

# FOLLIES

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The International Magazine for Follies, Grottoes and Garden Buildings

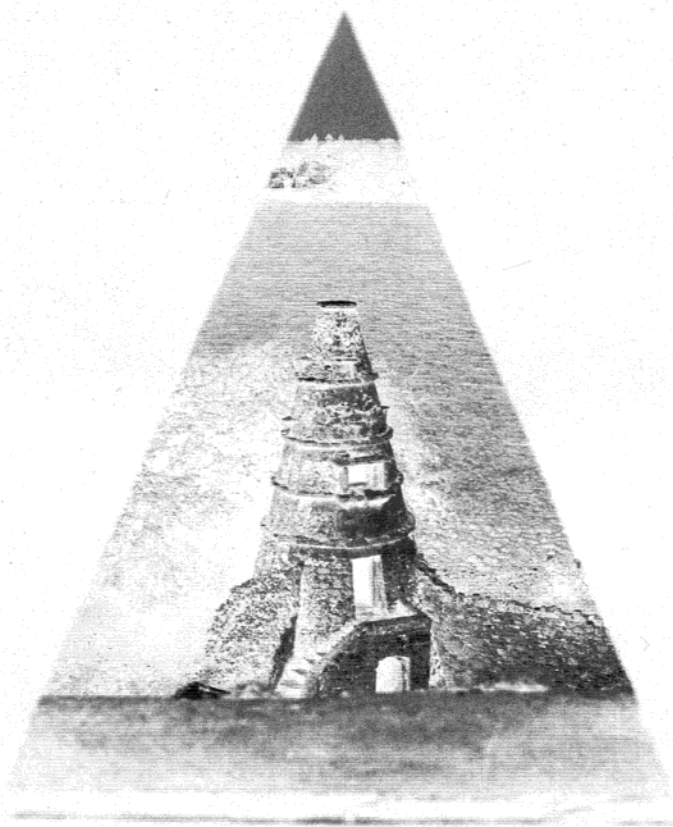
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Autumn 1993



A PIGEON HOUSE VIEWED FROM ONE OF THE UPPER FLOORS OF THE WONDERFUL BARN. PHOTOGRAPH BY ROBERTO DUSSEY

*In this issue:*  
**THE FOLLIES AND GARDEN  
BUILDINGS OF IRELAND**



# FOLLIES

The International Magazine for Follies,  
Grottoes and Garden Buildings  
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## On The Writing of *The Follies and Garden Buildings of Ireland*

JAMES HOWLEY

UNLIKE GWYN HEADLEY, I am unable to claim that I have been interested in follies from my earliest years. I had to wait until my early twenties when I was fortunate to spend two years working in Paris on the Musée D'Orsay project. During this time I developed a fondness for the beautiful structures in the Parc Monceau and the triumphal arches, columns and obelisks of the Parisian squares. I was particularly fond of the twin columns and pavilions by Ledoux at Nation, and of course that greatest of all follies the Eiffel Tower, which I could gaze at from my office window. The remarkable cemetery of Père Lachaise dominated the view from my 6th floor garret, and in the course of many visits there, I grew to love the dignified splendour of mausoleums and funerary monuments. It is perhaps as a result of these early Parisian interests that I have always embraced the notion of the 'urban folly'.

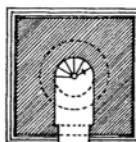
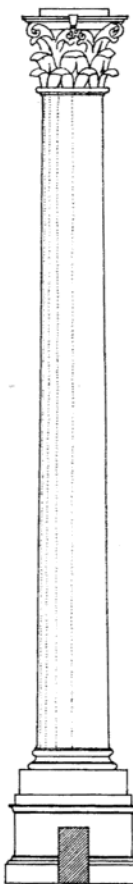
My real interest however was to start shortly after I had left Paris and returned to England to complete the final years of my architectural studies. This period also coincided with a reawakening of my interest in Ireland where I grew up, and the Irish countryside in which I spent many holidays throughout my childhood and youth. The major stimulus for my renewed contact with Ireland was a new friendship which started in Paris with the Irish painter, historian and conservationist Peter Pearson, who first introduced me to the romantic beauties of ruined Irish country mansions. During the first two years after my return to England and the student life, my friend was installed as a part-time caretaker in a cluttered basement flat in Castletown, the grandest Palladian house in Ireland, then owned by the Irish Georgian Society. The Castletown demesne contains not only one of the most impressive mansions in the country, but also some of the most impressive follies. Conolly's Folly, (plate 2) the Wonderful Barn, (page 4) Mrs Siddon's Temple and the Batty Langley Lodge (plate 6) are all to be found there.

Long slow summer walks across waist deep meadows to climb Conolly's Folly, and numerous summer and winter 'trips' always with picnics and tea brewed on an open fire, are

the most abiding memories. Camps, over night or merely for meal stops, were generally in the shelter of some great eighteenth-century ruin. Fortunately my friend numbers among his talents the ability to make blazing fires from sodden fuel, and as he seems to know almost everyone in Ireland, hospitality and the offer of beds were never wanting, quite regardless of the size of our party. It was during these trips, when my friend was concentrating his attentions on the ruined fragments of the neglected houses and turning his own home into a modest version of the Soane Museum, that I fell under the enchanting spell of those lone, and often modestly scaled garden ornaments, generally known as *follies*. This resulted in a final year college dissertation of some 20,000 words which almost wrote itself, such was the degree of my initial infatuation.

At that time 1983, Barbara Jones's *Follies and Grottoes* was the only serious work on the subject, with Headley and Meulenkaamp's *Follies* following some three years later. Barbara Jones had included some Irish examples in the second edition of her book, although she had not managed to visit many of those listed in her gazetteer. The other major source of written material at that time was *Lost Demesnes* by Edward Malins and *The Knight of Glin*, which described the great eighteenth-century demesnes which grew up in Ireland following the Williamite wars around 1690. A number of other useful guide books such as the *AA Guide to Ireland* and *Ireland Observed* also described many examples, but the real research lay in the field, and the unique pleasure of the beauties of the Irish countryside.

The format I chose for my own study loosely follows that of Barbara Jones wherein the buildings are described categorically and not by geographical location. This was largely because I was interested in the buildings as types and wanted to explore the symbolism and psychology behind them, together with some of the reasons for their construction. Unlike Barbara Jones, I spread the net widely and along with the follies and grottoes, I have included the more ornamental garden buildings such as obelisks and columns, temples, gazebos, even some of the more outlandish mausoleums and bridges. As a result the title had to be extended to include reference to *Garden Buildings*, even though every category includes at least some examples which are undoubtedly follies. Conolly's Folly, the Dromana gateway, (plate 7) Ballysaggartmore bridge, the Foxes Earth and the Mussenden Temple, (plate 5) are in turn—an obelisk, a gate lodge, a bridge, a mausoleum and a temple, all of which qualify as follies even under the very strictest and



limited of definitions.

The question of definition is an interesting one, and I did attempt it; but like most of the other writers on the subject, that I have come across, I found it frustratingly difficult to arrive at a brief, neat description. There is of course not enough space to go into it here, but I am convinced that very few of these structures were built without some function or other. This is most evident in the final category discussed, which for want of a better word is entitled *The Eccentrics*. These are the buildings which defy neat correlation, and include many in the manner of the archetypal folly, which in the simplest terms resembles a witch's hat made of stone (plate 3). But even here we find numerous examples of wildly eccentric buildings performing prosaic everyday functions which would have been of the greatest importance to an eighteenth century land based economy (right and front cover).

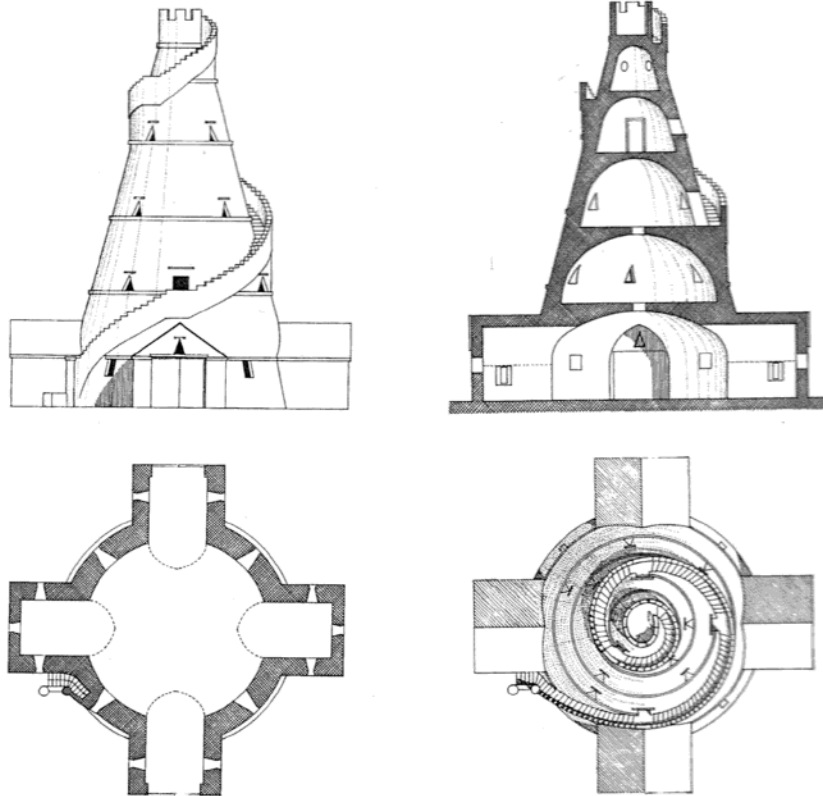
During the years following college, my interest grew to the point that every trip to visit family in Ireland included numerous detours to look at follies. At the same time the scope of my background reading and research widened, and the idea for a book soon developed. As my wife, who is also Irish and also an architect, did not wish to spend every holiday in Ireland, another area of research opened, largely concentrated in the Western Mediterranean. This led to a series of holiday quests to Rome and Athens, Campania, Sicily, the Peloponnese and Western Turkey in search of those landscapes and buildings which so inspired the 'grand tourist' of the eighteenth century and fuelled the obsession to create similar Arcadias back in Britain and Ireland. It was a particular pleasure during one of these trips to read Hardy's *Life of Charlemont* and learn about the young Earl's grand tour, while sitting in the shade of those very buildings he had visited, or to stay in one of the many "Bristol" Hotels named after the eccentric Earl Bishop of Derry, creator of the Mussenden Temple on his wonderful cliff-top demesne at Downhill, Co. Derry. Our one regret was in missing out on Egypt and especially Alexandria with Diocletian's monumental column, which I

understand bears an uncanny resemblance to the one at Carrickbyrne, Co. Wexford! (page 3).

