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# follies

THE INTERNATIONAL MAGAZINE FOR FOLLIES, GROTTOS & GARDEN BUILDINGS

**THE PEPPERPOT,  
SEDBERGH**

**ROTHLEY CASTLE,  
NORTHUMBERLAND**

**TOPOSCOPE / FOLLY,  
LICKEY HILLS**

**PENA PALACE**

**LOCKING AWAY  
HERITAGE  
INFORMATION ?**

**ROBIN HOOD'S HUT,  
HALSWELL**

**INGRESS ABBEY,  
GREENHITHE**

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Helen Lazenby

Karen Lynch

Derrick Green

Jochen Müller

Susan Kellerman

Elizabeth Anne Waters

Philip Jones



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PROGRAMME OF  
EVENTS  
2005

## Editorial

Welcome to 2005. It's been about six months since the last magazine, quite a period for 'intelligence' on follies to accumulate, whether they have appeared in the news, or have simply featured on the property market. So there should be something of particular interest for all of you. Anyone who has tried to seek out more information on follies will find Susan Kellerman's article on the National Monuments Record particularly interesting, but alarming at the same time. Ptolemy Dean made a passionate plea about our heritage during the final of last year's *Restoration* series on TV, and the reduction of services and funds in this sector is now approaching a critical point.

But back to rosier matters. Feedback on last year's events has been really fantastic: Andrew's visit to Palais Idéal generated lavish praise (not sure if that was for the folly or Andrew though) and the rarely-accessible Hewell Grange created such interest that we pleaded for another opportunity to see its hidden treasures – if you missed out in 2004, *don't* this year. And as for the Garden Party, we couldn't have asked for a kinder host, or such gorgeous weather... somebody likes us!

In compiling this issue, our thanks to Mick Corton, Iain Gray, Joyce and Peter Kiff, Susan Kellerman, Paul Kirkwood, Karen Lynch, David Matthews, Tom Sargant, Simon Scott and Elizabeth Waters. The deadline for contributions for the next issue is 28 February 2005.

### Erratum

A slip on the ol' keyboard crept into the book review in the last issue, p. 11, where it should read 'the Chinese House at Amesbury was in existence by 1748' and not 1747. I know, I should lay off eating pizza whilst typing.

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Cover photograph of **SMALL CASTLE**, Pena Palace Park, Sintra, Portugal, by JOCHEN MÜLLER

### From our Events Co-ordinator

Many thanks to everyone involved in organising and helping with the very successful events of 2004. Anyone with any ideas for trips in 2006, please do contact me, as plans are already underway for next year. You will see from the Events Card enclosed in this issue, we have also included a space for you to write in your name and membership number: some years ago, we used to print membership cards, but at a member's suggestion at last year's AGM, we have now included this in the Events Card.

Since arrangements for this year's main event, the Annual Garden Party, are still not confirmed, Rob Watkin, who is now taking on the job of organising this event (a big thank you to Karen Lynch who has done a splendid job managing this for several years), will be letting you have full details of the date and venue in the next issue of *FOLLIES*. I look forward to seeing you at events this year—Elizabeth Anne Waters

#### *follies* MAGAZINE

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**NEW** permanent website [www.follies.org.uk](http://www.follies.org.uk)



## The Pepperpot, Sedbergh

HELEN LAZENBY

The Pepperpot is situated on a prominence, in what is now a field, to the west of Akay Lodge, Sedbergh, Cumbria, providing a fine viewpoint for the surrounding countryside.

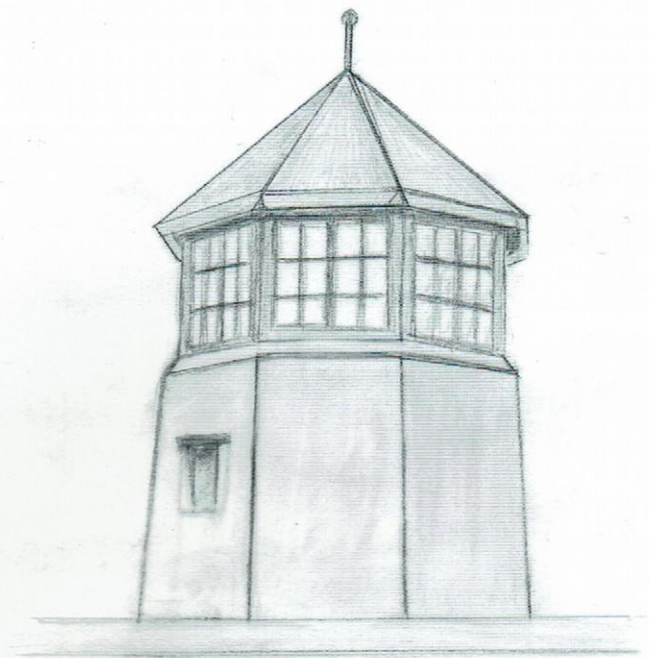
In 1893 Charles Edward Taylor, a chemist and druggist of Sedbergh, purchased Akay. About 1901 he erected a new mansion, which faced east and was about twice the size of the earlier house. Sale particulars of 1926 refer to a terrace garden in the Italianate fashion, with stone balustrade, sundial, undulating and level lawns, with two rest kiosks at either end of the tennis court etc. Attached to the house was a Conservatory with black and white tiled floor, also an L-shaped Aviary with Verandah.

Originally built as a two-storied summerhouse at the beginning of the twentieth century, The Pepperpot was to become the home of Anne Taylor, daughter of Charles Edward Taylor. Sadly, at the age of 18, Anne developed tuberculosis. She lived in isolation at The Pepperpot until her death at the age of 21.

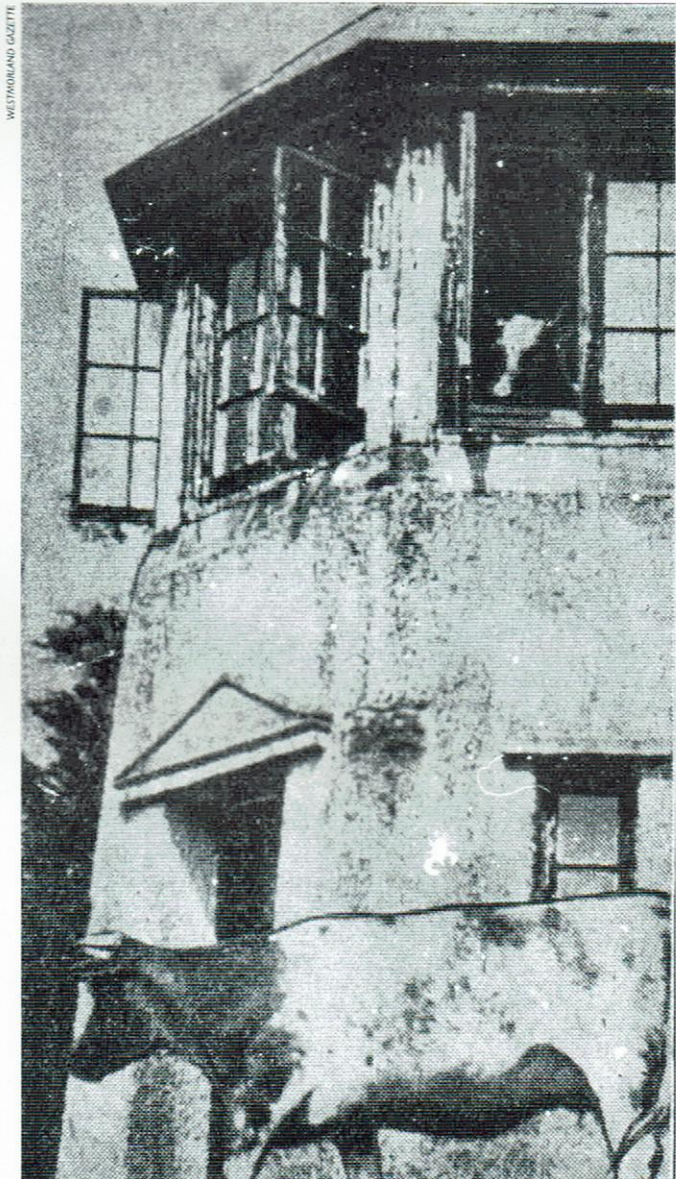
Akay Lodge was bought by Sedbergh School in 1936 for £2,700. After several years of standing empty the fixtures and fittings of the house were sold in 1938, the remains mysteriously burnt down in 1939. The Pepperpot remained intact until one day in the summer of 1948 when Mr Dinsdale, a local farmer, had cattle in the field in which The Pepperpot is situated. On this particular day he was horrified as he approached The Pepperpot to see one of his cows calmly gazing out of a first floor window. The cow had entered the building and proceeded precariously to climb the spiral staircase and then took advantage of surveying the surrounding landscape through the open window. According to an article in the Westmorland Gazette of 10 July 1948, titled 'Sedbergh Cow in the Pepper Pot', Mr T H Greasley of Rawthey Bank, Sedbergh captured the incident with his camera. It is said that it took five men with ropes to manoeuvre the animal down the spiral steps to safety.

In *The Sedbergian* of July 1948 it was reported that 'The Pepperpot now appears to be in the process of demolition, a move which we can only interpret as being intended to prevent it becoming a regular resort of cows.' Sadly, now only part of the outer shell of the ground floor remains, showing that The Pepperpot had been built of stone beneath the render - today it seems to be a regular resort for sheep.

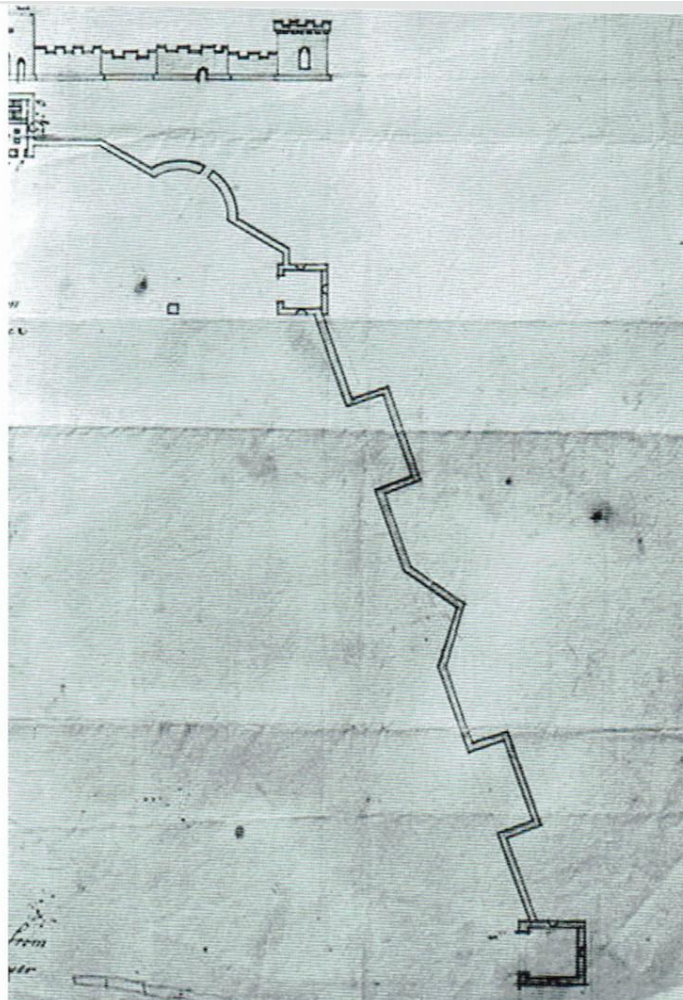
A number of folly towers have a tale attached in which a curious cow climbs to the summit and becomes trapped (Boot's Folly, nr Bradfield), or worse (Burton Pynsent), but here, at The Pepperpot, there is evidence!



