



Issue ISSN 0963-9004 Volume 15, No. 1

56

AUTUMN 2003

Price £3.00 (\$5.00/€5.00)

follies

THE INTERNATIONAL MAGAZINE FOR FOLLIES, GROTTOS & GARDEN BUILDINGS

**MILLENNIUM FOLLY,
STANCOMBE PARK**

**FOLLY OR EPITOME,
WELBECK ABBEY**

**AMERICAN
MAVERICK
ARCHITECTURE II**

**UPDATE LA QUINTA
DA REGALEIRA**

Karen Lynch

Derek Adlam

Pieter Boogaart

Rita Boogaart



Editorial

PIETER
BOOGAART

To complete the picture of American Maverick Architecture that we began in the previous magazine, we now bring you the second part. Furthermore we have an update on last year's visit of Quinta da Regaleira and two articles to prepare you for two Folly Fellowship outings. We hope to meet you all at the annual garden party.

A propos of garden parties: we read in the Dutch *Volkskrant* that Michael Gil from Britain offers an inflatable church for about £20,000. It is his own design and no small affair: it is 46 feet high and gothic in style, with stained windows, an organ, altar and pulpit. There is even inflatable sculpture at the façade! Gil thinks one would buy, or rent (about £2,000 per day)

his church for wedding-parties. We wonder if he also thought of garden parties where a host might want an eyecatcher overnight to adorn his landscaped garden. And, come to think of it, we even can envisage that Gil will come with some more designs for the rich, the ones that know what they would like in their garden, but do not want to spend the money on a permanent garden building that may get out of fashion soon anyway. Then an inflatable sham ruin might come in vogue, or a rotunda, or a hermitage. Should we as the Folly Fellowship suggest some? And would we want such a device at our garden party? Certainly Stancombe Park does not need any of those! But would you welcome them in the landscape?

Reactions and any other contributions for the next magazine are welcome from today, but until **1 December 2003** at the latest.

For otherwise uncredited contributions we are grateful to Rita Boogaart, Mike Cousins, Susan Kellerman, Karen Lynch, Sharon McGinn, Pat Patrick, Andrew Plumridge, Elizabeth Waters, and especially Dave Martin.

Cover photograph of Alster Tower, playhouse of Boldt Castle, Heart Island, USA, by PIETER AND RITA BOOGAART

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From the Historic Gardens Foundation

The Historic Gardens Foundation is a not-for-profit organisation set up to share information about historic parks and gardens across the world. It is offering 1000 free copies of its magazine *Historic Gardens Review* to *FOLLIES* magazine readers with a UK address. To receive a copy, send your name and address and two loose first class stamps to: G Condy, Historic Gardens Foundation, 34 River Court, Upper Ground, London SE1 9PE

Mike Cousins will be giving a lecture on 'The landscape of Hagley Hall' to Hereford and Worcester Gardens Trust on Thursday 6 November at Malvern Hills College of Education. The illustrated talk starts at 7.30pm and members of the Folly Fellowship are welcome. There will be an entrance fee of £2.00, so if you want to know the true history of this famous park and its follies, do come along. For further details, please contact David Whitehead on 01432 269766.

Folly Fellowship website

The temporary Folly Fellowship website is up and running, and considerably ameliorated. Try www.ffellowship.fsnet.co.uk Any comments/suggestions can be forwarded to folly@holepc.u-net.com.

follies MAGAZINE

THE INTERNATIONAL MAGAZINE
FOR FOLLIES, GROTTOS AND
GARDEN BUILDINGS

Published by the Folly Fellowship in
February, May and August; *Follies Journal* is
published annually in November.

The Folly Fellowship is a registered charity
no. 1002646 and a company limited by
guarantee, registered in England
no. 2600672.

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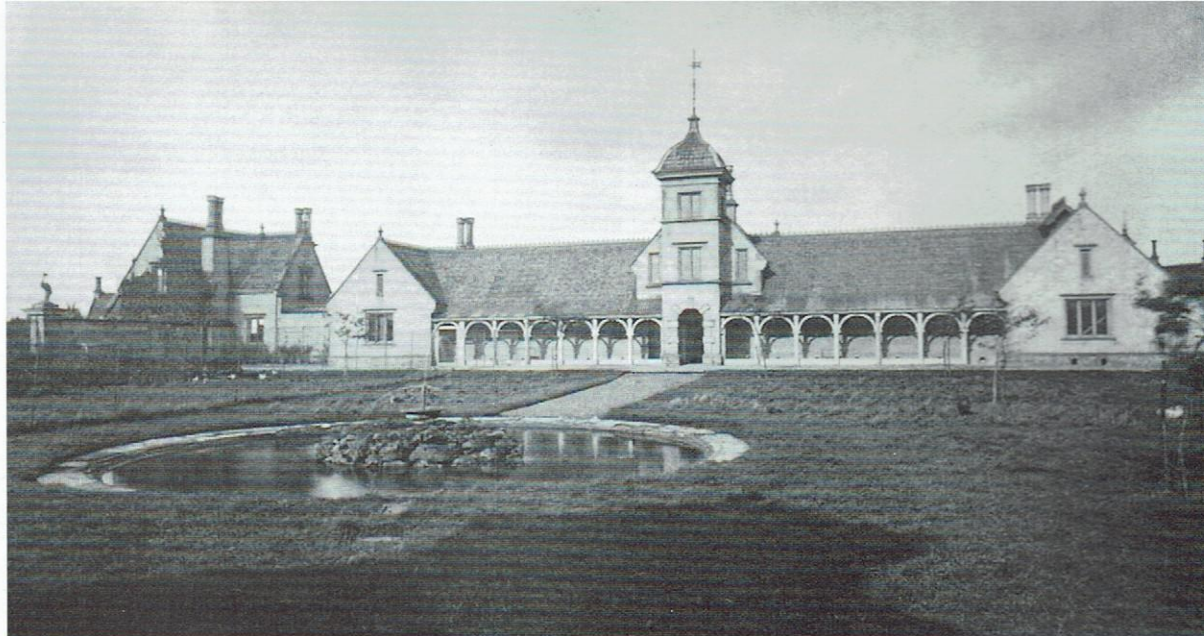
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POUTRY HOUSE,
WELBECK ABBEY
PHOTO c. 1895



Folly or Epitome?

DEREK
ADLAM

THE FIFTH DUKE OF PORTLAND AT WELBECK

In about 1806 William Henry Cavendish-Bentinck-Scott, Marquess of Titchfield and heir to the dukedom of Portland, commissioned John Rising to paint a small picture of five of his children. His eldest daughter holds out a bunch of grapes to a little boy running towards her. The next oldest girl holds a fashionably dressed doll. Charming though this group is, our attention is held by two other figures in the painting. A boy of about six is on hands and knees pretending to be a horse, and on his back he carries his younger brother holding a riding switch.

The boy on his brother's back grew up to be the politician Lord George Bentinck (memorably dubbed Lord Paramount of the Turf by Disraeli), whose greatest passion was for horses. The willing horse in Rising's painting was the Marquess's second son, Lord John, later the fifth Duke of Portland.

Apart from a caricature of Lord John drawn in the 1840s, this small portrait of the boy is probably the only one made of him during his lifetime. As he grew up he seems to have had no particular talents or interests other than his love for horses, hunting and shooting. Like many younger sons he entered the army, but his career as an officer was of no particular distinction. His eldest brother died in 1824, so at the age of 24 he was propelled into public life when elected in his brother's place as MP for King's Lynn. At Parliament's dissolution in 1826 he retired, claiming that 'the state of his health did not permit him to pay due attention to public affairs'.

We are still uncertain of the exact nature of this ill health. In family correspondence he speaks of a skin disorder and of arthritis. Together, these suggest a severe and perhaps disabling form of psoriasis. Unquestionably, he was determined to disappear from public view, and as the years passed he became increasingly reclusive.

On his father's death in 1854, Lord John became the fifth Duke of Portland and devoted the rest of his life to the management of his properties, particularly at Welbeck in Nottinghamshire's Sherwood Forest. In this, the Duke was confronted by some of the most important social and technological developments of the second half of the 19th century. He became involved in public education and an expanding railway system, seen as a stimulus to trade and local prosperity.

These developments made the Duke keenly aware of the technological advances of his times. Although living in carefully maintained seclusion at Welbeck, in about 1860 he launched a huge building programme there, working as his own architect with the assistance of a gifted local engineer. It is the scale and nature of these operations that established a place for him in popular mythology and raise questions concerning his motivation. He had no social life, and no apparent need for the development of the estate. It is this that allows us to suggest that the word 'folly' might be applied to much of this work.