During the Irish trips, one of the main problems I encountered was that so many of the buildings I came across were in a very sad state of repair and often eroding at a quite worrying rate. For this reason I decided to carry out measured surveys to record threatened buildings for posterity and in the process began drawing other buildings not under threat for the purposes of comparison. Shortly after commencing these surveys I obtained a copy of Thomas Wright's *Louthiana* of 1758 which includes his beautiful measured drawings of castles, round towers, burial mounds, dolmen and passage graves. As Wright was

mostly depicting the building's context or detail (plate 1).

All four provinces in Ireland are covered and the fieldwork brought me to all of the island's 36 counties, although some are understandably covered in much greater detail due to the greater numbers found there. The majority are found in the provinces of Leinster and Ulster, with counties such as Dublin, Down, Kildare, Cork and Meath being the most richly endowed. It would, however, be a shame to put too strong an emphasis on these more fertile southern and eastern regions, which contained the richest and most verdant demesnes. The rugged northern and western areas may have fewer buildings, but where they do occur they are often quite spectacular, in their extreme contrast between wild nature and man's art. During my researches I visited all but a half dozen of the buildings described or illustrated in the text, but as I had read of, or been told about many more, I decided to include a gazetteer. This is not however a detailed affair, more a check list of over 600 buildings and a starting point for new adventures; and I shall look forward to readers advising me of my omissions. As the book is not intended to be a guide book, there are no concise directions, which should not prove too great a deterrent for those wishing to visit the buildings, as much of the fun is to be

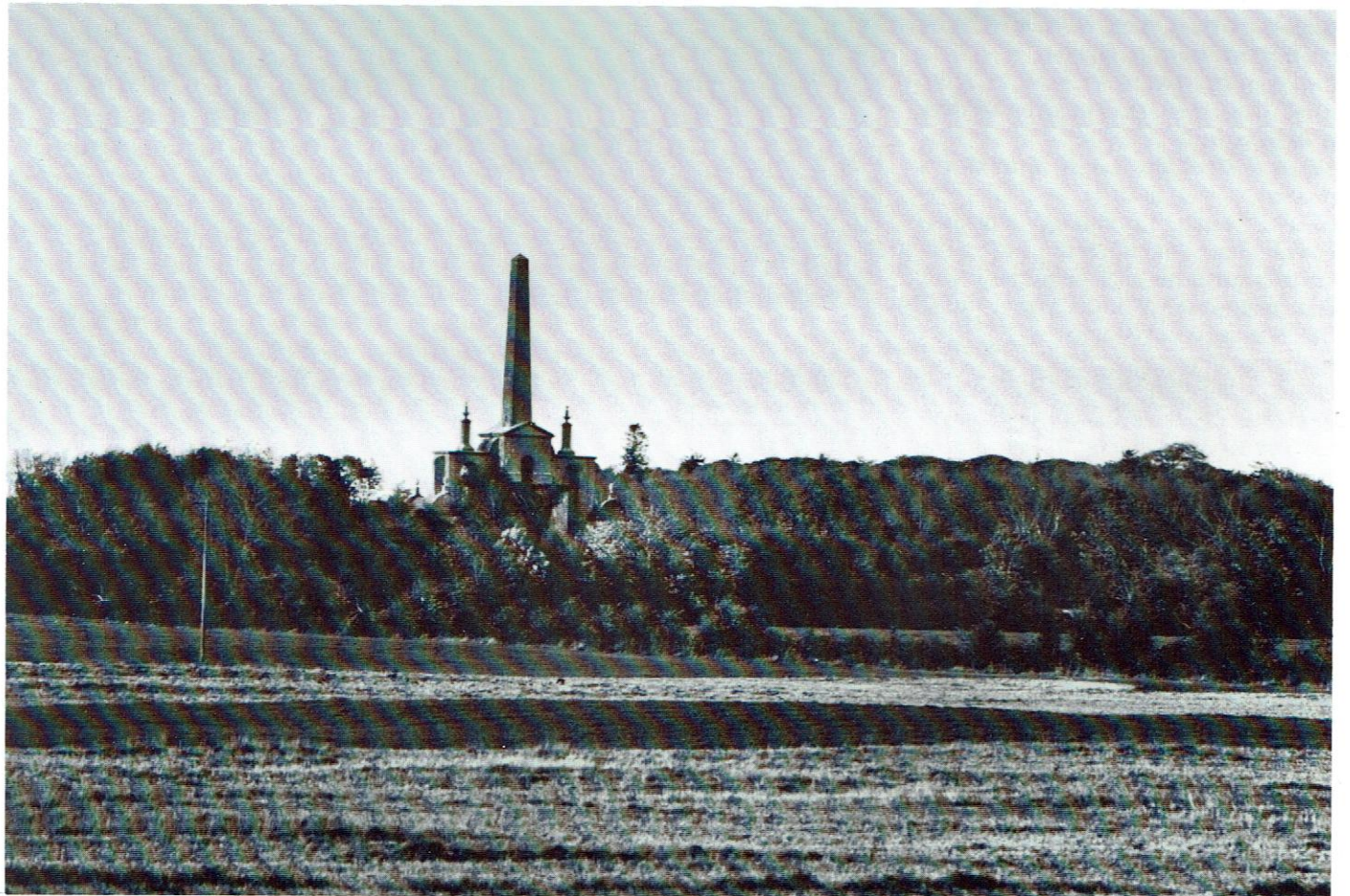


PLAN, ELEVATION, SECTION AND ROOF PLAN OF THE WONDERFUL BARN. BUILT AROUND 1740 AS AN EYE-CATCHER AT CASTLETOWN.

to play such an influential part in the history of Irish garden architecture, despite the shortness of his stay there, the decision to make similar, if less beautiful drawings seemed doubly justified. The result is a collection of plans, elevations and sections, of 170 different buildings, all produced at the same scale and often appearing in groups, in 117 of the book's 355 plates. These are contrasted with 60 archive plates of old engravings and original drawings, and complemented by approximately 180 contemporary photographs

found in the searching. The 1/2" ordnance survey maps (1" are also available for the North) provide the greatest assistance and the older the edition the better. The 6" maps of the 1830s are the best of all, but these are generally only found in large libraries or museums.

The story of Irish Follies and Garden Buildings is really a story of the Irish countryside, North and South. It is a countryside of great variety and splendour, with contrasting landscapes of wood-fringed loughs, sweeping mountain-backed bays and dramatic sea cliffs. As the principal purpose of erecting follies and garden buildings was either to adorn or else view beautiful landscapes,



it follows that these buildings are the very 'signposts' to the most beautiful parts of the country. Unfortunately in Ireland, they are seldom perceived as such, and even within the relatively short period of my research I have seen buildings disappear. In many ways the present, semi-ruined, ivy clad air of abandon could be seen as their apotheosis. Sadly, this ideal state will most likely survive only for a fleeting moment.

*James Howley was born in Belfast in 1956. He took a degree in architecture at Manchester Polytechnic, and completed the second stage of his architectural studies at Cambridge University. Since 1987 he has combined part-time teaching at a number of schools of architecture with running a small private practice in London. Recent work has involved the repair and restoration of several eighteenth century houses, garden and garden buildings, most notably Scott's Grotto and Gazebo at Ware in Hertfordshire. The Follies and Garden Buildings of Ireland is published by Yale University Press at £35.00.*

**Front Cover** FUNCTION AND FANTASY COMBINED, ONE OF THE PIGEON HOUSES VIEWED FROM ONE OF THE UPPER FLOORS OF THE WONDERFUL BARN. SPILT GRAIN BEING RECOVERED VIA THE PIGEONS.

**Page 3** THE BROWN-CLAYTON MONUMENT AT CARRICKBYRN, CO. WEXFORD, INSPIRED BY THE COLUMN OF DIOCLETIAN AT ALEXANDRIA. THE IRISH VERSION INCLUDES A SLIGHT BY CONTAINING A SPIRAL STAIRCASE.

**Plate 1** SMALL CONE AND STEP-PYRAMID AT KILLINEY HEAD, CO. DUBLIN, ONE OF THE GREAT SCENIC VIEWS OF IRELAND.

**Plate 2** THE 140' HIGH CONOLLY'S FOLLY RISING ABOVE THE FLAT PLAINS OF KILDARE AT CASTLETOWN.

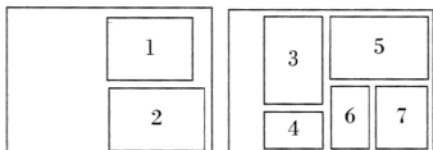
**Plate 3** ONE OF LORD LIMERICK'S FOLLIES

**Plate 4** LORD LIMERICK'S FOLLIES, MODEST BUT DELIGHTFUL BOUNDARY MARKERS ALONG THE EDGE OF THE BEAUTIFUL TOLLYMORE DEMESNE IN CO. DOWN, WHERE 'THE MOUNTAINS OF MOURNE SWEEP DOWN TO THE SEA.'

