



Issue 39:  
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### Events calendar:

- **18 June**—*A visit to Clearbeck Gardens* in Lancaster, and Kirkby Lonsdale to see Ruskin's View and Andy Goldworthy's Sheepfolds. Details from [clearbeckarts@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:clearbeckarts@yahoo.co.uk)
- **29 July**—*A visit to Tabley House* at Knutsford and Eaton Hall near Chester. Details from [ijackson@liv.ac.uk](mailto:ijackson@liv.ac.uk)
- **20 August**—*Annual Summer Garden Party* at Hope Valley, with additional visits to Dolfor grotto and Leighton Hall Poultry House, Shropshire. Details from [webmaster@follies.org.uk](mailto:webmaster@follies.org.uk)
- **24 September**—*Herefordshire Ramble*, with visits to Cadmore Millennium Tower, Westonbury Water Gardens and Hampton Court. Details from [pfgodfrey@gmail.com](mailto:pfgodfrey@gmail.com)
- **16 October**—*'Burt's Bits:'* A tour of George Burt's follies at Swanage, Dorset. Details from [jm.holt@virgin.net](mailto:jm.holt@virgin.net)

### Landmark Trust Open Days:

- **17-19 June**—*Queen Anne's Summerhouse* at Old Warden, Bedfordshire

### The Folly Fellowship

Articles, pictures, comments and feedback for the e-Bulletin should be sent to [andrew@follies.fsnet.co.uk](mailto:andrew@follies.fsnet.co.uk). All other correspondence should be sent to [membership@follies.org.uk](mailto:membership@follies.org.uk).

# The Gazebos of New England - I



Derby Summerhouse at Glen Magna, Danvers, Massachusetts. Photo: Daderot, Wikipedia

**T**he New England region of North America covers the six states of Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Connecticut. As its name suggests, it was one of

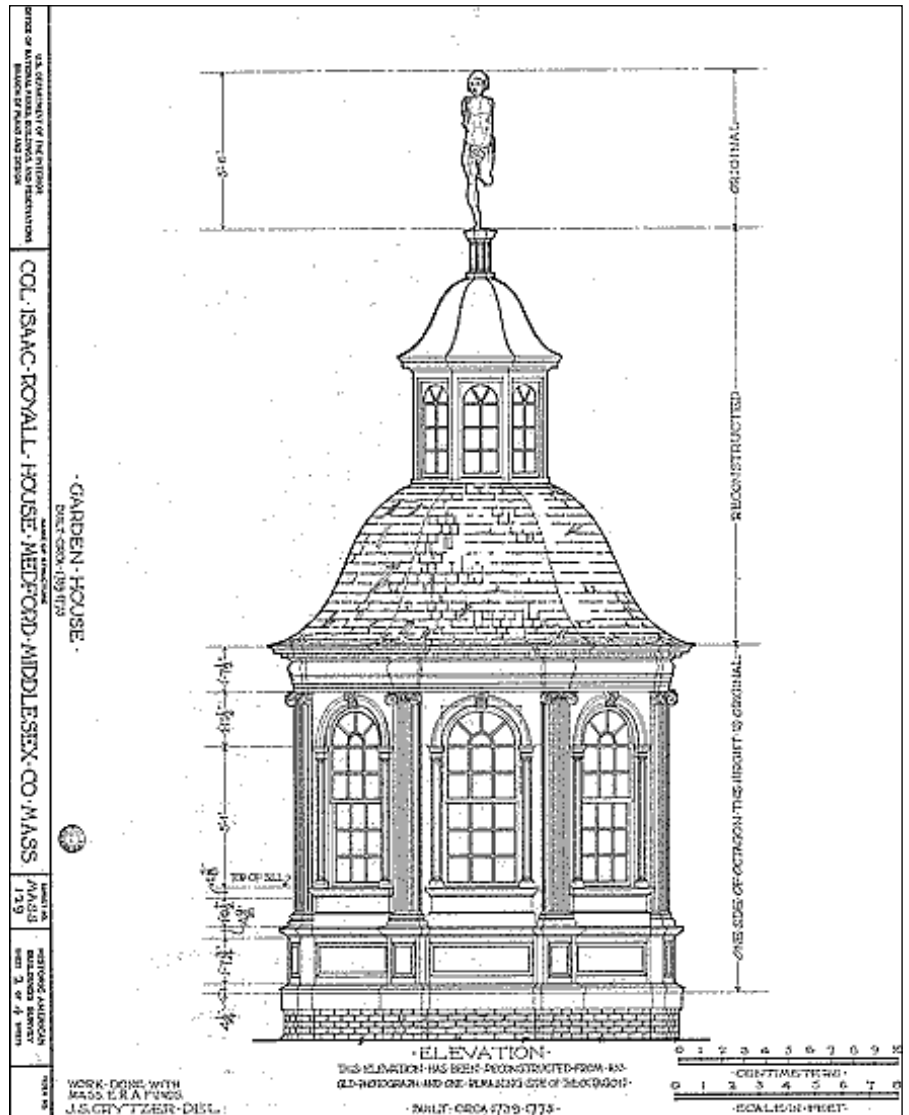
the earliest English settlements with Pilgrims first arriving there in 1620. Since then its residents have enjoyed a love-hate relationship with Britain, especially during the second half of the 18th century

