

The mystery of the two marble monuments: an archaeological investigation

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Widowed Manxman Reverend John Thomas Clarke (hereafter Clarke) arrived in Wales from the Isle of Man with new wife Kate and their children John Louis Petit (hereafter Louis) and Frederick Caesar Parr Clucas (hereafter Caesar) in 1871, as a consequence of official and social responses to his reaction to more personal events that took place in 1862. Matching weathered headstones separated by land and sea evidence two resultant and distinct phases in his life. A memorial commemorating Clarke's first wife Elizabeth née Clucas, their son John Thomas (hereafter John), and daughter Anne Jane (hereafter Anne) stands in a remote Manx cemetery in the village of St Mark's. Another very like it, which remembers Clarke and Kate, is located near the graves of Caesar and his sister Emma Gentile Maria Kate (hereafter Gentile) in the equally rural graveyard of St Philip's Church in north Wales. The separation in time and place between what initially appeared to be a pair of white marble headstones, in the context of the apparent break made between Clarke's two families, raised the questions that generated the following paper. The archaeological methodology of artefact biography taken seeks to add meanings to those discovered from textual sources.

ARTEFACT BIOGRAPHIES

‘Artefact or object biography is an approach to material culture that highlights the shifting roles and meanings of an artefact over time and context’ (Mytum 2003–04, 111). Materials are integral with human activity, and archaeological research is a good way to consider how they create agents (Dobres and Robb 2000, 14). The same kinds and range of questions can be asked of things as of persons (Kopytoff 1986, 66). This involves less reliance on the function, dating and style of artefacts, and more on the constant linked transformations that occur between people and objects during their production, exchange and consumption. These contexts create meaning (Gosden and Marshall 2010, 169).

The erection of any gravestone is the result of a number of activities that, over time, become a significant archaeological record. The traditional trend of commemorating the dead links the headstones studied to longer time scales, earlier relationships, evolving social and geographical places, and memories. ‘The short-term time scales of social life are flexible and ephemeral, but must nonetheless have a significant impact on the archaeological record’ (Foxall 2000, 496). This paper considers three active phases in the life histories of the two Clarke headstones as recommended by Mytum (2003–04, 115), their commissioning and production, their significance after erection, and longer term meanings, with the aim of discovering when and how their impact onto personal and wider perceptions changed over time, and what this reveals about the human actors involved. The following vignettes place the two headstones into geographical, social, and cultural contexts.



Fig. 1. The two marble monuments at St Mark's (left) and Caerdeen (right).

ST MARK'S, ISLE OF MAN²

In 1772 the villagers of St Mark's built themselves an Anglican chapel of ease. The chapel was, and remains, visible from miles around within the rural, agricultural landscape. The involvement of local farmers and their constrained access to resources remain evident in the chapel's vernacular form. A continued, shared, Low Church culture is reflected in the plain, single-roomed interior. The clear nave windows have never been replaced with stained glass. Definition of chancel and nave remains indistinct. The associated, walled graveyard, first used in 1778,³ once serviced the local population and those residing in nearby mining communities. The villagers probably built the wall around their chapel about the same time to protect it from animal damage, although the most accessible resource for churchyard maintenance was probably to allow a few sheep to graze around the graves.

Clarke was appointed chaplain in 1827, when the ruinous state of the parsonage and the roads echoed the conditions within which most of his congregation eked out a living. A full account of his 32-year struggle to make improvements (Harrison 1878, 1–80) was published during Clarke's lifetime, evidence that despite his later challenges to the prevalent culture, many in the Island continued to admire him. He came from a farming background. The practical skills learned during his youth stood him in good stead in St Mark's where he was the principal actor in turning the village into a thriving community. By 1862 there was a new parsonage, schoolhouse, and post office. Roads were improved



Fig. 2. St Mark's Church and graveyard, St Mark's, Isle of Man.

and four new bridges erected. Clarke and his wife raised four of their six children to adulthood whilst living at St Mark's.

Clarke's enthusiasm in acquiring financial resources for public projects involved interactions with many high status individuals. Some, like Bishop Ward, became mentors. Others like English clergyman John Louis Petit (hereafter Petit) became close friends. Clarke never achieved personal prosperity, but actively managed the social elevation of his sons by arranging powerful patronage for each and taking advantage of the reduced public school fees available to clergymen's sons.