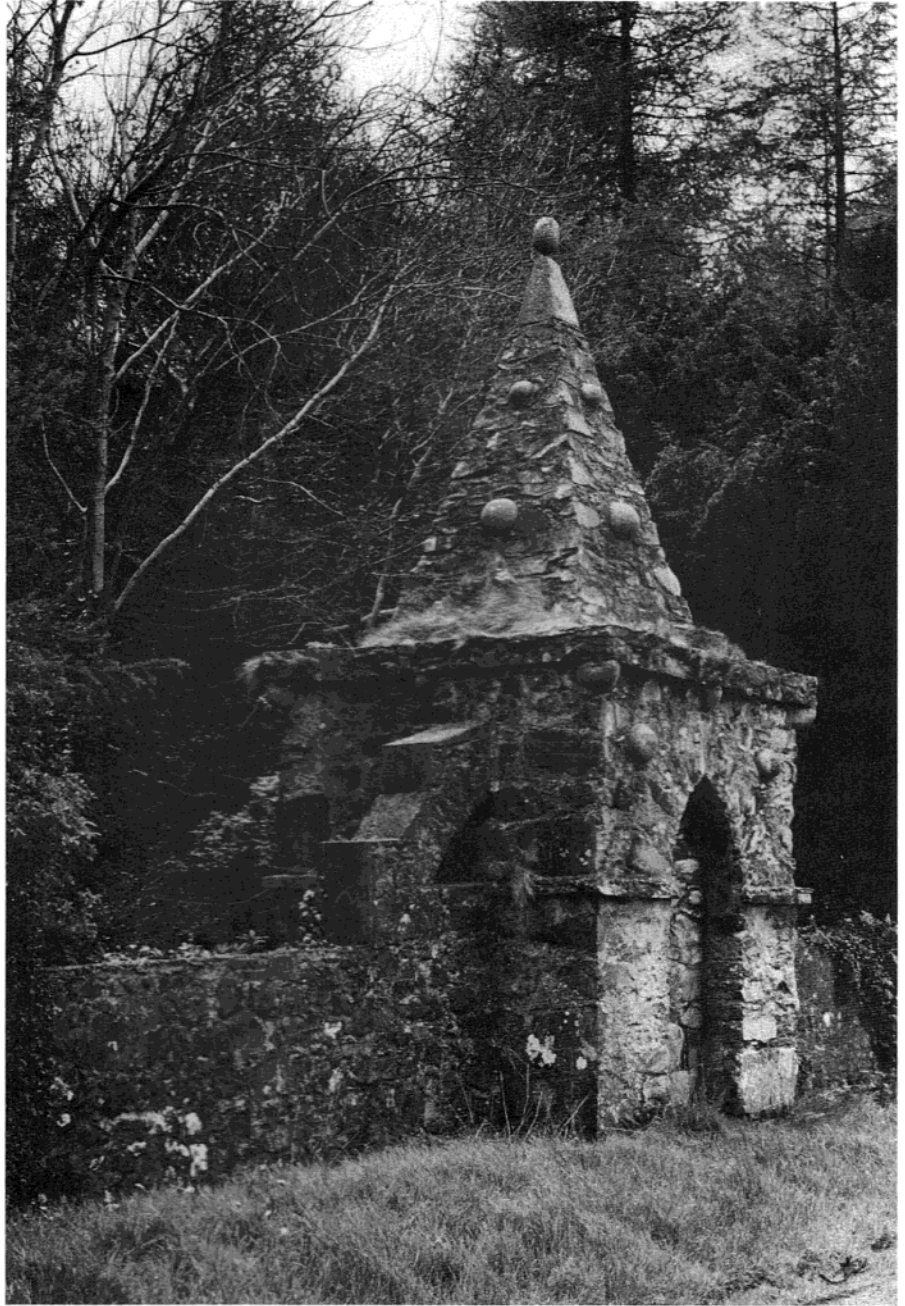
**Plate 5** THE MUSSENDEN TEMPLE AT DOWNHILL, CO. DERRY. BUILT AS A LIBRARY FOR THE EARL BISHOP OF DERRY, ONE OF THE MOST SUBLIME SITINGS OF A GARDEN BUILDING IN IRELAND.

**Plate 6** THE GOTHICK LODGE AT CASTLETOWN, CO. KILDARE, (AFTER BATTY LANGLEY).

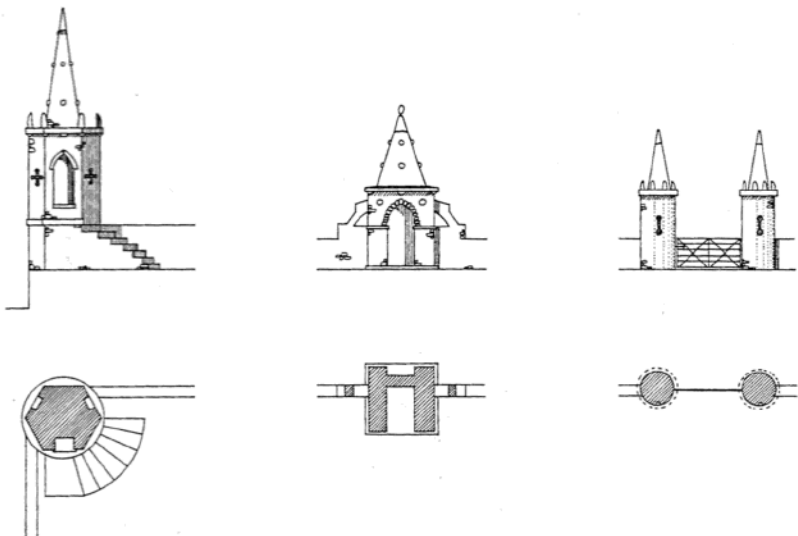
**Plate 7** THE "HINDU-GOTHICK" GATELODE AT DROMANA, CO. WATERFORD BUILT TO CELEBRATE THE RETURN OF A YOUNG COUPLE FROM THEIR HONEYMOON IN BRIGHTON.

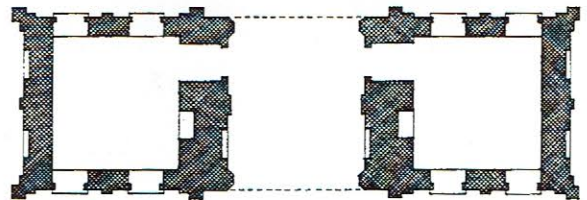
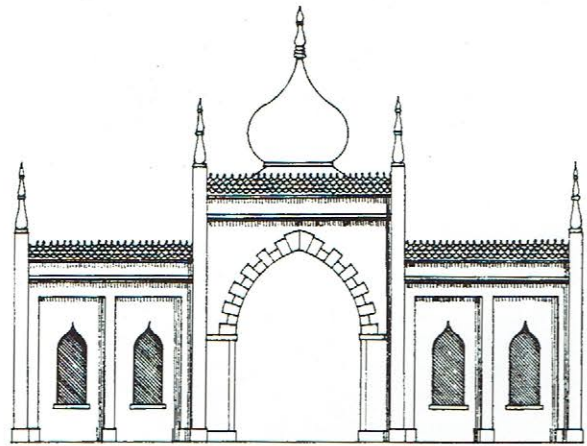


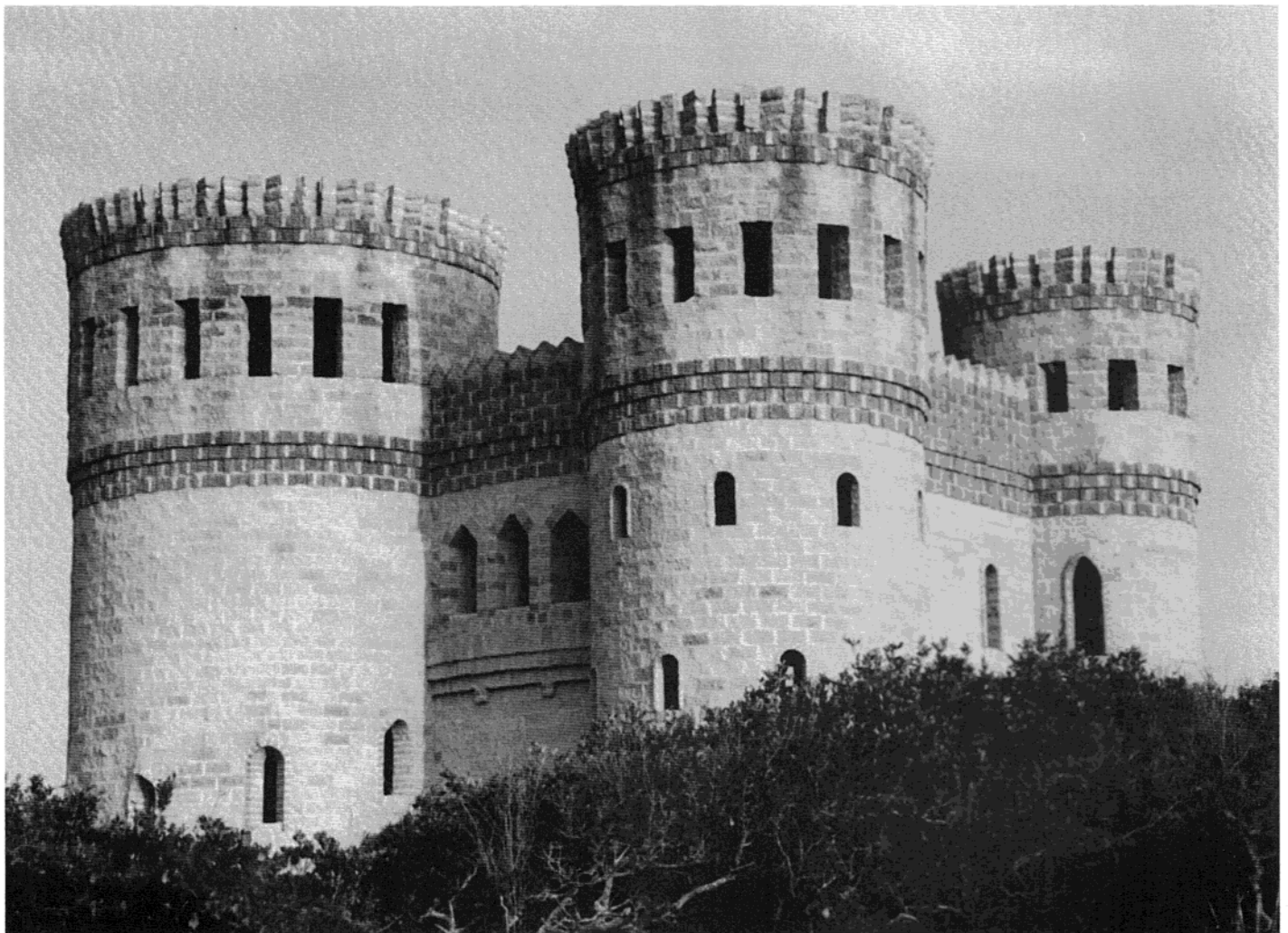
ROBERTO DUSSY



ROBERTO DUSSY







## Three 'T's In Florida

Rev<sup>d</sup>. Dr.  
PETER GALLOWAY

ON THE NORTH-EAST coast of Florida, the "Sunshine State" of the United States of America, there lies the town of St. Augustine (pronounced "Augusteen"), the oldest city in the United States. It was founded by the Spanish in 1565, and when Florida was ceded to the United States by Spain in 1821, it became the nation's oldest city. The town is proud of its historic status and has strict controls on planning and development. Parts of the town look much as they did in Spanish colonial days. However, this has not prevented the construction of a wonderful folly in the Vilano Beach area of the town, north on the A1A.