At Welbeck he employed thousands of men. His new kitchen gardens were modelled on the contemporary seventeen acres of royal walled gardens in Windsor Great Park. Not to be outdone, the Duke enclosed twenty-two acres. Fitted with every modern horticultural contrivance, peaches, apricots, strawberries, pineapples and other tropical fruits, soft and top-fruits were produced there in profusion. Vegetables of every kind were grown out of season. The Duke himself lived modestly, but was kind-hearted and generous. He showered gifts of delicacies from his gardens on the inner circle of his family. Inevitably, his large resident staff at Welbeck lived well, for the estate provided for all their needs.

All the while, until his death in 1879, the Duke continued building. The south wing of Welbeck Abbey was extended and raised by an extra floor, and at the northern end of the house a huge hall was excavated. With a floor area of a quarter of an acre, this underground room (its roof fitted with large skylights at ground level) was intended originally to be a new

chapel. Its flat roof spanning 63 feet has no supporting pillars, but is carried by vast, iron box girders; the Duke was making use of the very latest Victorian technology. He indulged his fascination with these subterranean constructions by surrounding the new hall with a range of underground reception rooms, all linked to two-and-a-half miles of underground drives lacing the park. Entered by grand, Roman portals, the largest of these tunnels are wide enough for two horse-drawn carriages to pass side-by-side. Finding the 1623 Riding House adjacent to Welbeck Abbey too modest, the Duke converted this into a ballroom (the roof painted in imitation of a sunset sky), and constructed a new one in the Park. The new Riding House was 396 feet long, 108 feet wide and 50 feet high, its stone facades and tile roofs concealing a glass and iron vault.

Improvements continued across the Arcadian park; trees were planted in prodigious numbers, handsome lodges (inevitably with large cellars) for his staff sprang up everywhere, the Great Lake was enlarged with the addition of three new dams. Public roads were re-routed to increase the Duke's seclusion. New offices, a coach house, a laundry, a dairy, the grandest poultry house in the kingdom, stone cow sheds, a new hunting stable, a school, masons'-, works- and wood-yards and much else appeared. A strong-room on three floors, 100 feet long, joined a new Agent's house and the Hermitage built for a resident Chaplain. Lacking any kind of formal or axial layout, it seems the Duke wished to arrange his 'New Works' to provide scenic variety when seen from a moving carriage or from horse-back. Imagine the dramatic possibility of leaving the open road to pass into a tunnel via a Roman arch, becoming accustomed to the gloom and then suddenly emerging into an Arcadian parkland with great groups of handsome stone buildings forming the backdrop for—a pageant? —an operatic *scena*? Since neither the fifth Duke nor his three brothers mar-



ried, on his death his titles would inevitably descend to a cousin. At Welbeck he had built the epitome of all Victorian country estates to serve as the basis for a great social or political career for his successor. So, folly or epitome...?

WELBECK ABBEY UNDERGROUND RAILWAY

Derek Adlam is curator of Welbeck Abbey, Portland Collection, and will be the guide for the Folly Fellowship September Event.

Nethermoor Park. The least visited park in Britain. Lord Nethermoor's park is an example of landscape gardening at its worst.

Nethermoor Park

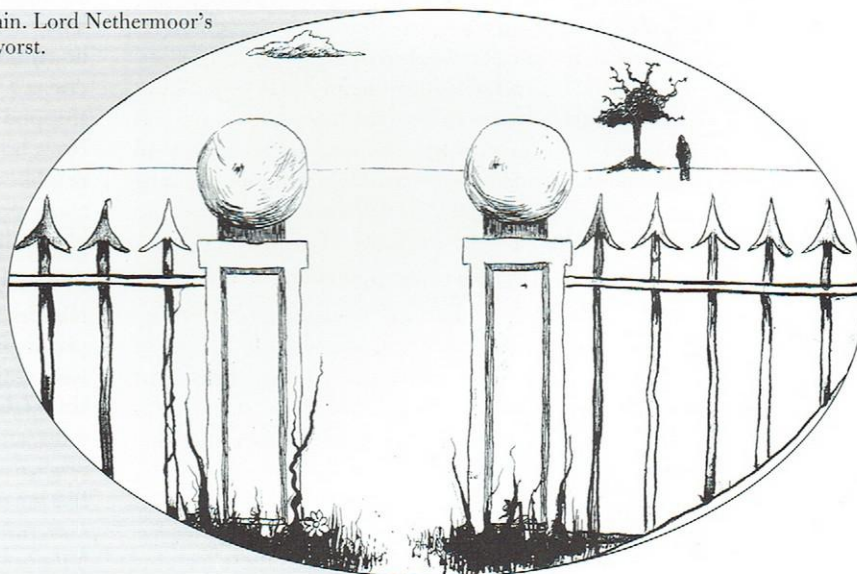
In Nethermoor, a quiet town,
The Mayor he planned a park;
Long, leafy lanes and there a seat—
Illuminations after dark.

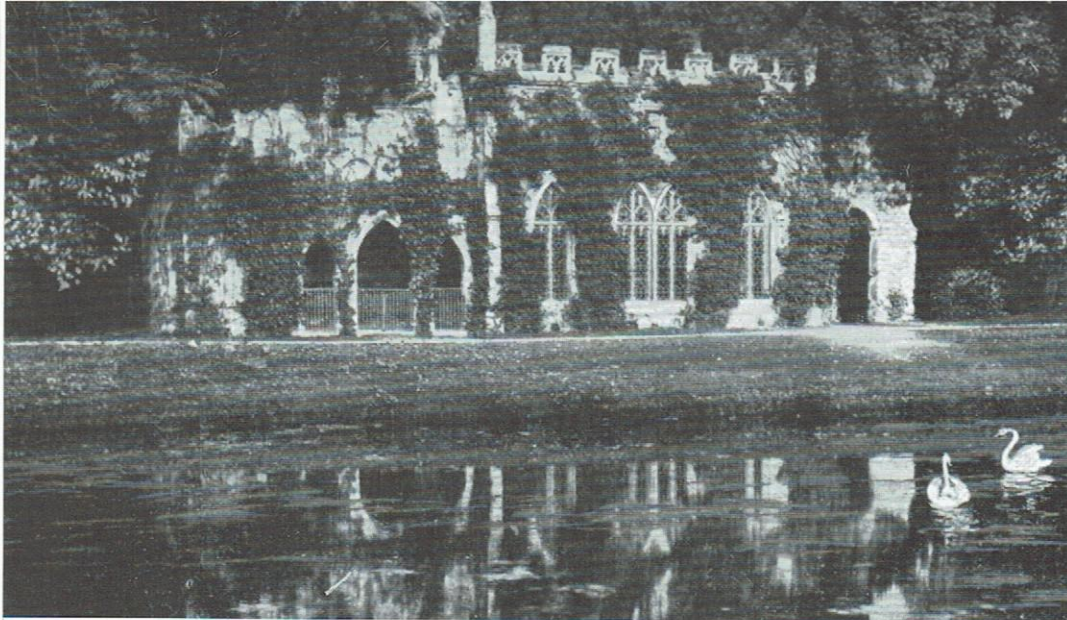
First, they built the railings,
The perimeter marked round.
One tree was planted then, inside,
Within the stony ground.

Before the work could carry on
A ring road came to town.
The people left and no-one came,
The shops they all closed down.

Now some say if you look and listen
Sometimes after dark,
The Mayor he comes
A-clancking chains of office through the park.

© George Parfitt, 1997





THE MARTIN COLLECTION

ABOVE: THE HERMITAGE, FROGMORE
PAGE 7, TOP: PERSEUS AND ANDROMEDA FOUNTAIN, WITLEY COURT, BEFORE RESTORATION
BOTTOM: OBELISK LODGE, NOSTELL PRIORY

IN THE NEWS

An open and closed case

If you've already missed the earlier openings this year, **Frogmore House** and Royal Mausoleum in **Windsor Home Park**, will be open again on 23, 24 and 25 August, from 10am to 5.30pm (but last admission 4pm). Tickets for the combined opening cost £5.20 for adults (bookable, with £1 surcharge per ticket). Telephone 020 7321 2233, or surf www.royal.gov.uk

Brick of an idea

Dorset's *Blackmore Vale Magazine* of 11 April 2003 had an article about **Blandford Forum's** former town councillor Peter Collington, who suggested that a locomotive be built of bricks and placed on the railway arches of the old Dorset and Somerset line, in order to enhance the charm of the whole. Collington thinks it could turn into a local tourist attraction. 10,000 bricks and some £20,000 could do the trick. It sounds a bit like the **Morton Park Mallard** (*FGGB* p. 215), in county Durham, and indeed was inspired by David Mach's design there.