Personal disaster struck in 1862. Son John's death at the age of 38 was followed within two months by his mother's demise. Elizabeth's Clucas relatives added a memorial inscription to her on a family headstone in the not too distant Santan parish churchyard.⁴

Meanwhile, Clarke's reaction perpetuated this family catastrophe. Over the next two years both chapel and parsonage deteriorated. He resigned his chaplaincy in 1864, thus losing his income, and Anne, the only home she had known. In May 1865 Clarke challenged Island culture and the Manx Church's continued legislative powers in civil matters by eloping to Scotland with Kate, a distant relative of Elizabeth's, 42 years his junior. Subsequently they did remarry in a Manx church⁵ but attempts to reintegrate into Island society afterwards were unsuccessful. By 1871 the couple were living in Swansea with sons Louis and Caesar, where the less prescriptive Mission to Seamen provided Clarke with a short curacy. Soon afterwards they moved to Caerdeen, near Dolgellau (Dolgelly), in north Wales.⁶



Fig. 3. St Philip's Parish Church and graveyard, Caerdeon, Merioneth. Clarke's grave left foreground.

ST PHILIP'S (HEREAFTER CAERDEON) CHURCH AND GRAVEYARD, MERIONETH⁷

In 1854, retired Englishman and traditional rather than Tractarian High Churchman William Edward Jelf (hereafter Jelf) bought a piece of land near Dolgellau in north Wales with views over the beautiful Mawddach estuary, where he built Caerdeon Mansion and commissioned his bother-in-law, amateur architect, painter, and traveller Petit to build him a private Anglican chapel. Petit's design did not reflect ecclesiological ideas, although the interior did have an open roof. Other features were simple and plain, but Continental references in the building's style to Catholicism must have suited Jelf. Many of Petit's own watercolours of 1861–62 chronicling the process, are held by the National Library of Wales, and have been described in an article detailing the chapel's construction in an article by Donald Moore published in *Archaeologia Cambrensis* 156 (Moore 2007).

Jelf planned to officiate at English-language services in his chapel. Although his arrival in the district contributed positively towards the local economy, neither he, nor the bishop, fully appreciated the legal position or the strength of local feelings against English-language services. In particular, the rector of Llanaber parish, within which Caerdeon was located, objected. As a consequence of resultant court proceedings (Owen 1960, 331–8), the need for services in English was recognized officially, but there was continued opposition to Jelf officiating in his own chapel.

The possibility of Clarke's employment at Caerdeon was probably initiated by his long friendship with Petit, although Petit died four years before Clarke moved his family to north Wales in 1872. The move must have been a desperate measure. One wonders what compromises the now elderly Clarke had to

make to accommodate Jelf's High Church convictions with his own, albeit moderate, puritanism in order to support his family.

While the simple liturgical arrangements within the chapel accommodated both positions, Kate, and probably Clarke, travelled from Caerdeen to the Isle of Man that same year for the births and baptism⁸ of the couple's two youngest children, Gentile and William Edward Jelf (hereafter Jelf Clarke). This visit may have been a practical solution to Kate's forthcoming confinement. However, it probably reflected as much about the couple's Protestant convictions that they should be able to participate in the christening of their infants. Although there had always been a font in the Caerdeen Chapel⁹ the building was not consecrated until 1875 when it was elevated to parish church status, renamed St Philip's, 'and separated from the jurisdiction of the rector of Llanaber' (Moore 2007, 166). In 1872 the couple may have perceived the alternative, baptism of their infants in the parish church in Welsh, as unacceptable.

In 1875 English entrepreneur Samuel Holland purchased Caerdeen Mansion, but not St Philip's. An old postcard labelled 'Caerdeen Church'¹⁰—so showing Holland's rather than Jelf's influence—dates from after the chapel's 1875 promotion to church. It depicts the building standing within manicured, walled grounds with a number of smart gravelled paths against a formal backdrop of immature trees. The English style of the landscaping probably echoed the gardens surrounding the nearby mansion, which displayed owner Holland's cultural roots and social ambitions. The implication is that his gardeners cared for the churchyard too, so exhibiting his considerable economic status publically.

