mr Lee of London, architect relative to the building of a monument on Black Down Hill Sept 6, 1817, Chas Bailey*. Charles Bailey was the agent for William Sanford and father of Charles Bailey of Lee Abbey (see note 39), David Rabson *pers. comm.*, 2014. For further information on the Baileys see pp. 57-59 of Nynhead and District Local History Society, 2003 (*op. cit.* note 5) and Rabson, D., 2002: Exmoor Review, pp. 49-54.
- <sup>31</sup> The Halberton Breccia Formation was quarried from quarries near Sampford Peverell, Devon, and used in bridges on the Great Western Canal, Barr, M. *pers. comm.*, 2016. The Devon section of the canal was completed in 1814, so could have provided a convenient transport route, but the stone was presumably rejected as unsuitable for the exposed position of the Monument.
- <sup>32</sup> SHC: DD\SF/7/6/70: Correspondence to William Ayshford Sanford, including a letter from C. Elton of Whitestaunton Manor, dated August 1890. This is the grandson of William Ayshford Sanford, 1772–1833. See note 64 for further detail.
- <sup>33</sup> De la Beche, 1839: *Report on the Geology of Cornwall, Devon and West Somerset*, Memoir of the Geological Survey of Great Britain.
- <sup>34</sup> Ussher, W., 1906: *The Geology of the Country between Wellington and Chard*, Memoir Geological Survey of Great Britain. NB Flint is used colloquially in the Blackdown Hills for both flint and chert. The former more accurately refers to that derived from the overlying Chalk, while chert is the more accurate term for the similar, but often more granular and/or banded material derived from the Upper Greensand. My thanks to Roger Taylor of the Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Exeter, for assisting with this distinction.
- <sup>35</sup> Prudden, H., 2001: *Geology and Landscape of Taunton Deane*, Taunton Deane Borough Council.
- <sup>36</sup> Woodward, H., 1887: *The Geology of England and Wales*, Philip and Son.
- <sup>37</sup> Barr, M., 2006: *Building with stone in East Devon and adjacent parts of Dorset and Somerset*, Transactions of the Devonshire Association, 138, pp. 185-224.
- <sup>38</sup> Carter, R., 1981: *Whitestaunton*, Parish surveys in Somerset, No 4, SAHNS and Barr, M. *pers. comm.*, 2016.
- <sup>39</sup> SHC: the last pages of DD\SF/1/1/90: Court book for the Manor of Culmstock, Devon, *op. cit.* note 30; Kinglake, A., 1853, *op. cit.* note 7, including, towards the end, a printed list of subscribers to November 1817; and Kinglake, A., 1853: copy GRN0321196, 13 14120687 which has additional archival material, including a subscription book for the Monument 'presented by C. Bailey, Lee Abbey, Lynton'. See note 30 for further information on C. Bailey.
- <sup>40</sup> SHC: DD\SF/7/6/7: Correspondence mainly to William Ayshford Sanford, including Statements of account for the Monument from Drummonds for Jan 1816 to Sept 1818 and John and Daniel Badcock for Oct 1817 to Sept 1818; DD\SF/7/6/11, including a statement of account from Messrs Matthew and John Brookdale; and DD\SF/15/4/6: *The Account of Money paid and received by Mr Sanford on Account of the Wellington Monument, including for the year 1818–1819*.
- <sup>41</sup> Nynhead and District Local History Society, 2003: *op. cit.* note 5, with thanks to David Rabson for drawing my attention to this relationship.
- <sup>42</sup> SHC: DD\SF/7/6/7 *op. cit.* note 40, which also includes a letter dated October 1815 with text confirming this donation from Blucher.
- <sup>43</sup> Kerr, W. J., 1930: *Historical Records of the First Somerset Militia*, Gale and Polden.
- <sup>44</sup> SHC: DD\SF/15/4/6: *op. cit.* note 40.
- <sup>45</sup> SHC: A\ARW/2/3 correspondence to Thomas Buckler Lethbridge of Sandhill Park, including a letter dated November 1818 from William Adair of Heatherton