when they resisted attempts by Britain to impose new taxes without their consent. The quarrel culminated in the Boston Tea Party protests of 1773 and forced the British Government to introduce the Coercive Acts stripping the colonies of their powers to self-govern. War ensued in 1775, leading to the expulsion of the British from New England early in 1776 and the Declaration of Independence in July of that year.

Despite our differences, cultural links between Britain and New England remain strong, with both peoples bonded by a passion for gardening. Unlike many other parts of the United States, garden design in 18th- and 19th-century New England echoed developments in northern Europe, with some of the bigger gardens being enriched by follies, summerhouses and gazebos.

One of the earliest of these was built by Captain Isaac Royall at his 600-acre Medford Estate in Massachusetts. In the 1740s his garden consisted of gravel paths between parterres lined with box hedging and containing mixtures of sweet-scented roses, geraniums and fruit trees. At the far end of the garden he added an octagonal summerhouse on top of a raised mound and icehouse.

Isaac Royall's summerhouse in 1890  
Photo: Library of Congress, Washington



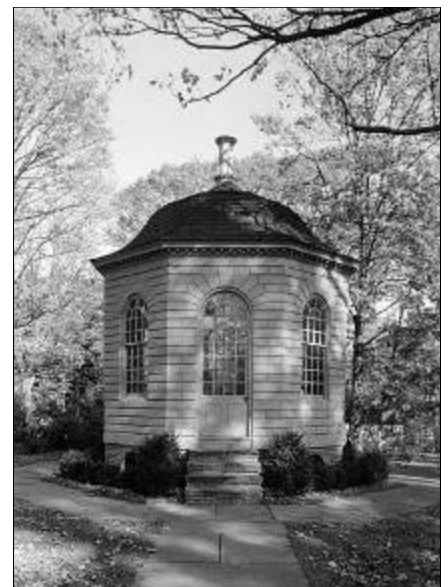
In her book *The Romance of Old New England Rooftrees* (1902), Mary Crawford described the exterior of the summerhouse as 'highly ornamented with Ionic pilasters' and explained that 'access to the icehouse was obtained by lifting a wooden hatch in the floor.' The building was topped off with a tiled dome, raised cupola and a large statue of Mercury cast in lead.

Sadly, this handsome folly has not survived. The only element that remains today is one of the window panels.

Not all of these early gazebos have been lost. Abraham Redwood's summerhouse of 1766 in Newport, Rhode Island, was designed by the architect Peter Harrison and moved to Redwood's Palladian Library (the first

public library in the United States) during the 19th century. In an attempt to make it look like it was built of rusticated stone, the outside was clad with blocks of wood decorated with a mixture of paint and sand.

Abraham Redwood's summerhouse, Newport  
Photo: Library of Congress, Washington



The finest of these early New England follies was built in 1794 by Captain Elias Hasket Derby at his farm in Danvers, Massachusetts (see front cover). It was designed in 1793 by the architect and cabinetmaker Samuel McIntire (1757-1811) in what Americans call the *Federal style*—a Classical style based largely on the work of Robert Adam. It measures 6.5m square with Ionic pilasters, swags and Greek urns, all topped off with wooden statues of a Shepherdess (milk-maid) and Reaper carved by John and Simon Skillin of Boston.