Helen Lazenby



THE  
PEPPERPOT,  
SEDBERGH



HALL HOUSE, WALLINGTON HALL

GARRETT'S  
DRAWING OF  
ROTHLEY  
CASTLE

## Rothley Castle, Northum- berland

KAREN  
LYNCH

The National Trust has purchased land at Rothley Crag, the centrepiece of which is Rothley Castle, one of the most dramatic of sham fortifications. In the middle of the eighteenth century, Sir Walter Blackett of Wallington Hall, Cambo, Northumberland, created a deer park by enclosing land at Rothley, four miles from his home. The Trust has now acquired around half of the former deer park, and as well as Rothley Castle retaining walls and traces of ornamental planting can be seen. The land at Rothley Crag was sold off in the late nineteenth century and remained in private ownership until early in 2004, when the 242 acres were purchased by the Trust with funds from a

bequest. The Grade II\*-listed structure had featured on the Register of Buildings at Risk and the Trust intends to start work immediately to stabilise the castle. The work will be part-funded by DEFRA through the Countryside Stewardship Scheme that has also enabled public access to the castle since 1992.

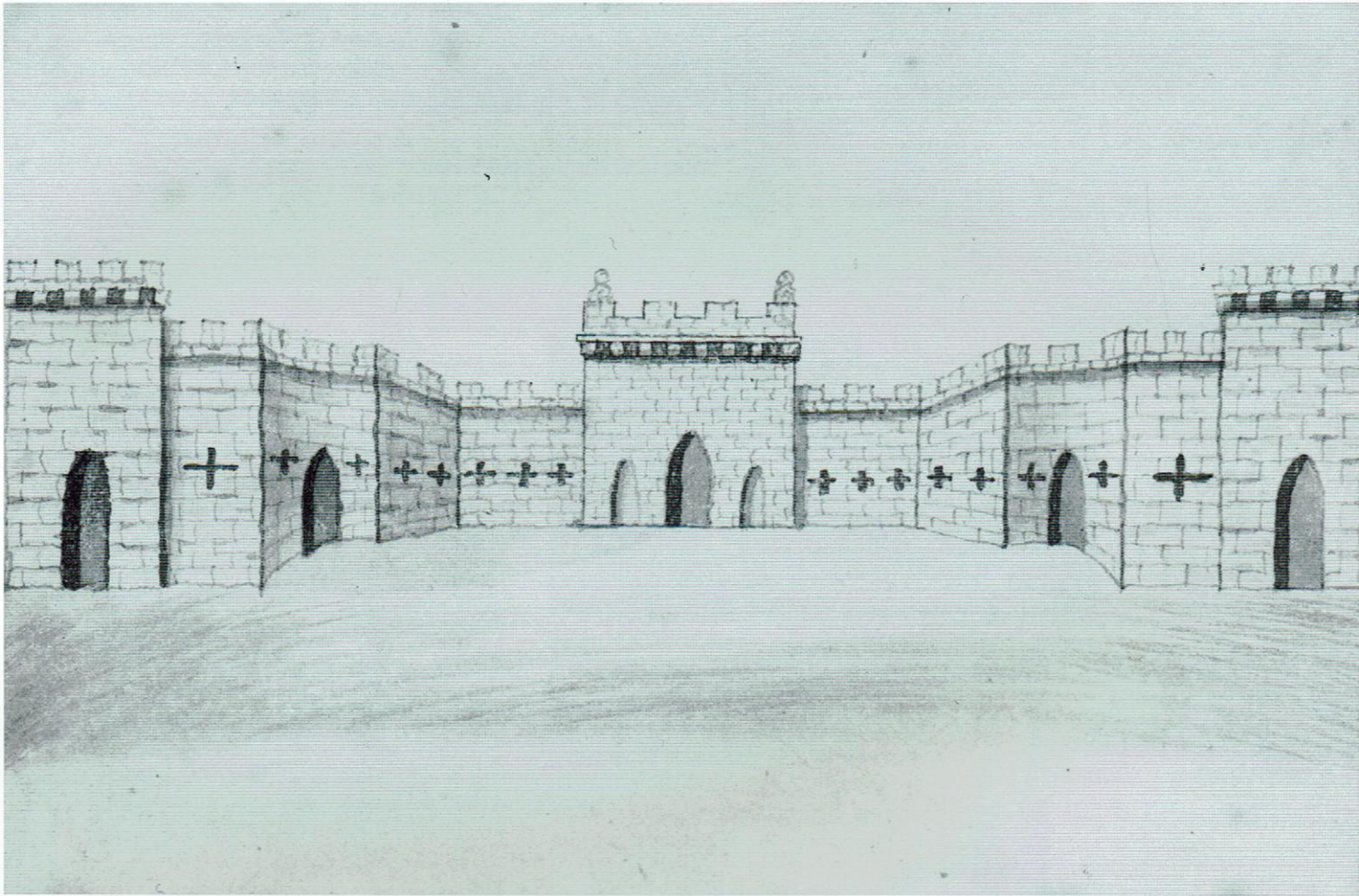
Rothley Castle was built as an eyecatcher at the heart of Sir Walter's park, which he began to enclose in 1741. Daniel Garrett is believed to have designed the building in the early 1740s when he was working at Wallington Hall. The Duchess of Northumberland, who kept meticulous notes of her visits to country houses, described a 'vast ruin'd Castle [...] on a plan of Garrets on an immense craggy Rock'.<sup>1</sup> The Duchess

had herself employed Garrett, and took particular notice of his work at other locations. Part of a plan and elevation of the castle, attributed to Garrett, survives in the Wallington Hall Papers and this shows that a much more substantial structure was originally proposed.<sup>2</sup> The embattled walls were to have continued down the crags to another pair of bastions, making the whole ensemble three times its current length. The most fascinating aspect of the elevation is that a spire surmounts the central tower. If actually constructed, the spire must have been short-lived, as early visitors do not mention it and the Duchess of Northumberland describes the tower having a leaded roof. But perhaps this design influenced Sir William Middleton's eye-catcher tower with spire at nearby Belsay Hall, constructed sometime before 1757?<sup>3</sup>

The sham takes the form of a square tower with curved connecting walls leading to two smaller square bastions, all with pointed gothic doors and windows and the obligatory loopholes. It is built of rough stones 'without a tool mark upon them'.<sup>4</sup> The central room was used for shelter and refreshment by sporting parties, but Sir Roger Newdigate noted that the building was to shelter herds as well as hunters when he described the park in 1766: 'In the midst rises a craggy Rock on top of w.<sup>h</sup> he [Sir Walter] built a Castle with Towers & Battlements intended for a Deercote'.<sup>5</sup> What distinguished this building from other sham castles in the gothic style was Sir Walter's rather quirky choice of embellishments. On the lawn in front of the building were 'huge heads of griffins' and large statues, 'preposterous effigies, representations of no known dress'.<sup>6</sup> The four griffin heads formerly surmounted one of the gates to the city of London and are believed to have arrived in the North East as ballast on one of Sir Walter's ships, replacing the coal that would have filled the hold on its outward voyage.<sup>7</sup>

One of the best descriptions of Rothley is that published by William Hutchinson, a historian who visited the castle in 1776. We should note, however, that he was in no mood to be pleased by Rothley Castle. In search of mediaeval ruins he had arrived, exhausted, at the summit of the steep crags only to conclude that 'the fatigue was but ill recompensed, for we found this object of our curiosity, no other than an ornamental structure'. Hutchinson noted, rather incredulously, the most curious element of the exterior: 'to give the coup de grace to this composition, enormous ribs, jaw-bones, and members of a whale, are fastened to the walls for decoration'. He also describes the interior of the tower, which was fitted out with rough-hewn stone tables and benches. Clearly feeling he had wandered into a fairytale, he thought the setting 'pretty enough for the reception of [...] Jack the Giant-killer'.<sup>8</sup>

Hutchinson should have done his research and consulted Wallis's *Natural History and Antiquities of Northumberland*, published only a few years earlier. Wallis knew Rothley Castle was an 'artificial tower',



but his interest in natural history drew him to study the whale bones which he somehow managed to measure and note for posterity: the 'two jawbones of a *Whale* by the entrance seventeen feet and six inches long'.<sup>9</sup>

Sir Walter died in 1777 and his heirs turned Rothley Park to pasture. By 1827 the castle was described as neglected and the huge statues had been vandalised by 'young clowns of the neighbourhood [who] very needlessly waged war with the giants'.<sup>10</sup> The griffins however survive intact, having been moved to the lawns of Wallington Hall in 1928 to protect them from further damage. Fragments of statuary in the East Wood at Wallington are thought to be the remains of the two giant figures. The castle, although structurally unsound, is relatively intact considering its exposed position and the fierce Northumbrian winds. It is great news that its future is now secure.

*Rothley Castle can be found just off the B6342 Hexham to Rothbury road, north of Cambo. There is parking at Rothley Cross Roads. Codger Fort, a sham fortification by Thomas Wright and also owned by the National Trust is just to the north.*

*The drawing of Rothley by J. Duffield, 1775, is from the Duchess of Northumberland's album of drawings. Collection of the Duke of Northumberland, 03395/6.*

- 1 Alnwick Castle, Papers of the Dukes of Northumberland, *Travel Journals of the Duchess of Northumberland*.
- 2 The National Trust, Wallington Hall Papers, Drawings 66.
- 3 See *FOLLIES* #43, p. 9 and #45, p. 14.
- 4 John Hodgson, *A History of Northumberland, in three parts* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: E. Walker, 1827), Part II, vol. I, p. 305.
- 5 Warwick Record Office, CR 136B/4108, fol. 24. With thanks to Mike Cousins for this information.
- 6 William Hutchinson, *A View of Northumberland with an Excursion to the Abbey of Mailross in Scotland Anno 1776*, 2 vols (Newcastle: W. Charnley, 1778), vol. II, p. 223.
- 7 Historians do not agree on the provenance of the heads – they are said to have come from Bishop's Gate or Aldgate.
- 8 Hutchinson, *op. cit.*, p. 223.
- 9 John Wallis, *The Natural History & Antiquities of Northumberland, and of so much of the County of Durham as lies between the Rivers Tyne & Tweed; commonly called North Bishoprick*, 2 vols (London: W. & W. Strahan, 1769), II, p. 525.
- 10 Hodgson, *op. cit.*, p. 306.

