

An Interesting Gravestone

This gravestone can be found about 10 metres from the north-eastern buttress of the church.

It is unusual to have the cause of death mentioned, in this case Smallpox. The poem beneath is also unusual and as poignant today, almost 300 years on.

Note also, the carved skulls, crossbones and hourglass symbols. These represent death, mortality and the passage of time. In the 1700's, life expectancy in England was only about 35 years, so hourglasses were often included on gravestones to indicate the short time people had to live.

Here lieth the body of
ELIZABETH RIGDEN
Wife of William Rigden of
The Parish of St Paul Near
And without the City of
Canterbury who died of
the Confluent Small Pox
Sept 18th 1737 & was buried
the 21st aged 41

Sleep on my Dear I do you prize
and death will Cloud my weeping Eyes
the time will Come when we shall see
Each other blest and happy be

