



The Strange Death of Hannah Twynnoy

In the churchyard at Malmesbury is a memorial stone to Hannah Twynnoy who died on 23rd October 1703 after been mauled by a tiger.

Hannah was aged 33 and worked as a barmaid in the White Lion Pub in Malmesbury (now a private dwelling) on the Gloucester Road.

Local history tells us that a travelling circus, complete with menagerie, came to the town and set up in the grounds of the White Lion.

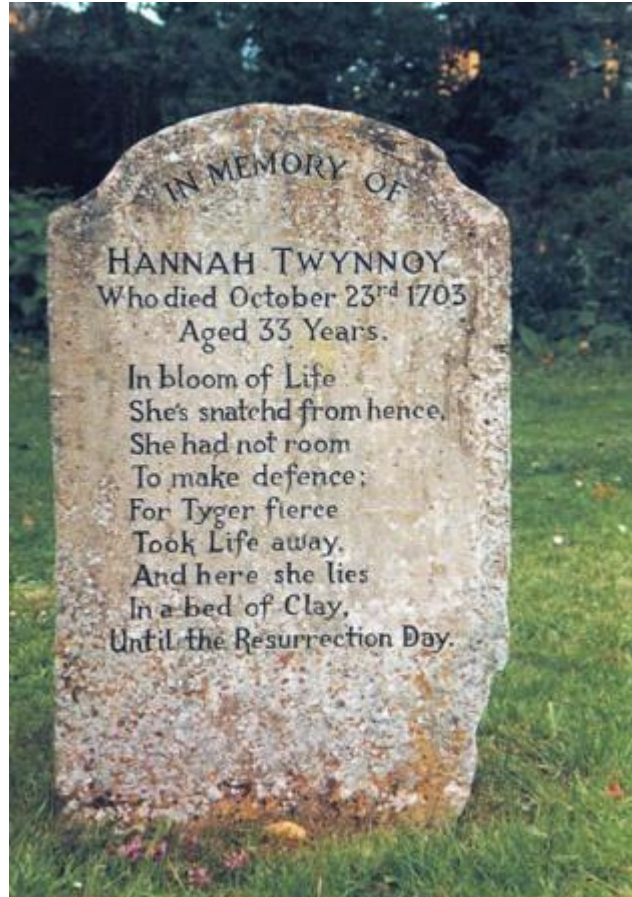
Mystery surrounds the provision of Hannah's burial in the churchyard which includes a headstone with carved poem. This would not have been a cheap burial and very unlikely that Hannah's family would have sufficient funds to commission the stone or even pay for the burial.

The inscription on the stone reads:-

In bloom of life
She's snatched from hence
She had no room
To make defence
For tyger fierce
Took life away
And here she lies in a bed of clay
Until the Resurrection Day

A memorial plaque, since lost, hung in the parish church at Hullavington (5 miles from Malmesbury) giving rise to the possibility that Hannah was originally from that parish.

As a tribute to Hannah in 2003, on the 300th anniversary of her death, all girls named Hannah under the age of 11, laid a single flower on her grave. Ten years earlier, a road in the town was named Twynnoy Close.



Headstone of Hannah Twynnoy in Malmesbury Abbey Churchyard