**ROTHLEY CASTLE,  
BY J. DUFFIELD**



SCARTY'S  
MONUMENT,  
ABERDEEN

THE OBELISK COLUMN

THE PILOT'S PILLAR

I'll tell you o' a Monument  
Erected in this Toon.  
It stands doon by the Fisher Squares  
An' built wi' bricks - a roon.  
Oh it would look much better  
If they'd gi'en 't a coat o' paint  
And stuck a brass plak on the front  
O' Scarty's Monument.

This unattributed poem is attached to a curious column that stands near Fittie, at the end of Aberdeen's North Pier. It refers to a simply constructed obelisk that is built in red brick and stands nearly five metres high.

Scarty's Monument, to give it its correct local title, was named after William Smith, who was one of two pilots serving the North Pier during the mid-nineteenth century; the other was James Morrice. As seems to be the need for certain jobs, it was not sufficient for Smith to operate under his real name and he was duly awarded the soubriquet of 'Scarty', while his co-pilot was nicknamed 'Pengie'.

It would be lovely to report that as a result of one of Scarty's heroic acts, completed with or without his friend Pengie, the obelisk had been erected by a grateful sailor or a weeping widow. It would also be lovely to report that a grateful town had erected the monument after a lifetime of distinguished service by their chief pilot. Sadly neither is possible, because the monument serves simply as a marker for ships entering the harbour. The pungent smell that emits from it also confirms that the obelisk also vents the outlet pipe for the town's sewage system as it passes into the sea.

—Andrew Plumridge

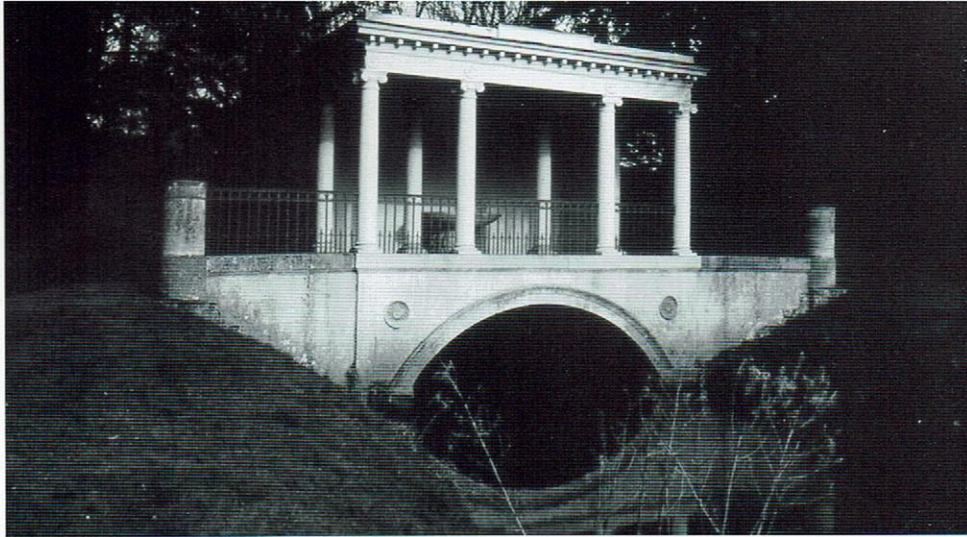
BOOK REVIEWS

**THE OBELISK: A Monumental Feature in Britain** by RICHARD BARNES. Kirstead: Frontier Publishing, 2004. 192 pp. Hbk £35. ISBN 1-872914-28-4

Growing up within cycling distance of the imposing 80ft obelisk at Holkham Hall in Norfolk, I have remained partial to these monuments; and a glimpse of pointed granite or ivy-shrouded marble often finds me stopping in the nearest lay-by or peering over cemetery walls. Yet within the first few pages of this detailed volume I realised what a minuscule percentage of our nation's collection I was aware of, let alone had seen first hand. The more workmanlike of the two back cover 'blurbs' quietly describes a 'comprehensive though incomplete' study, letting slip that this equates to over one thousand, three hundred obelisks - certainly 'complete' enough for my amateur eyes!

Richard Barnes interest in obelisks was kindled by study of his great-grandfather's uncle, the Victorian sculptor John Bell, whose lectures included 'The Definite Proportions of the Obelisk'. Barnes literally makes these lectures the central tenet of his book, with the middle chapter given over to detailed extracts from Bell's lectures; the surrounding chapters containing a chronological history of the British obelisk. To many people, the obelisk in Britain is interconnected with the Victorian's interest in Egyptology; importing the ideas, art, and eventually original monuments themselves. Folly aficionados may go back further, to the eighteenth century grand monuments such as Vanbrugh and Hawksmoor's 100-foot edifice at Castle Howard. Yet Barnes provides plentiful evidence of British obelisks from the sixteenth century onwards, three hundred years before the arrival of 'Cleopatra's Needle' on the Embankment - a venture that is revealed to have taken an extraordinary seventy-seven years.

A chapter on cemeteries covers the largest, and often most familiar, group of obelisks, from sandstone and marble to the many hues of polished granite. Kensal Green numbers; 'about seventy obelisks, which appear positively minimalist among the mausolea and commemorative extravaganza' - hinting at how easily these monuments are overlooked. Most of us give the obelisk lower attention than a grotto or sham castle. Even compared to other funerary monuments, obelisks do not offer us ornate carving or leering gargoyles. They do not contain rooms to explore or balconies to ascend to, but stand stark, solid and silent. This book provides the obelisk with a deserved extra dimension by rooting it firmly in British social history; where an obelisk can be a towering symbol of a landowner's wealth, or a small token to local heroism raised by public subscription. There are Royal obelisks, obelisks to mark the obscurest episodes of British history, obelisks as drinking fountains, obelisks to mark a hamlet's entire generation of young men lost to war. There are obelisks



**AUDLEY END  
PALLADIAN TEAHOUSE**

for the pure joy of putting something ridiculously pointy atop the highest hill, and tumbled obelisks, the legacy of doubtful construction and dubious builders.

In support of these stories, the book is rich in illustration. There are line drawings and diagrams throughout, and three generous sections of photographs, including full-size colour plates. A small quibble from me is that these three sections have their own numbering system, so in trying to find something from the index, I was initially confused to find pages numbering 31–48 sandwiched between text pages 128 and 129. However, this does not detract from the overall impact of a beautifully presented book.

The chronology continues to the twentieth century, with its early monuments raised in response to war, and later ones to the millennium. This book refrains from being simply a historical review, by including a view to the future of obelisks in Britain. The author reminds us that the British have consistently felt drawn to putting up obelisks, resulting in a far larger tally than either Egypt or Rome, and offers his opinion that obelisks remain an object of desire to present generations, 'To raise an obelisk is unusual and a talking point...many readers would wish to have a fairly large obelisk – and the house and garden to go with it'. The concluding chapter covers theories on the purpose of obelisks, providing an investigative counterpoint to the descriptive theme thus far, necessarily opening the discussion out to other cultures beyond Britain, and theories including solar worship and secret societies. This is followed by a 24-page gazetteer covering the vast number of obelisks already mentioned (and which would surely provide an interesting 'join the dots' project!)

I found this book a most enjoyable read, providing insights into the history, society, and architecture underpinning these monuments. For all its quality of presentation, it does not, however, deserve to be left as a coffee table book; coming to the end I realised I had added a scribbled list of obelisks to my 'to visit' list, and impatiently looking for better weather in order to get started. And for those more ambitious, in these times of ever increasing planning restrictions and building costs, an obelisk must be a good choice for the aspiring folly builder. As the book's foreword concludes, 'I hope... some [readers] may be motivated to raise 21st century obelisks. The national collection awaits additions'.—Rat Riches.

**ROBERT ADAM: an illustrated life of Robert Adam, 1728–1792** by **RICHARD TAMES**. Princes Risborough: Shire Publications Ltd. 2004. 48 pp. Pbk £4.99. ISBN 0-7478-0603-9

Shire Publications are noted for their booklets on offbeat subjects. Included are such esoteric interests as *Follies*, *Shell Houses and Grottoes*, *Scottish Dooocots*, *Mausoleums* and *Icehouses* to name but a few that may be familiar to

the Fellowship. Then there is their *Lifeline* series dating from 1972 to 1977 that was the inspiration of Richard Tames who has been responsible for more than a quarter of the titles. These biographies include architectural and landscaping personalities such as Pugin, Paxton, Repton, Brown, Jekyll and Vanbrugh. The publication of *Robert Adam* in 2004 saw the re-activation of the series and Lutyens, due in 2005, will be the forty-fourth title.

As for Adam, he may not be the first name to come to mind when thinking of folly designers / builders. However, if the scope is allowed to include garden buildings, the likes of the Brizlee Tower, Hulne Priory, Croome Court's Panorama Tower (in desperate need of TLC unlike Adam's Greenhouse Temple and Island Pavilion which are cared for by the National Trust), the Bowood Mausoleum, two temples at Audley End, the square gatehouse at Kimbolton Castle and Mistley Church / Towers bring this Scot into the fold. Such works get short coverage in the *Lifeline* but not unreasonably, more space is dedicated to Adam's more major works of Culzean Castle, the Adelphi, Syon House and Kedleston. There is brief mention of Adam's father and brothers, his move south from Scotland, his Grand Tour and his competition with fellow architect, Sir William Chambers. Throughout there is a fair amount of name-dropping (Dr Johnson, Lord Bute, Thomas Telford, Thomas Chippendale, Horace Walpole, David Garrick) which helps to set Adam in the context of eighteenth-century society and the circles in which he moved.

