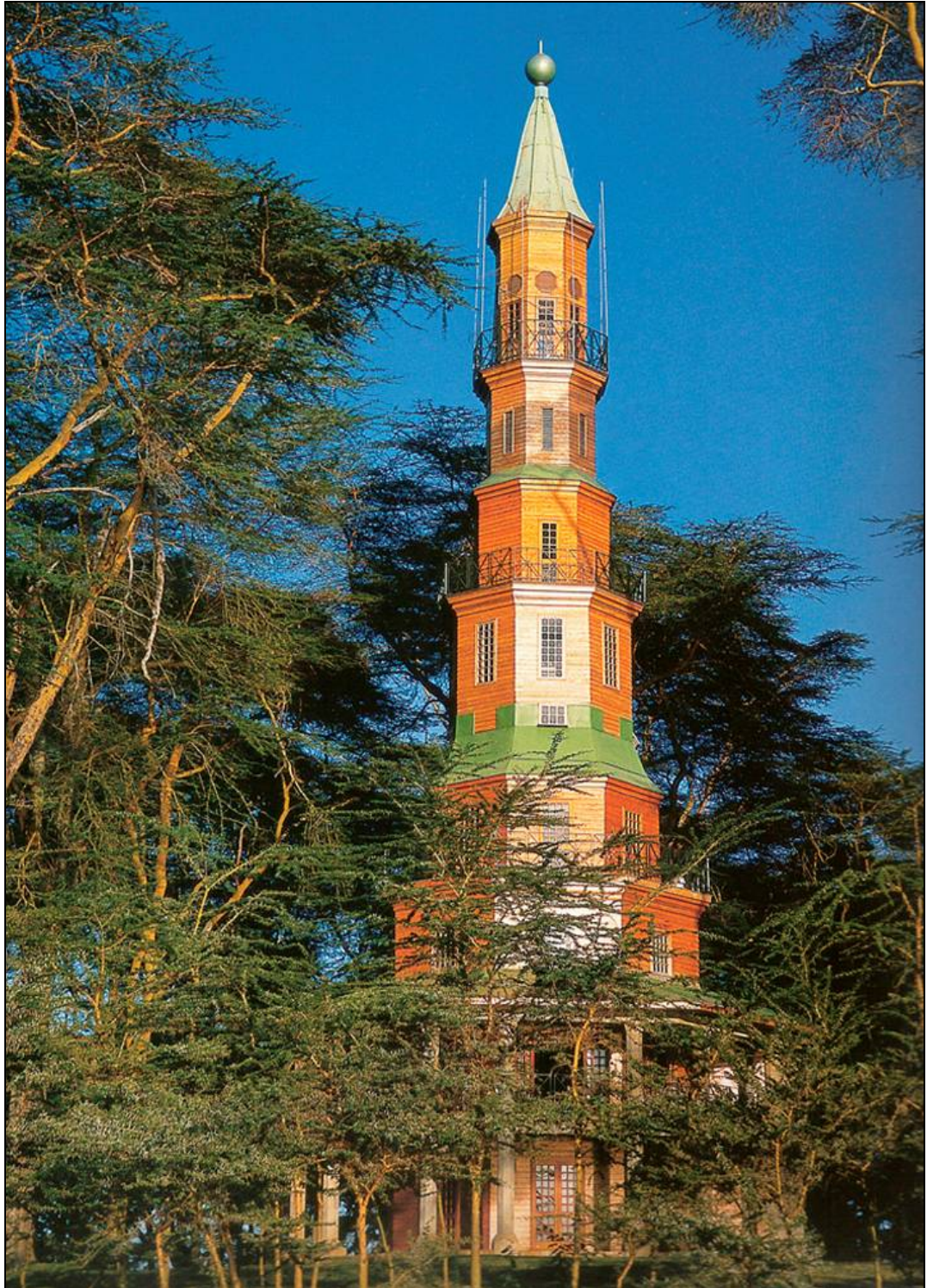




## Dodo's Folly, Hippo Point, Lake Naivasha, Kenya





## In spite of them all!

In 1842, George Annesley – the second and last Earl Mountnorris (1769-1844) – owned most of the area around the Worcestershire village of Arley, but was particularly keen to add to his estate a property located in the centre of the village called Hafren House. His only problem was that it was owned by Sam Wilcox, who had already made a fortune as the owner of a local quarry and rather enjoyed the position and outlook from his home. Not to be deterred, Mountnorris made Wilcox a substantial offer which he declined, something that the Earl found less than pleasing. In his fury, he is said to have flown into a deep rage and issued instructions for a building to be erected where it would block the view from Wilcox's house, thus undermining its value and status in the village. The result was the appearance of a splendid Gothic folly that is now available as a holiday home through the Vivat Trust ([enquiries@vivat.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@vivat.org.uk)).



Standing next to the churchyard, the building was first known as Vicarage Tower. After the Earl's death on 23 July 1844, it adopted its more formal name of Arley Tower, and its informal sobriquet of Spite Tower.

Similar stories are commonplace across the world, including one attached to a three-storey timber building in Adamsville, RI (USA), where the Rhode Island Red chicken was bred. The tower is said to have been erected during the early twentieth century by a member of the Manchester family to deliberately obscure a view of the town by a neighbour who upset him.



Another involves the "Twin Towers" on the main road between Detroit and Chicago, opened in 1924. It was then that the newly formed Michigan Observation Company asked a local landowner,

Edward Kelly, if they could purchase part of his hill beside Highway 112 (now US 12) in order to build a prospect tower so that travellers could stop and admire the view. Not wanting to see it from his home, Kelly said no. Undeterred, the company simply went next door to Kelly's neighbour (Edward Brighton) and made him the same offer, which he accepted. And so, on 4 October 1924, the prospect tower was opened in front of 1,200 people and in a carnival atmosphere.

