

David Jeffery Presentation

East Meon History Group 11 December 2023

Introduction: Rob Mocatta

So, thank you all for coming out for the second time in three weeks. We're very lucky today to have local historian David Jeffery with us. He is going to be talking about William III and the statue in Petersfield, and a little bit about the Jolliffe family, as well.

David, who I know, because he's quite involved in the Petersfield History Society, and he's a huge enthusiast about our wonderful statue in the middle of Petersfield, and he and I have been trying to persuade the authorities about what they should do about that statue, in order to explain better to people that don't know what it is, so that they can understand it better. We will win in the end, but we currently aren't on the winning team on that issue, we haven't been able to quite change what we want.

I didn't know, until he just told me, he used to be a Bedales teacher for three years, and he is very involved in lots of local history, is very knowledgeable about lots of things to do with Petersfield, particularly about William III, particularly about the statue. So, David, I'm going to hand over to you, to give us some words of wisdom and thoughts about William III, the statue, and about the Jolliffe family. So, thank you.

David Jeffery

Thank you. I'm not sure about the wisdom but thank you very much for inviting me.

The first thing I want to say is that the title isn't the title I thought it was going to be. It's actually William III, and I didn't say about the Jolliffes, although the Jolliffes do come into it. Because you had Bill Gosney talking to you two or three years back, I don't know if you can still remember what he said, but it may overlap a little bit with what he did.

This is a two-part talk.

First of all, the statue itself, the history of the statue, if you like, its creation, and what it's been doing there, and people who have recognised it and admired it.

And then the second half, which switches into the Jolliffe family itself, which then answers the question, "Why is William here?" which is what a lot of people still ask. So if you don't know why William is here, I hope to enlighten you by the end of the evening.

First slide:

This was taken four months ago, and the picture is historical. I'm really pleased we've got it because the horse itself has never been seen on its own, as far as I know, ever since the statue was there, so that's very unusual.

The three months that it took to repair the statue this summer left us looking at Sorrel. The horse is called Sorrel, like the herb or the vegetable. Not many people know that. And he was there on

his own.

In 1702, William III was riding around Hampton Court countryside and Sorrel stumbled on a molehill. The outcome of that was that William III died. It wasn't due to the horse, exactly, but he in fact came off his horse, and broke his collarbone and he never really recovered from it. I can't remember the difference in time between when the accident happened, and when he died, but it was a result of the horse stumbling on the molehill, and William died in 1702.

Slide 2

The other thing is to talk about William himself. You don't normally get very close to William, so I thought it might be quite a good idea to show you a picture of the very time when he came back at the end of September.

But you get a very good impression of the man here, minus the legs, because they were repaired separately. You won't get this close ever again so it's worthwhile looking at it, from this point of view before he gets put back in the saddle.

The key things are that he is dressed in Roman style like Marcus Aurelius whose famous statue is in Rome, and that style was copied by quite a lot of sculptors in the 18th century.

The key thing here is that when he first went on his horse, and he came to Petersfield in about 1750, he was gilded. Not a lot of people know that, but I'm going to show you a picture in a minute, which will give you an idea of what it would have looked like gilded. In fact, it's been in the square since 1812, over 200 years ago.

So, Roman garb, and gilded. And the other thing is, he's holding a scroll in his right hand. And over the years, that has changed once, possibly twice, between a baton and a scroll. The baton might suggest that he is an army person, obviously, but a scroll has much more significance to us, because the whole story is about William III and British law, and Parliamentary proceedings. I'll go into that later on. So the scroll is quite important.

And the other thing to say is "why Roman?", and why did so many sculptors use the Roman garb as opposed to a contemporary garb? And the answer is, because Roman, at the time, was considered a timeless habit. So people aren't going to say, in 50 years' time "That looks a bit strange," in 1900 costume, or 1800 costume. Put it right back to the Roman time, and it'll give an impression of being historically significant.

