



GRANTHAM'S MISSING MONUMENT

By Charlotte Miller

Standing on St Peter's Hill today, surrounded by busy roads and shoppers, it is difficult to imagine that it was once home to a rare royal monument.

Yet over 700 years ago, one of just twelve magnificent Eleanor Crosses commissioned by King Edward I himself stood here. Today, that lost monument has become one of Grantham's greatest historical mysteries.

Not a single confirmed fragment survives. There are no contemporary drawings, no detailed descriptions and no definitive answers. It is as though one of the town's most spectacular landmarks simply vanished from history. In 1920, when Queen Eleanor of Castile died, King Edward I ordered twelve incredible stone crosses to be built. Each of these monuments marked an overnight stop on the funeral procession carrying her body from Harby, where she died, to Westminster Abbey. Grantham was the second stop on this solemn journey, with the royal cortege arriving on 4th December to rest the Queen's coffin for the night. It is most likely that her body rested inside St Wulfram's Church, although some historians believe it may instead have been placed in the now missing Chapel of St Peter. Like so much of this story, the details remain uncertain.

*Eleanor Cross,
Waltham Cross,
Herts*



If Grantham's cross resembled the three that still survive today, it would have

been breathtaking with rich Gothic carvings, statues of the Queen, elaborate canopies, royal coats of arms and a towering spire which would have made it one of the tallest structures in medieval Grantham. Today, a plaque installed by Grantham Civic Trust in 2015 marks its believed location, but it still offers no answers. Even the disappearance of the cross remains unclear. Some believe it was destroyed during the English Civil War, while others suggest its stones may have been reused elsewhere in the town. One intriguing theory even proposes that parts of it may lie within Grantham's Market Cross, passed by thousands of people every day without anyone realising. Perhaps the lost Eleanor Cross isn't truly lost after all. Perhaps one of Grantham's most impressive medieval monuments has been hiding in plain sight for centuries but we simply don't know where to look.

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