Be that as it may, the inclination is to say that the book lacks balance with too much time given to the buildings and not enough to the architect himself. However, it has to be remembered that all the *Lifelines* are only 48 pages long (except the recently re-issued Ruskin title which runs to a massive 64 pages!) and there are some forty colour illustrations in the Adam book. These are serious restrictions to what the written word can cover. Therefore this and every other *Lifeline* must be viewed as general starters rather than being all-inclusive authorities on their subjects. That said, Richard Tames has done a creditable job of introducing Robert Adam's works and if your taste buds have been tickled, the *Lifeline* cites 21 further reading titles in which the minutiae of man and works can be explored.—DM

**CHELTHENHAM'S LOST HERITAGE** by **OLIVER C. BRADBURY**. Thrupp, Sutton Publishing Ltd, 2004. 176 pp. Pbk £14.99. ISBN 0-7509-2990-1

Every time that I dip into this book, I am left with a feeling of sadness – a sadness evoked by just how much fine, fascinating and frivolous heritage Cheltenham has lost. The foreword by Sir Howard Colvin makes similar overtures about the disappearance of its buildings, and as he says: 'what is more shocking than the losses is the abysmal quality of so many of those that have replaced them'. The town's rise and fall is visually traced, the subject matter being broken down into six classifications: public buildings, spas, retail premises, hotels, ecclesiastical buildings, and houses. Little potential for folly-related material there, you might think, but you'd be wrong. The Market Arcade, for example, was 'a bizarre composition of Gothic and "Oriental"': possibly inspired by Sezincote, it was demolished in the 1870s. There is a great story about 'A MONSTER

VAULT', erected by Mr Darby, a great dog-lover, who intended his pet to find a last resting place in the family mausoleum, but being contrary to the rules of the Church, he decided to have a carving of the dog placed on top of the tomb. The demise of some of the enchanting spa buildings is particularly notable, such as the Gothic Cottage and Octagon, the Cambray Chalybeate Spa and the Park Spa – you can read about, and see them all in this book.

Considerable effort has gone into tracking down old views of these vanished structures; the real twist of the knife of progress is Oliver Bradbury's use of recent images of the same locations: an assemblage of tarmac car parks, cinemas, a plethora of council houses, flats and other nondescript dwellings, and so on. The author deserves congratulating on bringing this tragedy to the public's attention; let's just hope that more people take heed than with previous campaigns hoping to save Cheltenham's past.—MGC

## Toposcope / Folly, Lickey Hills Country Park

DERRICK GREEN

The Toposcope / Folly is situated on Beacon Hill in Monument Lane, Lickey, in Worcestershire near the Birmingham border. The toposcope was built after the Cadbury family donated the hill to the City of Birmingham in 1923. It was

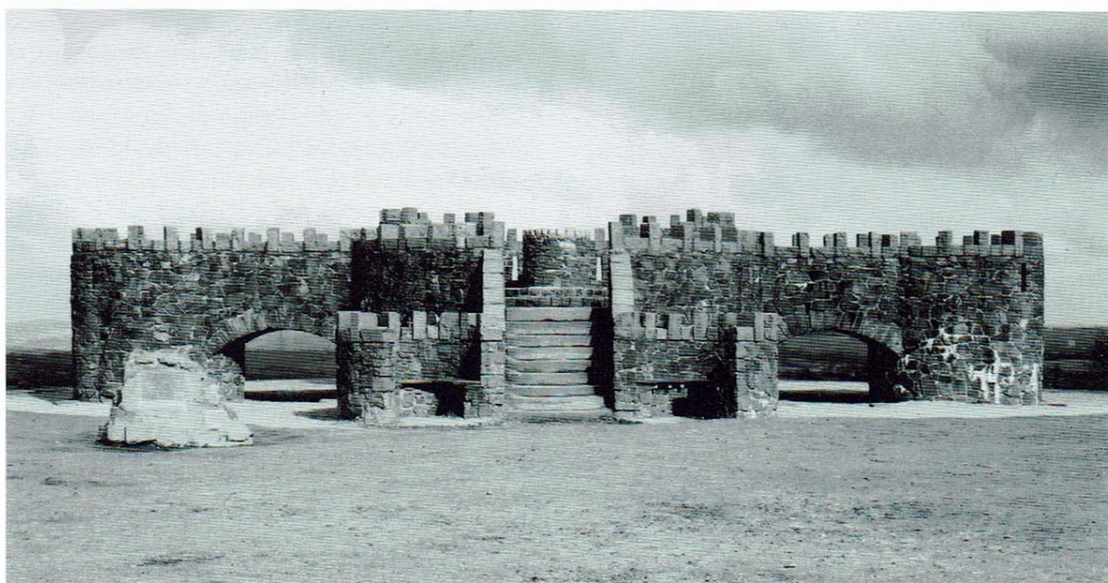
rebuilt and increased in size in 1987/88 to give the overall look of a castle. A toposcope is usually a round plate showing directions and distances to places that, on a clear day, may be seen. Beacon Hill is 297 metres above sea level – thirteen old counties can be seen from here!

There are two plinths on the folly to take two toposcopes but only one has a plate mounted on it, due to prob-

lems with vandals. The original brass plate was prised off and was replaced with a plastic one that was damaged by fireworks. The third one is made of stainless steel and is still in position at the time of writing!

Also in Monument Lane is an obelisk that had its first stone laid in May 1834 and was built in commemoration of the 6th Earl of Plymouth who owned most of the Lickey Hills in the nineteenth century. He resided at Hewell Grange, Tardebigge, near Bromsgrove. The obelisk was built from the same Anglesey marble as Birmingham Town Hall and at the same time, allegedly with the marble that was left over.

The centre of the obelisk is hollow and occasionally a stonemason has to be lowered down the centre on a bosun's chair to inspect for cracks, but doesn't linger too long due to the nest of cockroaches at the bottom! The pyramid lead cap has recently been replaced after being dislodged by high winds.



TOPOSCOPE /  
FOLLY,  
LICKEY HILLS

The latest issue of *Essex Gardens Trust Newsletter* (no. 17, Autumn 2004) included a very useful piece of research on **Warlies Park [Upshire]** by Jill Plater. A pleasant enough estate near Waltham Abbey in Essex, it is probably one of the lesser-visited folly sites, even though it has links to two **obelisks** to Boudicca – that near Obelisk Farm supposedly marking the spot where the Queen took poison, that by Dallance Farm reputed to be where she died and was buried (which is another alternative to under platform 10 of Kings Cross Station). There is an entire saga of correspondence on Boudicca and these obelisks in *Notes & Queries*, but Edward Smith's 'How History is Written: Obelisks in Epping Forest' (30 September 1882 (6th Series, vol. VI, no. 144), p. 272) provides the most comprehensive account.

Closer to the main house, I was very interested to read that 1737 had been given for when the small **rotunda** on Temple Hill was erected by then owner, Richard Morgan. Knowing the structure quite well, intrigue got the better of me, and I wanted to know where the date came from. One quick trip to Essex Record Office in Chelmsford, and here is the answer. There is an early manuscript dated 1891 *Historic Notices of Warlies ... and its Surroundings* by one William Winters. The relevant section reads: 'Eastward of the mansion [Warlies Mansion] is "Temple Park", deriving its title from a small Temple erected on an elevated spot a few yards from the main road. The floor of the Temple is prettily paved with small pebble stones, on which the date (1737) may be seen when the grass is removed from between the stones.' [Essex Record Office (Chelmsford) T/P 153, p. 32] The date is no longer present, and to my eye the stonework of the rotunda looks too fresh to be over 250 years old, and I suspect that this is not the original temple, or that it has been reworked at some time in its history – the concrete hexagonal base is a dead giveaway.

**Heads up...**

10 November saw the official opening of **Temple Bar** by the Lord Mayor, Alderman Robert Finch, in its 'new' position in **Paternoster Square** by St Paul's Cathedral. A number of inscribed stones under the main arch detail the recent saga: one set in place by 'Lord Mayor Alderman Gavin Arthur to mark the commencement of work for the return of Temple Bar to the City, 10<sup>th</sup> October 2003', and another relating to the involvement of Temple Bar Trust 1876–2004, which 'Successfully concluded the Resolution of the Court of Common Council of November 1877, that the Bar should be rebuilt in the City of London'. Now resplendent with its statues, but possibly too 'clean' at present, the **only thing** lacking from former days is a few heads spiked on staffs – you've probably all got your own candidates though.

**Lucid in the Sky...**

When we last heard of a **Sitooterie** (allegedly the Scot's word for a summerhouse – literally somewhere you can 'sit oot') it was with regard to an exhibition of them in the grounds of Belsay Hall (see *FOLLIES* #45, pp. 14–15). Thomas Heatherwick's 'Hairy Sitooterie', a wooden cube with more than 5,000 protruding ash batons, has been inspiration for an aluminium version built by Bernard Holmes at **West Horndon**, Essex. Ash has been replaced with hollow tubes, topped with orange *Perspex*: 'it lets light in during the day, but at night, emits hundreds of shards of shocking orange colour into the sky.' If you're considering building one yourself, it took Bernard three years and £50,000.



TOP: ROTUNDA, WARLIES PARK  
 BOTTOM: TEMPLE BAR IN PATERNOSTER SQUARE



TOP LEFT:  
**FOLLY TOWER,  
LILBURN**  
TOP RIGHT:  
**DAYLESFORD  
PAVILION**  
BOTTOM:  
**TEMPLETON  
CARPET FAC-  
TORY DURING  
'MAKE-OVER'**

### Underground and Underhand

Northowram Hall, in **Northowram**, near Halifax, West Yorkshire, is a Grade II house of fairly modest architectural interest. It is a 1925 rebuild of an earlier mansion that later became a hospital. The house has now been converted into apartments and its grounds filled with new homes by Persimmon. What is exceptional about this site (and deserves a higher listing in its own right) is the underground **bath house**, a large and impressive stone structure, located in (or rather, under)



the garden, at a short distance from the existing house and the site of its seventeenth- and eighteenth-century predecessors. Access to the bath, in relatively good condition, was via steps from a terrace in front of the house. The bath house has been dated to *c.* mid-1700s, possibly built by John Edwards, a wool merchant whose trade was largely with Lisbon, but so far no-one has been able to find any historical documentation relating to the bath. The good news is that, as a condition of listed-building planning consent for the site, a programme of historic building recording was carried out, so that a photographic, written, and drawn record of the bath house exists. The bad news is that in early November, a decision was taken by the developer to block the entrance with a large concrete slab, and the area was paved over, prohibiting access, and breaking the conditions of planning consent. Calderdale MBC is writing to Persimmon for an explanation.

NB: In 1998-99, the chairman of Persimmon Homes, Duncan Davison, built himself a **folly tower** on his **Lilburn estate**, near Alnwick, in Northumberland. (So the privileged few can indulge their architectural idiosyncrasies while others are deprived of enjoying those left us by previous generations.)