The gift of the living was Holland's. As patron he presented Clarke, aged 78, as this church's first vicar. It was Clarke's first post as vicar too. The material culture inside the church continued to reflect compromise between the mild puritanism surely perpetuated by Clarke, and acceptance of some more modern English ecclesiological forms. At Easter in 1881 the interior of the church was described as 'simply but tastefully decorated'.¹¹ The accompanying long list of flowers and parts of the building adorned imply the arrangements were not really all that modest.

Services were in English. Clarke was not a Welsh speaker. The common language between him and the local community was English, although he must have empathized with those who promoted use of the vernacular. He was a linguist, and had been used to taking services at St Mark's in Manx. His increasing frailty was probably a deciding factor in him not embracing the Welsh language.

Clarke died in the parsonage in 1888 at the age of 90 and was interred in the adjacent graveyard. Kate died forty-five years later and was laid to rest with her husband. Subsequently, Caesar and Gentile were buried not far from their parents, commemorated by matching gravestones (albeit of different sizes) made from roughly hewn granite. Caesar and Gentile's husband Rowland Evans predeceased Gentile, so it seems likely she had a hand in selecting both granite memorials. That they match surely implies close ante-mortem family relationships.

At an unknown date matching, decorative headstones were erected on the grave of Elizabeth, John, and Anne in St Mark's and that of Clarke and Kate at Caerdeen. The following sections consider the material culture for evidence of related human activity.

COMMISSIONING AND PRODUCTION

By the eighteenth century British trade had reached international proportions (Jackson 2004, 166). Cargoes of high value commodities had little personal meaning to those involved except for economic gain. The non-British marble of the Clarke memorials represented a far wider trend of awareness of hitherto exotic materials, improvements in production, transport, and social mobility facilitated by the change agents of Empire and the industrial revolution. The conveyance of blocks of marble by sea from mainland Europe



Fig. 4. Variations in execution of design detail in the crosses: St Mark's (left) and Caerdeon (right).

to English ports and then onwards by rail to Wales and steamship to the Isle of Man would not have elicited comment in the second half of the nineteenth century, by which time use of Continental marble for mortuary monuments had become fashionable (Mytum 20003–04, 59) and affordable by the expanding middle classes.

The ecclesiological changes within the Anglican Church that admired pre-Reformation forms also contributed to the popularity of white marble. Its use for graveyard memorials was relatively new, so it seems likely the material was chosen to be noticed.

The two Clarke headstones appear very similar in their material, design, condition and size. Both machine-tooled monuments were erected on red sandstone bases. Both were inscribed with simple, inlaid, lead, sans serif capitals that contrast with the more flamboyant style of the headstones. This could imply donor empathy with the family's known unpretentious lifestyle. Alternatively, the style of the script may have been a pragmatic constraint imposed by the inlaid lead technique chosen.

Neither has had to be repaired, which implies quality, considerable related cost, and a donor with high economic capital. Significant expenditure was reiterated by the implied time and expertise required to execute the style chosen. The colour and superior material used support earlier suggestions that the intention was to make a public statement. The additional choice of an intricately carved Celtic cross restated this, although in the context of Clarke's background, the cross may also have been chosen as a cultural metaphor for his Manx identity, and empathy with an exile. Memories of an earlier phase

of Clarke's life may even have been shared. The chosen style, that also portrayed Clarke's devotional convictions, was not inappropriate at St Mark's either. His first wife and children also shared his long, Manx, Christian heritage.

The ironwork around both plots, which would have enhanced the enclosed headstones, was another Victorian innovation. It was not discovered when this was erected on either site.

Variations between the memorials are minimal. For instance, except for height (the St Mark's stone is 28mm taller than that at Caerdeon), measurements vary by less than 6mm. However, the St Mark's memorial lies within a double kerb whereas the Caerdeon stone stands upon a single kerb, and the railings do not match. The size of the lettering on both inscriptions varies. The presence of a scriptural message on the Caerdeon stone was not replicated in St Mark's. Close consideration of dissimilarities in the two headstones strongly suggests that they were carved by two artisans working in separate workshops from the same duplicated pattern. Each stonemason seems to have interpreted the smaller elements of the design individually. Although this cannot be verified, nothing suggests those involved collaborated to ensure a perfect pair. Neither memorial is inscribed with a maker's name.

Once carved with memorial inscriptions to specific individuals, relationships between the headstones and everyone involved changed dramatically. The marble lost much of its value as a product, whilst simultaneously the headstones became singularized (Kopytoff 1986, 73) by their transformation from high quality commodities to very personal, and religiously significant, objects.