Here we go again

The pioneering cancer support organisation founded by Maggie Keswick Jencks and Charles Jencks her husband, Maggie Centres, are building a new centre at Dundee, Tayside. It is designed by Frank Gehry, no less. A personal friend of Charles and his late wife, he has done it again: none of its walls are straight and it is topped by a concertinaed roof made of stainless steel and timber of which no two pieces are the same. Opening day: 25 September 2003. You will be welcome to admire the architecture in the weekend, 11am-3pm.

Who wants to be educated?

Painshill Park have published their adult education programme. Besides items like Costumes and Images of Painshill Park, and Food and Music, and Plant Collectors and Willow Decorations for Christmas Day, there are such interesting lectures as on Eighteenth-century Landscape as a Work of Art and the English Landscape Garden Abroad, both by Bill Tomlins, on 8 October and 19 November respectively. Including a tour of the grounds these lectures

are £25 each per person (so stop complaining about the cost of the FF Garden Party, which offers so much more). More info on 01932 868113, speak to Sandra Waldren.

Watch that Lady

The *Daily Telegraph* of 17 May had an exciting two pages by Lucinda Lampton on *Suburbia Exotica*, as a preview of her TV series *Sublime Suburbia*, on ITV1. She showed a lot of weird and wonderful buildings, most of them well-known to lovers of literature and follies. But. We thought we knew **Pinner** well. However, oddly enough we had never

noticed that peculiar pyramidal or rather tent-like grave in the churchyard. Not a folly of course, but typically the sort of thing that appeals to us.

Badgering

The *Sunday Telegraph* of 6 April had a report about a weekend in **Badger Dingle**. Nice enough in itself, but we liked Jochen Müller's report in *FOLLIES* #49 a lot better. Don't the readers of the *Sunday Telegraph* read *FOLLIES* magazine?

From Telegraph to Telegraaf

Going even further back in time, the Dutch national newspaper *De Telegraaf* of 15 March 2003 had almost a page about Frits Fritsen's new folly castle at **Kapel-Avezaath**. Fritsen used to live in Drunen near 's-Hertogenbosch, where in 1992 he built a fantasy castle in the small back yard of his otherwise perfectly ordinary house, mainly as a home for his collection of medieval weapons and stuff. But there was no room for expansion and that was what he needed. Towards the end of the year 2000 he bought a farmhouse some twenty miles to the north, and began to build another castle, more like a tower this time. And he goes on building and is planning lots of activities. The local authorities in Drunen were not happy at all with him and neither were the authorities at Kapel-Avezaath. They insisted on him producing design drawings and he couldn't do that—he is completely illiterate and doesn't work that way. The building process was stopped for eight months and he felt very frustrated. Now, however, everything is alright again. Only the neighbours are afraid that the castle will attract too many people. But you can never please all the people all the time, can you?

Professional envy

Haddenstone (the leading manufacturer of garden ornaments and architectural cast stonework) must have seen the picture we published in the May magazine of the **temple** made by Chilstone. Why else would they send us their catalogue in time for the August magazine? Actually, there may be ten different reasons. But what a catalogue it is! The most comprehensive ever produced by the company. Garden ornaments, interiors, pavilions, belvederes, temples, grot-

toes and all sorts of things including follies can be ordered from them. It's all there in gorgeous colour pictures. Boy oh boy—quite mouth-watering.

The Corrugated Iron Club

The what? Yes. Check for yourself: www.corrugated-iron-club.info. In their information brochure these people explain: 'The Corrugated Iron Club is part of Common Ground's campaign for Local Distinctiveness linked to its new Building Site on www.england-in-particular.info (add /buildpath.html)'. Explain? Bewilder further more like. 'We know we are not alone in having a passion for old tin sheds, but we also love glorious new buildings made of corrugated iron.' Glorious new buildings? Of corrugated iron? These people's minds must be as sinuous or as convoluted as their material. Or fiendishly clever. The Corrugated Iron Club. Now we have heard of everything!

There she blows

Worth the wait, and worth part of £700,000 of Heritage Lottery funding, the Perseus and Andromeda Fountain is once more gushing forth at **Witley Court**, Worcester. Designed by W.A. Nesfield in the 1860s, the fountain boasts 120 separate water jets secreted among giant clams, and the usual nautical ensemble. The principal jet soars to 90ft. We should be lucky that we have the fountain at all: a catastrophic lightning strike in the 1960s hit Pegasus, Perseus's mount, who now sports newly carved wings, and then Bing Crosby and Stewart Grainger tried to buy it for a racecourse in Chicago, no less.

The remains of the remains

Wiltshire Life is about to run an article on **Bremhill Court**, formerly the vicarage of that village. Sadly little remains of the Rev. William Bowles's latter-day Leasowes: there are still the odd urn or statue about the place, but of the grotto only some salvaged stones survive, now used elsewhere in the garden and walls. The sham ruin had collapsed (the spot now ceding to the children's goal frame) and what few fragments of Stanley Abbey remained have been incorporated into walls screening the outdoor swimming pool. Magically part of a 'Shenstonian inscription' has survived, and this is also built in a wall. The house is now a private dwelling.

Raffles baffles

We're not sure if Raffles (the firm) was involved with this one, but **Alice's Seat**, a thatched folly at **Trebah** in Cornwall has just been beautifully restored. The building, traditional cob and thatch construction, takes its name from Alice Hext, who, with her husband, bought Trebah in 1906. The building was recreated with the help of archaeologists and local craftsmen: by the 1990s all that remained of the original structure were patches of pebble paving and slumped cob. As a result of this work the garden received a Civic Trust Award—well done. For more details, visit www.trebah-garden.co.uk. *Oops—see p.14.*