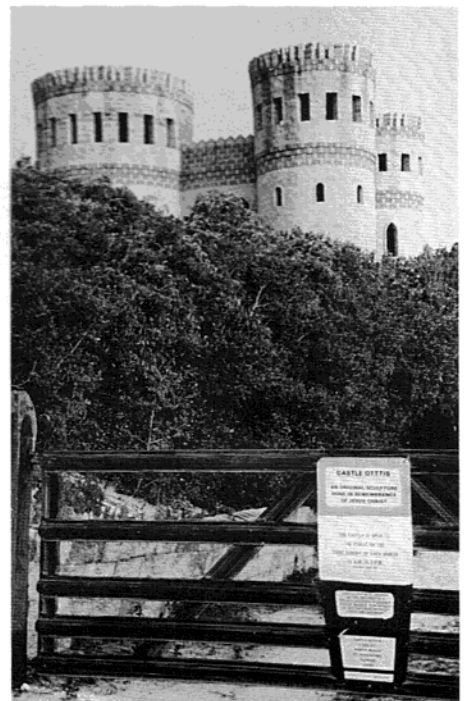
The A1A, lined with beach houses and condominium developments, is an unremarkable Floridian coast road. But suddenly, as the traveller drives towards the Vilano Bridge to cross into the centre of St. Augustine, there appears a vision from the Middle Ages, a strikingly handsome, well-proportioned

and seemingly solidly-constructed castle. Here, at No. 3, 3rd Street, North Beach, St. Augustine, Florida 32895, is Castle Ottis, a folly that might have sprung from the pages of Ivanhoe.

Castle Ottis (yes, it is spelt with three 'T's) is a square, four-towered castle completed in 1988, and easily the most unusual and eye-catching edifice in the area. The story of the building of the castle is fascinating. The owner, Mr Rusty Ickes, who is reputed to be something of a mystic, conceived and designed the castle "in the remembrance of Jesus Christ" as the result of a dream. It was built block by block and beam by beam by Mr Ickes and two of his friends, one a mason and the other a carpenter—all 7,000,000 lbs of material. He designed it as he thought a castle in Ireland built between 500 and 1000AD might have looked. In the best tradition of the folly it bears no relation to any Irish castle of the period, and it was built without planning permission.

The interior is fashioned as he visualised a mediæval church of that period to be. He used no blueprints, photographs, elevation plans or models in the construction of the building or its interior. In keeping with the imagined age of the building, there is no electricity, plumbing or other modern conveniences. I was unable to see the interior because

it is only open on the third Sunday of each month from 11am to 5pm, and my stay in St. Augustine did not include that Sunday. But I am told that the Castle is equipped with altars, and is available for hire for appropriate functions, including weddings.



# The Battle of the Barn

PIETER BOOGAART

LES OAKES'S HALES VIEW FARM in Staffordshire is one of those places that are changed as soon as your back is turned. You need to go back regularly in order to keep up with developments.

To refresh people's memories: Les Oakes builds barns to house his collections of all sorts of things, especially carts. Our first report was published in Follies #2. Later, in 1989, another big barn was built, next to the existing conglomerate. Unfortunately its side is partly finished with plates of corrugated iron, not nearly as nice of course as the regular irregular jumble of bricks and second-hand building elements which normally constitutes his style. But the subsequent building, closer to the road again, is well up to the old standard. There is a decorative horse and cart again and a dedication to Staffordshire, plus the usual countless windows, reliefs, ornaments, circles, arches and cartouches. This is the barn that caused a lot of commotion a few months ago.

To Les Oakes it is of minor importance whether a 4,000 sq. ft. barn is used for sheep or to house a museum for vintage farm machinery. His main pleasure is in building it, and he does so in his own special way. And that of course is not always according to the rules and regulations of the local authorities. They don't appreciate idiosyncrasy. They don't recognise a unique contribution to architectural folly. They just don't want to allow precedents. They feel their position threatened. They are afraid and they have some power. So they don't want this building. And they wanted to have it taken down before it was completely up. Trouble was brewing, and Les added a dedication to the Queen to the facade. If they were going to take the barn down, they would have to take down that as well, and he could write and complain to the Queen about it.

The problem alerted the local people. Les himself tried to keep a low profile, since he didn't want to make things more difficult for

the council members, but feelings ran high in the village. There was a petition and Letters to the Editor in the local papers were full of "Leave Les Alone" pleas and remarks like "why not listen to the views of the people?" The council remained divided. A sad and sorry peak was reached on August 13th 1992, when newspaper headlines reported "...a furious row...", "Tempers Flare" and "Meeting Ends in Chaos".

After that things calmed down a bit, relatively speaking, but they remained troublesome and it wasn't until June 21st 1993 that the papers declared the battle over and reported: "Les wins fight over 'museum' wrangle". Les himself was quoted as saying: "This is the end of a nightmare for me."

Naturally, the outcome of this Battle of the Barn consists of a compromise. There will be a high loft inside the barn, to be turned into a lecture room or conference room. So now the building, which was still in scaffolding in August 1993, can be finished.

There has been a lot of aggravation and bad feeling, and in the end nobody has really gained anything. You could even say that something was lost, although strictly speaking the case had little to do with it. At Congleton there was a big double arch and it was going to be destroyed. Les wanted to step in and save it by rebuilding it at the end of his yard. But his fight with the authorities made it so difficult for him that he couldn't get it organised. The arch is now lost and Les is very sorry. And so is the Folly Fellowship, I suppose.

Even now Les Oakes still gets very angry when he thinks about it all. "Thorrolly disgusted" he is, and he feels that the local officials have given him nothing but "trouble, trouble, trouble". And it's true. Why can't they leave him alone? Hales View Farm is unique. Nobody stands to gain anything by this sort of interference. When will officialdom learn its lesson?

Nevertheless, the fight has been fought, the trouble is over. It was good to see Les and Mavis Oakes again. Their coffee tastes just as good as it ever did. And we will be back again some day. Who knows what their place will look like in a few years' time?

## LOST & FOUND

### AVON

**Hartree Court** is another of those private gardens which opens in aid of the National Gardens Scheme. It is only in recent years that an underground passage has been rediscovered. It was probably created as part of a pleasure ground in the 18th century at the same time that the house was built. The architect Charles Harcourt Masters made a plan for the layout of the grounds c.1802 (now in private hands) but little else is known. The secret tunnel had been deliberately blocked up long ago by a previous owner as it fell into disrepair and became dangerous. Its restoration was completed in 1991—a bulldozer was used to clear the entrance, then all the rubbish totally blocking the tunnel had to be brought out in wheelbarrows. The original arched stonework lining, each stone supporting another, was intact in one stretch of the passage; the second was skilfully reconstructed. The tunnel passes a stone chair known as the Hermit's Seat into daylight again in a ferny grotto, and on through a further passage with a spectacular waterfall to view at the end. The small rotunda is a modern reproduction—Mr. and Mrs. Hill's (the owners) ruby wedding anniversary present to each other. Just for good measure there is the obligatory ice-house hidden away in the wood, although this was bricked up in the Second World War for use as an air raid shelter.

### BERKSHIRE

At Hall Place Berkshire College of Agriculture in Burchett's Green stands a ten-sided **beehouse**, prettily painted pink and built c.1870.

### CORNWALL

In the spring of 1991, the gardens of Heligan at **Pentewan** lay under a blanket of bramble, ivy laurel and fallen timber. In the following year a restoration team opened the gardens to the public to allow them to share in the excitement of their discovery. In the northern gardens are two and a half miles of footpaths, an Elizabethan mount, rockeries, summer houses, a crystal grotto, an Italian garden, a fine set of bee-boles, a wishing well and a superb collection of walled gardens which are being restored under the supervision of Peter Thoday. For further details phone 0726 844157/843566.

### HEREFORDSHIRE

After a visit to The Arches at **Shobdon** a temple-like structure was spotted in a small coppice in the middle of a hay/cornfield to the south of the drive, about 250 yards directly east of the church. Enquiries at the offices of the poultry processors, currently occupying the former stables at Shobdon Court, were





LEFT: THE TEMPLE AT SHOBDON.  
RIGHT: SCOLPAIG TOWER

fruitless, eliciting the response 'You mean the bandstand!' It is now in fairly poor condition but was obviously once a fine structure, probably visible from the house which, according to Pevsner, stood close to the church.