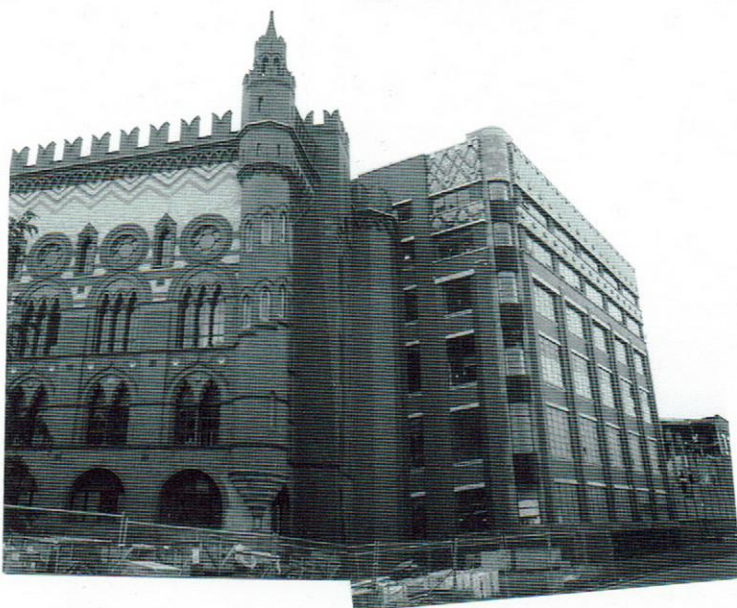
### Shod off

The **horseshoe piles** at **North Grimston** in East Yorkshire have disappeared, it seems (see *FG&GB*, p. 592). More information, please.

Driving about trying, without success, to get a view of the 'Moslem dome' of Warren Hastings's **Daylesford**, Worcestershire, I saw across a field near the church this **gothic garden pavilion**. By collecting the key to the church from the Old Rectory, I was able to learn that the building, which uses recycled architectural pieces, was built over the winter 2003/04 by Mrs Abel-Smith. [*Would 'I' please provide an identity?—Ed.*]

### In brief

Members of The Georgian Group may already have read that a small grant from the Cleary Fund has gone towards recording of the **Gothic Umbrella** within the **Wentworth Castle** estate. Patrick Eyres's guided tour back in 1997 included a visit to the remains of this – it collapsed between the two World Wars – but the majority of the stone work of Richard Bentley's exquisite Gothick design survives. The **Templeton Carpet Factory** in **Glasgow** (see *FG&GB*, p. 59) is getting a 'make-over'. It is no longer sub-divided into small offices and workshops – the 'modern' portion at the rear is being



demolished and the spectacular 1889 building is being converted into apartments. A recent *Country Life* says that **Castle Hill**, in Devon, is going to be open to the public regularly in 2005. At the **Swiss Garden, Old Warden**, Bedfordshire, the glass in the **Indian Kiosk** has been beautifully restored and excavation has revealed the foundations of what seems to have been a rather eccentric aviary (details at: <http://www32.brinkster.com/snefru/archaeology/aviary8/aviary8.htm>)

### From the ashes

A £309,500 grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund will see the **pagoda** rebuilt at **Peasholm Park, Scarborough**, N. Yorkshire. Many readers will know that it was burned down in 1999, and there seemed little hope of seeing it rebuilt at the time: all that was left was a charred skeleton that had to be demolished. The money, together with additional sums from the Borough Council, sponsorship and fundraising, totalling close to £500,000, will also allow the willow-pattern footbridge to be restored and the park's cascade to run as originally intended. Fortunately, George W. Anderson's original designs survive in the town hall's archive, and if everything goes to schedule, a grand reopening is planned for this summer. This is excellent news, especially since I never had a photograph of the original!

Paul Kirkwood came across this little **tower** (see picture) – surely some sort of folly – in the front garden of a house on the seafront in **Rhyl**, North Wales. Do any readers have any information about it? Meanwhile a half-built hotel next to the **Victoria Tower**, on the top of **Castle Hill** at Huddersfield, has been ordered to be demolished. The Thandi Partnership, the hotel's owners, not only demolished the whole of the old hotel – not as originally agreed – but the building bore little resemblance to the approved plans. A public campaign clearly added weight to these breeches, referring to the scaffolded hotel as a 'blot on the landscape', which judging from a photograph that appeared in the *Yorkshire Post*, it truly is, or hopefully was by the time you read this. They had to pull it down by January 11.

### Letters from America

The most 'happening' bit of news has to be the claim that the inscription on the **Shepherd's Monument** at **Shugborough** has been cracked – it even reached the *Yorkshire Post*, although totally missed by the Essex local papers. Legend had it that the ten letters D O U O S V A V V M reveal the whereabouts of the Holy Grail, assuming of course that you could decipher their meaning. This story evolved from the monument's builder, Thomas Anson, who was reputed to have had an interest in the Knights Templar, said keepers of the Grail. So, two veterans who worked at the Bletchley Park code centre in the Second World War, put out a request for solutions to the inscription. There was one interesting answer from the States (given increased exposure to generate increased Shugborough visitor numbers from the US? – surely not). But let's skip to a more sat-



RHYL  
TOWER

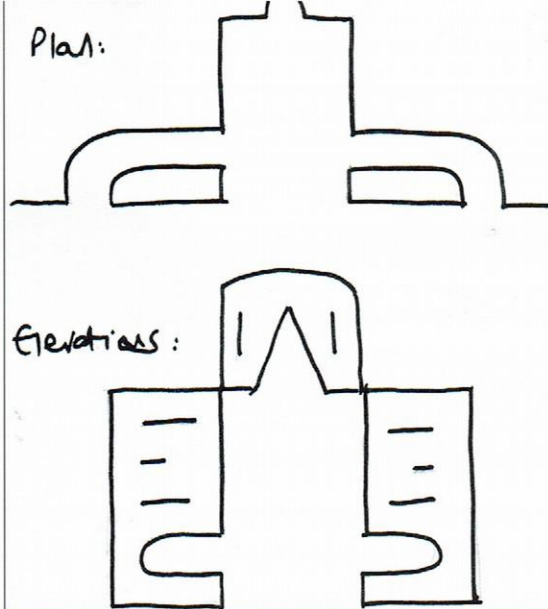
isfactory offering from home, in which the eight central letters represent a Latin poem to a departed loved one: 'Optima Uxor Optima Sororis Viduus Amantissimus Vovit Virtutibus', translated as 'Best Wife, Best Sister, Widower Most Loving Vows Virtuously'. Now, wasn't that much better than a story about locating a chalice.

SHEPHERD'S  
MONUMENT





LEO SCOTT  
SIRION SCOTT



**DITCHLEY GROTTO /  
LAKE HEAD EXPLORED**  
FAR RIGHT: **PLAN AND  
ELEVATION**

### Nothing Ventured...

Nothing gained. Those intrepid few who braved the undergrowth, brambles, thorns etc. at last year's **Ditchley** visit provided these rare details of the **grotto**, or lake head there (I saw the cuts afterwards, so can testify to their braveness... or folly). Clearly this is no ordinary 'recess' and the features – a triangular niche and vertical 'stripes' of infill – are too well-defined not to have a purpose. But what purpose? As can be seen on the sketch views, the outer arches actually lead into the main chamber that forms the central arch. All very mysterious.

### Drawing on the Past

William Weddell and the Transformation of **Newby Hall**, Leeds City Art Gallery until 13 February 2005. This exhibition of sixty drawings, including many by Robert Adam, illustrates how William Weddell (1736–92) of Newby Hall, North Yorkshire, refash-

ioned his house and estate buildings in the middle of the eighteenth century. A fully-illustrated book and a programme of talks accompany the exhibition. Further information 0113 247 8248 [www.leeds.gov.uk/artgallery](http://www.leeds.gov.uk/artgallery)

### Visits

The Centre for Lifelong Learning, Birmingham University, is holding a number of day schools, including the following that may be of interest:

- Dream House: Arts and Crafts Houses 12 March 2005, £30
- Lunar Men and Women, 5 March 2005
- William Shenstone: C18 local Poet and Gardener, 9 April 2005 (incl. visit), (fee tba)

And advance notice (no details) for:

- Visit to Kenilworth Castle, 23 April 2005
- Witley Court House and Garden (summer visit, nd)
- Oxford Botanic Gardens and Nuneham Courtney (summer visit, nd)

More info is available from: University of Birmingham Centre for Lifelong Learning, tel: 0121 414 8065.

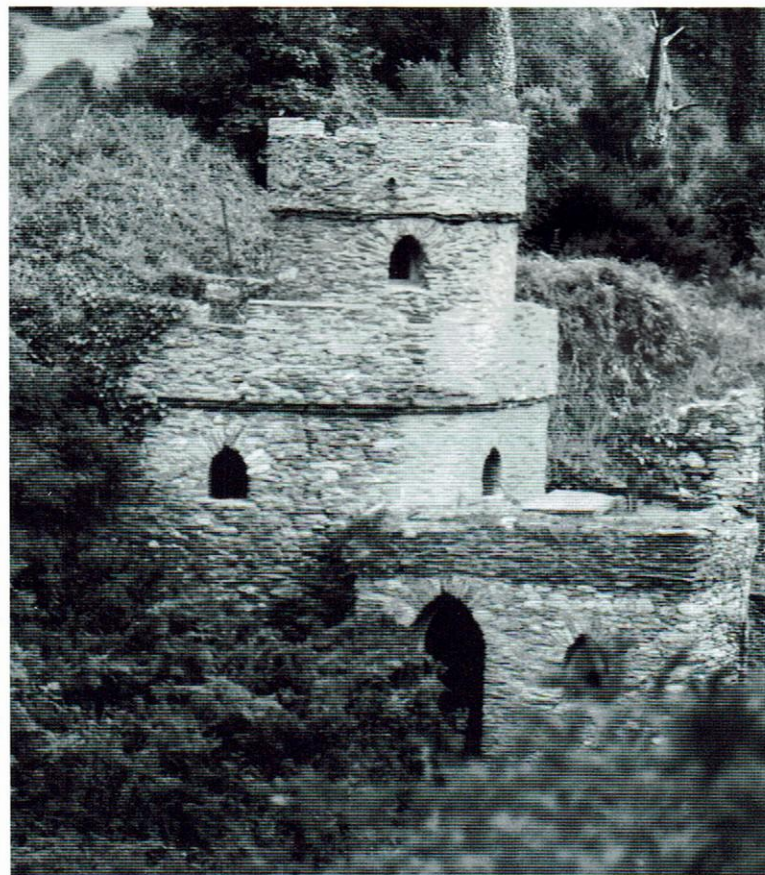
### In Turner's Footsteps

Hopefully some of you were fortunate enough to know about and go to *The Art of the Garden* exhibition at **Stourhead**. One of the pieces, or rather a copy of it, was a painting by J.M.W. Turner of the **Bristol Cross** that has never been displayed to the public. Painted in 1798, the watercolour has been in the Tate archives since it was bequeathed in 1856. The reproduction was placed at the spot where Turner painted it so that visitors could appreciate the view that he saw, and also how it has changed in over 200 years.