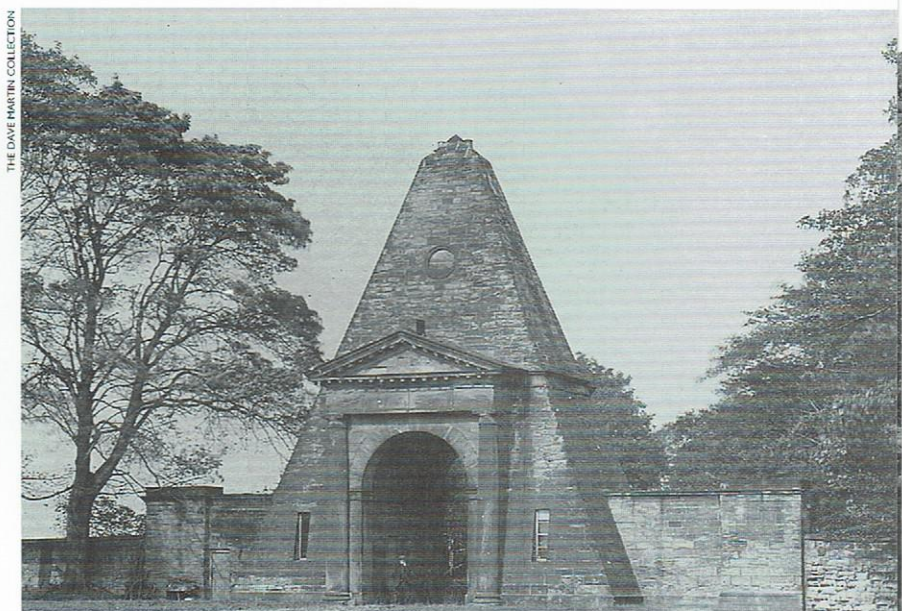


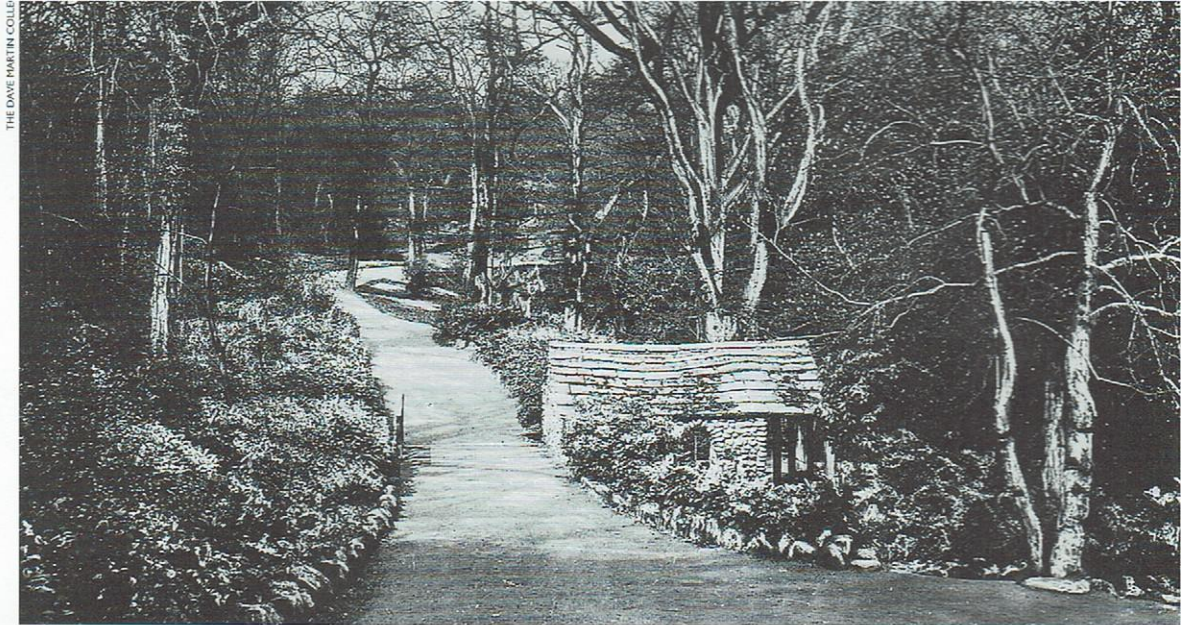
Back in the USSR

So what's happening in Russia? Well, work has started on the Chinese Palace, Catherine the Great's personal dacha at Oranienbaum, one of the World Monuments Fund projects. This 'emergency phase', as it is termed, is to prevent water leaking in, or at least reduce it. Investigations will also begin into the drainage problems, the principal cause of the building's steady decline. 'Once this problem is remedied the palace will be well on its way to being restored to its former magnificence.' Look out for a new book on the Chinese Palace by Will Black, published on the occasion of St Petersburg's tercentenary celebrations.

The Yorkshire Pages

Wentworth Castle has featured in the last two magazines in terms of forthcoming restoration plans and grants; in fact Yorkshire is doing exceptionally well in this respect. **Nostell Priory** near **Wakefield** received a cash boost last year enabling the NT to buy up a large amount of the surrounding parkland, allowing it to open up the estate to the public. The £4.2m grant is also to be used for restoration work on the historic estate, and work will be carried out this winter on Robert Adam's pyramid-shaped **Obelisk Lodge**, completed in 1766. Worth taking a look ahead of the scaffolding going up, and then in four to five years when the work is expected to be completed.





THE DAVE MARTIN COLLECTION

The Edwardian rock garden at Aysgarth NY, which had been experiencing so many difficulties for a number of years, sent us an invitation for the official opening after the restoration was completed earlier this year. 5 July 2003 was the date, and the work was only started last year. Nice going.

But wait, we're not finished with Yorkshire yet... Charles Forbes Adam has restored **The Temple** on the **Escrick Park Estate**, near **York**, and created a two-mile circular permissive footpath (through Gas House Wood to the Temple and then back to Escrick). The Temple was restored with the help of a grant from the Department for Environmental Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), the work being carried out by listed building specialists Burrows Davies Ltd. The Forbes Adams' former ancestral home is now Queen Margaret's School, but what a nice man. Let's hope the vandals keep away, so a photo quickly please.

And there's more! Work will soon start on restoring **Roundhay Park** in **Leeds**, recipients of £6.1m Lottery funding. And what do we get for this investment? Restoration of the pleasure gardens, repairs to the water garden and Barran's Fountain, plus other features. No mention of the sham ruin—which was restored not that long ago anyway—and it seems highly unlikely that the hermitage will be reinstated, whose disappearance was shameful. Recent research suggest that that the park owes much to the influential style of Uvedale Price, after Humphry Repton's initial involvement in the project in the early nineteenth century.

And more... Calderdale Council, with English Heritage backing, is bidding for restoration funding for **Shaw Park, Holywell Green**. Never heard of it? Well there's no point in looking in *FGGB*. You won't even find a mention, which is tragic because the sloping garden includes an aviary and follies that were built as a wild bird sanctuary. All of this was created in the 1870s by Samuel Shaw, owner of the textile firm John Shaw & Sons of Greetland, as a landscaped garden to accompany his new-built house, 'Brooklands'. The house was demolished in the 1930s, and in 1953 a descendant gave the gardens to Elland Urban District Council for public use, after which they acquired the fitting name of Shaw Park. Some tree clearance has already been undertaken, and a feasibility study is underway.

Now a joke's a joke, but some ne'er-do-well has clearly nicked the colonnade from the octagonal, domed **Temple of Victory** at **Allerton Park**. What do you mean there's never been one, but *FGGB* says there is... Come on Gwyn and Wim, there never really was a colonnade, was there, and this is just a wind-up?

The Wentworth rivalry clearly isn't dead, as Rotherham County Council are seeking Heritage Lottery funding as part of a £570,000 restoration of **Keppel's Column**, at **Scholes**. The Grade-II-listed column has been gradually falling into ruin over recent years, and two years ago the local authority carried out emergency repairs after major cracks were discovered. A spokesman for the authority said: 'The completion of the project will secure the future of Keppel's Column and hopefully allow it to be re-opened to the public...

TOP: HERMITAGE, ROUNDHAY PARK, LEEDS
BOTTOM: TEMPLE OF VICTORY, ALLERTON PARK



MARK COLEMAN

However, there is a risk that its condition will deteriorate during the intervening period and we have been advised if that happened the Heritage Lottery people will consider a fast-track award to secure it.

Whilst Gateshead got its acclaimed Angel of the North, a less well-known fact is that its creator, Antony Gormley, was also commissioned to produce a 125ft giant brick man for **Leeds** back in 1988. Many saw this as a missed opportunity to create a nationally-important piece of art after the council decided to cancel the deal. Recent plans for a pair of 40ft-high **miners' heads** either side of the M62 don't look half as impressive.

FOR SALE

The **Old Rectory, Puncknowle**, near Dorchester DO, was for sale towards the end of March. It's the old home of gardening writer Anna Pavord and has in the grounds a little gingerbread, neo-Gothic, stone folly, erected by Henry Etherington in 1846. It served as a wendy-house for her children, but it is difficult to gauge the exact height, as it appeared in the photograph that was published in the *Telegraph* Property section.

On 9 April 2003 Susan Kellerman wrote to us: '**Steeple Lodge**, at **Wentworth Castle**, near Barnsley, is for sale. The lodge dates from c.1775 or c.1750 (matter of debate) and has the appearance of a church—the third bedroom appears to be in the top of the tower itself. £239,950 from Lancaster property Services. I have more details if anyone is interested (and my commission is very modest!)

Country Life and the *West Surrey Property Advertiser* had an ad saying: Build your own castellated folly. Apparently planning permission has been granted to build a sort of castle with four corner towers and an extra tower with a gallery round it and a pointed conical roof. To be constructed in the very heart of the Surrey hills at a cost of £1.5m. Looks lovely, though. Hamptons International hold the as yet imaginary key.

On a smaller and more manageable scale but no less castellated is the conversion of a garage we saw on a design by Peter Scott and Partners, the architectural firm that puts so much follydom in their drawings (and no wonder). The garage turns into a beautiful two-storey cosy home, the smaller of the two bedrooms in the tower upstairs.

Herefordshire and Worcestershire are or were for sale. At least, two estates that we recently talked about on these pages: **Kyre Court** and **Hampton Court**. We have no further information. Does anyone of our readers know more? If so, please tell us all about it.

Flush to the tune of £1m plus? Then be an Englishman... The original **Starborough Castle** was built in 1342 by Lord Reginald Cobham. Later on, however, Oliver Cromwell being the chap that he was, ordered its demolition after winning the Civil War, so what you see today is a miniature castle, occupying much less of the moated island than its predecessor. Geographically



rooted in Surrey, yet in Kent for postal purposes, Sir James Burrow built this Gothick-style bijou in 1754, but it stood ruinous and unoccupied for over a hundred years until Ray Edwards, a local farmer (and property developer) bought it in the 1980s and put it up to a five star residence, subsequently selling it to Warwick Leadley in 1995. Back on the market, FPD Savills are waiting to hear from you on 01732 789700.

Borderline folly this—Lower Castle Mill at Linby has a three-bedroom apartment up for grabs. At £450,000 and tagged as would suit a 'Mixed-up miller' in the *Telegraph*, FPD Savills are also handling this sale (0115 934 8020). A local tram service (yes, tram) due to open in June may be an added attraction.

For just £1,705 a week (peak holiday summer season mind you), the recently-restored **Chorister's House** by William Burgess in **Studley Royal Deer Park** can be yours, oh, and nine friends'. The National Trust's holiday cottage manager, Rachel Hill, could tell you more if only we had contact details.