#### WESTERN ISLES

**Scolpaig Tower** near Grimish Point, North Uist, is a two-storey stone tower situated on a small island in Loch Scolpaig. On a clear day, or so it is claimed, the islands of Haskeir and St. Kilda can be seen. Nothing seems to be known about it or what purpose it could have served, it is simply marked on the map as 'Twr' (OS 18, grid ref. 730750)

*Thanks to Tony Burrows, Peter & Gill Dane, Maurice Gould and Brian Page.*

## IN THE NEWS

#### PAVILIONS OF SPLENDOUR

The heritage consultancy and estate agency group Pavilions of Splendour has appointed **Marianne Watson-Smyth**, formerly Secretary of SAVE Britain's Heritage, as its Managing Director. The firm is currently in the process of raising finance through the government's Business Expansion Scheme, which gives tax relief to U.K. taxpayers over a five year period. Full details are available from the company's registered office at West Tower, South Park, Penshurst, Kent TN11 8EA.

#### VICTORIAN SOCIETY

The Folly Fellowship congratulates **William Filmer-Sankey**, an archaeologist, on his appointment as Director of the Victorian Society.

#### MIDLANDS REGION

**Barbara Hague**, the Folly Fellowship's

area secretary, was recently interviewed for a major article in the *Coventry Evening Telegraph* about the Fellowship. This led to a guest interview on BBC Radio, in which she appealed for new information on the region's follies and help in setting up a restoration fund.

#### A LIVING NATIONAL TREASURE

COUNTRY LIFE has bestowed this elegant sobriquet on Folly Fellowship member **Diana Reynell**, for her work as a grotto builder.

#### RADIO LIMBURG

The Folly Fellowship was on Dutch Radio Limburg for half an hour in August, when **Pieter and Rita Boogaart** were subjected to a ruthless cross-examination. The same had happened in October last year for a regional radio station. Unfortunately the performances elicited no respons in the sense of the discovery of first-class follies. But even a full-page interview in a local newspaper failed to produce that desired effect last year. What does one have to do these days? On the other hand, Dutch membership is growing, slowly but steadily.

#### OFF LICENCE NEWS

It took a Dutch couple to discover a new line in Pale Cream British Sherry at Budgens. A 70cl bottle with a fine label picture of a jolly folly, seen at the end of a conifer lane, bears the inscription:

*England, a happy land we know,  
where follies naturally grow.*

This is a quotation from Charles Churchill, they say. The fact that this Churchill (1731-64) is mainly known for his political and social

satires may go some way towards explaining the origin of the quotation, but who would have thought that Budgens employ people who can find it and use it in this way? The Folly Fellowship declines any responsibility for the actual taste of the stuff, but extends a hand to Budgens.

#### ESPRIT DE CORPS

We are told that the American Ambassador to the Court of St. James's enjoys spending holidays in follies. Why then is he not a member?

#### SNOWFOLLIES

More Dutch activities, this time unconnected (as yet) with the Folly Fellowship or the Donderberg Groep. An association of artists under the chairmanship of Guus Boudestein has come together to form the **Snowfolly Foundation**. Boudestein writes: "*In our opinion no building is more worthy of the title 'Folly' than a building made of snow or ice, since it is sure it will not exist anymore in any summer to come and therefore has no purpose at all than to be beautiful and (more or less) expensive for a certain time of being.*" We hope Pieter Wiersma's astonishing sand sculptures will also qualify. The Snowfolly Foundation can be contacted at Molenstraat 4B, 2517 HK Den Haag, The Netherlands.

#### BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

Readers who have not visited **Stowe** since the sweltering (remember that word?) Summer Garden Party of 1990 will be astonished at the transformation. It is amazing what can be done with a few million pounds. We will be arranging a local area return visit in 1994.

The *Milton Keynes Citizen* is running a series of articles on local follies. The word 'folly' is here used as a term of abuse for buildings which have aroused the irritation, to put it strongly, of a journalist

charged with filling space.

## GLOUCESTERSHIRE

Money to maintain the **Tyndale Monument** at North Nibley is running out, claimed Bill Thomas, chairman of Nibley Monument Trustees. At the moment the structure is in good repair, but Thomas said there was "not a cat in hell's chance" of having enough funds to meet the next repair bill. Cooling to his task, he went on to say that the monument may become a liability and that the trustees might resign. A week later he apologised for his defeatist attitude, having discovered quite how popular the monument is. Donations should be sent to the Tyndale Monument Trust, c/o A. G. Thomas, Waterley House, North Nibley, Gloucestershire.

A big fuss brewed up over **Rodborough Fort**, near **Stroud**, in July when it was revealed that its owner, Joanne Willies-Williams, was receiving £380 a week from Social Security to pay her mortgage. Just to prove that bureaucracy can move quickly when it feels like it, a new ceiling limit of £150,000 was imposed only days later. Mrs. Willies-Williams is trying to claim £10 million damages from the National Trust for stealing her land. Meanwhile an eighteenth century painting of the view from the folly by an anonymous artist of the English school fetched £58,000 at Sothebys in the same month.

## HERTFORDSHIRE

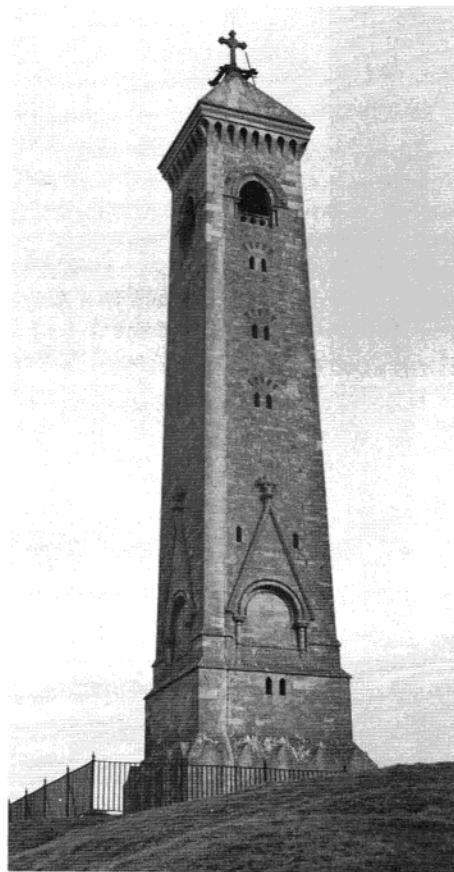
**Capel Manor** (just by junction 25 on the M25) has Gone Grotty. It is a 100 acre estate used extensively by one of the country's leading horticultural and environmental colleges. Some Pulham walling has been added next to the new visitors' centre and is the first feature of the guided tour. An information board reads: *'The use of Pulham walling material has been donated by Tesco Stores Limited when it was removed from Ponsbourne Park Hotel in 1991. Ponsbourne Park was built by the banking magnate James Carlile in 1876, on the site of a previous mansion. He commissioned the work from the local terracotta workmen, the Pulham Brothers, who were renowned in Britain at that time. This rebuilding was undertaken by Michael D. Chewter from Tunbridge Wells, Kent, a landscape garden contractor well known for building award-winning gardens at the Chelsea flower Show.'*

Also in the gardens are a maze, a copy of William Nessfield's Italianate design for the Great Exhibition in London in 1851, the Ruin Garden which contains a small Greek Temple, and a temple / summerhouse. On the summit of another mound, close to the motorway, a group of truncated columns are being erected in a ring.

## LONDON

The **Albert Memorial** has been added to

GWYN HEADLEY



THE TYNDALE MONUMENT, NORTH NIBLEY

English Heritage's list of buildings at risk. This is a national disgrace—the structure has been swathed in scaffolding for nearly two years—but there are now so many national disgraces that one is nearly injured to them.

The **Temple in Wanstead Park** is a Grade II listed building, thought to date from 1720. Once used for banquets and receptions, its function today is less glamorous with only some of the rooms in use, as a workshop and toilets. Having been damaged by wartime bombing, the building has been ravaged by dry rot decaying the structural timbers, and the toilets have become targets for arson attacks. A £200,000 restoration plan is proposed with funds for the repairs already available from The Corporation of London. Some of the total cost may be met by a grant from English Heritage now that plans have been approved by The Epping Forest and Open Spaces Committee who look after the park.

The **Jubilee Fountain at George Green** has recently undergone some repair and refurbishment work. Apparently this is in preparation for a forthcoming move—the fountain sits on the route of the M11 extension and at this point the road will be in a tunnel (probably the 'cut & cover' variety). In the proposed plan for the fountain it will be temporarily removed and resited, out of harm's way, on another corner of the green. According to an employee from the municipal authority they are undertaking to move it in one piece!

## NORTH YORKSHIRE

The **Rocket Ship** at Aysgarth, together with its pals the **Pepperpot** and the **Folly Arch**, are to be consolidated (rather than restored—what good news) with the aid of a £3,208 grant from the Local Historic Features scheme of the Yorkshire Dales National Park Committee. They were apparently built for a Mrs. Hutton, owner of Sorrelsykes Hall, in the nineteenth century, although Follies dates the cone / pepperpot to 1921.

Midsummer madness came to the **Druid's Temple at Masham** in June when a pig's head was found on the altar. Police thought it may have had something to do with inept devil worshippers who didn't realise the temple was a fake. As it's not connected to the spiritual grid, there seems little point in using it for a function it was clearly designed not to fulfil.

## NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

A correspondent in the *Northampton Chronicle & Echo* wanted to know the connection between the follies in the Boughton / Moulton area, in particular the tower on the Leicester Road, **Bunkers Hill Farm**, **The Spectacles** and **Holly Lodge**. Answers please to *Trevor Cooper, Chronicle & Echo, Upper Mounds, Northampton NN1 3HR*.

## SOMERSET

The **Temple of Harmony at Halswell House, Goathurst**, is collapsing through want of care. There is a proposal to rescue it. John Taylor, who owns the Cricket St. Thomas wildlife park nearby, has the permission of the farmer who owns it to move it to his park, where he wants to restore and reërect it on a hill above his estate. It appears that this hill was used by the BBC filming the TV sitcom *To the Manor Born*, when they erected a cardboard folly on the site. Taylor thought it looked well. Sedgemoor District Council, however, have refused to give consent, and it has the support of conservation groups who want the structure restored where it stands as part of the original landscape setting. Here is the dilemma: Unless something is done quite quickly, the building will collapse and be lost to us. If it is moved, the park, already mangled and mangy like a tired old lion, will be further diminished. Taylor says he is prepared to spend up to £100,000 restoring the temple, but understandably only if he can have it. Note that there is no financial gain to the park—just the loss of a beautiful old temple. We say—what does Penelope Keith say? We say—thank you Mr. Taylor, but that £100,000 of yours would probably pick up the entire Halswell estate. Why don't you restore it in situ?