IMMEDIATE POST-BURIAL SIGNIFICANCE

The gravesites tell about how communities and the deceased were perceived socially by contemporaries. At St Mark's, Clarke in his role as chaplain probably had an input into the allocation of his son's burial site. The position of the Clarke plot suggests perceptions of the family as socially inclusive. John was buried adjacent to contemporaneous interments near the stone wall between the graveyard and the highway, away from the east end of the building, behind a large, eighteenth-century tombstone. Without permanent headstone the grave must have been hidden from all but the most curious visitor by the wall on one side, and the tall eighteenth-century memorial on the other. The location suggests Clarke did not have perceptions that his son's profession, or his own office as a clergyman, afforded John a special place in the graveyard, or that many except family visitors were anticipated.

The double width kerb oriented east/west indicates John and Elizabeth had Christian burials side by side. In all likelihood both funerals were highly emotional, personal events held within the simple liturgical arrangements of the chapel interior. Clarke did not officiate on either occasion but did not allow his private feelings to interfere with his professional duties. Both events were documented in his own hand in the burials register,¹² and he presided at another funeral at St Mark's thirteen days after Elizabeth's.

Clarke, Elizabeth, and Anne, and after Elizabeth's death, Clarke and Anne, probably did visit the plot frequently for a time. The parsonage was only a short walk away. Anne's siblings no longer lived at home, so undoubtedly visited less frequently. However, within two years Clarke and Anne had left the village. The consequences of the distances and transport difficulties involved suggest visits tailed off from then, although the liturgical calendar provided opportunities for annual private commemorative interactions, and for public activities based on more communal memories.

Anne's interment in the same grave nearly half a century later probably did not prolong the activity of the gravesite for long. She was residing some distance from St Mark's in the adjacent parish of Marown¹³ when she died. Her unmarried status which involved the transportation of her remains from

IN MEMORY OF
ELIZABET[H],
 [W]IFE OF THE REV. J.T. CLARKE,
 [C]HAPLAIN OF ST MARK'S,
 AND DAUGHTER OF JOHN CLUCAS ESQ.,
 [O]F MARY VOAR AND BALNACREGGA,
 IN THE PARISH OF SANTAN,
 DIED SEPTEMBER 2. 1862, AGED 66 YEARS.

JOHN THOMAS CLARKE, M.D. M.R.C.S.

ELDEST SON OF THE REV. [J].T. CLARKE,
 AND OF THE AFORESAID ELIZABETH CLARKE,
 SOMETI[M]E ASSI[ST]ANT SURGEON IN H.M. ARMY,
 DIED JULY 9. 1862, AGED 38 YEARS.

ANNE JANE CLARKE,

DAUGHTER OF THE REV. J.T. CLARKE,
 AND OF THE AFORESAID ELIZABETH CLARKE,
 DIED NOVEMBER 6. 1907, AGED 73 YEARS.

IN MEMORY OF
THE REV. JOHN THOMAS CLARKE,
OF THE NAPPIN, ISLE OF MAN,
 LATE INCUMBENT OF CAERDEON CHURCH,
 BORN NOV. 1, 1798,
 DIED FEB. 2, 1888.

"I KNOW THAT MY REEDEEMER LIVETH."

JOB XIX. 25.

ALSO OF KATE CLARKE, HIS WIDOW

BORN JUNE 1, 1846,
 DIED JAN. 13, 1933.

"THEIR WORKS DO FOLLOW THEM."

REV. XIV. 13.

Transcript of the memorial inscriptions (missing letters enclosed in square brackets): St Mark's (left) and Caerdeon (right).

Marown for burial at St Mark's had logistical and financial implications for an unknown participant in the arrangements made for her funeral. None of her brothers outlived her. Afterwards, travelling distances involved almost certainly constrained friends who wished to visit the grave from doing very often.