Or would you rather share **Bryncir Tower**, Dolbenmaen, Caernavon, with three friends? It is the top location of Euro Relais, and the only proper folly. The next most interesting property in their care is **Capel Y Waun**, Pensira'r Waun, near Bangor, a chapel restored into a wonderful cottage with a sauna and a sit-around fireplace. Serves seven. Look for details, prices and availability at www.eurorelais.com

STARBOROUGH CASTLE,
(TAKEN 1989)



American Maverick Architecture II

PIETER BOOGAART

In the previous issue I announced that after a general introduction and a description of some private gardens it would be good to have a closer look at the relationship between art and architecture on the one hand and a few private residences on

the other, in order to get a complete picture of follies and related buildings in the United States. We begin with some cases where artists are involved.

Art and Architecture

Opus 40

There are several instances of where sculptors cross the borderline with architecture and create buildings or structures that enter into our sphere of folly interest. Our first example is Harvey Fite's Opus 40. It is usually described as a monumental environmental sculpture. But there was no sculpting involved in its creation. Opus 40 was built, although one would not call it a building. It is a structure or conglomerate of structures, it is idiosyncratic and pleasing, and it is a work of art. So we can safely say that it is an art folly. The Friends of Opus 40 run the place, organising concerts and such and keeping the nearby Quarryman's Museum open.

Opus 40 is in between Saugerties and Woodstock (of festival fame) in upstate New York. It is the site of an abandoned bluestone quarry and Harvey Fite used to live there and make sculptures. He started what would develop into his life's work because he wanted a suitable setting for his stone carvings. But he became so gripped and engrossed by the pedestals and the back-

ground he was building that the setting itself became his main work of art. For almost 40 years he was occupied with almost nothing else, which serves to explain the name of the work. There is one centre point in this folly, also the highest point. One big carved stone on a pedestal: the epitome. The rest of it stretches across more than six acres and is made of hundreds of thousands of tons of finely fitted bluestone. It is as if you start out making a flagstone path and then decide to make it three-dimensional and lay out platforms at all sorts of levels and steps in between, narrow steps and broadening steps, and beautifully rounded curves everywhere, the paths and platforms encircling trees, large trees some of them, and fountains and pools, big and small pools, round and rounded, and walls of smoothly fitting pieces of stone going up and down and round another lovely curve, high walls and lower walls, never ending and losing track and getting lost, not knowing how or where or even why you started to build—this folly or this sentence. It is mesmerising. And has become a truly exceptional achievement, in a beautiful mountain landscape.

We were walking around here and came upon a man in a colourful shirt, a cap and a camera: the archetypal American tourist. He was shaking his head in disbelief. We smiled at each other and I started: 'To build this ...?', and he finished my sentence: '...you'd have to be pots!'. As fitting a definition of a folly as I would come across that afternoon.

But the end of the construction of it all must be recorded as well. Here, in a few words, is the story that clinches the idea of this being a true folly. One fateful day in 1976, after nearly 40 years of hard work, Harvey Fite fell off one of the walls of his folly and died. How absolutely wonderful.

The Tower of Sighs—a Folly

Artist Shaw Stuart usually makes large plaster and stone constructions using the architectural themes of arches, columns and stairways. In 1988 her work was exhibited at an art show resulting from a State of Connecticut competition. An art critic for the *New York Times* compared her work to follies—in the 18C sense of the term. Shaw Stuart herself had no idea what he meant, but looked up a definition and filed it away in her head for further reference. A few years later she was invited to create a sculpture for The Stamford CT Museum and Nature Center sculpture trail. She was still thinking about that when in 1995 she got a grant for \$5,000. Then she decided that this was her chance of creating something big and outdoors. Further inspired by the immediate surroundings of the entrance to the museum she hired stone masons and had a tower built. At the top of it is an archway, connecting it to a rocky outcrop nearby. The tower is a slightly tapering 13 foot cylinder without a door, but with some window slits. Through one of these slits one can see a ladder, designed to add to the mysterious nature of the 'sculpture' and the ambiguity of its origin and destination. It is called *The Tower*

of Sighs—a Folly. Shaw Stuart has joined our Folly Fellowship, and might tell us more about her follies.

Others

We don't have time to mention many others, or I would say something about for instance the tower in the Reclamation Garden in Jenkintown, Pennsylvania, by Winifred Lutz, with lengthwise slits. Wonderful stuff.

A-maz'-in-grace-ful surroundings

Timpson's Other England mentions a maze (p. 66) that was built by Michael Ayrton (d. 1975), sculptor, philosopher and author of a book called *The Maze Maker*. This maze apparently was based on the original Labyrinth in the Greek island of Crete and took two years and 200,000 bricks to build and was completed in 1969. Its walls are ten feet high, the book says, and there are two chambers with bronze Minotaur and Daedalus/Icarus sculptures inside. New York State is given as the clue to its whereabouts. Naturally this major maze, built personally by an expert, intrigued us. Besides, Rita remembered taking pictures of a bronze *Minotaur* by Ayrton, in London some 20 years ago. So we decided to try and see it. Some research yielded the information that we would have to look for it near **Arkville** in the Catskill mountains. Arkville is only a small village. The smaller the village the bigger the surroundings. A maze was not immediately apparent. We asked at the local General Stores. Nobody knew anything until a lady came in who heard us deliberating and said that she was willing to help us. Serendipity at work again. She said that if we wanted to see the labyrinth she might know a chap, a sort of Park Ranger, who could maybe take us there the next day if she could reach him and if he had the time and if we could get into contact with him and if we were prepared to follow his Range Rover into the woods. Little did she know that we would be willing to stay an extra night in the area just for the experience. But we were and we did. All the arrangements could be made, in the end.

Michael Ayrton was commissioned to build this labyrinth by an art patron whose house still has a meadow nearby with a lot of sculptures in it. A private collection. The labyrinth can only be reached down a mile of several grass tracks and if you don't know the way you get lost. It is in the woods in the heart of the mountains. Graceful surroundings indeed. We saw a few deer, but fortunately not the sort of big cats for which the Catskill mountains were named (by the Dutch). Much to our surprise we found two mazes. One was laid out on the ground in stones of different colours. A medieval type of maze: unicursal, i.e. you walk around a lot when you try it, but you can't go wrong. Octagonal, like in the churches of Amiens (F) and Itchen Stoke, Hants, England. Quaint, here on the forest floor. But much more impressive is the other maze, the three-dimensional Labyrinth, a few yards further back.

It is quite something. The brick walls are covered by lead everywhere. As its construction is based on the original Minotaur's lair in Crete, one would expect that it



is virtually impossible to get to the two chambers in the centre. That is not the case, however: as a maze it is relatively simple when you study the plan. But the pattern of ever-curving corridors in the womb-shaped maze is certainly confusing when you actually walk around inside, and it is a longish walk too if you want to see both chambers and not go out the same way you came in. The Minotaur sculpture looks appropriately primeval, wild and scary, and in the other chamber it seems as if Icarus, launched by his father Daedalus, is just going to make his escape soaring over the nearest wall. Masterpieces of art, certainly, and their setting may well be called unique.

Everything is in excellent condition. Apparently it is too far away from the local vandals' stomping grounds. Or maybe they are afraid they will get lost. Which could easily happen, outside the Labyrinth, as well as inside—even if the walls are not as high as Timpson says. They are circa two meters. Nowadays a Dutch volleyball team would have little trouble peeping over the top, perhaps, as a means of finding their way out, but people like us, regular shorties, will quickly get a sinking feeling of being completely lost. As I said: it is all very impressive. And considering the way this idiosyncratic structure is built, in these surroundings, there is no other word for it than: folly.

Residences

There are lots of special houses in the USA. The Armour Steiner house in Irvington-on-Hudson: a gorgeous giant multi-coloured cupola on slender red pillars. And lots of castles. Castle Craig in Meriden and Gillette Castle in Hadlyme, both in Connecticut. Or Searles Castle in Windham, New Hampshire. And there is lots to find out about. Hammond Castle, Gloucester, in Massachusetts probably. We saw a picture of it in a tourist guide. Looks gorgeous, but we haven't actually been there and don't know anything about it. Amherst, also in Massachusetts, is another one. These could be the first jobs for the American FF with which to concern itself.