To make best use of the view, the tower was built only six feet inside the boundary of Kelly's property, because that was the highest part of the Brighton land. It stood some 50 feet in height and had a 14 foot square viewing platform at the top, and a souvenir shop at the bottom where visitors paid their five cents entry fee. Kelly was naturally furious at this, and so in revenge he built a copy of the tower six feet into his own land, but gained the upper hand by making his slightly taller. It soon obtained the name 'Spite Tower', and encouraged the Michigan Observation Company to react by raising its platform to match Kelly's.



In the battle that followed, each party made noises about out-doing the other. In the end, the company declared that if the feud was not ended immediately it would demolish its wooden tower and erect a much higher one in steel. It was enough to bring Kelly to his senses, with the contest ending at 60 feet. Both sides still competed for business which continued for half a century.



In more recent times, the title 'Tower of Spite' has been attributed to Wainhouse Tower at Halifax, West Yorkshire, but wrongly so. Standing at a massive 253 feet in height, it was (officially, at least) John Wainhouse's sensible response to the Smoke Abatement Act of 1870, which declared that industrial works like his had to reduce the impact of smoke on surrounding built up areas. It was an attempt to improve the lives of people who lived in urban centres like Halifax, where the town

was frequently shrouded in a thick blanket of smog, and where the air was heavily polluted with chemicals and soot.

When it came into force, Wainhouse's dye works on Washer Lane did not fully comply with the legislation, so at the alleged encouragement of the local industrialist Sir Henry Edwards, the works manager (Henry Mossman) was prosecuted. For his defence, Mossman had to convince the Court that a series of improvements were in hand, so it was from his testimony that the Wainhouse Tower idea evolved. He explained that the company was intending to install a series of fans in the furnaces to hasten the dispersal of the smoke, and were planning to demolish the current six small chimneys in favour of a large one. During the next few months Wainhouse (right) put forward an ambitious plan to build his new chimney on the hillside above his works, requiring the flue to be taken a couple of hundred metres through a tunnel beneath a main road and part of the hillside. Among the objectors to the project was Sir Henry who complained of the inconvenience and damage that it would cause.