## SUFFOLK

The conversion of **Woodbridge Lodge** at **Rendlesham**, the 'world's smallest

cathedral', into an environmentally conscious green machine for members Colin and Christine Cooper, has won an regional award from the RIBA. Using timber from managed resources and organic waxes, resins, dyes and pigments means that no lead-based paint or white spirit was used in the decoration. The extension is well insulated, uses off-peak electricity and the warm air accumulated in the conservatory area during the day is released into the rest of the building at night. The architect was Hugh Pilkington and the contractors were Ingram Smith of Woodbridge.

#### WILTSHIRE

Candida Lycett-Green has acquired a splendid new grotto designed for her by the husband and wife team of Isabel and Julian Bannerman, who have also recently built the ruined tunnel grotto for J. P. Getty II and a romantic dairy at Waddesdon Manor in Buckinghamshire for Lord Rothschild. Recession? What recession?

#### CLWYD

The Bryn Pedw Obelisk (see FOLLIES Vol V, 1) has been reprieved. Common sense has triumphed over umbrage, and Richard Broyd has been allowed to keep his elegant Gibbsian obelisk after a barrister quietly took the borough council aside and explained the real world to them. Now we await the mounting of the plaque and the unveiling of the inscription. Whatever will it say, we wonder?

#### GWENT

The Committee for the Reerection of the Folly Tower (CROFT) at Pontypool is jubilant about the progress it has made—the 1740s tower, which was blown up by the War Department on July 8th, 1940, is nearing completion and by the time you read this may well be finished. It has taken four years of hard graft by the Committee led by the energetic Arthur Crane, who is to be applauded for his perseverance and dedication. We hope to run a full feature on the tower and its builders in a future issue.

#### ABERDEEN

We have heard of a threat to Dr. Duncan Liddel's Aberdeenshire Monument by John Fyfe Ltd, a sand and gravel company who find the structure to be tediously in the way of a profitable quarry. More information, please.

#### BERWICKSHIRE

Hume Castle, the sham castellations erected by Lord Marchmont in 1789 on the site of a genuine castle, has just been restored by the Berwickshire Civic Society with funds provided by the Scottish Office, and is now open to the public.

## FOR SALE

#### HAMPSHIRE

No Man's Land Fort in The Solent is to be auctioned off. Originally on the market for nearly £6 million three years ago it still failed to sell at the knockdown price of £900,000. The fort has a revolving master bedroom and three helicopter pads for those of us with three helicopters.

#### HERTFORDSHIRE

Mullucks Wells & Associates are the agents for Flint House in Great Amwell. Described as 'a classical grade II listed family house with mature grounds', opposite the front door is a column from the old Blackfriars bridge which is included in the sale. Offers invited.

#### NORTH YORKSHIRE

Steeple Lodge at Stainborough, built as a sham church in 1730 for the Earl of Strafford, is for sale at £105,000 through Halifax Property Services in Barnsley.

#### SUFFOLK

Strutt and Parker have Erwarton Hall back on the market with its unique gatehouse. An impressive sports complex and 4 acres—the lot can be yours for offers in the region of £450,000.

#### SURREY

The Moat House, less than a mile from the centre of Guildford, is a real mixture. It started life as a quarryman's cottage in the 18th century, but after the quarry owner went bankrupt Henry Emlyn extended the cottage in 1840 by the addition of a castellated church tower and steeple (apparently wishing to be reminded of a church in Richmond which he used to see from his bedroom window as a child). Some thirty years later a yellow-brick Gothic extension was built on to the red-brick tower which, at the same time, had the steeple removed but a decorative ironwork staircase and balcony added. The name is derived from a folly moat which runs round the back of the house. The asking price, through Browns, is £350,000.

Sorry you've missed this, but there we are—a house designed by Edwin Lutyens, a garden designed by Gertrude Jekyll (indeed part of her own garden), and a folly tower built by Lutyens for Jekyll, all for sale for only £250,000. The house is Munstead Orchard, near Godalming, and it was built for Jekyll's head gardener. The wonderfully named Thunder House folly was built in 1895 for Miss Jekyll to watch storms coursing over the Wey valley.

An outing to Peper Harow House to look at the garden buildings yields plenty of curiosities, if not follies. Is the famous "Inigo Jones" gate by Sir William Chambers to honour

his hero a folly? It certainly is historic and, absurdly, now abuts at right angles a Romanesque porch doorway by Pugin. A crinkle-crankle wall lies beyond the walled gardens—at half height, it is most unusual and decorative, broken with a sort of bastion for a huge sundial. The barn is a classic, and there is an octagonal building that could be a game larder.

Down by the Wey, the boathouse is long gone but a tunnel-shaped bath house lingers on, with a flint-knapped lower half, brick above rising to a half-dome. Traces of tufa outside—was there once a grotto-like entrance to it? Can anyone date it—the vendors can't but would like to know. Peper Harow House, with its enchanting Chambers stable block and farm buildings all in a melting Brown landscape, is for sale with Savills and Lane Fox.

To the perimeter to see the Pugin gatehouse at Oxenford Grange and a closer glimpse of the abbey wall eyecatcher to Peper Harow House (spotted first from the walled garden). These no longer belong to the Peper Harow estate, so binoculars are needed for a good stare, unless you have made separate prior arrangements to view with the owners. There is a photo of the abbey wall opposite page 228 of *Follies*.

#### SUSSEX

Does Eric's Folly ring a bell? It didn't with us, until we discovered it was the less than affectionate title dubbed by the Electrical, Electronic, Telecommunications and Plumbing Union on its Buxted Park estate, bought for £6 million in 1987 at the insistence of its general secretary Eric Hammond. Since the purchase the estate has been losing over £500,000 a year, and is now for sale for £3 million. A suitable appellation, even though he was not the original builder.

#### WORCESTERSHIRE

Knight Frank & Rutley are handling the sale of Abbey Manor about one mile to the north of Evesham. Currently with a bed and breakfast business this was also the case when Pieter and Rita Boogaart from the Netherlands visited in 1990. Even the owner's name, Mrs. Holland, didn't help them: 'If we didn't want her Bed and Breakfast, we couldn't look at her follies.' A shame—there is a folly tower (Leicester Tower), an obelisk to commemorate the spot where the battle of Evesham was fought, and an icehouse of 1852.

Between Bristol and Birmingham a magnificent 18th century country house, listed grade I, designed by 'Capability' Brown and set in one of his grandest landscapes. Rooms and hilltop temple by Robert Adam. What else could it be but Croome Court (despite the disguised photograph). With planning consent granted for conversion to an hotel or conference centre, this is hotly followed

by a much disputed (*and detested—L&F Ed.*) conditional consent for a 27 hole golf course on land separately available subject to terms. For anyone who visited Croome on the recent visit they will appreciate the beauty of the landscape and the eyesore proposed.

#### GLAMORGAN

The Glyntaff Druid Towers at Pontypridd make for unusual houses, and the one on the right is now up for sale through Knight of Cardiff.

#### MAINE, U.S.A.

One of New England's best known and best-loved folly houses, the **Wedding Cake House** at Kennebunk, is for sale through Pavilions of Splendour in Maidstone, Kent (0622 754554). The purchaser runs the risk of having George Bush as a summer neighbour.

#### NEW YORK, U.S.A.

The Armor / Stiner House at Irvington-on-Hudson, the finest surviving example of an Orson Squire Fowler-inspired octagonal house, complete with a gigantic dome in multi-coloured slate, is for sale at \$2,400,000. It was last sold in 1979 by the National Trust for Historic Preservation for \$79,000. Somebody got their pricing wrong.

*Thanks to Mike Cousins, Chrissie Murr, Valerie Monaghan, Constance Sayre.*

## LETTERS

I continue to find my membership an inspiration. There is one project you started and seems to have suffered a prolonged hiatus, and that is the Folly Register which got as far as Merseyside and stopped.

I very much hope you will pursue it to its conclusion, but I suggest it could be run in the style of the piece on Northamptonshire [FOLLIES #3], that is with a map of sorts. I wrote mentioning the tall water tower at Horton Hospital, Epsom, Surrey. Now I have found another, standing amid a demolition site near the Elephant and Castle in London. Not pretty, but striking all the same. It stands close to Holyoak Road, SE11, and must have been part of Lameth Hospital.

*Iain K. S. Gray  
Wandsworth Common  
London SW11*

*Is there life after Merseyside? We have had many requests to continue this series; it is simply a question of the Editor finding enough time to complete it. Help would be appreciated. If somebody would like to volunteer to do a little free map-making, then we will include maps too.*

## EVENTS

### FOLLIES IN WILTSHIRE

A residential adult education course on *The Follies of Wiltshire* is being held at Urchfont Manor College from Friday 18th to Sunday 20th February 1994. The tutor is **Jonathan Holt**, the secretary of the South West Region of the Folly Fellowship. The fees are £91 for Wiltshire residents and £97 for 'people from other areas', which sounds like Moonraker discrimination to us. The price includes accommodation, tuition, meals, insurance and a Saturday afternoon visit to some normally inaccessible follies, which sounds like Moonraker generosity—in fact it's cheaper than staying at home. Call 0380 840495 for further details.

### CROOME COURT

In September it rained. All day. Every day. Except on Saturday 11th, when **Barbara Hague** organised a Midlands Region outing to Croome Court in Worcestershire, where the sun shone brilliantly, the company was congenial, the follies and garden buildings were wondrous and the tea was splendid. The only scar on the landscape was the great M5 motorway bisecting the 12,000 acre estate. "What motorway?" puzzled the estate manager, who had lived there for 25 years. "Can't say I notice it."

