

THE INTERNATIONAL MAGAZINE FOR
FOLLIES
GROTTOES & GARDEN BUILDINGS

Issue 80 ISSN 0963-9004 Volume 21, No.1
AUTUMN 2011
Price £3.00 (\$5.00/€5.00)



FOLLIES OF JAMES PULHAM
RETURN TO LINDERHOF II
ROOT HOUSE AT BLAISE CASTLE
THOMAS WRIGHT
TRIANGULAR TOWERS III
VISITS

Michael Cousins
Claude Hitching
Jonathan Holt
Iain Jackson
Hilary Peters
James Russell
Alan Terrill



PAINTING BY JMW TURNER, 'TABLEY MERE WITH TOWER AND HOUSE IN DISTANCE'

**BOATS ON
TABLEY MERE
WITH TOWER
AND HOUSE
IN DISTANCE**

stunning views, to the gardens of Eridge Park where the relevance of the various buildings could be seen in the context of their position in the landscape from the lawns in front of the 'new' house by Denham built in 1930's and quickly reduced by two-thirds in the fifties. It was interesting to see how small the features looked. They must have been designed to be visited.

Lunch was at the 'Nevill Crest and Gun' or for picnickers in the Eridge Park gardens. The full convoy then miraculously got to Watstock, stopping on the side of the road to look across the fields to what must be a folly. This is not in any book and was happened on, literally when passing. It is a range of modern asbestos cement clad farm buildings painted pink with false windows and gables to completely disguise their utilitarian purpose. Great fun and it is to be hoped the holiday cottage business behind will benefit from the publicity.

Arrived at Chiddingstone Castle, an early-19th-century Medieval Castle (formerly known as 1 High Street), built by the Streatfield family using the architect William Atkinson, but completed by another architect, Henry Kendall, on a reduced scale. The whole was set in landscaped gardens again with superb views. We were met by Heather Williams, Operations Manager, who kindly gave a talk on the grounds, history, and the properties current use as the home for the Dennis Bower collections.

The tour included the restored Orangery with its new glass roof, used for weddings. This was followed by the Gothic Gazebo, and Gothic Water Tower. A circuit was taken of the grounds including new turf maze, rockery, locked cave (was the Eridge one a precedent?), a dead tree carved to look like a gothic seat, and a sham bridge at the head of the lake. Also to be seen in the

village were the Chiding Stone (a large rock) hence the village name, the 1736 Streatfield Mausoleum in the churchyard and the National Trust Village.

On the continuing premise of keeping well fed, the visit nearly ended with a delicious cream tea in the castle courtyard. However the very generous Heather very kindly opened up part of the Museum for a quick free visit, the sunny and enjoyable day then ended.

Best hats: Tess and Pete

Best quote: 'Don't worry about keeping everybody amused, give members a pile of bricks and they will talk for hours.'

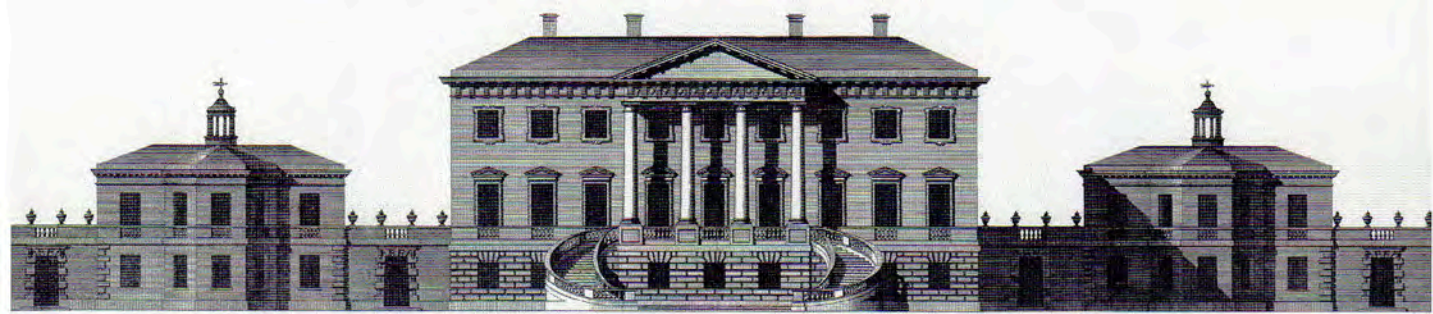
EATON HALL and TABLEY HOUSE

29 July 2011

by Iain Jackson

The county of Cheshire has a number of well-known follies, but those found at Eaton Hall and Tabley House have remained fugitive to the folly guides and gazetteers (although neither escaped Pevsner's vigilance and pedantry).