By this time relations between the two men were at an all-time low. Edwards thought of himself as part of the aristocracy and boasted on several occasions that no house on his side of the valley could see into his land at Pye Nest mansion, which just happened to border the Wainhouse estate. Around the same time, Wainhouse was setting out to improve the Rochdale Road and proposed raising the level by 18 inches, knowing full well that it would allow travellers to look over the wall into Sir Henry's land. With bitter words being cast, Wainhouse went to court to clear his name only to find Sir Henry sitting on the bench as Justice of the Peace.

Sir Henry was also known to hate the sight of industrial chimneys, and often complained when white linen was hung out to dry on Norland Hill because it spoiled the view – the smog was often so bad lower down that white linen would soon turn black from it. Not unsurprisingly, a rumour began to spread saying that Wainhouse's plan for his single chimney was a deliberate attempt to dominate and overlook Sir Henry's land, and was clearly intended



to annoy him. The plan then took a large step forward in 1871 when Wainhouse employed Isaac Booth (1823-91) as his architect for the project.

At first it seemed to be an innocent choice, except Booth was also working for Edwards at the time, and with the feud between the two heading towards boiling point, Booth found it impossible to work for both at the same time. Two years later he decided to resign from one of the commissions and chose to stick with Edwards, a decision that he later regretted. In what might be regarded as an act of spite, Wainhouse employed Booth's young assistant Richard Dugdale to complete the project, and although he kept to Booth's main design, it was he who added the balcony and crown feature.

The appearance of a balcony fuelled further speculation that the tower was not intended to be a working chimney, afterall, how could Wainhouse use the viewing platform if smoke was bellowing from an outlet above his head? When Wainhouse then announced he was planning to build an observatory at the top (something that he never intended to do), it was enough to push Sir Henry over the edge and triggered a bitter two year fight between them. It culminated in Wainhouse publishing a number of pamphlets about his rival to ridicule some of Sir Henry's claims, including one that his was "the only county family" in the area. Another saw Wainhouse mock Sir Henry's Masonic links in a pamphlet entitled *Yeomanry Cavalry*.

When it was completed on 9 September 1875, the tower had cost £14,000 and used around 9,000 tons of local stone. Eight years later, at the age of 66, Wainhouse died from 'congestion of the lungs', but according to one of his friends, he had reconciled his differences with Sir Henry just a couple of years before his death.



## Folly of the Month: The Dodo Pagoda at Lake Naivasha, Kenya

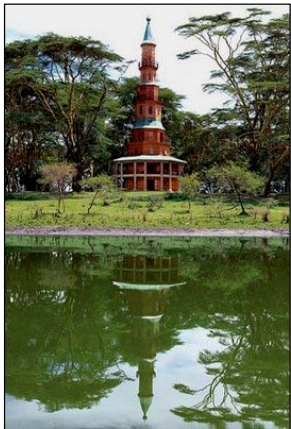
**M**ichael Cunningham-Reid is the genius who built the extraordinary Dodo Pagoda at Lake Naivasha, in central Kenya, although it is rightly named after his wife whose idea it was. Dodo Cunningham-Reid's inspiration for the project stemmed from the follies that she saw in England, and then wanted to emulate back home by building something of her own.



After buying 500 acres of land from his step-father, Lord Delamere, Michael Cunningham-Reid set about creating a Garden of Eden on the shores of Lake Naivasha, and opened it up for visitors to share and enjoy a close relationship with the many wild animals that pass through the surrounding 25,000 acres of National Park. His dream location is now consistently rated as one of the top retreats in the world, one of the most luxurious and one of the least known of Kenya's hideaways.



Dodo's folly, as it was known from the start, began as a series of rough sketches and over a period of four years evolved into a nine storey high monument stretching above its surrounding grove of Acacia trees, with each level boasting a view of the lake and the Aberdare Mountains. It was designed by the local architect George Wade and his engineer Nick Evans, and completed in 1995. At 115 feet high the pagoda is built around a steel frame clad in cypress wood, with the interior panelled in African hardwoods. It boasts a total of four bedrooms and a Veranda at first floor level from which it is possible to safely watch hippos, cheetas, giraffes, impalas and zebra, as well as the amazing sunsets that occur in this part of Africa.