## BOOK REVIEWS

### THE DRIVE TO ORNAMENT

**Diana Balmori** and **Margaret Morton**, *Transitory Gardens, Uprooted Lives*, Yale University Press, London and New Haven 1993, 148pp, £20.00  
ISBN 0 300 05772 5

At this year's Frankfurt Book Fair there were 8,343 publishers touting new books, 99% of which were reworkings of tried and tested themes. This book is different. This is the first serious study of the gardens of the homeless. The author and photographer went out among the derelicts and down-and-outs of New York and unexpectedly discovered a vital, virile garden culture. They found the bower-birds of the Bowery—people who created gardens with objets trouvés, with no plants, with no cost. The gardens cost nothing because the gardeners had nothing. Presumably unaware of the culture of the *jardin imaginaire*, of which there are many fine examples in America, the authors hit the truth early on—"These compositions differ significantly from traditional gardens in that plants play only a secondary rôle in them...stuffed animals, toys and finds from sidewalk trash cans replace plants as impor-

tant components."

The soul of the book lies in its concept, photography and the reportage of the words of the garden makers themselves. The text, alas, is dull and its assumptions questionable—one assertion, that architecture outlasts landscape, is simply incomprehensible. Stripped of its leaden, apparently compulsory political correctness (Balmori condemns "historically dominant cultures" and groups together "underclasses and women"), its subtext is clear, bright and hopeful. The desire for tranquility, the urge to beautify, the drive to ornament will thrive in the most adverse conditions, and this flawed but seminal work reveals this. This is a profoundly disturbing celebration of the human condition. *Transitory Gardens, Uprooted Lives* is not a book to comfort and enchant the boutique gardener. It captures the elemental force that can drive a flower through a concrete fuse. —LRGH

### LITTLE ENGLANDS OVERSEAS

**Charles Quest-Ritson**, *The English Garden Abroad*, Viking, London 1992, 232pp, £20.00  
ISBN 0 670 83252 9

Although Quest-Ritson refused to be overcharged by the British Library for their photographs, this is one of the best illustrated garden books around, despite its paucity of folly coverage.

Italy features pretty heavily in this highly authoritative tome, with no less than seven out of thirteen chapters about gardens in Italy including one each on the magnificent La Mortola and Villa Taranto. Although showing well its authority, by the author's own admission, the book features not a single garden outside Western Europe. So Gertrude Jekyll's fine work in America doesn't get a look in, nor is there anything in Germany or Sweden.

Quest-Ritson is very much a plantsman, giving us plenty of Latin names often with an x in the middle. As for follies et al, there is notable coverage of Beckford in Portugal and a sprinkling of other goodies like Ermenonville,

### THE FOLLIES OF WILTSHIRE

18-20 February 1993

Jonathan Holt

Secretary of the South-West Region of the Folly Fellowship is running the first-ever residential weekend course on the follies of a single county

For brochure, write to:  
Urchfont Manor College

Urchfont

Devizes

Wiltshire

SN10 4RG

Tel, 0380-840495

Bagatelle, Monceau in France and the Egyptian Temple at the Villa Stibbert in Florence, but not a lot else.

In his epilogue Quest-Ritson chauvinistically laments that the big gardens on the continent do not have English administrators. Do you really have to be English to create or manage an English garden? —JH

### A BRIDGE TOO FEW

Tim Mowl, *Palladian Bridges: Prior Park and the Whig Connection*, Millstream Books, Bath, 1993, £4.95. ISBN 0 9489 75342

Someone has, at long last, picked up the gauntlet and written a much needed monograph on Palladian Bridges. Tim Mowl is well qualified to tackle the task. The text goes beyond the well known brick structures (Stowe, Wilton & Prior Park) that immediately spring to mind when a Palladian Bridge is mentioned to cover Palladio's original three types—wooden, ordinary stone and monumental. In the former category fall the wooden 'Chinese' bridges although the fancy fretwork patterns are adaptations rather than intent. Lesser known works which still exist include Robert Adam's Tea-House Bridge at Audley End and Capability Brown's bridge of 1773 at Scampston, referred to as the 'Palladium Bridge' on early maps.

And yet Sir William Chamber's bridge at Kew, the design of which '...is, in a great measure, taken from one of Palladio's wooden bridges', and his 'Palladio' bridge at Danson Hill in Kent, c.1770, copied from a model in the third book *I Quattro Libri*, receive no mention. Both are long gone and, it would seem, forgotten. With John Harris included in the healthy list of credits I found this a strange omission. Mr. Mowl goes on to assert, quite boldly, that Sanderson Miller built the Palladian Bridge at Wotton, when in fact all that is known from Miller's correspondence is that he drew a design for a bridge for George Grenville in 1758. According to William Hawkes, who must be recognised as the authority on Miller, the extant five arch bridge is that normally associated with the architect. I expected a lot more, footnotes to substantiate the claims, at least a bibliography which is sadly lacking (a work such as this yells out for one), or even a simple index. Books like this just don't get them. These quibbles aside, at just under a fiver, yes, you must buy it—with the National Trust undertaking the restoration of the grounds at Prior Park, this book has been sponsored by Bath Preservation Trust and proceeds from its sale will assist with the restoration of the Palladian Bridge. —MGC

### HUNKY PUNKY

Peter Poyntz-Wright, *Hunky Punks*, Avebury 1982. ISBN 0 86127 014 2

Somerset likes to pamper its visitors. The

Tourist Offices are staffed by friendly people who are very generous with their services and information. They give out excellent brochures on regional features. Quality stuff. For example there is a beautiful leaflet called "Discover the South Somerset Follies" with a drive along four follies, a cycle ride along five Walls and a walk along the Barwick Park follies. And there are more brochures for Leisure Drives and Walks with follies in them. Exemplary.

The Taunton Deane Tourism Unit also has a leaflet on Towers and Hunkypunks that drew our attention. Let me tell you what hunkypunks are. Hunkypunks are non-functional stone carvings. They appear on church towers. They look like gargoyles, but they are ornaments, made according to someone's fancy. Hunkypunks are fun. They are the follies of tower-building.

Peter Poyntz-Wright explains the peculiar term itself: derived from the local words "hunkers" (squatting) and "punchy" (short, squat), and he writes it as two words: hunky punks.

There are probably less than 100 hunkypunks in Somerset and they date from a period of 100 years between 1450 and 1550, when the area was comparatively rich thanks to the woollen cloth trade. Small teams of masons went round building churches during the summer, while in winter preparatory work was done on the ground in workshops.

Hunkypunks seem to attract gargoyles (which have the practical purpose of carrying off water). They are often found side by side and as with gargoyles the subject-matter for the carvings varies greatly. But animals, creeping up or down the tower, are clear favourites. Most frequent are: dogs, dragons, goats and griffins, but people also make their appearance, and there is even a woman in childbirth somewhere. Some clearly display heraldic features, but most hunkypunks are the results of the carvers' fantasies or superstitions. They are taken from folklore and myths, and, as Poyntz-Wright points out rightly: "...nearly all satisfy the mediæval desire for the grotesque."

Hunkypunks don't make things easy for their admirers. Usually they can only be viewed from far below and they are virtually inaccessible. That is probably why they have received little attention and care so far. Not that they need much care. The only threat to their continued ugliness-cum-loveliness is air pollution. *Thanks to Jenny Hoyle of Taunton Deane.* —PB

### CHRISTMAS PRESENT PROBLEMS SOLVED

Dušan Ogrin, *The World Heritage of Gardens*, Thames and Hudson, London 1993, £24.95.

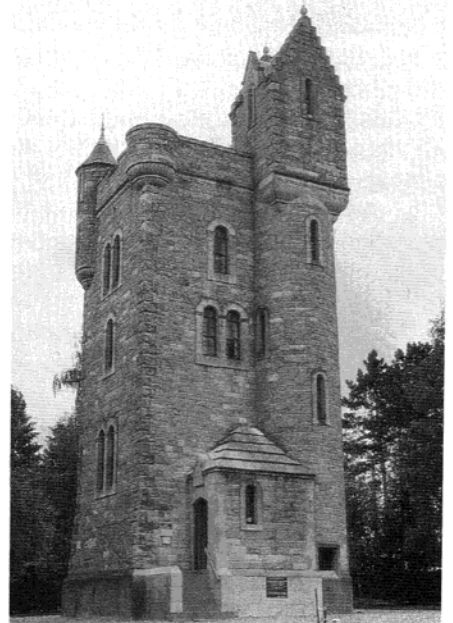
ISBN 0 500 23666 6

For sheer value for money, this book is a must. It originates from Slovenia, is unashamedly a coffee table book, and it is big, heavy (too expensive to post), and packed

with colour photographs. All the world's favourite gardens are here—Villa Lante, Bomarzo, Ermenonville, Fontainebleau (rather worryingly spelt Fountainebleau), Stowe, Stourhead, Yu Yuan, Yi He Yuan, Saihōji, Katsura, Taj Mahal, Red Fort, Alhambra, Quinta da Bacalhoa, Wilhelmshöhe, Wörlitz, Het Loo, Zeist, Drottningholm, Arkadia, Tsarskoe Selo—could the professor of landscape architecture at the University of Ljubljana really have visited and photographed (in glorious weather) all these sites? That is what we infer. America is notable for its sparse coverage. We are also told that Professor Ogrin spent thirty years 'gathering material for this magisterial survey', but let us accept all that and instead applaud the achievement of his aim—'to provide as clear a survey of the heritage of garden art as possible'. He has succeeded magnificently. James Howley may not be too happy to discover that Ogrin believes Powerscourt in Dublin to be part of England, but then we think Slovenia should never have broken away from the Czech Republic. This book is accessible and comprehensive, if not 100% accurate, and it is graced by the sort of colour printing that only comes with a very long print run. It deserves to succeed. —LRGH.

*A review of James Howley's Follies and Garden Buildings of Ireland, published by Yale University Press, will appear in the next issue of the magazine.*

## ERRATUM



Due to a Zool in the computer, the right hand photograph on page 7 of FOLLIES Vol. V, 1 was incorrectly captioned as Helen's Tower in France. Here is the real Helen's Tower in France. Come on, it's easy to make a mistake. Let's see a little forgiveness here.