In contrast, an 1888 newspaper account of Clarke's funeral at Caerdeon indicates it was a very public, as well as deeply personal, event. A long list itemized attendees and the many, including his 15-year-old daughter Gentile, who sent wreaths.¹⁴ Clarke's formal interment was only the third in this cemetery. His grave lies towards the top of the sloping churchyard, oriented east/west in consecrated ground near the liturgical east end of the church and in clear view from the pathway¹⁵ through the graveyard to the south entrance of the church. This would have been deemed appropriate by contemporaries in the context of perceptions of tradition, and Clarke's professional and social status. His grave may have been marked temporarily with a simple wooden cross such as the one presently at the lower end of the graveyard, because at Clarke's demise Kate became destitute and homeless. Although Clarke retired in 1885¹⁶ his death at the parsonage implies that the freehold he acquired when inducted as vicar prevented his eviction prior to his passing.

When the permanent Clarke memorials were eventually erected the materials and design chosen would certainly have attracted attention in both rural graveyards. The inscribed headstones changed the meaning

of both graves by locking perceptions of the memorialized and others in time, and in religious and social place.

In St Mark's, a previously largely hidden site became a little more visible and public. The gravesite now definitely faced the main, albeit rural, highway through the village. The wall between graveyard and main road is not high, and around the turn of the century traffic would have been slow moving, so the decorative, white headstone, which must have contrasted markedly with its predominantly plain, dark-grey, Manx slate companions, may have excited notice from passers-by, especially from those who remembered the Clarke family.

The colour, style, and design of the St Mark's Clarke headstone reflected more about the views of its commissioner than of those interred. The arrival of the intricately carved white marble in St Mark's, with its continued mildly puritan, conservative communal paradigm and generally low economic capital may have been contentious. Its presence implies a donor from a later generation and with more modern aesthetic tastes than Clarke, Elizabeth, or even their children. Son Benjamin reiterated that family's continued and shared feelings when he wrote in 1898 asking that there be no 'fuss' when a memorial window to his parents was installed into St Mark's Chapel. 'We all [Elizabeth's and Clarke's three surviving children] have a thorough disbelief in it [i.e. fuss] in such matters or indeed in anything connected with religion'.¹⁷ However, another contemporary white marble headstone erected nearby evidences wider changes in English social and Anglican fashions that had made at least some headway in the Isle of Man.

Perhaps unintentionally, because necessarily the location of the headstone was constrained by the earlier positioning of the burials, and despite its colour and design, this headstone always expressed less public meaning than its Caerdeen counterpart. Since then, modern transport innovations, discolouration of the marble, and time have ensured that the St Mark's headstone is even less likely to be noticed by anyone except occasionally.

In Wales, local newspapers reported Kate's continued involvement in Caerdeen Church affairs for some time after Clarke's death, so she probably visited her husband's grave often. She and others may have brought flowers and/or tended the grave on annual occasions like birthdays. The cyclical Christian calendar also offered occasions for private and public activities related to personal and shared memories.

The new memorial faced the road, so drew itself to the attention of those arriving at the nearby church on horseback or by vehicle. Prior to its erection Clarke's grave had been hidden from the road by the wall between that lane and the graveyard. Those who walked up the path through the graveyard to the church now only got a view of the back of the headstone. The Christian reference of the Celtic cross did not negate the intention that this headstone should be socially interactive. The memorial's arrival would have been welcomed as an appropriate metaphor of Clarke's former office.

Kate's burial in her husband's plot in 1933 was probably a much smaller and private affair than his had been. Her interment, only the seventy-seventh in this graveyard, reiterated the small size of the congregation. By then there can have been few worries about costs incurred. At her death Kate owned property and had a private income. Daughter Gentille now lived nearby in Dolgellau, and was probably the chief mourner. Her brother Caesar may also have attended but Louis was living in America and Jelf Clarke predeceased his mother.

Inevitably the passage of time lessened the impact of this memorial. Fewer of those arriving at the church remembered the couple. Other interments took place nearby, some also marked with white marble headstones, and the Clarke marble became weathered and discoloured. The donor was not to know that the Caerdeen congregation would shrink and that the church would eventually close. Now the access road sees very little traffic at all, and the Clarke headstone probably elicits very little interest or attention.

The following section analyses evidence accrued in order to discover who ordered the memorials, and when.

THE DONOR

A few conclusions can already be drawn. For instance, Clarke's financial difficulties in 1862 and Kate's in 1888 excluded either from having access to the resources necessary to commission inscribed marble headstones to their loved ones soon after their deaths. Neither did the material, colour, and style chosen represent Clarke's *habitus*. Nor would his choice of the St Mark's memorial soon after 1862 explain the similarities between the two stones. Consideration of the considerable resemblances and minimal differences between the headstones strongly implies both were commissioned around the same time by a single agent. It seems highly unlikely that Clarke had an input into the choice of either memorial.