Boldt Castle

Reading Gwyn Headley's glowing description of the history of George Boldt and the Castle for his wife Louise one might conclude that from 1904 onwards it continued to deteriorate to a state of disrepair and is now a ruin. Well, that was correct until 1977. In that

ABOVE: SHAW STUART'S
TOWER OF SIGHTS,
SCULPTURE TRAIL,
STAMFORD,
CONNECTICUT, USA
PAGE 10, TOP:
HARVEY FITE'S OPUS 40,
SAUGERTIES, NEW YORK
STATE, USA

year the Thousand Island Bridge Authority assumed ownership of Heart Island and they immediately began a rehabilitation programme. Pouring in hundreds of volunteers and millions of dollars they started to rebuild. The arch, the dovecote, Alster Tower (see our cover picture and p. 70 in *Architectural Follies in America*: it is the playhouse where the Boldts lived while the Castle was under construction), the smaller buildings and the castle itself are being restored even beyond the splendour that they had acquired when Louise Boldt died and work on the castle was stopped. The Yacht House on Wellesley Island opposite already looks terrific. But the best job we think was done restoring the Power House, which half burned down a few decades ago. Seeing it nowadays one wouldn't guess its function, then or now. It is still connected to the island, but it looks like a small towered chateau in its own right. All in all a tremendous job is being done here, and Boldt Castle on Heart Island rightly attracts lots of visitors nowadays. Certainly worth the wait for the little ferry boats. And you soon realise that the steep entrance fee is used in a good cause.

Stokesay Spurned

George Bear Hiester of Reading PA had come into a lot of money at the age of twenty-one. So when he was ready to get married in 1931 he wanted to present his bride with a gift on a grand scale. On a trip to England he had been mightily impressed with Stokesay Castle in Shropshire, built in 1240. And now he needed a new home to start a family. Why not duplicate Stokesay Castle? Money talked, and local builders and craftsmen were put to work on a quiet hillside not far from Mount Penn Pagoda, to make as good a copy of Stokesay as could be contrived. Stone towers with battlements, half-timbered parts, wooden beams hand-carved, dark-coloured panelling, bas relief figures in plaster ceilings, leaded windows, the lot. There is a dungeon, an octagon gazebo and a lovely gatehouse. And when it was all ready and George Hiester proudly presented it to

his wife, she turned up her nose and said she didn't like it too much. The couple then decided to go and live somewhere else, but they kept Stokesay on as a summer-party-house. In 1956 it was finally sold and converted into a restaurant. It still is a restaurant now, with a beautiful, peaceful patio and a view of twenty miles. It makes one curious about what sort of people the Hiesters were. Well, their loss is our gain.

Virginia House and others

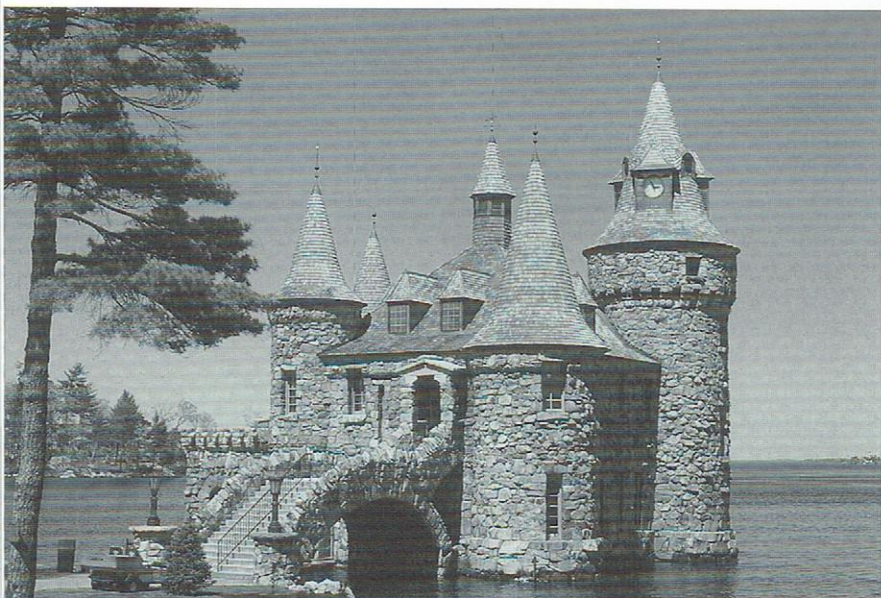
At the beginning of last century rich Americans went through a period which is sometimes called 'country place movement'. It meant that they built houses in quiet surroundings and made them look like European-style estates, complete with expansive gardens. In Richmond VA Alexander and Virginia Weddell went one up on that and bought the 12thC priory of St Sepulchre in England and had it taken down and shipped to Richmond and built up again, at some height above the James river. Seven shiploads of stones and timber went across in numbered crates and in three years' time local builders recreated the old priory, 1925-28. A spectacularly beautiful garden was laid out sloping down towards the river and the whole place acquired that romantic oldworld look that was so much sought after. The Weddells bequeathed their home with all its furnishings and art treasures to the Virginia Historical Society and it is now open to the public. The house next door is genuinely Elizabethan and was shipped over from Lancashire in 1926. It is a life-style museum now. Displacement follies. Needless to say that there are more of those about in the USA.

Millbrook NY

Millbrook lies in the area of the Taconic State Parkway, east of the river Hudson and is as pleasant a village as one would wish to see. There are a number of things of interest for people who like follies and gardens. Driving round in this area one can't help coming across them, but someone who lives here should feel challenged and put all of them on a list and do some decent research. Here are some first contributions to a survey of attractions.

The old water mill northwest of the village for instance is in a splendidly romantic area and a lovely building in itself. Between the Tribute Gardens and Innisfree we saw what looked like a white little temple on top of a boathouse. Beautiful landscaping there. Innisfree is of major importance in the history of gardens. It is a so-called 'cup garden', a term coined by this garden's creator Walter Beck and based on ancient Chinese principles. The idea is that special attention is drawn to something rare and beautiful by segregation. An enclosure is established so that the special element, like a tree, a lichen-covered rock or a meadow can be enjoyed without distractions, in the way one can concentrate on the contents of a cup. Lovely views on all sides, though. Special features in this garden, set round a lake, include a mist fountain, a water sculpture, and rock and tree formations. Mildly of interest to the folly-

**POWER HOUSE OF
BOLDT CASTLE, HEART
ISLAND,
NEW YORK STATE, USA**



hunter are some terrace buildings, the cave and the bat house (—stylish, but not as elaborate as the one in Sugarloaf Key Florida, or even Heythuysen (NL)). Innisfree, dating 1930–60, is a must for garden historians.

Another surprise in Millbrook is the Gatehouse to the Hitchcock estate, just north of the village. It is built of huge stones in the style of a fairy-tale castle. Stone pinnacles and turrets beckon along the driveway beyond the gatehouse, but a heavy portcullis emphasises the privacy of the grounds. If this is the gatehouse one can only guess at the shape and size of the main house (where Timothy Leary used to live). It should be on a par with the gigantic Halcyon Hall, at routes 44 and 343.

We may have overlooked a number of other things in Millbrook. But what we came here for in the first place was Wing's Castle, which for some reason just missed Gwyn's book. But that deserves a separate chapter.

Wing's Castle

Peter Wing did a Tour of Duty in Vietnam and came back to his father's dairy farm in 1969. When some new silos were needed and a house to live in, Peter and his wife Toni (later assisted by children Tara and Charles) started to build on a piece of his father's land, high over the Hudson Valley a few miles from Millbrook NY. They hadn't had any experience in building and started with recycled material and their own imagination to guide them along. The more they built, the more the place started to look like a castle and they began to get really interested. Peter studied books on Spanish organic architecture and on Asian and Tibetan art. He developed other interests as well, while the farm business declined over the years. An antiques shop was started here, its headquarters some thirty miles away. Lots of people admired Peter's energy and creativity and employed him to build fireplaces and other parts of houses. He also carved over 200 life-size wooden Indians of the kind you find as road-signs for tobaccoists, and worked as an actor. He is a landlord as well, for he has built a B&B facility, where American comforts such as hot tubs are combined with the interior and the exterior of an old-style European castle. For that is what Wing's Castle looks like.

Imagine a mishmash of towers and turrets, roofed with wooden shingles, of corridors and rooms, irregularly shaped, some parts grotto-like, some parts sham ruinous, and of arches and patios. Parts of the whole are built over a swimming pool with an open air hot tub and a changing-room in the shape of another tower. All the rooms inside are crammed with antiques and curios, and besides the Wing family are lived in by mannequins with historical costumes. Grotwork and sculptures adorn the place inside and out. 80% of the building material is recycled and comes from a diversity of sources like a railway bridge, a Baptist church foundation and large sidewalk paving stones. The hulk of a boat is used for the ceiling in the living-room, the 'great hall'.