- Park relating to the Wellington pillar. Adair and Lethbridge were two of the three treasurers appointed at the original meeting in September 1815, in addition to William Sanford, see note 6 for DD\SF/15/4/5 already referred to in relation to that meeting.
- <sup>46</sup> Giles, C., 1853: *op. cit.* note 29.
- <sup>47</sup> SHC: DD\SF/7/6/187: Correspondence to William Ayshford Sanford including, in one of the four bundles, a letter from Thomas Lee, dated March 1818.
- <sup>48</sup> SHC: DD\SF/7/5/12: Correspondence to Edward Ayshford Sanford, Oct 1829–Aug 1830. Edward Ayshford Sanford, 1794–1871, was the son of William Ayshford Sanford, 1772–1833 (see note 5); and father of the second William Ayshford Sanford (see note 64). He took over running the Nynhead estate when his father moved to Lynton in c. 1820 and was a founder member of SAHNS. He appears to have been less actively involved with the Monument than his father.
- <sup>49</sup> SHC: DD\SF/9/1/47: Sanford family, mainly household bills and vouchers, including a voucher dated 1829 from William Kinglake to George Ronaldson indicating an amount due or owed for ‘*erecting the staircase in the Wellington pillar*’.
- <sup>50</sup> Nynhead and District Local History Society, 2003: *op. cit.* note 5.
- <sup>51</sup> University of Southampton archives: WP1/1212/1: letter from Daniel Warren, dated 1831, seeking the Duke of Wellington’s help in getting his son into a good school. Mr Warren writes ‘*perhaps Your Grace might possibly recollect that I was the only gentleman of that neighbourhood (with the exception of Mr Kinglake) who had the honour of being introduced to Your Grace at the Wellington Monument*’. My thanks to Colin Spackman for sharing this information.
- <sup>52</sup> SHC: Kinglake, A., 1853: Copy 13 14120687, *op. cit.* note 39. The additional archival material with this copy includes: *A war memorial of the last century*, a 4-sided article on the Wellington Monument, Somerset, by the President of RIBA, April 1920, which refers to this reported comment by the Duke, but gives no primary source.
- <sup>53</sup> Devon Records Office: Z/9/2/8a-f: The Sketch books of Peter Orlando Hutchinson of Sidmouth (date given in catalogue as 1830–40), Vol 4, drawing no 139. The East Devon AONB ran a project on Peter Orlando Hutchinson, 2010–13, so the sketch can be seen on its web site, [www.eastdevonaonb.org.uk](http://www.eastdevonaonb.org.uk). It was also reproduced by the Devon Records Office some years ago as a postcard. With thanks to Douglas Marshall, former chairman of the Wellington Local History and Museum Society, for drawing my attention to the postcard and this image.
- <sup>54</sup> Giles, C., 1853: *op. cit.* note 29.
- <sup>55</sup> Included in SHC: A\CFH/4/3: a collection of topographical views, portraits, genealogies and printed matter relating to the County of Somerset, Vol 3, p385. A further copy is held by Wellington Museum.
- <sup>56</sup> SHC: Kinglake, A., 1853: *op. cit.* note 7. Towards the end of this copy of Kinglake, A., there is a newspaper report of the meeting’s proceedings. Arthur Kinglake, the author of the pamphlet, was a son of William Kinglake and brother to Alexander William Kinglake, see note 13. Lord Portman, 1799–1888, was Lord Lieutenant of Somerset, 1839–1864 (British Biographical Archive).
- <sup>57</sup> SHC: DD\DN 4/4/90: Dickinson manuscripts: correspondence to Francis Henry Dickinson from Charles Giles.
- <sup>58</sup> SHC: DD\SVL/7/2/10: Portfolio of illustrations and engravings including a lithographic print produced for ‘*Goodridge Architects, Bath*’ by ‘*Day and Son, Lithographers to the Queen*’, of ‘*The Wellington Pillar, Wellington*’.
- <sup>59</sup> Henry Edmund Goodridge, 1797–1864. Colvin, H. M., 1954 (*op. cit.* note 9) indicates that Goodridge had an architectural practice in Bath and was succeeded by his son A. S. Goodridge. See also Frost, A., 2009: *From Classicist to Eclectic: The Stylistic Development of Henry Edmund Goodridge, 1797–1864*, PhD thesis, University of Bath. Amy Frost considers that H. E. Goodridge was ‘*the most significant architect practising in Bath during the first half of the nineteenth century*’ and explains that his son, Alfred Samuel Goodridge (1827–1915), was in partnership with him from around 1850 and continued the practice after his father’s death. She has also suggested (*pers. comm.* to Stephen Ponder of the NT) that it may have been Alfred who was responsible for the Wellington Monument design. Henry retired fully in 1857. The Hood Monument is a Grade 2\* listed building: see Historic England, National Heritage List for England for further detail.
- <sup>60</sup> SHC: I. M. J., 1893–4: *Wellington Monument*, reprint from the Wellington Weekly News of 7, 14, 21, & 28 Dec 1893 (Parts I–IV) and 4 Jan 1894 (Part V), Tite 106–21. Sir Alexander Acland Hood, 1819–1892, was the third baronet. His father, the second baronet, died in 1851. See British Biographical Archive.
- <sup>61</sup> SHC: A\DKH/5/6/1: Illustration entitled *Method of conveying a block forming a portion of the base of the Wellington Monument, from the quarries of the Messrs Freeman and Cheesewring granite company*, 1864.
- <sup>62</sup> Edward Jeboult, 1829–93, local historian and author of *A General Account of West Somerset, Description of the Valley of the Tone, and the History of the Town of Taunton*, 1873. See SHC: T\PH\rea/1: for archival material compiled by Edward Jeboult including a poem on the Monument.
- <sup>63</sup> SHC: DD\HP/19: Papers of A. L. Humphreys: Wellington, folder entitled *Wellington Monument*,

newspaper cuttings, including one from August 1890 which reports on a meeting to consider repairs to the Monument.

