



The Druid's Temple at Ilton Moor, North Yorkshire

Druid's Temple Stones Stolen

Mystery surrounds the theft last month of the stones that formed the Druid's Temple on Ilton Moor, one of Yorkshire's more remote follies. The theft took place during the night of 29 February, and was discovered by members of a local Orienteering Club who found deep tyre tracks leading to the folly site. When they reached it all they found was a mud bath with almost all of the stones unearthed and removed.



The Druid's Temple was an early Victorian folly built by William Danby who also erected the nearby New Swinton Hall with a little help from James Wyatt, John Foss and Robert Lugar. Having completed work on his fine mansion, he wanted to improve its setting and do his bit to relieve local unemployment, so paid a shilling to anyone who was prepared to give a day's work in the building of his stone circle. The work was far from easy for the local jobless because it was heavy and dangerous. Danby was also a perfectionist who wanted the job done properly, and brought in huge stones to create the large oval of altars, cromlechs, menhirs, dolmens. That attention to detail is one of the reasons why many people seeing it for the first time believe it to be a genuine Stonehenge.

This fakery and the site's remoteness was often the reason why it attracted attention from so many undesirables. In addition to the children of hikers and tourists believing it to be some kind of adventure playground and climbing all over the stones, young couples seem to believe it had fertility powers and used it for a different kind of fun at the midnight hour. It was also popular with Pagans and Goths, something that was recently highlighted by the Baroness Masham of Ilton in the House of Lords, who stated that "A few miles from Masham, on the estate, is a realistic copy of a druid temple, with all the stones, including the sacrificial stone, in the correct positions. One Sunday afternoon, my secretary was going for a walk with a friend when she found a pig's head sitting on the altar, which gave her a terrific shock. It is thought that there has been devil worship there...Another incident was a large gathering of people from Manchester who took over the place

for the whole night in order to have a rave. They tore gates off their hinges and broke down trees to make a huge bonfire. The police were called and with the gamekeepers, could only watch at a distance. It was only after a fight had taken place within the group and one of the people had been taken to hospital with severe injuries that the rave subsided. When my nephew visited the site the next day to inspect the damage, he found half-burnt probation orders and such discarded documents."

The investigation into the theft is being led by Chief Inspector Brian Shuttleworth who believes that the stones may have been taken out of the country. "It's all part of the trend to steal ornaments and statues from gardens" he said, adding "I'm sure they have been taken through Hull Container Port to Russia to provide some rich businessman with an instant folly garden."



Anyone who has information about the theft is urged to contact the local police. There is no truth in the rumour that a reward has been offered for information leading to the arrest of the thieves and the safe return of the stones.

Time to Define a Folly

Ever since we first set up the Fellowship there has been a debate about how we define a folly. It is an issue that has never reached a satisfactory conclusion, and is why our language expert Pieter Boogaart is still working on it. Now, it seems, we need to bite the bullet or have the issue decided for us by European bureaucrats who want to standardise the definition of all building types.

The Brussels-based Standardisation Unit is part of the European Commission's *Enterprise and Industry Directorate-General*, and exists to ensure that there is a common understanding about all things across Europe – you will recall their role in the debate about whether tomatoes are officially a

fruit or a vegetable, and their conclusion that they must be a fruit because they contain pips. The EU is nonetheless keen to stress that "standardisation is a voluntary process based on consensus amongst different economic actors (industry, SMEs, consumers, workers, environmental NGOs, and public authorities etc.) and is carried out by independent standards bodies acting at national, European and international level."



The Column House at Desert de Retz, Paris

The problem stems from a difficulty that many European organisations have in deciding whether or not they can give money to the repair and restoration of a folly because they don't know when a building is one. All of this is not surprising given that follies manifest themselves in many forms, and that buildings regarded as 'folly' in one country are not necessarily held to be the same in another.

While welcoming the debate at such a senior level, and understanding that it can be confusing to members of the public and government officials, we are keen to see the definition kept as loose as possible to protect the inventiveness and creativity of current and new follies. Andrew Plumridge has been invited to attend the first of the meetings in Brussels later this month, and invites all members to urgently let him have their definitions of the term.



The Palais Idéal du Facteur Cheval, France

Castle Howard Obelisk Closed

Visitors to Castle Howard in North Yorkshire will find that the recently restored grade I listed obelisk is again under scaffolding and is closed. The problem is that it has started to lean dramatically toward the north-east, and has been condemned by Health and Safety Inspectors from North Yorkshire County Council who have formally issued a Dangerous Structures Notice.

The obelisk was recently the subject of a £200,000 restoration so the cause of the problem is something of a mystery. Possible causes include the collapse of local underground coal mines and vibration from traffic using the nearby A64. There has also been a significant problem with birds pecking at the lime mortar between the cut stones in much the same way that they do with putty around new glazing and with milk bottle tops. This last possibility has not been ruled out by English Heritage Inspectors who are urgently looking to see how they can best save the monument from permanent loss.



