

Philpot Sisters - Final Resting Place

Graham Davies, October 2016

<https://www.lymeregismuseumresearchteam.co.uk>

In about 1805, John Philpot, a solicitor practising in London, took a house at Lyme Regis for his sisters Mary (1777-1838), Elizabeth (1779-1857) and Margaret (1786-1845) who settled there for life at Morley Cottage, Silver Street, which is now the Mariner's Hotel. The sisters, especially Elizabeth Philpot, were noted for their fossil collecting and relationship with Mary Anning.



Mary (March 30, 1838) and Margaret (April 12, 1845) Philpot were buried in the churchyard of the Lyme Regis Parish Church, St Michael the Archangel. ⁽¹⁾

There is no known plan of the graves from the 18th and 19th centuries; the Philpot grave was identified when the monumental inscriptions were recorded in the churchyard in 2001. ⁽²⁾

Today, the inscription on the headstone is illegible, and from the 2001 record it would appear there were difficulties reading the inscription at that time.

In 2001, the headstone inscription was recorded as:

Sacred to the memory of MARY PHILPOT/who died March 27th 18(88) aged (61) years/Also the body of/HARRIETT PHILPOT/who died April xx 1845 aged 38 years.

The available evidence ⁽²⁾ ⁽³⁾ indicates that it is Margaret Philpot who is buried with her sister Mary.

Elizabeth Philpot is buried in the Lyme Regis municipal cemetery. ⁽⁴⁾



The parish churchyard was closed to further burials in 1856 because of the continuing threat of landslips and cliff erosion, which had already led to the loss of land and coffins to the sea. The first burial at the newly built cemetery was on November 16, 1856.

Elizabeth Philpot was buried in the cemetery (plot B38) on August 1, 1857. The memorial inscription is still legible, including that she died on July 28, 1857, aged 78 years, and that she was 'upwards of 40 years an inhabitant of Lyme Regis'.

Her grave was later joined, in close proximity, by further graves of the Philpot family, including that of the sisters' nephew, Thomas Embrey Davenport Philpot, who was responsible for the building of the Lyme Regis Philpot Museum.

(1) Lyme Regis Parish registers, 1813-1950s

(2) *Monumental Inscriptions of the Parish Church of Lyme Regis, St. Michael the Archangel*, recorded 2001 by the West Dorset Group of the Somerset and Dorset Family History Society

(3) Ancestry.co.uk

(4) LRM Research Team's Cemetery project, 2012-2016