**GATEHOUSE TO
HITCHCOCK ESTATE,
MILLBROOK, NEW YORK,
USA**

The castle has views over the Hudson Valley of up to sixty miles. There are a few pools nearby, where Peter Wing found an opportunity to express his interest in Japanese Shinto. There is also a mock Ancient Stone Circle ('Stonehenge') in the grounds and the foundations for a hill figure are being laid. We paid \$5 per person to be guided round by the man himself and were amazed at the speed with which he recited his well-prepared speech. Interrupt him and he is in trouble. Interrupt him again and you are in trouble. But he became quite enthusiastic when we told him of our special interest in follies. Apparently he had written to Gwyn—perhaps too late to be included in the book,—and had got no reply (Gwyn told me later he had lost the address). Since he hadn't built for fame or fortune, but only to please himself, he had left it at that. We promised to renew the contact and told him it would probably be a while before he would hear something. 'Don't worry if it is a few weeks later than you might expect', I told him. He shrugged and looked at me. 'Can you see me worried?', he asked. I couldn't.

**WING'S CASTLE,
MILLBROOK, NEW YORK,
USA**



WEBWATCH

We're journeying across the Atlantic to the USA for our first few sites this month, and moving from the sublime to the ridiculous.

www.vintageviews.org/vv-3/ is a postcard collection gathered by an enthusiast. As the site name suggests, the postcards date mainly from the early 20th century and so generally take the form of detailed, coloured drawings rather than photographs. It covers a wide range of topics, but click on 'structures' on the left hand side to access images of American follies and gazebos and monuments and other constructions, including towers (I particularly like the Old Observation Tower in Vicksburg) and 'unusual structures' such as an 'elephant hotel'. The site design has a clever layout, but it's simple and easy to navigate.

I was wondering whether or not to try searching for some of these structures to see if they were still standing, but decided against it. Then I remembered that I'd jotted down some website addresses months before, concerning those ridiculous but curious roadside oddities that are virtually synonymous with America. They may not be follies in the strict sense but many are certainly strange and unique, and they can be amusing and entertaining. I finally unearthed the list,

then click on the 'exhibit' name to reach photographs and short descriptions or anecdotes. You'll find wonders such as a house partially made of salt blocks (Texas) and the cement tepees that comprise the Wigwam motel (Arizona). There is another roadside site but it looked so complicated to start navigating that I didn't even know where to begin. Instead, go to one of its pages www.roadsideamerica.com/set/cow.html to encounter giant cows which are found throughout the country. Entitled 'The Cowlossus of Roads', it includes a striking photo of a 38ft high cow perched on a hill in North Dakota.

Back to Britain now and yet again disappointing search results for Scotland. This time I tried to look for information about 'The Hermitage' in Perthshire. Managed by the National Trust for Scotland, the Hermitage is an area of woodland with beautiful walks and a folly, Ossian's Hall, overlooking a spectacular section of river, where it flows over jagged rocks. There is also a man-made (hermit's?) cave further up from the hall. I managed to find a site with a few photos and that was about it. www.visitdunkeld.com then click on 'Dunkeld photographs' on the right hand side, followed by clicking on 'The Hermitage' and the top three photos should show Ossian's Hall.

Trebah garden in Cornwall has just received an award for its restoration of 'Alice's Seat', a thatched folly named after the woman who bought Trebah in 1906. Unfortunately, the website www.trebah-garden.co.uk doesn't (as yet) mention this folly at all. However, if you're in the area and want to visit the garden to have a look for yourself, you'll find admission information and location details here.

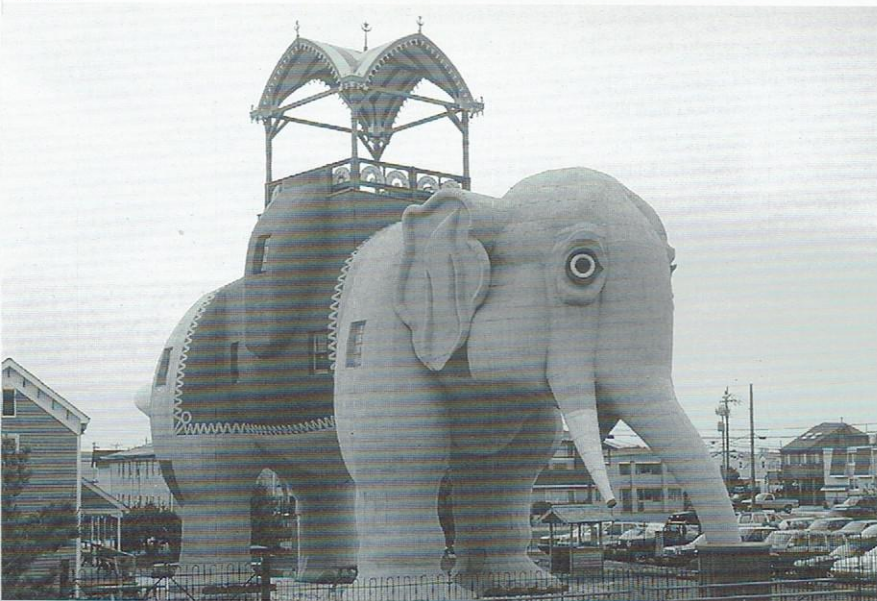
To end with, a little gem of a site: www.scotts-grotto.org. This is concise and well-organised, containing visiting details, descriptions of the grotto and its history, and it has a bank of great photographs. Oh, yet another place to add to my wish list of follies to visit!

Any information regarding folly websites (in any country) would be gratefully received!

Angela Jones, aleonpeach@aol.com

P.S. As I was surfing the net for possible updates of the American Maverick Architecture article (pp. 10-13) I came across some more sites of interest. When I tried Wing's castle I found many sites of tour operators offering visits to this 'castle of stone with a moat and 7 towers...has many antiques'. And recent pictures of Wing's unfinished castle at <http://www.dupontcastle.com/castles>. Now this site turns out to be of a castle-addict, King James (Dupont) the Castlefinder, building his own castle with his princess Patricia (you can follow the process) and collecting data about castles in the USA. He has 300 by now documented on his site, several of them proper follies. Boldt castle was amongst them too of course. But for pictures of Boldt castle you can also either go to <http://www.1000islands.com/boldtcas.htm>, or to <http://www.Boldtcastle.info/> which gives several 360° views, revolving on the screen.—RB

FRBOOGAART



LUCY THE ELEPHANT, MARGATE, NEW JERSEY, USA, 1881 (TAKEN 1997)

and the first address shone out at me: www.lucytheelephant.org. This is surely the same elephant from the vintage postcard, although it seems she's had quite a chequered history since then. Clicking on 'History' on the left hand menu will lead you to her story, and clicking on 'Tours' will take you inside her body and head. Watch out though—the site does look a bit gaudy!

While we're on the subject then, more roadside fun can be found at www.eccentricamerica.net. Go straight to searching via the states listed on the left hand side,

Update Quinta da Regaleira

RITA BOOGAART

You will all remember Jochen Müller's article and photographs on this beautiful site in Sintra, Portugal, in *FOLLIES* #53. Last April Pieter and I went to see it for ourselves and were suitably impressed although we had torrential rain before and after the actual guided tour on partly flooded paths. And we've got some noteworthy additions for Regaleira-adepts.

In all the brochures you read that you have to book a visit in advance (€10 per person). That includes a guided tour. But apparently many visitors came back and wanted to roam by themselves. That is now officially permitted: if you pay €5 per person at the kiosk you get a small map of the gardens, and off you go.

The guides are very competent, but if you would like to take something home to revive your memory, I can recommend the guidebook: *Quinta da Regaleira* by Denise Pereira and others (Sintra: Fundacao Cultursintra, 1998) - €7 in their shop.

This little book, illustrated with colour pictures, gives the history of the place and a description of a tour through the gardens. It focuses much on the meaning of what you see: the most intriguing thing about Regaleira is not its Neo-Manueline architecture, but the esoteric and masonic references that it has for the initiated. To help us uninitiated ones the book gives short explanations of words and themes in the margin, so that you can ignore them easily. And one-page articles shed more light on subjects like Masonry, The Spirit of the Templars or Esotericism and Initiation. The only flaw is that there is no map included, and you need one to follow the descriptions.

Newer and more up to date according to the guide is the cd-rom they offered for €15. It can be used in Portugese, English and French and is also called *Quinta da Regaleira*, cd-rom released in Sintra by Fundacao Cultursintra in 2000.

