

ROCKINGHAM MONUMENT

The imposing building commonly referred to as “The Rockingham Mausoleum” was commissioned in 1783 by the 4th Earl Fitzwilliam when he inherited the great estates of his beloved Uncle the 2nd Marquis of Rockingham who died without a direct male heir in 1782.

The name by which the memorial is now known is in fact a misnomer, since Rockingham is buried in York Minster, as befits a statesman who was twice Prime Minister. Eighteenth and nineteenth century sources refer to the edifice simply as “The Monument”.

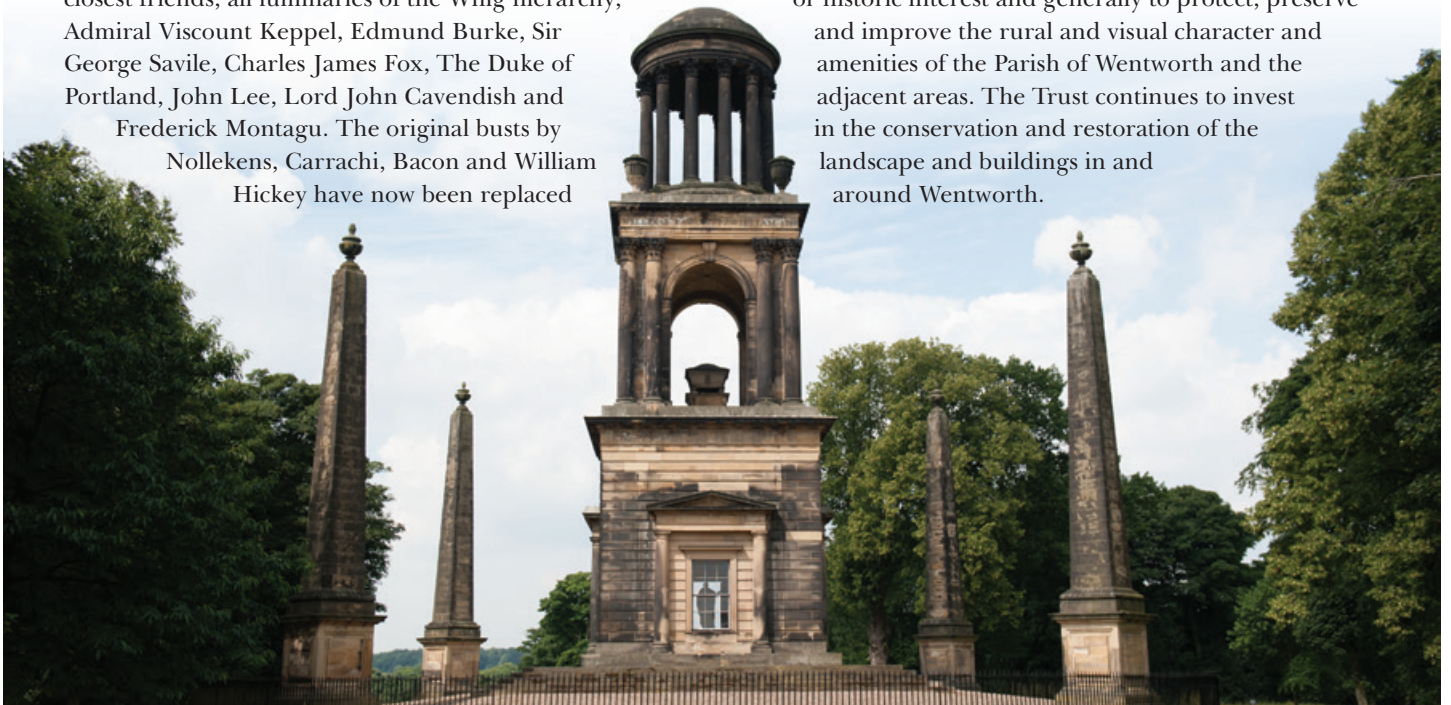
The architect engaged was John Carr of York, who had already built the great stable block for Lord Rockingham himself. Carr was to do a great deal of work for Lord Fitzwilliam, notably alterations to the side pavilions and to the west elevation of Wentworth Woodhouse. He submitted a number of options for The Monument, some of which were based on the concept of an obelisk. The three-storey design ultimately selected may have been inspired by the Cenotaph of the Julii at St Remy de Provence near Arles. As executed, it is a combination of a Cenotaph and a Temple of Friendship, housing within it a statue by Nollekens of Rockingham himself in Garter robes with upraised hand.

Building started in 1785 and took four years to complete. Twenty-eight pages of accounts record regular small payments to local artisans and more infrequent but larger disbursements to better-known craftsmen such as Nollekens. Niches in the walls support busts of eight of the Marquis’s closest friends, all luminaries of the Whig hierarchy; Admiral Viscount Keppel, Edmund Burke, Sir George Savile, Charles James Fox, The Duke of Portland, John Lee, Lord John Cavendish and Frederick Montagu. The original busts by Nollekens, Carrachi, Bacon and William Hickey have now been replaced

by casts. The large sarcophagus which can be seen from the exterior reposing on the first storey is vacant. Because, even in those days, vandalism appears to have been a problem, the building was enclosed by a fence of 743 iron railings commissioned from the Rotherham iron-founders Samuel Walker and Company. Finally, in 1792 (perhaps as a result of the extensive re-planning of the Gardens and Park at Wentworth by Humphrey Repton) four obelisks, which had previously stood on the West side of the Woodhouse, were relocated to the Monument and placed inside the enclosure.

This monument is the property of the Fitzwilliam Wentworth Amenity Trust, who completed its restoration in the 1980’s with the aide of compensation from British Coal and a grant from English Heritage. It only became possible to undertake this work when all undermining was at an end, making it safe to remove iron clamps which had kept the building stable while mining was in progress. The Monument was opened to the public for the first time in 1991.

The Fitzwilliam Wentworth Amenity Trust is a charitable trust formed in 1979 with an endowment from the 10th Earl Fitzwilliam. The principal aim of the Trust is to promote the permanent conservation of lands and building of beauty or historic interest and generally to protect, preserve and improve the rural and visual character and amenities of the Parish of Wentworth and the adjacent areas. The Trust continues to invest in the conservation and restoration of the landscape and buildings in and around Wentworth.



KEY FACTS

BUILT: 1792 **ARCHITECT:** JOHN CARR of YORK **HEIGHT:** 27M (90ft)

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Fitzwilliam Wentworth Estate

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