In 1962, just over 100 years after James Eaton’s death, local stonemason Phil Strong took on the task of restoring the dilapidated tombstone.

Mr. Jack Comber (then the Verger of All Saints Church) had long tried to draw attention to the state of Eaton’s memorial in an effort to save the stone from complete destruction. He sought financial help from various sources including the Admiralty and the local council but without success. It was Jack who approached Phil Strong at the Heath Lane monumental masons company for his help.

Phil realised that to raise enough money for a complete replacement would have taken too long, so using his experience he suggested the original stone could be renovated and redesigned. “*Having checked its thickness I knew there was enough room to get rid of the worn facings and carve a new design with fresh lettering. During my spare time away from work I set about making a model of the intended new design and presented it with due respect to a relation of James Eaton who still lived at Hill House in West Bromwich. The work was approved and I started almost immediately, carefully chipping away at the old, crumbling memorial, the ancient stone and the dirt and dust of a century of Black Country pollution covering my overalls from top to toe. The new design took the shape of a ship's log-book with an anchor carved across the centre, and slowly but surely the headstone began to appear like a phoenix from the ashes. I'd managed to avoid any disastrous stone fracturing and completed the job in three months. Most of the wording was the same as on the original, but Jack and I decided to include a few additional words we felt were appropriate, including: He was a gallant officer and an affectionate husband."*

To Phil the work was a labour of love and he willingly did the it free of charge.

As the bi-centenary of the Battle of Trafalgar approached, the stone again needed attention and Phil’s comment at the time was, “"The carving I finished in 1962 has begun to wear badly in the last few years and I'm afraid the stone hasn't many years left. The peeling process that effected the original is caused by the way the stone was cut in the first place. Each stone has a strong and a weak side, and understandably the 19th century stone masons cut along the side of least resistance. Forty-three years ago I had enough capacity of stone left to remove the old and carve the new, but there now remains just a sliver of stone to work on that wouldn't survive a great deal more renovation. There is no real alternative but to replace it altogether."

In March 2015 the West Bromwich Local History Society decided to attempt another restoration and with permission from All Saints Church, the work was commissioned with Strongs Stonemasons.