Mytum (2003–04, 113) advises that researchers examine the inscriptions for evidence of more meanings than the names and dates expressed, the most important elements of the inscription being the 'inscriptional events during the life of the memorial.' The addition of a secondary dedication may change a memorial's form, meaning, or function.

In St Mark's, the similarities between letter styles and sizes, and the workmanship of the three memorial inscriptions on the Clarke stone imply a single engraving event after Anne's death. No room was left on the St Mark's headstone to add another memorial caption. It seems whoever was involved in its design knew Anne's surviving brothers had already died, and that no one else was likely to be buried in this grave.

In Caerdeon Clarke's name is written in larger letters than Kate's. This and the variation in the angles between the italicized letters between the two legends probably reflect two separate inscriptional events. Assuming the two headstones were commissioned simultaneously, the likelihood that the inscription to Clarke was carved much earlier than that to Kate is supported by the very different language and concepts expressed between Elizabeth's and Kate's memorial inscriptions. This alone suggests the activities of two individuals. If so, the space left for another inscription that surely anticipated that Kate would join her husband in the future, places the primary inscriptions on both stones to before 1933, when she died.

So these two stones were probably constructed between Anne's death in 1907 and 1933 when Kate died, which excludes a large proportion of the contenders, like Petit, Jelf, Clarke, Holland, and all of Clarke and Elizabeth's other children, who all predeceased Anne. Therefore the St Mark's memorial probably never interacted with close family members.

Alternatively, the primary memorial inscription on the Caerdeon memorial would have had personal meaning for Clarke's widow and a small number of others for a time. The scriptural text reflected contemporary public expectations of Clarke's religious convictions. When the secondary memorial engraving to Kate was added, the significance of the headstone was extended.

A number of other prospective donors, such as Elizabeth's Clucas relatives, can also be eliminated at this stage. Although they probably had the necessary financial resources they already had access to the earlier memorial to their daughter they had had inscribed onto a family headstone in their own churchyard at Santan, with which they probably interacted. No evidence was found that they maintained contact with Clarke after he remarried. Clarke and Elizabeth's grandson George Frederick did live in the Island, and had attained high office. So he had the necessary access to resources, and may have been motivated to erect a memorial to his grandmother, uncle, and aunt at St Mark's, but again, no evidence was found that he maintained close contact with his grandfather. His father had taken the Clucas name and inherited Elizabeth's childhood home, so there may have been some perceptions of solidarity that excluded Clarke because of his relationship with Kate. And Revd Holmes, the chaplain at St Mark's with whom Kate corresponded, who facilitated the installation of the memorial window there to Clarke and Elizabeth in 1899, left St Mark's in 1903. Relationships between him and their sons George and Benjamin whilst planning that window had not been entirely amicable.¹⁸ Holmes also married in 1903 (Gelling 1998, 232). It seems safe to assume his new wife and incumbency occupied his time and finances more fully than any

perceptions of a need to become involved again in memorializing members of the Clarke family he had never met.

The only remaining candidates for donor are Clarke's widow Kate, their four children, and daughter Gentile's husband Rowland Evans. Three can be excluded. Louis emigrated to America at the age of fifteen,¹⁹ and no evidence has been found that he ever came home again, even for a visit. Apparently neither did his younger brother Jelf Clarke, who left home at the age of twenty-five and settled in Canada. Although Caesar had a successful career which necessitated much travel, he did live in England between 1907 and 1926. None ever knew Elizabeth or John, and may never have met Anne. The same applied to Gentile and her husband Rowland Evans, both of whom moved back to north Wales during the latter part of Kate's life. There seems no reason to think any of the three donated the two stones, even though Rowland and Caesar probably had ample means to fund such an undertaking.

The only contender left is Kate. She was Manx, so familiar with that culture although exposed in Wales from a relatively young age to changing ideas within the Anglican Church and innovations facilitated by the industrial revolution. Circumstances had made her independent. There is evidence she had the means and a motive to erect memorials on both sites. She was financially secure by 1911. If she did not meet Elizabeth's sons George and Benjamin previously, she did so in 1888 when they attended Clarke's funeral. She maintained contact with St Mark's until at least 1899 when she expressed a wish to contribute towards the memorial window to Clarke and Elizabeth.²⁰ Her desires then were frustrated by her embarrassed financial status, so she may have wanted to make amends once that improved.