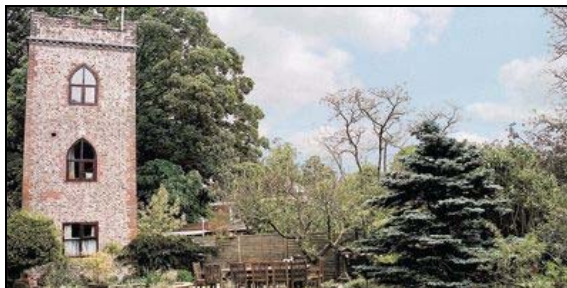


The atmosphere is overwhelmingly romantic mixed with a gentle recalling of old-world colonial luxury. Breakfast is often served outside beneath the towering acacias while fish eagles catch theirs, and dinner is taken by candlelight listening to hippos splashing in the nearby lake.

The Hippo Point Estate is located north-west of Nairobi. Bookings can be made through [hippo-pt@africaonline.co.ke](mailto:hippo-pt@africaonline.co.ke), with further details available at [www.hippo-pointkenya.com](http://www.hippo-pointkenya.com). It will come as no surprise to learn that all this luxury and tranquillity comes with an appropriate price tag, but who counts the cost when you are staying in one of the world's most extraordinary buildings in one of its most beautiful locations.

## Anyone for Cricket?

On the subject of weekend retreats, anyone who is interested in both cricket and follies will find total contentment in the southern Hampshire village of Hambledon, just to the north of busy Portsmouth and Havant. This is not only the birthplace of cricket but is also home to Hopton Tower in the grounds of Folly House.



Little is known about the history of the tower other than it was built in the mid-nineteenth century and has a strangely religious appearance. It comes complete with the shared use of a 30ft long indoor heated swimming-pool, and access to some of the prettiest villages and countryside in the south of England. If you want to stay there, bookings must be made by telephone to **08701 917998** or **01282 845052**.

## Masseys Folly Update

Almost a year after the Masseys Folly Preservation Trust was set up, the Trustees have appointed a project manager using funds awarded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and the Architectural Heritage Fund. Part of his task is to identify funds from other organisations so that if the village decides Massey's Folly should be restored and brought into community use, there will be matched funding in place. At the same time, the Winchester architects Radley House Partnership have been carrying out a survey of the building so that they can write the Conservation Management Plan.



The Trust's main focus is the restoration of the folly and to finding a long-term sustainable use that will benefit the community as a whole. Sadly, English Heritage has not supported the Trust, nor shown any interest in doing so. It does again raise the question of what purpose is served by this increasingly unhelpful organisation.

## My Favourite Folly: Jack the Treacle Eater, Somerset

**A**lthough 'Mad Jack' Fuller appeals most to me as a folly builder, my favourite folly (by a short head from the Palais Idéal du Facteur Cheval) is another Jack.

Spike Milligan introduced Gill and me to Jack the Treacle Eater in the 1970s, in what was probably a half-hour telly programme on BBC2. As I recall, we virtually jumped in the car and hurtled down to Somerset. I've been back there four times since, I think: in blazing sunshine, in the rain which stopped just in time for our Garden Party there, on a very blustery autumn day and, on that first occasion, beneath a sky so black it threatened to fall and crush us.

We picked Jack out in the headlights as we parked in front of the house. Squire Messiter and his wife answered our knock on the front door in a way which Gwyn and Wim regularly experienced from old money, with a warm welcome and with pleasure at our interest in their follies.



I had had the good fortune to be blessed with a family with wide interests and an exceptional circle of friends that enabled me to visit many fascinating buildings. I must have been in my late twenties before I began to appreciate that follies were not commonplace though I did think them very special just the same. However, Jack the Treacle was truly extraordinary.