Slide 3

That statue in the middle, because I've talked about it already, is in Hull. They all exist, except one. Do you want to guess which one?

Male: Bottom left.

David Jeffery: Bottom left. Correct. Are you Irish?

Male: No.

David Jeffery: Oh. Why am I asking?

Male: Because, presumably, that was in Dublin.

David Jeffery: Exactly. So the key thing here, compared with Petersfield, if you like, is that they do all compare, because they are all of William III, they are all equestrian, and they are all in Britain now, but the bottom left-hand one was in Dublin. And when I say was, it brings in the whole question of what I'm going to talk about a little later, and that is Protestantism versus Catholicism.

And what happened was, that there were plenty of people who came along to support, or the opposite, to be angry about a Protestant statue in the middle of their city. It happened a long time ago, almost 100 years ago, in Dublin. That statue was blown up by the IRA in 1928. So if you do go to Dublin, he's no longer there.

I haven't seen them all, myself. I think I've seen only the London one. I certainly haven't been to Hull. Top left is London, top right is Glasgow, and bottom right is Bristol. Now, the other three, the London, Bristol, and Glasgow, not the Hull one, were all cast in the 1730s, which seems a bit strange, but when you think that William died in 1702, it took a little while for the sculptures to be commissioned, and then created, but they all had been completed in the 1730s.

So, the Petersfield statue is one of five, currently. It was one of six, but it's now one of five.

Male: And they're all identical?

David Jeffery: No, they are by different sculptors. But the costume is the same, you know, the Roman costume. I'd forgotten to say something about Hull. You can see immediately, can't you, (a) that it's gilded, and (b) you can see the safety barrier below the statue.

Now, I don't want to be too political, but Rob is here, and Rob knows perfectly well, like I do, that there has been some discussion about what Petersfield should do to protect the statue from vandalism. It's not new. Vandalism has occurred from time to time, and encroached on William, for all of the 200 years that he's been here.

There have been several occasions when people have taken up, not necessarily to demonstrate the Protestant side of things, but just generally the ability to get up onto the statue, and just show off. It happened at the end of the war, for example, the Second World War, in 1945, there were schoolchildren up there celebrating. It is quite easy to get up there, I imagine - it's not terribly high off the ground, as you know.

So I put that forward, anyway, with Rob here, a big hint, that maybe it's something that could be done to save the statue from more vandalism. And the other way of saving the statue, the whole statue itself, as you can see in a minute, I think the next slide, is to put railings around it.

Slide 4

I love this one, it's a really superb print. This is the 1830s, in the early Victorian stage, by an artist called Sheppard, who was actually a Londoner, but he was quite well known nationally as an artist and printer, and this was a rather fine view of Petersfield town square, with railings around William at that time.

I'll go into the Protestantism/Catholicism thing in a minute, but for the moment, I'm really just talking about William, where he's been, where he is elsewhere in the country, and how he is protected. And the answer to that is that he has been protected more in the past; in the first 100

years, since he's been in the Market Square, he was protected by railings. These were removed in 1913.

So the statue itself came into Petersfield square in 1812. It deteriorated, as you'll see in a minute on some more pictures, but it deteriorated thanks to vandalism, but also thanks to weathering. It was therefore felt necessary to repair it. So, from 1812 to 1913, he had had those railings. It was decided, in 1913, that the railings should come down.

Now, I'm not going to go into detail about the 1913 repair, but in fact it was very, very serious. The whole view of William was really quite crooked.

Slides 5 and 6

You can't quite see the leaning to the right here, I think, but the next picture will show you more clearly.

Slide 7

This picture is from 1892, 20 years therefore before the major repairs took place. And I wanted to show you this, for lots of reasons. First of all, the background. I don't know if you've ever seen pictures of Petersfield town square in 1898, but this was it in 1898. And that particular date is quite well known to local historians, because many buildings were demolished at that time.