Another factor that supports Kate as donor of the St Mark's headstone is that Elizabeth was a distant relative of hers, although it has not been proved that Kate knew of the eighteenth-century marriage that linked the two Clucas families living in Santan, Elizabeth's childhood home, and Kionslieu in Foxdale,²¹ where Kate was raised.

The choice of white marble would have expressed Kate's perception of her husband's character and his professional status, and the Celtic cross, their shared heritage. One dimension of his persona not expressed on the memorial, his enthusiasm for the Manx language, also supports Kate as donor. During almost all of their married life they lived in Wales, where he had few opportunities to express himself in his native tongue except in correspondence. No evidence was found that the family spoke Manx at home.

The rather antiquated tone of the memorial inscription to Elizabeth also seems compatible with its composition by someone who had never met her, as does the absence of a scriptural message. How would one choose so personal a memorial for a stranger?

The memorial inscription to Anne describes her as the 'daughter' of Clarke and Elizabeth. Kate wrote she did not know Clarke when he was at St Mark's.²² Presumably, this included the whole Clarke family. So she may not have known that Anne was actually Elizabeth and Clarke's second daughter. An older sister who died in infancy was not buried at St Mark's.

In contrast, the memorial inscription to Clarke reflects his profession, his nationality, and his religious convictions. As his wife Kate would have understood how integral all were to his personality. And she left a space for her own memorial inscription because she planned to be buried with her husband. The lack of definite evidence that she was the donor may have reflected characteristic reticence on her part. In 1899 she asked that her donation to Revd Holmes towards the St Mark's window remain anonymous.²³ It seems reasonable to suppose her plans for the headstones focused onto her perceptions of the necessity of a suitable public monument to her husband at Caerdeon, and that the replication at St Mark's was a more private gesture, perhaps as a token to a remote relation, or as a propitiation for her part in tensions created between the two families by her relationship with Clarke.

There are considerable differences between the inscriptions on the two headstones. The script on the St Mark's memorial is almost illegible and eight of the inlaid lead letters have been lost. In contrast, the

memorial inscription on the Caerdeon stone remains relatively clear, despite the effects of weathering. Initially, presuming similar climate conditions in the two graveyards, this suggested the earlier erection of the St Mark's headstone, which challenges the idea of Kate as donor. However, surely her efforts would have been more likely to have focused primarily on a memorial to her husband. Then again, if Kate's actions caused the erection of both headstones more or less concurrently after 1907, then there were no family survivors living near St Mark's who might have cared for that headstone. St Mark's was too far from Santan for regular visits from family members residing there either. Conversely, in Caerdeon, Kate probably continued to visit and maintain her husband's burial site. Gentile also lived nearby from an unknown date after 1911, so doubtless helped care for that memorial too. In that case the superior condition of the lettering on the Caerdeon headstone does not exclude Kate as donor of both headstones. And, in the context of the prevalent common culture, it is possible that the smaller lettering of the secondary inscription on that stone reflected Kate's perception of herself as the subordinate member of that partnership. To conclude, nothing was discovered that excluded Kate from being the key actor in the purchase, design, and erection of both headstones.

LONG TERM MEANINGS

Both headstones remained socially active for a time. In St Mark's passed-on memories prompted by material contexts such as the memorial east window to Clarke and Elizabeth in the chapel, and the improved regional infrastructure that continued to remind villagers of Clarke's nineteenth-century activities, may have extended the length of time members of the public interacted with the Clarke grave. On the other hand, the probable removal of its ironwork between 1942 and 1943 by the Isle of Man Government Office Salvage Division may have been related in part to reduced activity at this site. Although a 1942 Act of Tynwald allowed the Division to recover hundreds of tons of iron railings,²⁴ the survival of many within Manx churchyards is evidence that neither church officials nor grave owners felt compelled to comply with requests. However, by the 1940s the presence of a Clarke family spokesperson at St Mark's seems unlikely. The removal of ironwork from cemeteries was part of even wider social history but of minor relevance to the social life of the Clarke monument.