On my next visit to Yeovil, to attend the retirement party of a much-loved bank manager, I set off from my hotel straight after breakfast with our camera and took a taxi to Barwick Park. The cabbie had no idea where it was but dropped me

near the Cone which was stranded in the midst of an agricultural show. I spent a blissful day snapping away at everything. I had already had the most marvellous view of Jack from the train as I arrived from London but now I was going to walk around, it if not do a Steve Winnard and climb up to the door in the turret. I was a little bothered when I noticed that I'd taken thirty-seven shots including some marvellous wildlife ones. When I got home I discovered that the camera had been returned to Gill by a colleague who had neglected to put in a replacement film – no pics!



I love follies with good social history, better still with a colourful anecdote, and with Jack the Treacle Eater you couldn't do better. In Mad Jack Fuller's case he is said to have given employment by getting the needy to build the estate wall; the other Jack was one of four follies supposedly built for the same reason. Then again Mad Jack was believed to be seated ready for dinner in his pyramidal mausoleum while Jack trained on treacle to run to London with messages for his master. But who was his master? Gwyn and Wim suggest Squire Messiter in the 1820s, while Jonathan Holt (in his new book *Somerset Follies*) inclines towards Barbara Jones's belief that John Newman first built them for fun in about 1770. There's probably a bit of truth in both versions: I go for Newman over Messiter but perhaps partly for the reasons attributed to Messiter. Over the better part of two centuries the Messiter family may well have embellished the story a little. Surely Mad Jack would have done just the same.

So Jack the Treacle Eater's my favourite folly. Well he is today.

Iain K S Gray  
[gg@candycollect.co.uk](http://gg@candycollect.co.uk)



## Membership Matters

Have you renewed your subscription yet? If the answer is yes, thank you! You will continue to share in all of the folly facts, fun and frolics. If you have not yet done so, however, you risk missing out on future Folly Fellowship festivities, so act now by forwarding a cheque to the membership secretary Norma Hebden at 36 Longfield Drive, Rodley, Leeds LS13 1JX: the rate is £25 for individual membership, or £30 for joint members. If you can, please pay by standing order because it helps to reduce work at our end: if you already do so, please check that you are paying the current rate; and to convert to a standing order, contact Norma for a mandate form that includes your unique member number. Remember to also complete a Gift Aid form so we can reclaim the tax.

Norma is also the one to contact if you want to acquire magazine binders or back issues of the magazine or journal. There are also a few silk ties, scarves and sweatshirts remaining if you are quick, but they are going fast. She can be contacted at the above address, at [membership@follies.org.uk](mailto:membership@follies.org.uk), or on 0113-257 3366.

## Gobbets

- Peter Dane wrote to me some time ago to point out that with the planned redevelopment of Euston Station from 2009, there are hopes that the great Euston Arch (originally built in 1837) could be restored and set between the two Italianate lodges in front of the station, in much the same way that Temple Bar was returned to Paternoster Square (*Foll-e* 2, June 2007). Ever since its controversial demolition in 1962 the whereabouts of the stones has been something of a Holy Grail to architectural historians, including Dan Cruickshank who found them ten years ago dumped in the Prescott Channel of the River Lea, close to what is now the site of the 2012 Olympic Stadium. If rebuilt, would it be folly, he asks? Answers to the usual address.



- Dr Susan Gordon of Parks and Gardens UK is looking for any information that we may have on Rococo (slightly ogee) follies/archways of a bottle neck or heart shape, located here or abroad. If you know of any, please contact [seg1738@aol.com](mailto:seg1738@aol.com). At the same time, check out the Parks and Gardens

UK website ([www.parksandgardens.ac.uk](http://www.parksandgardens.ac.uk)) for an excellent feature on James Pulham & Son of Broxbourne (Hertfordshire), one of the leading firms of landscape gardeners in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and the main manufacturers of Pulhamite. Further information on Pulhamite and the Pulham legacy is at [www.pulham.org.uk](http://www.pulham.org.uk).

- The offices of the Open House Scheme moved on 19 May to their new address at 44-46 Scrutton Street, London EC2A 4HH.
- Congratulations to William Palin who has taken over from Adam Wilkinson as Director of SAVE Britain's Heritage. Congratulations too to Adam on his appointment as Director of Edinburgh World Heritage, and on his recent marriage.