# Ferries, Grottoes and Mr. James Pulham

VERNON GIBBERD

**W**HEN IS A grotto not a grotto? One answer might be when it is a Fernery. When I first heard of a Victorian grotto in Leominster my excitement was tempered by a disquieting thought: would this contradict my long held contention that all proper grottoes died out in the 19th century? Didn't the Victorians look on them as deplorable examples of 18th century taste, of little aesthetic value and dubious moral content?

There are examples to disprove this view but I don't think the grotto at Buckfield Keep is one of them. Indeed it combines, in the most practical way, no fewer than three Victorian passions: the conservatory, the wild garden and the enthusiasm for new and exotic plants. It is a fernery, but one might also call it a wild conservatory or indoor rock garden.

There is, it is true, a small grotto at the far end of what is in effect a dead end rocky defile or cleft, such as one might come upon in a mountain walk. The little cave is formed by overhanging rocks and a small cascade used to run over the top and through the back of the interior, to drain across the floor in little streamlets. Steps lead up one side of the grotto and down the other, affording a birds eye view of the whole.

The roof of glass and cast iron had disappeared by 1950. Adjacent greenhouses survive still, as does a charming glazed verandah which acted as a porte cochère to the main house, now divided in two. The fernery was heated by underground pipes, fed from a nearby boiler and at the far end is what amounts to a small double glazed enclosure for tender species. When I visited Buckfield Keep the present owner, Mrs. Blanchard, was busy filling the grotto pool from a hose to flush the water along its old courses. Spring flowers and ferns sprouted happily among the rocks, outside too, where the soil has been piled up to minimise the height of the rocks. The rocks themselves are in a surprisingly good condition but Mrs. Blanchard explained she could do little more than maintain the status quo, which she is doing admirably, but as for the green houses she said the cost of maintenance and repairs is beyond her means.

Neither the house nor fernery is listed, and even if they were the problems encoun-

tered with the Broughton Mount Grotto (Follies passim) could well apply here: that listing, while attracting a grant, might nevertheless impose statutory obligations on the owner to meet the balance, commonly about 60% of the total.

When Mrs. Blanchard and her late husband bought the property some years back they assumed the rocks were genuine, a mistake only too forgivable given their extraordinary verisimilitude. It wasn't until bits started to break off that the underlying structure of brick was revealed. They were made, as astute readers will have already guessed, of Pulhamite.

I must confess that what little I knew of this material was mostly confined to the burnt clay products that the firm produced in the

state of preservation, better than their counterparts in Battersea Park (about a decade earlier at 1866) which are more exposed to the weather and vandalism.

I simply cannot tell, without taking a geological hammer, whether or not real local sandstone rocks have been incorporated at Buckfield Keep, but the structure raises questions not addressed so far in any of the literature I have been given.

First of all, what exactly was their Portland cement? It bears very little resemblance to the uningratiating material we know today. It is clearly softer and warmer in colour, but I suspect it was mixed with lime and sand like a good traditional render, (I have taken away a sample which I hope to have analysed)

It appears to have been applied quite thinly in places over the brick or clinker structure below. One account says it was applied in a sloppy mix over the base and then worked with trowels into simulated fissures and strata, leaving earth pockets here and there for planting.

It seems the firm was never large, just forty men and boys, and one imagines that these would be divided into labourers, apprentices and master plasterers. Doubtless someone with extensive knowledge of rock formations directed each operation, usually a member of the family.

I suspect that besides the trowel other devices were used such as 'bagging' (rubbing down with sacking) sponging, and spraying while still green. Is it possible even that moulds were used?

Another puzzle is all those wide overhangs and cantilevers, difficult if not impossible to achieve in conventional brickwork. Possibly thin slabs of real stone or slate were incorporated, where today we would use reinforced concrete.

Any hope of reviving such a craft is alas, unlikely, depending as it must on years of experience coupled with a

high content of manual labour. I hope Buckfield Keep will be preserved. Only yards away lies the busy Brecon Road and diagonally opposite is a vast new supermarket, yet once inside one is in a quiet little sanctuary, a secret garden of great quality and interest.

*My thanks to Martin Rickard, of Leinthall Starkes, who introduced me to Buckfield Keep, and to Mrs. Blanchard for her warm welcome. Also, as ever, to Michael Cousins and his inexhaustible library.*

Other Pulhamite rockwork gardens include: Battersea and St James's Parks, London Buckingham Palace, London Highnam Court, Gloucestershire Madresfield, Hereford & Worcester RHS Wisley, Surrey Merrow Grange, Guildford, Surrey



THE PULHAMITE WALLING AS IT WAS IN PONSBORNE HOTEL, AND (BELOW) AFTER ITS REERECTION IN THE GROUNDS OF CAPEL MANOR, HERTFORDSHIRE (SEE IN THE NEWS)



19th century, more or less as an historical succession to Coad.

Now I am better informed. I have discovered that the fortunes of this remarkable family dynasty are well documented, from their start in around 1820 by the first James Pulham, through to their decline in our own century and final demise in 1945.

It started with their 'discovery' or invention of Portland cement, which they used not only in their simulated rocks but also in the larger parts of their garden ornaments, urns, fountains balustrades and so on whose size probably prevented their being fired in a kiln. Usually the finer decorations like swags and figures, were made in terracotta which has lasted better than the unfired artificial stone, yet the rocks at Buckfield Keep are in a good

# News From Thunder Mountain

HENK HARDEMAN

**B**ELIEVE IT OR not, there are follies in the Netherlands! There is also a Dutch association not unlike The Folly Fellowship—the 'Donderberg Groep' (group), which is solely devoted to follies. Its president Wim Meulenkamp is also the vice-president of the Fellowship, and is currently writing a book on Dutch and Belgian follies. On May 15th, the Donderberggroep held a meeting in Leersum, in the centre of the Netherlands. This location wasn't very surprising, as a great number of follies still exist in this area. The programme consisted of a few introductory lectures, an exposition, a lunch and a small tour around some interesting buildings.

Follies were introduced somewhat later to the Netherlands than in Great Britain. They were imported together with the British landscape gardens in the second half of the eighteenth century. The buildings came in many styles and forms, varying from Turkish mosques to Chinese temples and Swiss cottages. Of course a lot of these buildings have been torn down, due to changing tastes. Fortunately, in recent years the interest in these strange edifices is growing, not only in Great Britain, but also in the Netherlands and Germany. Although the Donderberggroep already existed for some time on an underground level, things got serious in May, when the 'group' turned into a foundation. It started with fifteen members; there are now about fifty enthusiasts.

The atmosphere in Leersum was jolly and breathed a sort of Pickwickian cosiness. The party consisted of about thirty five people, who were pressed into an small but snug room of the pub-cum-restaurant-cum-bistro 'Torbijn'. After a short introduction by the president,

Anton Nuijten showed some slides of Belgian follies. It appears that there still are some follies in Belgium, but their condition leaves much to be desired, which is partly due to the fact that the Belgian monument organisation is practically bankrupt. Then there were two folly-constructors of the present-day: Chris Goedhart, from Hoogwoud in the north of the Netherlands, and Bram van Binnendijk from Waalwijk in the south.

Goedhart lives far from the madding crowd and has lots of space, which means he isn't pestered by complaining neighbours and moreover gives him the opportunity to experiment with different kinds of follies. He builds them on a small scale, so that it's quite hard to see the buildings from some distance. Goedhart, who used to be a carpenter, usually builds in red brick and concrete. The concrete is shaped with moulds into pillars and ornaments. He has built a dome and a temple and a fake ruin. Hedraws outlines, but makes no real designs. He does take measurements to make sure the proportions are correct. He prefers to work in a classicist style, or sometimes baroque.

Bram van Binnendijk works as a researcher at the Efteling, a famous Dutch attraction, vaguely reminiscent of Disneyland. He is fascinated by the buildings which were constructed in the Efteling at the time of Anton Pieck, whom one can compare best with his 'teacher' Arthur Rackham. He decided to build a wall with a turret in the back garden of his parents in Waalwijk, which had to look old and picturesque. His inspiration was derived from a story by C.S. Lewis, about a wall with a door which can't be opened, but suddenly does open and gives access to a fairy-like world. Van Binnendijk named it the 'Enge Poort' (Wicket Gate). Aided by slides, he explained very clearly and wittily how the work had been done.

Inside the turret, which can be lit at night,

lives a dozing gnome who, according to the constructor is 'still busy with his studies'. (At the time of the construction Van Binnendijk himself was studying.) In front of the door stands a gnome who knocks, because he wants to visit his friend. Had Arthur Rackham been alive to see the building, there's no doubt he would approve of it.

The excursion consisted of a tour—in eight cars—of buildings around the Langbroekerwetering, a twelfth century canal. The party saw a Cottage ornée, a red-brick 1867 building with a thatched roof, a Gothic door and Gothic windows; Vijverbosch, a building in an old-Dutch style, but too small to be used; Sandenburg, a bower made out of wood, concrete and thatch, which is often referred to as the 'Sugarpie'; Hindersteijn; Leeuwenburgh, a wooden pigeon-house with a slate roof dating from 1848 and Beverweerd, dating from 1836.

Molenstein was already thought to be older than the nineteenth century, but there was no evidence for this supposition. Recently historian Ben Olde Meierink bought a rare pencil drawing of the chapel, which dates from 1750, so that we now know for certain that the building is older. He had brought his costly purchase with him, so that everyone could make comparisons on the spot between the drawing and the building as it now is. It used to be an underground chapel, but was changed in the nineteenth century into a folly. Nowadays it is used as a storage for a thatching firm.

*(The Donderberg (Thunder Mountain—I believe it's named after a pub, but I'm sure I'll be corrected) Groep publish a Nieuwsbrief which now extends to twenty four pages and looks much more professional than our sickly offering. Further information can be obtained from the Secretary, Ms. Francis Staatsen, Struyckenlaan 8, 3527 KL Utrecht, The Netherlands. Tel: (+31) 30-940351. —Ed.)*

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