It consists of two main parts. The Sensible World shows a revolving picture of the site. By clicking on hotspots you get a short video about that spot. So now I could see the stone door revolving, a feature that I had missed on the tour, and several places where we didn't go because of restoration works or lack of time. There is music to it by Gabriel Gomes, very celestial and etheric, but if it irritates you it can be clicked silent. The Conceptual World is a deep well of information. You get easily lost in the wealth of facts and pictures

(rather small but sharp) about the place, the buildings, the persons involved, their ideas, and lots about Portugese history, esoteric topics and suggested relations in Regaleira. It is as in reality: one should find one's own path and get from it what one can digest. You can use the search engine to find 130 in-depth articles, 650 links to 620 colour pictures, 340 personalities and 450 other items. But I sorely missed a map again. Even so I can highly recommend this gadget and I will certainly be better prepared myself thanks to it when I go back, which I shall.

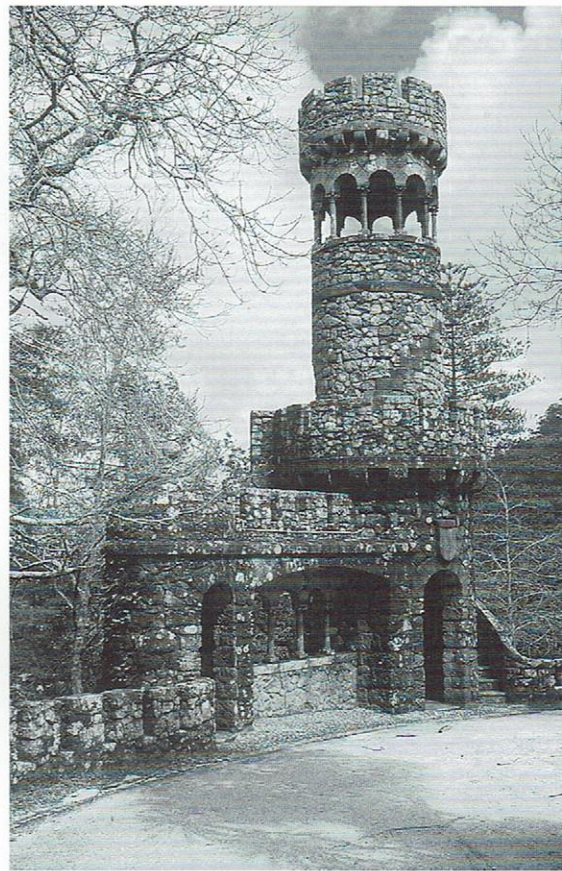
Quinta da Regaleira has a website too with lots of information: <http://www.regaleira.pt> You can find their opening times and publications there, and/or ask more information by email: regaleira@mail.telepac.pt

Although Quinta da Regaleira opened to the public only in 1998, the place was well-known soon. In 1999 Regaleira appeared (with plan of the house and of the garden!) in a book I found in the sales the other day, and is well worth keeping an eye open for. This book is dealt with in the following review.

BOOK REVIEW

MY HOUSE, MY PARADISE, THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE IDEAL DOMESTIC UNIVERSE by **Gustau Gili Galfetti**. Barcelona, Gustavo Gili. 1999. 192 pp. ISBN 84-252-1790-3

This book starts with a twelve-page philosophical introduction about the concept of home, and about several types of ideal worlds that people can seek. The main body of the book contains beautiful colour pictures of the several types of 'paradise' from different times and continents. Every site has a one-page description, linking it with ideas in the introduction. Some of the twenty-four you would expect, like *Bomarzo*, *Désert de Retz*, *Le Palais Idéal* in Hauterives, *Watts Towers* and Edward James' Mexican *La Conchita*. But several are less well known, especially the very modern ones; some are still in progress. Some are just strange houses, like Dali's proud abode, and Alex Jordan's House on the Rocks in Spring Green, USA. But there are real follies too, like Robert Garcet's Tour Eben-Ezer in Eben-Emael, Belgium. I think this book would be a splendid addition to any folly-lover's library.—RB



REGALEIRA TOWER,
1800-93, SINTRA,
PORTUGAL

From our Events Coordinator

We all had a splendid, hot and sunny, trip to Wardour Castle (15 June) followed by a guided tour around Larmer Tree Gardens, Wiltshire. The head gardener not only told us the history to the gardens but also gave us the benefit of his botanical knowledge. All this was followed by the usual good quality cream tea and we thank Malcolm Hole for starting off the year's events so successfully. And by the time you read this I expect the majority (!) of you all to have taken the opportunity of joining our own Graham Daw and Jeremy Pearson (NT Territorial Curator), in the trip to Saltram House (2 August).

Saturday 16 August 2003, Garden Party at Stancombe Park, Gloucestershire.

Karen Lynch has done us all proud again and organised a splendid Party for us at Stancombe (see also p. 3). Mrs Barlow is looking forward to welcoming us back for our second Garden Party at her home. Many thanks to Karen for all the hard work involved in organising our biggest event of the year. Invitations by separate mail.

Saturday 27 September 2003, Welbeck Abbey, Nottinghamshire

I imagine by the time you read this all places will have been taken, but if you want to come, then contact Barbara Hague who will be taking numbers for a second trip on the same day or at a later date. The visit will feature a talk, refreshments and a guided walk around the Abbey (see also pp. 4-5). Contact Barbara at 'Brookview', Milburn Grange, Coventry Road, Kenilworth, Warwickshire CV8 2FE ☎ 01926 856 494

Saturday 18 October 2003, Cardiff Castle & Castell Coch

Again numbers for this trip are restricted to 30 so contact Iain Gray, at 1 Keble House, Manor Fields, Putney Hill, London, SW15 3LS ☎ 020 8780 0866 (H); 020 8870 4567 (W), or iksg@wetraceandcollect.co.uk

For further details on any of the events please contact in the first instance the Regional Organiser or alternatively: Elizabeth A Waters, Events Coordinator, 19 Red Lion Street, Alvechurch, Birmingham B48 7LG ☎ 0121 447 7196, email: follywaters@onetel.com

On Oatlands Park grotto

Dear Editor,

I've been re-reading *Three Men In A Boat, To Say Nothing Of The Dog!* (to give its full title) by the splendidly named Jerome K. Jerome.

My copy was printed in 1959 and priced 2/6 but by then the grotto had been gone for 13 years as a result of one of the greatest acts of public vandalism of that destructive period.

This is what Jerome had to say about it in 1889:

You pass Oatlands Park on the right bank here. It is a famous old place. Henry VIII stole it from someone or the other, I forget whom now, and lived in it. There is a grotto in the park which you can see for a fee, and which is supposed to be very wonderful; but I cannot see much in it myself. The late Duchess of York, who lived at Oatlands, was very fond of dogs, and kept an immense number. She had a special graveyard made, in which to bury them when they died, and there they lie, about fifty of them, with a tombstone over each, and an epitaph inscribed thereon.

Well, I dare say they deserve it quite as much as the average Christian does.

There are lots of good reasons to read this delightful book, summed up perhaps by Jim Moir ('Vic Reeves') on Desert Island Discs who described it as the one book which made him laugh out loud. As Moir used to be the next-door neighbour of our illustrious members, the Brights, we should take this view seriously. On the other hand he refused to take the best of all story books (The Bible) to the desert island.

Yours sincerely,

Iain K. S. Gray, London

Dear Editor,

I took the opportunity of visiting the Tenbury Wells Pump Room, which is now completely restored and looks excellent. I was shown the inside (now part Council Offices and part the Register Office). There is a booklet available: *Tenbury Wells Pump Rooms An Illustrated History 1840-1938* by Howard Miller, £2.50. Ten years ago you would not have believed it could be put back in order; it heartens one. If any of you are nearby do go and have a look, it is a delight.

Elizabeth A. Waters, Alvechurch

Dear Sir,

I am wondering how many of our members spotted the Thanet folly Arx Ruochim on a postage stamp which was part of a series depicting aerial views of the UK coastline in 2002? (See *Isle of Thanet Gazette* of 22 March 2002)

Perhaps philatelists amongst our membership could enlighten us as to whether any other follies have appeared on stamps of the realm or indeed on postage stamps of any other country.

Yours faithfully,

Peter & Joyce Kiff, Broadstairs

First reaction from editorial team:

In our national newspaper *Volkkrant* of 31 May 2003 I found in the Philately corner that Sweden issued a new series last May, containing five stamps with a different tea house on each. They are beautiful 18th- and 19th-century examples of round or polygonal pavilions, called *lusthus* (lust-house) in Swedish.

In 1993 the Netherlands issued a 80 cents stamp with a picture of a building by artist Per Kirkeby in Groningen. Now one may argue that a work of art can hardly be a folly, but Kirkeby's buildings are often full-size well-laid brick walls without roofs, doors or windows, sometimes labyrinth-like.



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