SAVE Britain's Heritage cordially invites you to attend its annual Conservation Book Fair at The Gallery, 77 Cowcross Street, London EC1M 6EL, between 12pm and 7pm on Thursday, 17 July 2008.

The nearest tube station is Farringdon, and the nearest NCP car parks at Cardinal House and Snowhill.

Among the stall-holders will be the Ancient Monuments Society, Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, Twentieth Century Society, Yale University Press and the Cinema Theatres Association.

## Forthcoming F/F Events

**Sunday, 13 July 2008** – Among the many delights contained within this tour of Derbyshire follies are the Moorish Temple and Tuffa Window at Elvaston Castle, the Swarkestone Pavilion (courtesy of the Landmark Trust), Anchor Church, and the grounds at Calke Abbey where we will be visiting the grotto and icehouse.



The park at Elvaston covers over 200 acres of varied landscape, including beautiful woodland, gardens and open parkland. They were set out by the third Earl Harrington who wanted to see a new style of landscaped garden to go with his newly rebuilt Gothic castle. He offered the commission to Lancelot Brown, who turned it down because the area was too flat and uninspiring. As a result it was finished by the fourth Earl as a symbol of love for his actress bride.

Working alongside William Barron and a team of 90 gardeners, he created a landscape that echoed the gardens of Tuscany and the Alhambra, including a Moorish temple in which he placed symbols of a knight's chivalric love for his lady and a statue of him worshipping at her feet.

The Swarkestone Pavilion is undoubtedly one of the prettiest buildings in Britain, and was built in the early seventeenth century to provide a grandstand view of whatever occurred in front of it, including jousting, bear-baiting and bowling. It was built by Richard Shepperd to a design attributed to John Smythson, one of our first true architects in England. Having outlived Swarkestone Hall, which was demolished in 1750, the pavilion fell under the controlling influence of the Harpur Crewe family at Calke Abbey, who eventually sold it to Landmark Trust. Appropriately, therefore, our visit will end at Calke Abbey to see its grotto and icehouse. Look out too for some great lock-ups and well-dressing.



Details from Joy Cotton on **01332 705165**.

#### **Saturday 20 – Sunday 21 September 2008 –**

This is a weekend wallowing in the work of William Beckford and understanding the genius of his architectural ideas. Saturday begins with an introduction to the man himself by Leo Vaughan-Williams, and is followed by a tour of Fonthill Estate led by Lord Margadale. This is an excellent opportunity to see the bridge, boat house, the lake and the grottoes. In the afternoon, by kind permission of the Fonthill Abbey Estate, there will be a visit to the Abbey, and the site of the beacon.



On Sunday the tour moves to the Lansdown Tower, built by Beckford to overlook the City of Bath. A guided tour will be led by Amy Frost, curator of the Beckford Tower Trust.

Further details are available from Susanne at [susanne.harding@ukf.net](mailto:susanne.harding@ukf.net). Tickets for members are £13 for Saturday and £5 for Sunday, and £15

and £7 for guests, including a bacon sandwich or pastry with your Saturday morning coffee.

**Saturday, 16 August 2008** – The Annual Summer Garden Party is at the Horton Menagerie, south of Northampton. Tickets will be released in the next few weeks through [andrew@follies.fsnet.co.uk](mailto:andrew@follies.fsnet.co.uk).



The Menagerie was designed by Thomas Wright of Durham as a folly to Horton Hall, built for the third Earl of Halifax and demolished in 1955. It was saved from destruction by the late Gervase Jackson Stops, who also redesigned the gardens. His work has been continued and enhanced by the present owners and now extends to more than five acres, including a new walled garden, shell grotto, gothic arbour and chapel.

**Saturday, 08 November 2008** – Visit to Hardwick Park, Sedgefield, Durham (an eighteenth century garden currently being restored) and more. Further details to follow.