### On the Beach

Whilst on holiday at **Kingswear** on the river Dart in south Devon Mick Corton came across a folly that does not appear to be included in Headley and Meulenkamp's book. Setting out to walk along the path to Coletton Fishacre from Castle Cottage where he was staying, just above the Kingswear castle, is a private road, and not far past the track to the castle there are steps leading down through the woods. At the valley bottom the steps rise steeply on the other side and the **folly** is on the immediate right of the track very near the shore

**FOLLY,  
KINGSWEAR**



MICK CORTON

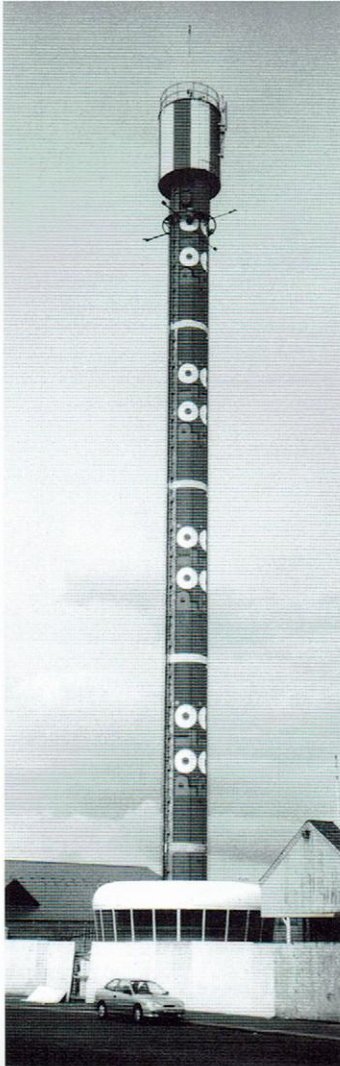
(OS Sheet 202, grid ref: SX 891 503). It looks quite sound but there is the usual notice warning people of an unidentified 'danger'. A ferryman said that 'people used to hold wild parties there'. As a matter of additional interest, at the head of the valley is a large white house where Colonel 'H' Jones of Falkland fame used to live.

The next photo is meant to be a wry glimpse of follies of the future. This **Polo tower** is derelict and virtually all that remains of 'Frontierland' at **Morecambe**, Lancashire. The observation car you can see at the base used to rise up the shaft whilst revolving. 'It was a strangely calm experience I recall from some years back, when I was obliged to amuse my children rather more than I am now'. Somewhere else in the area a rather grim Stalinist edifice with a tastefully corrugated outer skin and charmingly blocked entrance used to be an **observation tower** for **Heysham 2** nuclear power station. The general atmosphere is eerie and one expects Daleks to roll across the grass at any moment.

In the corner of a field, just north of the village of **Coniston** in Cumbria, is a curious stone building. Now known as the **Dog Kennel Folly**, James Garth Marshall built it in 1855 to house his pack of foxhounds. Marshall purchased the Monk Coniston estate early in 1835 as a country residence to which he could retreat from the family flax spinning business in Yorkshire. The notion of building the kennels with architectural embellishments would have seemed quite natural to Marshall - his father, John Marshall, had built his **Temple Mill** in **Leeds** in a flamboyant Egyptian style (see *FG&GB*, pp. 557-58).



KAREN LYNCH



RICK CO

The Marshalls sold Monk Coniston to Beatrix Potter in 1930 and it passed to the National Trust on her death. The Dog Kennel Folly had fallen into serious disrepair but in 2003 a funding partnership of local sources paid for restoration. The building now houses a National Trust display on the Marshall family and the Monk Coniston estate.

Meanwhile in Somerset, **Halswell House** has a new owner (Graham Bond) who is planning extensive restorations of the garden and follies. I've just had a week at **Robin Hood's Hut** there, a fantastic new folly experience thanks to the Landmark Trust. The following website is planned to provide updates <http://www.halswell.co.uk/> ... but there's been nothing so far.

LEFT: **POLO TOWER, MORECAMBE**  
BOTTOM LEFT:  
**DOG KENNEL FOLLY, CONISTON**

Q & A

It was a slip of paper with the following quote, and a question, that prompted me to consider a new, occasional section for the magazine: Questions and Answers. Clearly we will never know all the answers, but the challenge is always good for the soul. We start with a query regarding a letter from Horace Walpole to Richard Bentley, written in September 1753:

'...I stayed two days at George Selwyn's house called Matson, which lies on Robin Hood's Hill: it is lofty enough for an Alp [...] A little way from the town (Gloucester) are the ruins of Lantony Priory: there remains a pretty old gateway, which G. Selwyn has begged, to erect on the top of his mountain, and it will have a charming effect.'

This concluded with the question: 'I don't know whether this was ever done.' Well as I intimated in the last magazine, the Yale Edition of *Horace Walpole's Correspondence* holds many a key - the above letter appears in vol. 35, pp. 152 & 154, and the footnote states that Selwyn's scheme fell through. The gateway is still with the rest of the Priory ruins; a view of it appears in Fosbroke's *Original History of... Gloucester* (1819), top of plate facing p. 147.



relative of the Bavarian King Ludwig II who built Neuschwanstein – almost 30 years after the Pena Palace – so Pena might be seen as Neuschwanstein's forerunner.

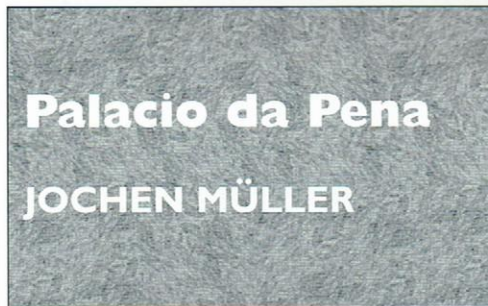
The architect of the Pena Palace was Wilhelm Baron von Eschwege. Having submitted four plans which were not accepted by Dom Fernando because they were considered to be 'too Anglo-Saxon', Wilhelm was sent to Southern Portugal, Southern Spain and Southern France and the whole of Italy (at Dom Fernando's cost!) to

study the art of building there; after his return he seems to have acquired the requisite skills, because his fifth proposal finally found the King's approval. Construction works began in 1841, alterations were constantly made until the King's death in 1885.

The World Exhibition in 1998 in Lisbon seems to have provided the impetus for the Palace to be completely re-painted. Photos from former days show it as a building in brown and grey; today its exteriors are painted in its original shining colours: red, representing earth, blue for transition, and yellow for the sky. Unfortunately, the humid climate, with sometimes strong, salty sea winds, get the better of the painted finish, and when we visited the area in 2003, the heavy traces of patina were again beginning to show.

Due to the climate, the palace was never used much by the royal family. Nevertheless, it has been cared for and today it looks as if the Royal Family had just left, even the cutlery is still in place on the tables. Bearing in mind that the last king was forced to leave the country in 1910, this is really remarkable. The palace has a total of 26 rooms; except for the ballroom, they are comparatively small for a palace, and have a homely atmosphere. For today's taste they might appear too crammed with furniture and other memorabilia, but this was typical in Victorian times. Even so, whilst walking through and reading the very comprehensive information sheets that adorn every room, one would really wish to be able to stay and live there for a day or two to just breathe the atmosphere of luxury, of old, forgotten times and enjoy the fantastic views over the countryside.

Whilst the castle was in the process of being built, Dom Fernando II began to improve the parkland around it. In the best sense of romanticism he tried to create a landscape garden by enhancing the natural surroundings. He imported exotic plants – these days the park contains more than 2000 different species that grow in abundance, as the climate is similar to the one for rainforests: humid with lots of rain and a very fertile soil. Engravings from the 19th century show that the area around the palace was nothing but naked rock, so



## Palacio da Pena

JOCHEN MÜLLER

The town of Sintra in Portugal lies northwest of Lisbon on the northern slopes of a little mountain, the Serra da Sintra, sometimes also referred to as Monte da Lua, Mountain of the Moon. Settlements can be traced back to the Stone-age, and more

recently parks and buildings have been added that give the whole area a very special atmosphere. Lord Byron is said to have been inspired by the scenery to write part of his 300-page poem *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*.

The oldest existing structure is the Moorish castle from the 8th century AD, a small version of the Great Wall of China with its defences running around the top of one of the peaks of the Serra. Furthermore, there is the town palace in the Renaissance style that formerly belonged to the Portuguese Kings. Four kilometres behind the town, in the westerly direction, lies the park of Monserrate, which was created by William Beckford in the 18th century; Sir Francis Cook added a small romantic palace in oriental style in the second half of the following century – British citizens were quite active here!

The Palacio da Pena stands on the top of one of the hills of the Sierra Sintra: it is a folly in itself, a huge building erected in no particular style but a mixture of various types, from Roman to Baroque with elements of all sorts of other styles mixed in: gothic, Manueline, oriental. The origins of the castle stem from 1511 when the site was chosen for a small Manueline abbey, the cloisters and chapel of which were later integrated in the present structure. After the dissolution of the monasteries in Portugal in 1836, the small convent and surrounding orchards were put up for public auction on 3 November 1838, and were purchased by Dom Fernando II (1816–85) of Sachsen-Coburg-Gotha (written 'Dom' but spoken 'Don'), who had married the Portuguese Queen Dona Maria II. He was also a

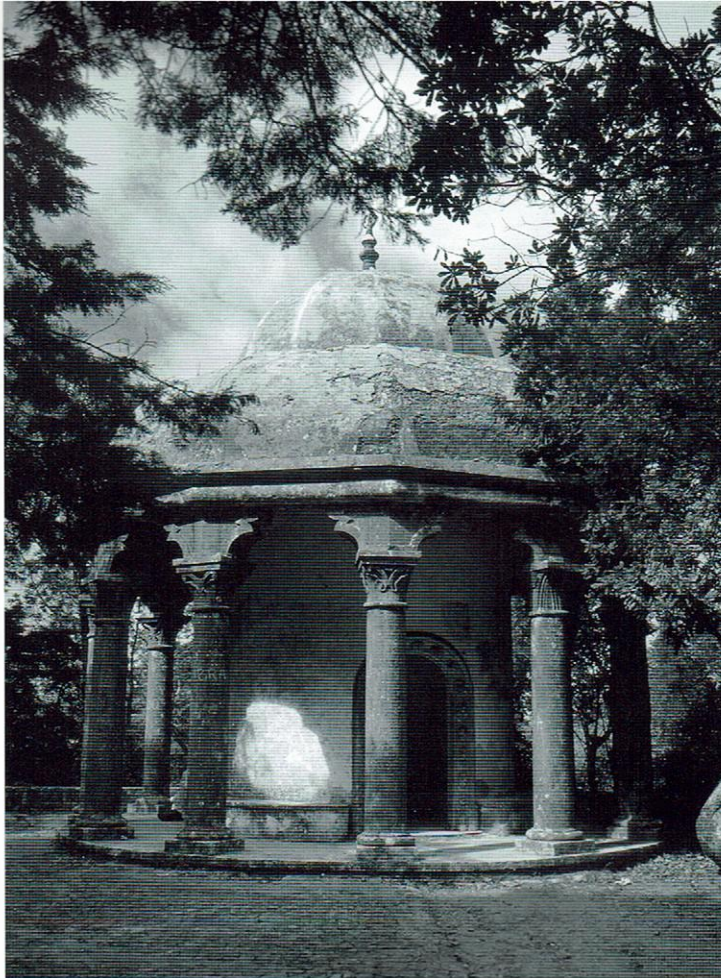
the creation of the park must have been quite a task. Now it seems that a very special microclimate exists, probably due to the park, in which very different kinds of plants can survive.

