



**W**ith the end of this year's events season fast approaching, there is just one more excursion before we close for the winter, so be sure to check the details at the end of this Bulletin and sign up before the spaces are filled.

Our weekend tour of Edinburgh and Lothian follies was an enormous success. Not only did we secure access to over thirty of the finest follies in Britain, we also had the benefit of superb weather, great dinners and a group of friends who made every moment of our time together full of laughter and merriment.



The Edinburgh Tour Group at the Midhope Tower, Lothian

Our tour revealed many surprises, including a handful of buildings that had been missed from the standard books on follies, and clarity to some of the legends behind others. Rather than keep all these to the tour group alone, some of the finds will be included in future editions of the Bulletin under the title of *Discovered in Scotland*, while the larger features will be sent for inclusion in the magazine.

Lastly, this is an appropriate time to salute Michael Cousins for his exceptional and inspired

stewardship of our *Follies* magazine, raising it to what is unquestionably one of the best magazines by any of the amenity societies. My late friend Sir Hugh Casson simply loved it, and the architectural writer Marcus Binney claimed it was "the only publication that smiled at him when he opened the envelope". Under Mike's guidance the magazine has become a real *tour de force*, but with 32 editions at the helm, and contributions to most of the others, he felt it was time to take a break, and who could deny him that. While I tried to persuade him to complete the round 100, it was not to be; besides there are plenty of new projects that can benefit from his unique talents, some of them for us too! His place will be taken by Hilary Peters, who understands fully the size of the void that Mike leaves behind, but with the support and supply of articles from the rest of us, we hope there will be a seamless transition. So, if you have any material or pictures for Hilary, please send it to her at [hpeters@toucansurf.com](mailto:hpeters@toucansurf.com), and if you want to express your own personal thanks to Michael, drop him a note to [mcousins@ford.com](mailto:mcousins@ford.com).

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## Discovered in Scotland: The Callander Folly at Preston Hall

**F**rom the very first moment that you arrive at Preston Hall, your vista is filled with the most sumptuous of architectural surprises. It starts with a large and impressive stone wall around the estate and a pair of Classical gates guarded by stone lions and pretty gate lodges. Beyond lies a long drive lined with rhododendrons which steer you nobly to one of the finest of Scotland's many Classical Mansions, a particularly handsome set of stables and beautiful landscape hugging the banks of the River Tyne.

In 1700, the estate belonged to Roderick McKenzie, who was appointed a Scottish Law Lord and granted the title of Lord Prestonhall in 1703. It was he who commissioned the architect William Adam to build a mansion for him, a work that was extended in 1738 by its new owner the Dowager Duchess of Gordon. Her son, Lord Adam was Commander-in-Chief of the Army in Scotland, and

set about making substantial improvements to the gardens. Soon after he finished that work, he put the estate up for sale, but it took a long time to find a buyer. In the end it was purchased by Alexander Callander after his return from India. By then the house had been on the market for some time and was in "much need o' repair".

Looking to start afresh, Callander invited the architect Robert Mitchell to reconstruct the house, a job that was unfinished by the time he died in 1792. His seven-bay house was impressive on both the entrance-front and garden elevations, and appears to have retained Adam's pavilions which he modified and fitted into his design for the main block. When the estate passed to Alexander's brother, John, work on the house and grounds were completed under Thomas White, who is believed to have turned the house back-to-front to create its current successful setting. With the folly on axis with the house, it is naturally believed that the ornate temple is by White, although the family believe that the roof is Indian in character and so was built during Alexander's time, making it the work of Robert Mitchell. The family may well be right in their belief; only more detailed research will determine the answer one way or another.



The Temple at Preston Hall, Pathhead, Lothian

It is possible to see the house and the folly for yourself, through the Wolsey Lodge scheme ([www.wolseylodges.com](http://www.wolseylodges.com)), or by contacting Major Callander at [hc.phall@fwi.co.uk](mailto:hc.phall@fwi.co.uk).

## Work Continues at Kimmeridge

**T**he Dorset Echo this week (15 Oct) reported that work on taking down, moving and rebuilding the 177-year old Clavel Tower was continuing apace, thus preventing it from crumbling into Kimmeridge Bay.

The tower is part of the Smedmore estate and was built about 1831 by the Reverend John Richards who had changed his name to Clavel after inheriting the estate in 1817.

The tower has a long history, serving as an important landmark to aid navigation by shipping in the English Channel. Thomas Hardy is believed to have courted Eliza Nicholls around the tower, and used it to illustrate his *Wessex Poems*, while another author, P D James, used it as the inspiration for her book *The Black Tower*.



Clavel Tower, Kimmeridge, Dorset [1]

Although it was gutted by fire in the 1930s, its real threat stemmed from its proximity to the edge of a cliff that was being seriously eroded and undermined by the sea. In 1999, at the invitation of the Smedmore Estate, I put forward the idea that the tower should be taken down and moved away from the area of likely collapse, and while this was supported by the local authority, we were all taken aback when English Heritage raised objections to the plan, saying that they "wanted mother nature to reclaim its own materials" and would block listed building consent. Unsurprisingly, the Smedmore Estate decided to ignore this bizarre opinion of these so-called experts, especially when that same year EH allowed the Belle Tout Lighthouse to be moved back from a collapsing cliff at Beachy Head.

An approach to the Landmark Trust provided the support that was need for the emergency appeal to be launched in 2004, with grants being received from the Heritage Lottery Fund, Country

Houses Foundation and Dorset County Council, thus enabling work to start. It began with the painstaking work of dismantling the building, recording each individual piece, and re-assembling it all 25-metres back from the crumbling cliff face. When the process is complete, it will be the latest in the Landmark Trust's success stories, and will be used as a holiday home for public let.