The follies at both estates adopt an almost 'inverse' architectural style to that of the main house providing an antidote and visual juxtaposition to the style and presence of the main abode and primary focus. The follies are presented as the antecedent or archaeology of the site with the house displayed as the enlightened solution or jewel, emerging from a previous state of ignorance. The follies are used not only to enhance the landscape and as somewhere to serve tea, but also to physically illustrate an architectural agenda; a gothic structure appears more gothic when viewed against a classical structure and of course the opposite is also true. ☞



**TABLEY BY
JOHN CARR**

Tabley House located near Knutsford, was designed by the prolific, if conservative, Yorkshire architect John Carr in 1761 for Sir Peter Byrne Leicester. The house was styled according to a strict Palladian manner and featured in the seminal *Vitruvius Britannicus* in 1767 demonstrating its scholarly significance. The house was a replacement for the Old Hall, originally a medieval Cheshire timber structure much altered in the 1670s where it was enveloped with some tepid classical motifs. The Old Hall was located on an island on Nether Tabley Mere alongside a chapel, gatehouse and bridge. The old house dramatically collapsed in 1927 due to its foundations being undermined by nearby brine pumping. Today, the Old Hall persistently, if precariously, remains as a Grade-2*-listed ruin. The chapel was hastily relocated closer to the new hall and all that remains on the Mere is a solitary brick tower. It is a plain pile with projecting castellated cornice and is circular in plan. Although it resembles a hunting tower, its location on a small island suggests it was not built for this purpose and was probably constructed to serve more picturesque means. It was a destination point whilst rowing on the lake and served as an eye-catcher from across the estate. It may have been constructed as late as 1724, so it predates Burke's thesis on the sublime and beautiful, but nevertheless conforms with many of his ideas on beauty and the questioning of the classical ideal. The tower features in two of Turner's paintings completed in 1809, which are almost identical apart from the weather conditions. It is just possible to see the house in the background.

Travelling west from Tabley towards Chester the Eaton estate is located alongside the village of Eccleston. The Grosvenors have occupied the site since the 15th Century and from 1675 until 1825 a 'spectacular Gothic mansion' was constructed in various bursts of activity. The building continued in 1870 when Alfred Waterhouse was commissioned to encase, extend and rebuild. The result was a muscular high-Victorian Gothic Revival palace costing over £600,000 and taking 13 years to complete. Despite the great expense and lavish exterior, the house was to only last 78 years and was demolished in 1961, with just the chapel, tower and stables remaining from the original composition. The tower, now a folly in its own right, is of the distinctive Waterhouse-style, and one can play 'spot the difference' between it and several other Waterhouse buildings, such as Liverpool University and Rochdale Town Hall.

Despite Waterhouse's fame as a Gothic Revivalist, he lacked the fervour of Ruskin and was more of an eclectic designer, preferring anything but 'classical' and its servile approach to architecture. We can see evidence of this at the Natural History Museum and Liverpool's Great North Western Hotel. What is quite surprising then, is his Parrott House at Eaton (1881-83), which is a flat-topped classical mausoleum-meets-tempietto structure with Ionic colonnade. There are swags on the frieze and balustrade above. It is constructed from ochre-coloured terracotta and internally has a series of caryatids holding up the clerestory. It would certainly make a fitting home for parrots.

'Capability' Brown laid out the grounds of the estate; although a number of formal axial routes remain from before then, and there have been continuous developments to the landscape and gardens since. A number of other structures can also be found within the gardens such as the small temple made up of three arches with an Ionic loggia. The designer of this structure remains at large. It was constructed to envelope a Roman altar that was discovered on the site and the large columns that stand on either side of the temple are also Roman. According to Pevsner the classical temple that now stands replaced a Gothic temple that was constructed in 1822. It must have been decided that a classically inspired structure was more appropriate to house the antediluvian remains.

Another folly on site is the Tea House, designed in 1872 by Cheshire architect, John Douglas. It is a half-timber structure with a conical roof to the front and set within a hidden, formal Dutch garden. The Italian Garden, located south of the new house was designed in 1897 by Sir Edwin Lutyens and there are various other buildings, lodges, gates and cottages on the site designed by Waterhouse and Douglas all built with the same degree of richness as the larger works which appears even more amplified on the smaller-scale versions.

Finally, one of the most beautiful aspects of the Estate is one of the most recent. A grotto set within the entrance of the Chapel. It was completed in 2000 by Blott Kerr-Wilson and is viewed through a gothic window frame serving as a portal into another realm. Originally a fernery, it is a masterly insertion into the existing building fabric. It cleverly manages to distort scale with the onlooker's gaze led deeper into a mysterious cavern clad with shells, minerals, mirrors and rock ponds.