- <sup>64</sup> William Ayshford Sanford of Nynehead Court, 1818–1902, was son of Edward Ayshford Sanford (see note 48) and grandson of William Ayshford Sanford, 1772–1833 (see note 5). This William took over running the Nynehead estate in 1871 on the death of his father. He was a Fellow of the Geological Society and an active member of SANHS, including holding the role of president. See note 32 for the letter to him about Whitestaunton Stone. Nynehead and District Local History Society, 2003 (*op. cit.* note 5) and David Rabson *pers. comms.*, 2014 and 2017.
- <sup>65</sup> SHC: I. M. J.1894: *op. cit.* note 60.
- <sup>66</sup> *Wright's Directory of Nottingham*, 1893 with thanks to Nottinghamshire Records Office.
- <sup>67</sup> SHC: DD\HP/19: Papers of A. L. Humphreys (*op. cit.* note 63) including a Wellington Weekly News report from November 1893 on the meeting to discuss the scheme; and DD\SAS/C2273/3: Mixed papers from SAHNS: no 15 includes a draft Charity Commission order for Wellington Monument, stamped November 1893, with additional pen notes.
- <sup>68</sup> Sid Cottrell's work is recorded on the Monument (information from a report held by the NT) and with thanks to Douglas Marshall, former chairman of the Wellington Museum, for showing me the photo in 2014 and providing background on it.
- <sup>69</sup> Thorne, R. L., 1950: *op. cit.* note 4; and Allen, G. and Bush, R., 1981: *The Book of Wellington*, Barracuda Books, which gives a short history of the Monument on pp. 113–19, including a summary of the history of the cannon.
- <sup>70</sup> George Macaulay Trevelyan, 1876–1962, was a well-known historian, the first president of the Youth Hostels Association (YHA) and a supporter of the NT. See his Royal Society Biographical Memoir, 1963, and the YHA archives on-line catalogue, University of Birmingham, Cadbury Research Library.
- <sup>71</sup> Wellington Museum: L0208, Local History Cabinet, folder of press cuttings on the Wellington Monument from the 1980s onward.
- <sup>72</sup> NT and SPAB archival files.
- <sup>73</sup> John Macgregor, 1890–1984. See Dance, M., 1984: SPAB News, Vol 5 (2) for his obituary. With thanks to Meriel O'Dowd, Historic England, for mentioning his significance.
- <sup>74</sup> Bagnall, P. and Beck, S., 2015: *Ferguson's Gang*, book, published by the NT. Macgregor was a tenant of Shalford Mill in West Sussex, which the Gang had acquired for the NT and which became their regular meeting place.
- <sup>75</sup> NT archival files and Wellington Museum: Fox's Mill maintenance manager's diary from the 1960s, entries

for March 1965 and 1966, Colin Spackman *pers. comm.*, 2015.

- <sup>76</sup> Somerset County Museum: poster for the Waterloo Fair to be held on 19 June 1819 near the Wellington Pillar, copy currently on display, with thanks to Colin Spackman for first drawing to my attention to this item; and SHC: I. M. J., 1893 (*op. cit.* note 60): Part IV describes the controversy in advance and includes a short report from the Taunton Courier on the event itself.
- <sup>77</sup> SHC: D\N\wel.b/7/4/1/257-260: Wellington Baptist Church records including: Humphreys, A.1934: *When I was a Boy: a West Country Town in the Seventies*.
- <sup>78</sup> SHC: Kinglake, A., 1853 (*op. cit.* note 39): the additional archival material with this copy includes both a leaflet for the excursion and a newspaper cutting reporting the event; and SHC: A\CFH/4/3: A collection of topographical views, portraits, genealogies and printed matter relating to the County of Somerset, Scrapbook Vol 3, includes a photo of the same event on p. 383.
- <sup>79</sup> SHC: C/CPO/5/1: an old photo album, possibly from the Colthurst family of Northfield House, Taunton, from the county planning department archives. The photo taken at the Monument apparently dates from 1900/01.
- <sup>80</sup> NT files: letter of Sept 1967.
- <sup>81</sup> Wellington Museum, filing box no 41: Taunton Deane Borough Council, circular walks leaflet no 12: *Wellington to the Monument and Return*, undated.

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