



Stourhead in the Snow – picture © Pat Patrick

It was one year ago that we floated the idea of an e-Bulletin and sent out a trial edition for your comment. Since then it has become a welcome addition to our stable of excellent publications, but has the advantage of being able to reach a wider audience through the website. There it can be read by everyone, and is something we encourage because it helps us to fulfil the educational and promotional obligations on us as a charity.

To give it a Christmassy look, this month's Bulletin is written around the availability of pictures of follies in the snow or as part of a wintery scene. Given the number of warm winters we have had in Britain of late, snowy pictures are in short supply, even in our own picture library. So if it happens to snow this year, please visit your local folly(s) and take pictures for us for next December. In this edition I am especially grateful to Pat Patrick who kindly provided the fabulous pictures of Stourhead and the amazing Robin pictured on page 4.

Winter is a quiet time for us while we gear up for the year ahead. It gives the trustees time to prepare for the AGM, provides time to finalise our excursion plans for the year ahead, and sees the delivery of our annual *Journal*. Sadly, this will be Susan's last as editor, having completed all seven previous editions and taken it from its concept to

the highly respected periodical that it is. Although she made it look effortless, we know that producing any publication is time-consuming and requires an in-depth knowledge of the subject. Under Susan's inspired management, especially working alongside Karen Lynch, the Journal has covered a broad range of subjects including the memorable colour feature on Shell's advertising posters last year. I was even lucky enough to have an article included before the quality threshold was raised to the high standard that is now expected. Naturally we are extremely sorry that Susan has decided to step down, but we understand her reasons and wish her well with her new endeavours. Rest assured, however, that the future of the Journal is safe and that a new editor will be in place soon.

Finally, despite floods, storms and tempest throughout 2007, we managed to arrange a host of fabulous excursions, improve further the quality of our publications, and see the expansion of our website through the generosity of Alan Terrill. We hope to do the same next year, so in wishing you a Happy Christmas, we hope we will again enjoy the distinct pleasure of your company in 2008.

Andrew Plumridge
andrew@follies.fsnet.co.uk

A New Folly in Westminster



In response to last month's Bulletin, I received a note from Hilary Marshall drawing my attention to a new folly in the City of Westminster in the American State of Colorado. It was erected at the City Centre Marketplace as part of the City's policy on public art, and stands at the junction of 92nd Avenue and Sheridan Boulevard. It is one of 40 individual works of art that range from kinetic wind sculptures to brick murals and numerous bronze sculptures. If it looks familiar it is because it is a Haddonstone creation, shipped out from England via their American works at Pueblo in Colorado.

If you want to see an example of one of these pavilions in England, as well as a variety of other follies, Simon Scott has reminded me that Haddonstone's charming Show Gardens at East Haddon, near Northampton will be closed over the Christmas period (21 December to 02 January) but are normally open Monday to Friday all-year except Bank Holidays. For further details visit the Haddonstone website www.haddonstone.co.uk.



Folly of the Month: The Stoops at Nidderdale, North Yorkshire

Standing proudly above the eastern end of the Nidderdale in the North Yorkshire Moors are two massive stone stoops that at first glance look like the last remains of a massive church or monastery. In fact they were designed and built as

an eyecatcher by John Yorke (1733-1813) as part of his efforts to improve the character of the valley and recreate some of the scenes of ancient ruins that he saw during his time on the Grand Tour, and illustrated on the many paintings that he brought back to Britain.

When John Yorke returned to Yorkshire in 1780 his energy was initially directed to improving Bewerley Hall, which he had recently inherited. In the months that followed he widened his horizons and began work on enhancing his estate, including the walks around Raven's Gill and Fishpond Wood. In line with some other gentleman landlords of the time, he used the local poor and unemployed to carry out the work, helping them to avoid starvation and earning himself the nickname of 'the poor man's friend'.

Yorke's tree planting scheme was interesting in that he used decorative rather than industrial species that would have provided a quick financial return. He also sought to enhance the scene by the building of his unusual folly.

In the beginning Yorke erected three stoops, each standing 15 metres (46 feet) tall and built in the local Gritstone with ashlar dressings. Although the inspiration for his design was undoubtedly the Classical ruins seen during the Grand Tour, it is possible that he also wanted a huge ecclesiastical style ruin to link the estate with nearby Fountains Abbey, whose monks were responsible for building the original Bewerley Hall. In 1893, however, one of the three structures was blown over in a storm, leaving the two remaining columns projecting from the side of the moor like two decaying molars.



Lighting up Oxfordshire



In 1999, to commemorate the arrival of the new Millennium, local electrician Peter White placed inside the lantern of Lord Berner's folly at Farringdon, a full-size marine lighthouse lamp so it could rotate and alert passing ships of dangers in the Oxfordshire countryside. His work proved to be a huge success, so much so that he has been doing something similar each year since then. Perhaps someone could stop by and tell us what he has created this Christmas?