On the left-hand side there, do you recognise the archway to the old town hall, which is now the archway to Cloisters café right outside the church? And you can see that the entrance to St. Peter's was blocked by the building belonging to the Hampshire Post. And you had to get to the church through this archway here. The buildings on either side, and the town hall itself, the old town hall, were knocked down in 1898. But that's another story.

Slide 8

So, the main thing is to show you the railings, and the leaning William, and there you see it much more severely. It's quite serious. So this is the 1913 repair. What they had to do was not only redesign William's position on the plinth but completely remodel his legs. So it was quite serious, in a way, because what you're dealing with there is an original sculpture. I don't like the idea of changing the original 18th century modelling, it seems to me wrong, but, on the other hand, that was the way they dealt with it – and it was seen as very necessary.

They also put something inside the horse's body to strengthen it, and there is still a kind of belly support system inside him, which nobody sees, but in fact it's quite interesting, because when he came back in September, the lady who was in charge of the repair told me and showed me some of the things that had been found inside his belly.

And they were in fact the names of the repairers, and the dates of repair over the years. In fact, they had one from the 1930s. So, you know, over the period of 200 years, the statue has had quite a lot of repairs.

On the right-hand picture you can see how clear the inscription was in 1898, compared to today. You can hardly read that today. The inscription at the front of the statue is so clear too, compared to today. There have been suggestions that that engraving should have some dark colour added to

it, so that it would be legible. It's in Latin of course and there's a plaque at the bottom, which is the translation of it. And on the other (north) side is William's name.

The Petersfield statue is made of lead, which is quite soft. (The Glasgow and Bristol statues are of bronze.) But the whole approach to repairing the statue's angle in 1913 was tricky, with a very heavy weight resting on three legs. Someone said to me, only a few weeks ago, "Do you know, the leg that doesn't touch the ground is about six inches longer than all the others." What he didn't know was that the legs had already been considerably redesigned.

Slide

Now, this picture is obviously taken before 1913. But I wanted to show you just how vulnerable he was and is. He's vulnerable every Saturday and Wednesday night after market days. People gather underneath, sit underneath, lean things against it. I can't blame anybody, because that's what happens.

Hampshire County Council paid £26,000 for this year's repair. I don't know about you, but I do think, personally, that some form of anti-vandalism needs to be taken.

Slide 8

So we get to 1913, and with all the vandalism that had taken place over the previous 100 years, it was inevitable that another serious repair was needed. One of the restoration committee, Harry Inigo Triggs, was one of the important people in the town who were involved with it.

Harry Inigo Triggs was quite well known. I'm not sure whether he was known nationally, but he was certainly known in Hampshire for his architecture and, in particular, public architecture. He was the architect who designed Petersfield's war memorial. I don't know if you know, but that is also a copy of an Italian work of art. He was also the architect of the Steep war memorial, which is beautiful. I don't know if you know it. It's very small, in the Art Deco style and extremely elegant.

But Harry Inigo Triggs was quite a well-known person in Petersfield, and he was the one who put himself in charge of the restoration committee, who collected public money for William's restoration. Now, nothing like that was suggested this year here, but in fact the Hampshire County Council paid for all of it, without, it seemed, any need for any public contributions.

But in 1913, the town did very well: they put on all sorts of events to raise money. They also had public collections, of course, over many, many months, before they could afford to have him repaired.

Slide 9

Here you can see the results. The lettering is extremely legible, and William has been made more vertical. It was quite a ceremony, there were hundreds of people there, a band was playing, there was military marching, and a whole public ceremony. It was a grand, grand operation. And he was, you can see, covered with a Union Jack, or several Union Jacks, and then formally opened, or reopened, after the restoration period.

And one thing you can see if you look very carefully are the reins. You can't see that wreath on his head, you can possibly guess at it there, and you can see part of his uniform there. The reins and

the harness, and the scroll in his right hand, and his head wreath, were all gilded. I can almost hear someone saying, why don't we try it again?!

But I imagine that that was in order to satisfy those people who were sorry that he hadn't been completely re-gilded. Obviously, it was hugely costly anyway. So what they did was a kind of piecemeal gilding, on that particular restoration.

