

Location – Stamford bus park viewing platform, overlooking the modern Eleanor Cross in the Sheepmarket



Transcription

One of the great love stories of the medieval age, the love of Edward I for his wife Eleanor of Castile is commemorated in the sculpture in front of you. They were married for 36 years and were inseparable; the Queen even went with her husband on the Crusades. When Eleanor died in 1290 of a slow fever, at Harby near Lincoln, Edward resolved to honour her memory. He built a monument at the cross roads in each of the towns where the Queen's body rested overnight on the way to burial in Westminster Abbey, in the hope that pilgrims and those passing by would pray for her soul. There were originally twelve monuments at Lincoln, Grantham, Stamford, Geddington, Hardingstone, Stony Stratford, Woburn, Dunstable, St. Alban's, Waltham, Cheapside and Charing Cross, but only three at Northampton, Geddington and Waltham have survived. All that remains of our Eleanor Cross is a small fragment of a rose carved in stone which is now displayed in Stamford Museum. The symbol of a remarkable love has inspired the sculpture by Wolfgang Buttress which celebrates Stamford's place in Eleanor's story. Pupils of Queen Eleanor Technical College have written short haiku poems, elegant 17 syllable phrases, which have been carved into the bronze studs surrounding the sculpture.



On the right-hand side of the plaque –
*Night and once again Eleanor I wait in vain
for you, cold wind Turns to rain*

Viewing platform at the bus station facing the Sheepmarket

Comment

This bronze plaque is unreadable to passing tourists and access to the viewing platform is often difficult because of a parked vehicle and stored material. You can squeeze past vehicles but would need to spend some time attempting to read the words and the view of the Cross is now obscured by a tree. The plaque would have been installed some years ago when the view of the Cross was unobstructed, Stamford Museum existed and of course, Queen Eleanor Technical College is now Stamford Welland Academy so is now partially misleading by default. The original idea must have been to attract people getting off the buses and onto this viewing platform and before walking down the bank into town. The fragment of Eleanor Cross is on display in Stamford Library. A similar plaque with revised text has been installed on the right as you walk down Castle Dyke towards the Meadows.

The comments and opinions in this document are attributed to Ronnie Teasdale and are not associated with any organisation.