Our main point of interest is the follies in the park, and there is quite a cluster of them: walking down from the Palace through the forest, the first and probably most outstanding of them all, some 100m from the entrance to the palace, is a domed temple with columns around it and a small circular room in the centre; it was designed by Dom Fernando II's father and its name is 'Alto de Santo Antonio' after the former existence of a circular votive chapel on this spot.

Quite close by stands the 'Gigante' on the top of a boulder; it is a medieval warrior sculpted in stone. Originally, it was believed to depict the palace's architect, Baron von Eschwege, but recent research seems to point in the direction that it is really a statue of Dom Fernando II himself, looking at his castle. The position was carefully chosen as the statue looks 300m – as the crow flies – at the altar of the palace's church, crossing the symbol of a half moon with a peak (Pena in Portuguese) which crowns the Alto de San Antonio Folly. The Gigante used to stand in the courtyard of the palace; Dom Fernando II ordered it to be moved to its present position after his death.

Further downhill stands a building, much overgrown and looking somewhat forlorn. One end forms a hexagon with huge gothic arches in five of the six walls; the sixth forms the inner wall of a smaller rectangular attachment. All the walls are crowned by finials, and the whole construction is about four metres high. There is no reference to it in any of the guidebooks or leaflets, but the piping running from it together with some plumbing gives reason to believe that it was erected to house a water cistern. If that should really be the case, one might argue that this disqualifies it as a folly.

A little further downhill, a small bridge spans an almost non-existent valley, so this can be considered a true folly. It is closed to the public, probably unsafe to use and in need of repair. Near the bridge stands a small building which resembles a chapel: above the Romanesque entrance arch there is a cross made from tiles stuck to the wall. Furthermore, the gothic arched interior sports something resembling an altar, also adorned by some tiles. Currently, the structure is completely fenced-off, and the bushes around it have grown so high that it is hardly visible. Legend has it that some of the sandstones used for this building stem from leftovers of the Jeronimus-Abbey in Lisbon; our guide claimed that the latter was finished with Dom Fernando's financial support on the basis of mediaeval design drawings at about the same time when the park was created. The drawings for the abbey did not match reality, so too many stones had been ordered ... one is tempted to guess that this little chapel may have been erected as a representation of the Jeronimos-Abbey to remind the visitor of Dom Fernando's contributions.



**ALTO DE  
SANTO  
ANTONIO**

Next comes the Tanque dos Frades which used to be the water reservoir at the top end of one of the few more formal parts of the park, the garden of camellias. It stems from the times of the Jerome friars who used to live in the abbey. The uncovered tank forms a rectangular lake and has recently been renovated, unfortunately in modern style, so it looks somewhat out of place. The camellia garden below can hardly be recognised now as it is very much overgrown and in need of restoration.

The fern garden, Feteira da Rainha, is, in comparison, fairly easy to recognise. It looks as if it has recently been restored; the well-catered-for pathways lead through many ferns, many of considerable size. Some of them are trees and look like miniature palms. The collection was assembled by the wife of Dom Fernando's son. She is said to have been jealous that Dom Fernando's second wife, a famous opera singer – we will meet her again later, – had created a fernery further up in the park, so she wanted to have something similar. The area is quite charming and evokes a feeling of paradise, particularly in the evenings when the sun is shining through the fern leaves.

The Fonte dos Passarinhos, still further down the valley, is a tiled pavilion inspired by Arab architecture, with an octagonal base and a spherical cupola containing Arabic inscriptions. The guidebook claims these to be a reference to the grandeur of Dom Fernando's project. It is built over a small fountain, which, in combination with other streams, eventually forms the Vale dos Lagos, the valley of the lakes, a succession of five small ponds that were used to breed fish.



**GEESE SHELTER /  
DOVECOTE TOWER**

There are two further folly structures by the ponds: coming down from the Fonte dos Passarinhos, the first one is a very peculiar construction. Out of the centre of an octagonal base with eight small pens grows a small tower, also octagonal, probably two metres high. The base part looks as if it might have been designed to provide shelter for ducks that populate the lake, but what the tower in the middle may have been used for remains a mystery to me. A true folly, perhaps? Our guide informed us that the base was intended to house the geese – the park’s watchdogs – and the top of the tower was used as a dovecote. He also said that the little building was originally painted red, purple and yellow like Pena Palace, and was meant to be the palace’s representation in the park, similar to the aforementioned chapel-folly with Jeronimus – probably.

In the middle of the lowest and biggest lake, on an island, stands a round tower with four stabilising protrusions at the base, an estimated two metres in diameter and two storeys high. It is made of rough stone with a castellated top, so it looks like a small castle keep that has lost its castle (see cover picture). It was erected to provide shelter for the swans and ducks that populate the lake and is supposed to stand as a reminder of the Moorish castle, which was restored and saved by Dom Fernando.

In the parkland, further buildings can be found: west from the lakes and a little up the mountain, there is the Abegoaria, a stable block that was formerly used to house the ponies that pulled the carriages during the royal outings in the park. It is nothing spectacular and not in very good shape: the roof has collapsed and some of the supporting wooden beams are burnt. It seems that it had been rebuilt for a different use: inside we found extensive bath facilities which appeared more in keeping with having been installed there sometime in the 1960s. What we couldn’t find, though, is anything resembling the interior of a stable. Following the path one passes a small rotunda building. It has an estimated diameter of approx. five metres and a domed roof. It looks a little too modern to be really considered a folly, but there is no hint as to its use and it is

not even mentioned in the guidebook, so full scope here for fancies.

In 1869, long after the death of the Queen Dona Maria II in 1853, Dom Fernando married the already mentioned opera singer Elise F. Hensler, and she was the one who collected the plants for the park’s first fernery, which can be found around a pergola bridge close to her chalet of which more anon. In her fernery, which is considerably smaller than the one created later for her stepdaughter, there is a little building, unfortunately roofless, and once again without any description, so guesswork is needed.

It looks a little like a small chapel as it sports a gothic door and windows, both with bark frames, but it might also be some sort of hermitage.

Still further to the west stands a medium-sized two-storey chalet. It was built on the orders of Dom Fernando for his wife Elise F. Hensler according to her design, and, as on her wedding day she acquired the title of Countess of Edla, it was named Chalet da Condessa. She used it until her death in 1929, but since then it has not really been cared for. A picture of it taken sometime in the 1990s shows it still surprisingly intact with roof and closed window shutters. When we saw it in 2003, only the walls were still standing; it was surrounded by a huge fence and under scaffolding supporting a roof to protect it, at least from the rain. One can only hope that the money can be raised to restore it as it is certainly a part of the park’s history.

The highest peak of the mountain, at 529m above sea level, is a beautiful spot to see the surrounding countryside. It is called ‘Cruz Alta’ as in former days it used to be crowned by a cross of which the original, already a feature during the monks’ days in the 16th century, was destroyed by lightning. Dom Fernando ordered another cross to be erected there, but this has also disappeared. Furthermore little garden ornaments and furniture such as benches, tables, steps are strewn all over the park, so there is much to discover.

In former days the park could be visited for free. Nowadays the entrance fee is €3.0 per person, and the gates are closed at 8 pm. When we asked why the change, we received the explanation that previously they were facing a lot of cost due to vandalism, a problem that they claim to have solved this way. Unfortunately, it seems that this solution came too late for the Chalet da Condessa and the Abegoaria.

Pena Palace and Park are certainly worth a visit, together with the Moorish Castle, the Monserrate Park, Quinta da Regalaira and the city palace one can easily spend a whole week in the area, not forgetting Portugal’s Escorial, situated in Mafra 20 km north of Sintra (for which see *FOLLIES* #53, pp. 4-5 for my earlier article on La Quinta da Regalaira).

The likelihood is that all of the following have now been sold, but to keep you abreast of what's been on the market in the past six months or so...

As their third major redevelopment scheme, property developers Octagon are creating 124 new homes in the 55-acre park designed by Humphry Repton at **Wall Hall, Aldenham**, in Hertfordshire. The centrepiece of this conversion is the original, Grade II-listed, crenellated manor house, which is being transformed into a number of apartments. The setting amongst Repton's pleasure ground – disappearing commodities in their own right – and other period features (including a Gothic folly and Italian garden) is bound to attract buyers. The first batch of homes should be available early this year, through Octagon's north London office (020 8358 7900)

**Walton Castle** (*FOLLIES* #57, p. 8) was still for sale last July after over 6 months on the market – surely someone has got the odd £3 million to adopt this former folly? But for just £1 million more, **Berkeley Castle** in **Mayfair** became available at the same time. A recreation of a fifteenth-century hunting lodge of two storeys and four bedrooms, evidently all in the shadow of Claridges, it was the work of Frederick Etchells, a former member of the Bloomsbury Group. With a pedigree of occupants including Cher, Melanie Griffiths and Antonio Banderas, your name could join that list. FPD Savills should be able to let you know if it's still on the market (020 7730 0822). Same name, but different number (020 7824 9091) was selling, by auction, a Victorian brick **water tower** in Hertfordshire between **Enfield** and Hadley Wood. Oh yes, I should just mention that it currently has no floors, just stairs to the roof and water tank, but planning permission has been given to convert it into a four-bedroom house in half an acre of greenbelt land.

**Falconer's Lodge** is a delightful castellated brick and flint tower at **Hilborough**, Norfolk. Strutt & Parker were receiving offers for sale by informal tender, but the building, which has an adjoining extension, requires both renovation and modernisation. Of historical note, it is believed to have been occupied by the 'Desert Rats' during the Second World War for D-Day preparations.

The ad for a 'Spectacular Manor House' situated on the Oxfordshire / Northamptonshire border caught my eye because of a **brick & flint folly** (I couldn't afford the gym let alone the garage, the size of which would put most ballrooms to shame). Built in the form of a sham ruin, it actually forms a façade for the recreation barn/bowling alley (well doesn't every household have one?). The property is actually **Rowler Manor Estate** at **Croughton**, near Milton Keynes, and if any of it is still available, Bidwells would be interested in speaking to you.

Not sure if this might actually be seen as a liability but the picturesque gateway, also known as **Chequers Towers**, at **Shepton Montague**, Somerset, is part of the

of the package if you want to buy a 'fascinating residential and organic farming estate'. If you're suitably moo-ved by this, and like fresh veg, Strutt & Parker had this on their books (020 7629 7282).

£4 million would have made you a contender for **Buckland Park** in Oxfordshire, back on the market again – what's wrong with the place? After all it does have a memorial rotunda, a beautifully-façaded ice-house, and in the same style, an alcove seat and dry bridge. Then again at a mere £2.5 million, the Manor House, with some very nice gothic detail and an orangery, may have been more your taste. Alas, the closing date for tenders was 5 October last year.