Slide 10

I love this picture, so I thought I'd show it to you. It's called 'Market Day', as you can see, and it was painted by Gunning King. He was a Londoner, in fact, he came from South Kensington, where he first started off his career as a student, but he died in South Harting. He was known for painting buildings, anything architectural, but also country scenes. He was born in 1859, he died in South Harting in 1940, so my guess that this picture would've been painted in about the 1930s. It is very realistic, showing how, over the years, animals have been brought right up to the statue itself, and have surrounded it.

That's the halfway point.

Slide 11

I am now going to read you a quote from the director of the V&A Museum in London, who was here in 1962 at the date of a previous restoration. And when he came down in 1962, it was in order to say something about William III and his statue, and this is what he said. And I want to read it to you, because it's quite important, being who he is, and what he feels should happen to William.

"This statue has great historical and local interest and rarity. There are few equestrian figures in England that date before 1900, and this 18th century tribute to the memory of the Protestant hero is clearly a monument of considerable importance that merits preservation."

There have been suggestions asking "Why is he here? Does he need to be here? Has he got anything to do with Petersfield? Let's have somebody else." There are people who say this, which I find quite shocking. We have an 18th century artwork here, with national, if not international, importance. So I think it's something that ought to be reiterated.

The most important thing, although he is artistically important as a sculpture, and nationally and internationally as a monarch, obviously, the key thing, in the 18th century, and indeed in the 19th and 20th centuries, has been his representative role as a Protestant, vis-à-vis Catholicism.

William III was invited over here to become our monarch because we had had James II on the throne for nearly three years. And he had been a strong Catholic, and there was a lot of anxiety from the British population, who feared that the Catholics, succeeding James II, would continue and reign for many years to come, and there was a strong feeling that that should not happen.

So, it was thanks to a popular movement which antagonised the Catholics, and saw an obvious answer in inviting William to come over here, because he was representative of Dutch Protestants.

The Dutch and the British had been involved in religious wars in the mid or slightly earlier 18th

century and so William was not unknown in this country. He was also linked to this country through the previous monarchy of Charles II. But, in fact, what happened was that a movement grew, and was boosted by, popular opinion that we ought to invite William III over here to replace James II. Now, how do you replace a monarch? The only way to do it is by war.

And what happened was, when a great anxiety hit James II, he took refuge in Ireland, which at that time was more Catholic than Protestant.

Because William III, who had grown up in Holland and become its monarch had had several disputes with France's Louis XIV, there had been quite a lot of anti-Catholic antagonism on his part, and on behalf of his whole royal family. So he was possibly the right man to answer the call to save the British from any future Catholicism that may grow here.

So William built an army, a huge army, in fact, and crossed over the Channel in 1688, and he was quite clearly antagonistic towards James II and Catholics. In 1690, he crossed over to Ireland and the two monarchs fought each other at the Battle of the Boyne. William III completely wiped-out James II and his army, thereby becoming our king.

At that moment, in those two years from 1688 to 1690, the period became known as the Glorious Revolution and William was described as 'the Great Deliverer from popery, slavery, and arbitrary power'.

During his reign of democracy, I mean the rule of Parliament, not the rule of any monarch took over. That's, again, a slightly simplified version of things, but that is how history has seen him.

Now we move on to why William is in Petersfield.

Slide 12

I have to talk about two Jolliffes. This is John. Now, John Jolliffe was what they call the second founder of the Jolliffe family.

The Jolliffes aren't from this area but from Staffordshire; , they were quite wealthy people, they were into business, industry, money and finance in general.

John Jolliffe came to Petersfield because he married the daughter of our Petersfield MP. Her name was Catherine Michel. Three months after they were married, she died of smallpox. She was heir to her father so, eventually John Jolliffe inherited the Michel family money. He then became Petersfield's MP for 30 years and built a house called Petersfield House. It stood where the Petersfield Museum now stands but no pictures or descriptions exist of it.