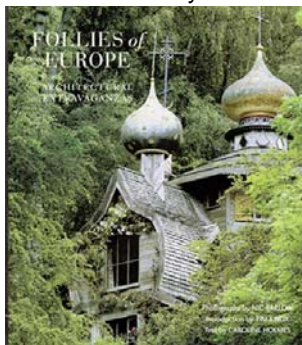
## **Other Events**

**Sunday, 06 July 2008** – The British Water Tower Appreciation Society has invited us to join them at water tower at Houghton Hall in Norfolk. The tower will be unlocked at 12:15 to allow us to see inside now that the internal tank has been removed. If you are interested, please meet in the car park at 12:00 – the house will open at 1:30. Details from Will Harvey at [harveys@care4free.net](mailto:harveys@care4free.net) – be sure to mention that you are an F/F member.



**02 August – 29 October 2008** – Exhibition of folly photographs by Nic Barlow at Petworth House, West Sussex.

From the moment that he first saw le Palais Idéal du Facteur Cheval at Hauterives (France), Nic Barlow was smitten by the subject of follies. Since then he has travelled extensively for over three years capturing their spirit in a collection of brilliant photographs, some of which appear in his new book *Follies of Europe: architectural extravaganzas*. This personal selection of follies from across mainland Europe with accompanying text by Caroline Holmes and an introduction by Tim Knox (Director of the Sir John Soane's Museum, London) reveal the wealth and exuberance of follies ranging from the Baroque and Rococo through Art Nouveau to the present day, and his pictures show in fabulous clarity the dedication to detail that makes both the buildings and the personalities that created them evocative of a time of imagination, elegance and eccentricity.



The exhibition at Petworth House runs from 2 August to 29 October: a further exhibition will be held at the Hove Museum and Art Gallery from 24 January to 3 May 2009.



**29 – 31 August 2008** – The Annual Conference of the Association of Gardens Trusts takes place at Leweston School, near Sherborne (Dorset), with its theme based loosely on Thomas Hardy's *Far From the Madding Crowd*. As well as the usual array of talks, visits will be made to Sherborne Castle, Duntish Court, Clifton Maybank, and Shell House. Details of the conference and accommodation are available from [www.gardenstrusts.org.uk](http://www.gardenstrusts.org.uk).

## And Finally: Caption Competition



Peter and Joyce Kiff kindly sent to me this picture from our visit to Painshill Park and suggested it for the caption competition. So, there is a bottle of the usual Brouilly for the best entry submitted to me at [andrew@follies.fsnet.co.uk](mailto:andrew@follies.fsnet.co.uk) by 21 July.

Picture credits: Cover – [www.topsytyrystyle.com](http://www.topsytyrystyle.com); Spite Tower, Worcs – Vivat Trust; and Adamsville – [www.photographersdirect.com](http://www.photographersdirect.com); Irish Hill Towers – LeRoy Barnett of [www.lighthouseedepot.com](http://www.lighthouseedepot.com) and [www.theexponent.com](http://www.theexponent.com); Wainhouse – [www.worksofwainhouse.com](http://www.worksofwainhouse.com); Wainhouse Tower – [www.groovyf.co.uk](http://www.groovyf.co.uk); Dodo Pagoda – [www.hippo-pointkenya.com](http://www.hippo-pointkenya.com) and Calie Anderson; Hopton Tower – [www.bookcottages.com](http://www.bookcottages.com); Massey's Folly – [www.farringdon.biz](http://www.farringdon.biz); Jack the Treacle – [www.salisburyctc.org](http://www.salisburyctc.org) and [www.en.wikipedia.org](http://www.en.wikipedia.org); Euston Arch – [www.common.wikimedia.org](http://www.common.wikimedia.org); The Swarkestone Pavilion – [www.nempf.org](http://www.nempf.org); Calke Abbey Icehouse – [www.picasaweb.google.com](http://www.picasaweb.google.com); Fonthill Abbey – [www.beckford.c18.net](http://www.beckford.c18.net); Horton Menagerie – [www.gardenvisit.com](http://www.gardenvisit.com); Hardwick Park – [www.sedgefield.gov.uk](http://www.sedgefield.gov.uk); The Pagoda at Chateau de Groussay, France and Portmeirion – Nic Barlow; Caption competition – Peter and Joyce Kiff. Our grateful thanks to all of them for use of their pictures.