Stourhead, Wiltshire

The gardens at Stourhead were created by Henry Hoare II between 1741 and 1780. His inspiration was the paintings of Poussin and Claude Lorrain, and the Utopian views of classical Italian landscapes painted by Gaspar Dughet.



To the eighteenth-century gentleman, the landscape garden was the equivalent of the Ferrari Testarossa and Rolex Oyster watch, being the outward expression of his wealth and success. It

was also an opportunity to show off his education and knowledge of European architecture obtained during his taking of the Grand Tour. Hoare was no different and when he inherited the estate in 1741 he used the opportunity to demonstrate his social status through the building of a number of temples around a central lake.



His first building was the Temple of Flora, which he built in 1745. It was followed soon after by the obelisk in honour of his late father, and by the grotto (above), both built in 1748. His main triumph, however, was the building of the great lake, which he achieved by damming the River Stour, and building of the Pantheon or the Temple of Hercules (see cover page) in 1754. He added the bridge in 1762, the Temple of Apollo in 1765, and in 1772 the 50-metre tall Alfred's Tower which was designed by Henry Flitcroft



When Henry Hoare died in 1785 the estate was inherited by his grandson Richard Colt Hoare who added the boat-house. Sadly, he also demolished several important architectural treasures, including a Turkish tent, a Gothic hermitage, and a Chinese temple and Umbrello because they were not in keeping with The Great Classical Garden style.



A Maharaja's Gift

The tiny village of Stoke Row in Oxfordshire is tucked away amid woodlands some 5 miles to the north of Reading and 15 miles south of Oxford at the highest point of the southern Chiltern hills. It is one of those places that quietly goes about its business without troubling the outside world, and is a much sought after place in which to live as a result. At first glance it is difficult to imagine how it became the site of a village at all, especially since heavy clay overlaying flinty chalk made the land poor for farming, and it had no natural source of water. And yet it was that heavy clay that made the area attractive as a place to manufacture excellent bricks and tiles.

For 700 years the principal landowners were the Reade family who were based in the adjoining village of Ipsden. Edward Reade (d.1886) was at one time appointed Lieutenant-Governor of the North Western Provinces of India and was a friend of the Maharajah of Benares. In 1831 he built a drinking well in the Indian village of Azamgarh and planted an orchard around it for the benefit of the local people, adding the inscription *'The Well-Spring and the Tree-shade are gifts of the Almighty. Rest traveller, refresh and be thankful.'*



During one of their meetings Reade told the Maharajah how people in his home village were *"dependent for water retained in dirty ponds and deserted clay pits, and in dry seasons the water used in cooking in one cottage passed on to do the like office in others, urchins being cruelly thumped for furtive quenching of thirst and washing days indefinitely postponed."* Surprised by this, and as a way of demonstrating his loyalty to the British after

the 1857 Indian Mutiny, and also as an expression of his great friendship with Reade, the Maharajah agreed to fund the building of a 112 metre (365 feet) deep well at Stoke Row, together with the cost of the small cottage that stands next to it and the planting of a cherry orchard. He opened the well in person in 1864 so that *'The public should have the privilege of taking water free of charge, in all times to come'*.

Gobbets

- The Folly Fellowship's AGM is provisionally set for the weekend on 23 / 24 February 2008. Details of the venue will follow shortly.
- Michael Symes has released an excellent book on *Garden Bridges*, giving an illustrated catalogue of mainly English and some Scottish examples. The 44-page book costs £11 (incl. p+p) and can be bought from 8 Woodcote Hall, Woodcote Avenue, Wallington, Surrey SM6 0QT.
- Painshill Park at Cobham, Surrey, is running a series of special events, including a chance to visit Father Christmas in the eighteenth-century Crystal Grotto on 01 and 02 December, and from 08 to 24 December inclusive. Details from 01932 584284 or www.painshill.co.uk
- This year's winter lecture series by the London Parks and Gardens Trust includes one by Michael Symes on *London's Nineteenth-Century Pleasure Gardens* at 7pm on 10 December, at the Museum of Garden History, Lambeth Palace Road, London SE1. Also of interest is *The Evolution of Victoria Embankment Gardens* by Sarah Crouch on 10 March. Details from 020-7839 3969.

We wish you a happy Christmas and a
folly-filled New Year



Picture credits: (cover) Stourhead Lake and Pantheon – Pat Patrick; The Westminster Folly – www.ci.westminster.co.us; Pavilion – Simon Scott; Yorke's Folly – Tristan Campbell; Lord Berner's Folly – John Waine; The Stourhead pictures (Temple of Flora, Grotto, Alfred's Tower, Henry Hoare Mausoleum and Temple of Apollo) – Pat Patrick; Maharajah's Well – Folly Fellowship Picture Library, the Robert Pilgrim Collection; Robin – Pat Patrick.