The important thing for us is that John Jolliffe's nephew, William Jolliffe, was also Petersfield's MP, from 1768 to 1802. (The Jolliffes were in fact Petersfield's MPs for between 150 and 200 years.)

It was this William Jolliffe (and there were many of this name) was so devoutly Protestant and anti-Catholic, that he bequeathed £500 in his will for a statue of William III to be sculpted as a strong representative of Protestantism in Britain – and hopefully for the future. He commissioned the statue to be sculpted by John Cheere, a Londoner, who worked often with his brother, Henry, both of whom were very well known nationally.

When William Jolliffe died in 1749, the newly sculpted statue was erected in a circus behind Petersfield House.

SLIDE 13

So this is now 1773. You can see the statue there. The market square hasn't changed. The high street is the same, the market square is the same, the statue is here now, but it did originally stand behind Petersfield House. And this road here, New Way, is what we now call St Peter's Road. And Petersfield House and its grounds were situated all around this area. You can see from the shading that the Jolliffes owned an awful lot of properties. For example, they owned several properties in what is now Sheep Street, the tiny little street off the market square. This in fact is a misnomer, because it is a mispronunciation of Ship Street, because there used to be a pub there called the Ship Inn.

To conclude, I thought I'd finish by reading to you some quotes which show the importance of William III in Petersfield now.

SLIDE 14

This is the plaque on the Glasgow statue.... you saw earlier the four sites of the equestrian statues of William, and this is the Glasgow one.

SLIDE15

This is 1913. We saw a picture before of the re-dedication of the statue in Petersfield Square after its repair, and this is the Earl of Selborne giving a speech at that moment, and I've put him on this picture but I also have his speech, and I wanted to read a little bit of that to you.

SLIDE16

"William of Orange was a great man, and a great king. Now that we can look back, we can see how great his influence has been in shaping the destinies of our nation and our empire. From the time of William III dated those international relationships of the countries and peoples of Europe which were called modern European foreign politics. From the time of William III dated also the traditional attitude of our country to the rest of Europe. For the first time she became a permanent factor in the European question. From the time of William III also dated our constitutional monarchy, and that evolution of our Parliamentary system under which we live."

So, as you now know, over the centuries, people have explained, how important the political side to the statue was and is.

SLIDE 17

I want to finish by reading another excerpt. This is from a biography of William III, published about two or three years ago. "William of Orange and the Fight for the Crown of England", is a biography by Brian Best.

"The accession of William and Mary to the throne was a landmark moment in British history, one which saw Parliament emerge into the modern state. In January 1689, two months after the Glorious Revolution, Parliament met, and in February, a Declaration of Rights was incorporated into the Bill of Rights. This included the measure that the crown could not tax without Parliament's

consent or interfere in elections.” What he hasn’t included in this summary is that no Catholic may sit on the throne.

William, therefore, is not only known for being one of England’s most revolutionary kings, but also one of the least remembered.’ So the reality is that although not many people know about his importance, I hope I’ve explained some of the important aspects of what he represents, and why he is in Petersfield, thanks to the Jolliffes.

Rob Mocatta:

Thank you, David.

When you next go into Petersfield, and have a look at the statue, walk around it, have a look at the plaque, there’s a little plaque down here that’s worth having a look at, try and see if you can read it in Latin, which we need to make more distinct, and also, if you want to write to ‘Petersfield Post’ and argue we need to put more plaques up, and explain what it is, David’s and my case would be made that much easier.

George Atkinson:

I was just going to add, David, as a family that’s lived in this area for a very long time, fascinating, you obviously walk past these things, day in, day out, and have done historically, but we don’t know as much as you’ve told us. I love the pictures, because, being a farmer, some of those would be my grandfather with a porkpie hat there, with cows, and sheep. We’ve got cups in my possession from the Honourable Captain Jolliffe, who awarded them, for the fairs and the market days. We’ve got some at home, I know that.