An unattributed diary entry from 1802 describes the summerhouse being 'in the centre of a garden filled with rare plants and trees.' At

that time the central arch was open without the lattice doors that exist today, perhaps leaving the staircase open at ground level. The diary entry goes on to record how 'The air from the windows is always pure and cool and the eye wanders with delight over the beautiful landscape below...The room is ornamented with Chinese figures and seems calculated for serenity and peace.'

By 1901 the summerhouse was in a state of disrepair and at risk of loss. In an attempt to save it, the building was bought by Elen Peabody Endicott and moved four miles to Glen Magna, where it now forms the backdrop to a walled rose garden designed by Herbert Browne. At that time only the Reaper was still fixed to the roof, but after a 20 year search the Shepherdess was discovered on a mill in Andover (Mass). In 1924, a replica was put on top of the roof and the original displayed at the Peabody Institute. During a storm in 1981 the Reaper fell off, so he was copied and the original placed in the Danvers Historical Society collection.

Samuel McIntire's other surviving summerhouse was built in 1799 for Lucius Beebe, a member of the Derby family who farmed on the shore of Lake Quannapoowitt in Wakefield (Mass). Like the

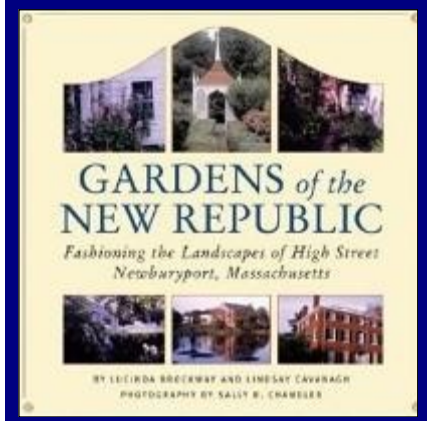


The Derby-Beebe summerhouse  
Photo: Unknown on Wikipedia

Derby summerhouse, this too was designed in the Federal style but with Corinthian columns and Greek urns set around a wooden balustrade. Today it stands in Salem where it is maintained by the Peabody Essex Museum.

Newburyport in Massachusetts hosts guided tours of its historic gardens in mid-June of each year. The town's best gardens line the High Street and the tours provide a rare opportunity to peek behind high brick walls and high-tech security systems.

*Further information on the historic gardens of Newburyport can be obtained from Lucinda Brockway and Lindsey Cavanagh's book, published in 2004 by Bright Sky Press*



Above: The actress Jane Pickens, later Mrs Walter Hoving at the Derby Summerhouse.

Below: Interior of the Derby Summerhouse  
Photo: Library of Congress, Washington





The gothic gazebo at 77 High Street, Newburyport, c.1940. Photos: Library of Congress



Below: The gothic gazebo in 1917  
Photos: Architectural Review



The house at 77 High Street was built in 1810 by the trader and Revolutionary War veteran Abraham Wheelwright. His was a well-ordered garden with row upon row of flowers and vegetables, into which he added a wooden lattice gazebo with a mildly 'gothic' flavour. It was photographed in 1917 for the *Architectural Review* magazine and shows what appears to be a Salmon weathervane above the roof (now missing).

Gothic is not a natural style for America so was presumably introduced by later settlers. It was easy enough for carpenters to cut the main pointed-arch motifs, especially since the buildings were formed in timber.

The prominent American painter Waldo Pierce grew up with a gothic gazebo at his family home in Bangor, Maine. It was probably built in 1890 on the instruction of his father, who was a wealthy timber merchant in the region. About 60 years later it was moved for safe keeping to the Hutchins family estate on the edge of town, where it was visible for a long time from the I-95 road.

While summerhouses and gazebos were built in most regions of America, the better and the earliest ones appear to be based in New England where they are more prolific. Their presence owes much to the need for

shelter from the hot summer sunshine and the Englishness of its people; their survival owes much to a few conservationists who are actively protecting New England's early heritage, something else that bonds us.

Next month's e-Bulletin will list a few more of these elegant garden structures, and make use of these extraordinary early photographs in the Library of Congress in Washington DC.



Above: The Pierce gazebo at Bangor c. 1901

Below: The gazebo and canal at the Edwards Estate in Beverly, MA.

Photos: Library of Congress



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