St Mark's Chapel, a licenced building,²⁵ has been elevated to church status, both measures consequences of recent human activity. Although burials no longer take place in the older sections of the graveyard, the close proximity of graves to each other and the new graveyard across the main highway indicate the site's past and continued activity. Over time, the Clarke memorial has become so weathered and covered with lichens that even its shape does not prevent it from blending into the wider landscape of the graveyard.

In north Wales, the departure of the family breadwinner forced lifelong changes onto those who had relied on him in the past. As time went by, the whole Caerdeon site reintegrated more fully with local communities, evidenced by the services during which the sermon was preached in Welsh, such as those held in 1887 and 1903²⁶ and, in the cemetery, in the simple, rustic styles of many later memorials.

Kate took on a boarding house in Dolgellau as landlady, Gentile became a governess, and Jelf Clarke had to give up his medical training. This probably prevented Gentile and Jelf Clarke from visiting the cemetery very often but it seems reasonable to assume Kate continued to visit Clarke's grave as regularly as she could within the constraints of domestic duties, the distance between Dolgellau and Caerdeon, and the cost of travel.

Once the Caerdeon headstone was clearly visible from the main roadway to the church, it attracted more attention from those going to and from services than previously, which surely extended its active

life. Its position continues to allow easy, close access, although today, with the demise of industry and the railway, the still remote but now well wooded, and less pristine, site reflects reduced material activity. The last regular service was held in Caerdeon Church in December 2013, but the cemetery has not been closed. Implied continued social significance is probably associated with personal recollections of past baptisms, marriages, and burials there, and with architectural interest in the church, which is a Grade II listed building.

Inevitably the significance of, and interactivities with, both headstones decreased over time. Kate cannot have anticipated how badly damp weather and smoke would disfigure the white marble. The now discoloured, damaged, and leaning headstones reveal that few family or public interactions take place at either graveside any longer.

CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, the methodology of artefact biography which considered the various life phases of the two Clarke memorials added meanings not discernible from textual sources, which aided in identifying their probable donor. Interpretation of changes reflective of the temporality of material and systems also narrowed the time span during which the headstones were likely to have been designed, inscribed, and erected. It is conceded that the likenesses between the headstones may be serendipitous, but consideration of the numbers of similarities between the two indicates they are very probably linked by a single design, date, and donor. The odds that Kate Clarke was the key actor in facilitated their erection, which extended the period of activity of both graves, were based on careful analysis of the evidence, which eliminated other prospective agents. Kate was the only person shown to have had dynamic and continued connections with both sites, access to the means just when the headstones were most likely to have been made, and plausible motives for doing so.

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NOTES

1. Email address: m2se@manx.net
2. SC 295740.
3. Manx National Heritage Library and Archive (MNH), Parochial Records (PR) MS 10430.
4. SC 311712.
5. *Isle of Man weekly Advertising Circular*, 3 July 1866, 3.
6. *Cambrian News* 1888, 7.
7. SH 651181.
8. MNH, PR MS 13426.

9. National Library of Wales (NLW), Paintings of Caerdeon Chapel by Rev. John Louis Petit, 1862: A.73, A.77.
10. Flickr, undated postcard, <http://www.flickr.com/groups/for_you/pool/with/5415331573/lightbox/>.
11. *Aberystwyth Observer* 1881, 7.
12. MNH, PR MS 09767/8, St Mark's burial register 1849–78.
13. SC 331790.
14. *Cambrian News and Merionethshire Standard*, 9 March 1888, 7.
15. Parochial Records held by church officials: 1920 map of Caerdeon graveyard revised by A. J. Muston, 1990.
16. *Cambrian News and Merionethshire Standard*, 9 March 1888, 7.
17. MNH, PR MS 10430, St Mark's, 1898, 1899.
18. Ibid.
19. United States Federal Census 1930, accessed via Ancestry.co.uk online.
20. MNH, PR MS 10430, St Mark's, 1898, 1899.
21. SC 284784.
22. MNH, PR MS 10430, St Mark's, 1898, 1899.
23. Ibid.
24. MNH, PR MS 11410/7/2, Andreas, 6 September 1943.
25. The licencing of Manx buildings equates approximately with the listing of English and Welsh structures.
26. *Cambrian News and Merionethshire Standard*, 7 October 1887, 6; *Merioneth County Times*, 15 October 1903, 5.

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