The Goat Tower of Oklahoma

Doug Matthews is “one hell of a nice guy,” according to his local veterinarian. At his farm outside Baxter Springs, near Tulsa, in the American State of Oklahoma, he began to get concerned when his herd of dairy goats from the Saanen Valley in Switzerland started producing milk that was bitter and devoid of the nutrients that made it suitable for people with lactose intolerance. While the breed is known to be sensitive to sunlight and performs best in cooler conditions, the weather in the mid-west State had not been particularly hot and seemed to be an illogical reason for the drop in milk quality. Blood tests also revealed that there was no physiological reason for the problem.

In true American style, Mr Matthews decided to bring in a specialist goat psychotherapist who assessed the herd over a two week period and

concluded that they were suffering from dysthymia, which is a form of depression. The condition is one that affects some humans too, leaving them feeling unimportant, dissatisfied and frightened by modern life. Although medication can be beneficial in these situations, Mr Matthews didn't want his goats to be given drugs in case it spoiled the medicinal quality of their milk, and thus kill off his lucrative business. So together with the psychotherapist he looked at other ways of cheering up his herd. In the end they agreed that the goats were missing the mountains of their homeland and were in need of somewhere to climb. The solution was to build a tall folly tower for the goats to use, a project that was completed in three months using six thousand clay bricks that had to be imported from the Nasa Slöga brick-works outside Belgrade (Serbia) because there are none made in Oklahoma or its neighbouring states.



Now that they have their very own folly tower the goats have returned to full health and their milk yields have returned to normal levels again.

Longford Tower Shortened

Anyone who has been aboard the new Airbus A380 aircraft will tell you how lovely it is, with wide leather seats in business class and individual cabins in first. But the inclusion of all this luxury, together with the increased number of passengers that it carries, means that it weighs considerably more than its rival the Boeing 747-500 and needs a longer take-off area. It is also much slower at climbing away from the airport.



During test flights at London Heathrow at the end of 2007, pilots expressed concern that they were unable to climb to a satisfactory height above Gallop's Folly on the outskirts of Longford village, located at the west edge of the north runway, and that it was a potential risk to passenger safety. And so in what is seen as a dreadful act of vandalism, BAA has used its special powers to cut the top off this grade II listed belvedere and leave it looking like a stunted chimney.



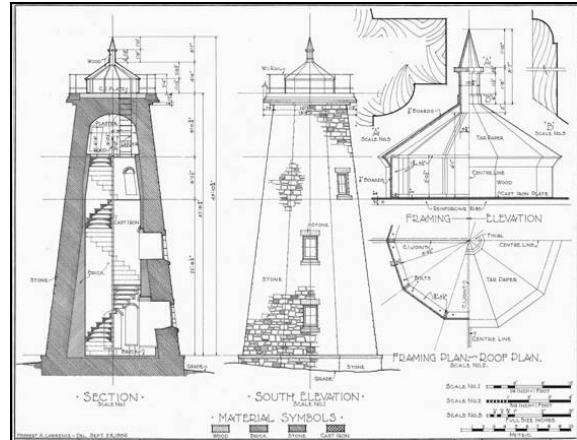
In a response to a letter from us the local authority's conservation officer admitted that he was powerless to stop the work because it was outside of his jurisdiction. He has nonetheless made a formal complaint to Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport and requested that the powers granted to BAA are reviewed.

Planning Permission Sought For Hampstead Lighthouse

Hampstead Heath is known to be the highest point in London and provides spectacular views across the capital. To that extent it is the most logical site for a monument aimed at warning the people of London that they need to do their bit to control global warming.

Local resident Freda Mayor has submitted a planning application seeking permission to erect a lighthouse on the Heath to warn Londoners that they need to change their lifestyle and to urgently reduce their carbon footprint if disaster is to be

avoided. Her idea is to erect a beacon that sends a rotating light across the whole of London warning of the dangers that are ahead of us unless we all start to change the way we live and start to do more to protect our fragile planet. If it is approved, the lighthouse will stand 40 metres (131 feet) high and will be as visible on the London skyline as the steel arch supporting the roof of the new Wembley Stadium.



Forthcoming Events

Sunday, 13 April 2008 – Tour of Somerset follies with Jonathan Holt. Further details published in the January *Foll-e*, and from jm.holt@virgin.net

Sunday, 15 June 2008 – Tour of Painshill Park, Cobham, Surrey with Iain Gray. Further information given in the leaflet posted in February or from Iain Gray at 020-8870 4567 or gg@candycollect.co.uk

Sunday, 29 June 2008 – Open Day at Pelham Place, East Tisted, Alton, Hampshire, in aid of the Army Benevolent Fund. Details available through andrew@follies.fsnet.co.uk.

Sunday, 13 July 2008 – Tour of Derbyshire follies. Further details from Joy Cotton on 01332 705165.

Volunteer Wanted – Urgently!

Have you ever wanted to help us run the Folly Fellowship? If so, now is your moment because we urgently need a volunteer to help us deal with the vast number of complaints that are likely to result from the release of this April Fools edition of the Bulletin. The post is likely to be a difficult one and will need someone who can tactfully deal with all of the unreasonable people who don't share our sense of humour or understand that this edition has been issued as part of an elaborate joke. It will also mean that we can avoid being sued and thus survive until our twenty-first anniversary in 2009.

If you can help, please send your CV to andrew@follies.fsnet.co.uk.