

The condition of Symmetry

Memorial to Wilfred Owen in the grounds of Shrewsbury Abbey

I much regret your feelings on the state of Symmetry which I understand. To explain, a little, the thinking behind this memorial by Paul de Monchaux was to reflect where Wilfred died. It was, as you know on the banks of the Sambre Oise Canal on a cold grey early morning on the 4th November. The memorial encompasses two though provoking meanings. One is the Canal itself and the other The Pontoon on which Wilfred was trying to cross the canal. This was blown out by the guns located on the opposite ridge. The setting is, at any time rather gloomy, but is particularly so in Winter.

It does reflect the allusion to the Canal. Surrounded and overhung by trees the memorial has weathered over the years. From its inception the granite was unpolished and not intended to look new.

The York Stone and lettering on the York Stone is a particular problem with water drainage off the stone and leaves that fall and lie on it. Even when new, lettering on the stone was difficult to read.

The bird droppings, I regret to say are very difficult to control as I am sure you can appreciate.

We do try and give Symmetry a regular clean but winter and this wet, wet spring/summer has been unkind to Symmetry. The Shrewsbury Town Council agreed to maintain the general cleaning of the memorial as part of their rounds. However – once clean it does not, take long, for the leaves and bird droppings to fall along with the rain.

We are discussing with The Abbey the cleaning of the Symmetry, since they are also concerned. We are also intending to revise and renew the information plaque.

As I said at the beginning, I much appreciate your letter to the ShropshireStar. We will, do our best to return Symmetry to a presentable state.

Yours sincerely

Mr Peter J Owen

June 2016