Christie's sale of the Bella Kleinman collection of eighteenth-century English porcelain (6 December) included a previously unrecorded piece from the 'Frog' service. The view on the plate (Lot 274) is thought to be of Syon House before the renovations to the grounds by Lancelot Brown in 1761. The Estimate was £10,000–15,000, and the piece was finally sold for just over £20,000.

UNIDENTIFIED  
GATEWAY



#### Where on Earth – I?

This is as much a plea for help as I hope it is fun. Before the days of databases, when quill pens were still all the rage, not every photograph got logged properly. This is one of such miscreants that Elizabeth Waters has been trying to identify (amongst several others) and where you can prove your mettle by letting us know if you recognise this building. You'll find another one on page 20.

## Locking away Heritage Information?

SUSAN KELLERMAN

The National Monuments Record (NMR) has withdrawn its Listed Building Information Service, which provided details of the listed status of individual buildings. Due to financial cuts, the London NMR office based in Blandford Street closed early in 2004 and the London archive was moved to Swindon. Lack of resources means that the NMR is unable to continue to run this service, and it advises customers to contact the planning department of the relevant local authority for listing details.

The cessation of this service presents researchers and the wider public with a real problem. A large number of problems, in fact, particularly for those without access to the internet. The NMR had originally intended, it seems, to make listed building information available via its website, but was prevented from doing so for 'political reasons'. It is possible to access much listed building information via the NMR *Images of England* website ([www.imagesofengland.org.uk](http://www.imagesofengland.org.uk)), but this is not a wholly satisfactory or complete answer. If you are coming to this site for the first time, you might be tempted to assume that a 'quick search' is the best way to start, rather than the 'standard' or 'advanced' search that require registration. But in fact the 'quick' search is a crude tool that will only work for certain types of search and may not lead you to what you are looking for. You are required to select according to building type, and if you are interested in a folly, grotto, or garden building, you will find no such type is offered; and at this point, trying to decide whether a folly falls under 'commemorative', 'monument', 'domestic', 'gardens', etc., you will be led on a fine old dance up the garden path in pursuit of a lot of red herrings. Forget the 'quick' search and register for 'advanced' search; the latter is actually more straightforward, user friendly, and logical: you can search by building type (you decide the term, e.g. bath house), building name, etc. Not all entries are accompanied by an image (despite the name of the website) so if you want a description, remember to 'untick' the box that limits searches to only buildings accompanied by an image.

Providing a basic list of generic structures (i.e. those fitting a particular criterion or set of criteria) was a particularly valuable aspect of the NMR service: for example, the gazetteer of bath houses in the first issue of *The Follies Journal* was based to a considerable extent on a search of the listed building database using the key words 'bath house' – information of this kind is the

strength of a central, national resource. Similar lists supplied by the NMR of 'bee houses' and 'garden buildings constructed of metal' would now be impossible to obtain without recourse to the internet, but although this yields more detail, it is also more laborious.

The logistics of finding out about a listed building via a local authority are daunting. Assuming you know the name of a building, and its geographical location, how do you identify the appropriate local authority? Even if you are familiar with the area, this is not always obvious; and for buildings outside your own district, finding this information alone can be enormously time-consuming (and potentially expensive), whether using the internet or telephone, or making a written inquiry. Some local authorities include listed building information on their website, others do not. But even establishing whether such information is given can be frustrating, resulting in pages of irrelevant advice on what alterations may or may not be made to a 'listed building'; or it can lead nowhere if the search requires you to input information which you do not have (e.g. the parish, or the address) before any search can proceed.

The NMR, part of English Heritage (EH), is one of the largest publicly accessible archives in the UK and the largest dedicated to the historic environment. It is therefore an invaluable resource to anyone interested in researching or preserving follies, grottoes, and garden buildings, and consequently to *FOLLIES* magazine and *The Follies Journal*. In Autumn 2003, EH launched a review of the NMR, based on a major public consultation. The conclusions and recommendations of this review, *Unlocking Heritage Information*, have now been published (November 2004), and, not surprisingly, nowhere in this is there any indication that users of NMR services think that any should be reduced or withdrawn. Interestingly, the first of fourteen points in the results overview (Appendix A, p. 31) reads:

Many positive comments are made about the NMR and its role. *Of concern to some respondents however is that the survey itself may be a sign that the NMR's services may be under threat* [my italics].

How very prescient. The NMR has stated that it will be improving the *Images of England* website by March, and it still runs all of its other services, answering queries relating to archival holdings on archaeological sites, individual buildings, and aerial photographic coverage (although unless you are willing to pay a hefty charge for their priority service, you may have to wait several weeks for a reply). You can telephone NMR Enquiry and Research Services on 01793 414600 or e-mail them at: [nmrinfo@english-heritage.org.uk](mailto:nmrinfo@english-heritage.org.uk)

The Folly Fellowship would be happy to hear a response from the NMR (whose staff, it should be said, are indeed friendly and helpful) about this reduction in access to its archives, or, perhaps more to the point, an explanation from whoever is ultimately responsible for its funding.

## Robin Hood's Hut, Halswell, Somerset

ELIZABETH ANNE  
WATERS

It has been many years since I last saw Robin Hood's Hut, and then it looked forlorn and unloved. So it was with great excitement and anticipation I accepted the Landmark Trust's kind invitation to visit the newly rebuilt and restored building.

In the absence of any detailed directions for approaching the hut, I arrived via the main drive to the house. (The Goathurst Estate, for those of you who do not know, is divided up with various concerns holding interest in the house and outlying buildings, and now, as on my first visit, the residents value their privacy and so do not look kindly on the casual folly enthusiast). However, having been specifically invited on this beautiful June Summer's day, I drove past the house, down a field, and having spotted the Hut in the far distance by then, parked my car on the edge of a golden yellow field of rapeseed. Striding out across this in the glorious sunshine and up the hill I approached by what was the original route from the house (as I have since found out, in exactly the opposite direction to that now requested by the Landmark Trust). As I came closer I really could not believe the transformation from a collapsing ruin back to its former glory.

'The Somerset Building Preservation Trust' took on the building in 1997, and supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund and English Heritage, carried out the extensive restoration work required before approaching the Landmark Trust in order to provide the building with a secure future. Too often we despair at the loss of buildings no longer loved, or even for those loved but with little chance of finance for important restoration work, particularly in the manner in which we would dearly love to see these buildings again. Here we have a splendid example of just what can be achieved. Those of you lucky enough to have actually stayed in a Landmark Trust building

will know the very high standards they attain for their rental properties.

I really would not have thought it possible to see this building, originally built c.1767, looking as it probably did back then; well, not exactly the same since the Landmark Trust obviously have to make their buildings suitable for accommodating their guests. Here they have done an excellent job and so if you recall the building's sad former state, and if you like to stay in Landmark Trust properties (and only need one double bed), go and enjoy this very special building. With its 'breathtaking panorama which still today gives uninterrupted views across the Somerset Levels towards the Mendip Hills and Bristol Channel', you will not be disappointed.

For further details contact 01628 825925 or visit [www.landmarktrust.co.uk](http://www.landmarktrust.co.uk)

FRONT AND BACK OF  
ROBIN HOOD'S HUT,  
HALSWELL





**UNIDENTIFIED  
TOWER**

**Where on Earth-II ?**

If you didn't know the unidentified gateway on page 17, how about this equally mysterious tower? For the record, it's not Pitt House Tower in Devon, so where is it? If you know either of these follies, please write and tell us.



**Ingress Abbey,  
Greenhithe**

**PHILIP JONES**

Planning to fit this into a trip to Gravesend, I was unable to find any reference in *FOLLIES* later than 1998, when there was a mention of a possible redevelopment by Crest Homes. So I didn't know what to expect. Someone may be saving it up for

a feature article but for the present, I thought I'd report on the amazing transformation from the scene described on page 296 of the *FG&GB* by Gwyn Headley and Wim Meulenkamp (H&M).

The Crest estate is largely but not wholly complete, in a distinctive high-density urban (front doors directly on footways) vaguely vernacular style, which would win Prince Charles's approval. The former entrance drive is not part of the road layout, or not yet, being used for construction traffic: the 'ruined lodge' mentioned in *FG&GB* has vanished, the 'tripartite grotto' (if I identified it correctly) is kept up by metal props, and the 'Cave of the Seven Heads' couldn't be found (its site possibly marked by hillside reinforcement works).

But further on the Abbey itself, 'horribly ruined but not beyond salvation', has achieved not so much salvation as beatification, its Gothick features fully-restored in pure whiteness, and apparently in use as offices. In front is a large sloping semi-circle of grass, fringed by a crescent of new housing, which itself is bisected by a tree-lined pedestrian avenue giving a vista of the Thames

from the front of the house. This combination of Gothick and classical is a bit incongruous; but the area between the house and the cliff behind is no longer a 'jungle' but an appropriately picturesque dell. The Grange has lost the ivy mantle illustrated in *FG&GB* and appears in pristine condition (for a deliberate ruin!); the tunnels on either side (of the Grange, not the Lover's Arch as stated by H&M) are protected by barred gates that allow good visibility. The third tunnel, in the rear cliff face, is likewise protected, but has little depth. Exploring the dell beyond The Grange I found first a circular flint-lined cave accessed by a short tunnel, with an aperture in the floor: presumably the Monk's Well. Above and to the right was a shallow flint alcove crowned by a perpendicular arch: more a Lover's Arch than a Flint Cave.

So H&M's conclusion 'it could yet be saved' has been justified. I don't know if the credit should go to enlightened developers or a tough planning authority, or a partnership between them, but praise is certainly due.

Dear Editor,

**LETTER**

I am part of the Great Ayton Community Archaeology Project, a group of about twenty volunteers researching and recording landscape features in the parish of Great Ayton in North Yorkshire. One of our many areas of research is the building known as the summer house, or shooting box, on the south west side of Roseberry Topping. This was featured in an article by Karen Lynch in the Spring 2004 issue of *FOLLIES* magazine. Very little is known about this delightful building, apart from the brief description on the plaque put up by the National Park. Even they do not know the source of the information on the plaque!

Please can any of your members help us? Whilst it is most unlikely that they would have any information on the history of this particular building, they may be able to comment on the unusual design of the roof. This has a distinctive eastern flavour to it and, since it is quite a complicated construction, must have been a deliberate original design feature. We know that Commodore Wilson, who is generally credited with erecting the summerhouse sometime in late eighteenth century, had retired from a very successful career in the East India Company. I wonder if anybody has seen a similar roof elsewhere or can comment on its design? Incidentally we have looked through the standard folly design books. We would be grateful for any suggestions or opinions.

Finally may I say that we were greatly heartened to learn that there is a group of people caring for this particular part of our heritage, and that we were really impressed with the high quality of your magazine.

Ian Pearce

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