Work continuing on the Clavel Tower at Kimmeridge [2]

## The Crowning of Klaïda

**S**tanding at the edge of the village of Gemert, in the South of the Netherlands, is a new folly called 'Klaïda'. Built in the shape of a gateway, it was officially opened by the Town Mayor and the artist on Saturday, 13 October.



The day began with the local brass band and two traditional citizen soldier groups dressed in full pontifical uniforms gathering in the Market Place and escorting the Mayor and many guests in procession to the house of the folly builder, Gerard van Lankveld. There he joined the Mayor and carried a large and heavy copper cross to the gate himself. As the structure is over forty foot high Gerard and the Mayor, both wearing hard hats, had to climb in a tower wagon and be manoeuvred over the top of the structure to lower the cross in its place. The ceremony continued with music and

speeches, and the traditional waving of coloured banners for the hundreds of onlookers before processing back across fields and lanes to the sound of the citizen soldiers playing their drums, ending with coffee and cake in one of the many town inns. There was something delightfully medieval about the whole thing, and it was an exciting happening for Pieter and me to witness as representatives of the Folly Fellowship.



Gerard van Lankveld is much respected in the Netherlands and beyond for his work (see: *Follies* # 13, 18, 19 and 61). There is of course a lot more to be said about Klaïda itself, which I will write up for inclusion in the magazine at a later date.

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## Folly of the Month: The Windmill at Chesterton, Warwickshire

**A**nyone travelling the northern half of the M40 motorway will be familiar with the curious Windmill folly near the village of Chesterton in Warwickshire: it can usually be seen either side of the Warwick Service Station.

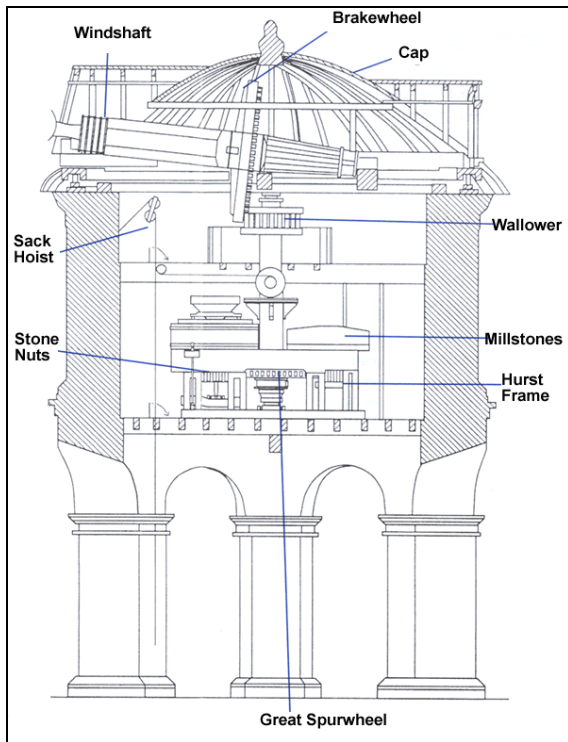


Sunset over Chesterton

Built in 1632, the folly was designed by Sir Edward Peyto, who was then Lord of the Manor, although it has also been attributed to the great

Inigo Jones. The fact that Sir Edward was a well-known mathematician and Astrologer lead many to assume that the tower was an observatory, but estate papers show that it was always a windmill, thus making it the earliest tower mill in England to retain any of its working parts.

There have been at least three major reconstructions of the building, one in 1776 when the shaft was modified, one in 1860 when the old curb and cap frame was altered, and one in 1969, almost seventy years after it ceased to be used as a mill. It reopened in 1971 for a few days each year with volunteer assistance from local villagers who acted as stewards for the event, and is now jointly managed by Warwickshire County Council and Chesterton Parish Council.



Section through the Chesterton Windmill [3]

About half a century after the Chesterton Mill was built, a similar one was put up in the American town of Newport, Rhode Island, although there are some subtle differences in the two designs. The commonly accepted view is that it was built by Governor Benedict Arnold in 1676 after an earlier wooden mill blew down the year before. Arnold's father was born at Leamington and the family immigrated to Rhode Island in 1635. It appears in Arnold's Will of 1677, which mentions his "stone-built windmiln", and in a deed filed 10 months earlier referring to 'ye stone tower',



implying that even then the building's purpose was a bit confusing to onlookers.

During the Chesterton annual open weekend on 09-10 September 2006, the mill had to be closed to the public following a tragic accident. It transpired that one of the main timbers had rotted, and the stress of turning the great sails was too much, causing one of them to crash to the ground, and the other left dangling from the lightning conductor. While questions remain about why the timber only lasted for 7 years, the good news is that the sails were finally returned last month, leaving the Chesterton Windmill in its full glory again.



## Gobbets

- Gloria Powell has kindly provided advance notice of a photographic exhibition by Nic Barlow tracing the development of follies across Europe. His exhibition *Follies of Europe: Architectural Extravaganzas* will be at Petworth House from 02 August to 29 October 2008.

## Forthcoming Events

**Sunday, 04 November** – Our last visit of the year is to Croome Park in Worcestershire, and includes a guided walk of the Park with Mike Cousins and Mike Smith, National Trust manager – don't miss it! Details from [follywaters@onetel.com](mailto:follywaters@onetel.com)

Picture credits: [1] = welcometopurbeck.co.uk; [2] = The Dorset Echo Online; [3] = Warwickshire County Council; Newport, Rhode Island Tower = Matthew Trump. All other pictures by the authors of the articles.