



Issue 47:

October 2012

Events calendar:

- **30 October**—The Vivat Trust's annual lecture at St. Paul's Church in Wilton Place, Knightsbridge, London SW1X. The evening starts with a talk by Lucinda Lambton on curious buildings followed by Paul Sharrock on the restoration of Hadlow Tower in Kent. Tickets are £20 from The Garden Barn, Wellbrook Manor, Peterchurch, Herefordshire HR2 0SS.
- **29 September to 11 November**—'Shellworks' by Suzannah Fleming and Blott Kerr-Wilson at the Sunflower and Poppy Gallery, 7 Southampton Road, London NW5 4JS. A proportion of all sales will be donated to The Temple Trust and the Cilwendeg Shell House. Details from 020-7284 1598 or [sunflower & poppy@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:sunflower&poppy@blueyonder.co.uk)

Next month:

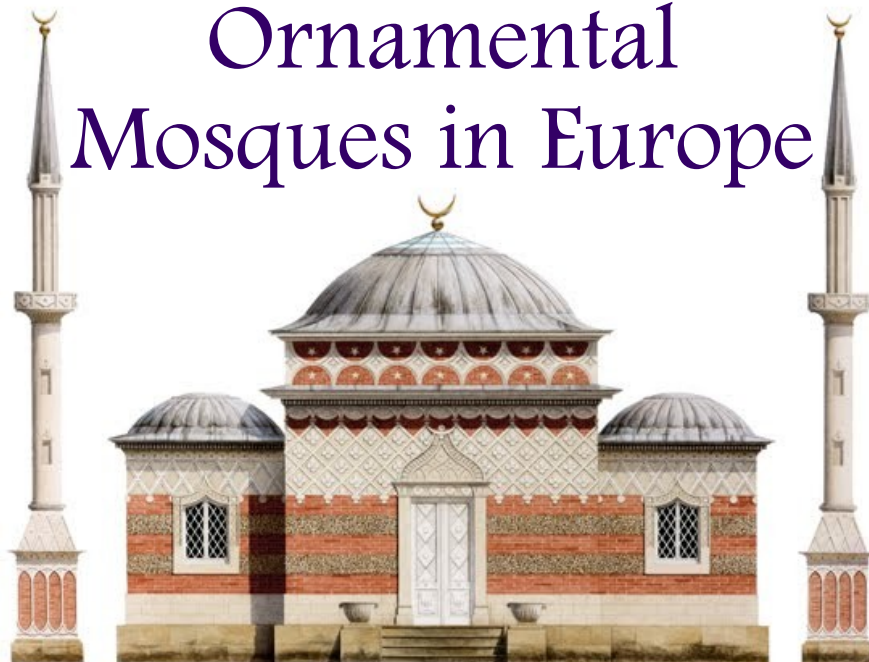
- Fettercairn Follies

The Folly Fellowship

Material for the e-Bulletin, including articles, pictures, comments and feedback, should be sent to andrew@follies.fsnet.co.uk. All other correspondence and membership enquiries should be sent to membership@follies.org.uk

Unless otherwise stated, all pictures in this edition are taken by the editor or from the Folly Fellowship Picture Library. Where images from outside sources are used we do our best to ensure that all relevant permissions have been obtained before use and that publicly-available images and material are free from copyright. We are grateful to all photographers who kindly allow us to use of their pictures. All views and comments expressed in this edition are those of the authors and are not necessarily the opinion or belief of The Folly Fellowship or its trustees.

Ornamental Mosques in Europe



Even with many examples of them across Europe, the inclusion of religious buildings as follies is uncomfortable for some of us. It has much to do with the fact that churches are places of worship and quiet contemplation, whereas follies are generally buildings of jollity and mirth.

In Britain, where religious observance is optional, we raise a smile at the Tattingstone Wonder (Suffolk)—disguising one side of a cottage as a parish church—but would feel uncomfortable if it had been built as a sham synagogue. Likewise, we are amused by the Vicar's Pulpit at Ashampstead (Berkshire)—where Isaac Septimus Nullis built a brick tower at the end of his garden to practice his sermons on cattle grazing in the adjoining meadow—but our reaction would be different if it was a *Minbar* in an *Imam's* garden used to rehearse his *khutbah* on goats.

That awkwardness stems from our embracing of multi-culturalism and our understanding that most Muslims, Sikhs and Hindus take

religion far more seriously than the rest of us. We also know that many of them are sensitive to any form of criticism, so we tread warily around the subject and try not to show disrespect.

Eighteenth-century Europeans were beginning to have similar concerns. After embracing China and *Chinoiserie*, their attention moved to Turkey where the Ottoman Empire was opening up to traders and travellers. Images of things they had seen on their journeys caused a sensation back home and soon began to appear on wallpaper and crockery, all of which was eagerly consumed by a knowledge-thirsty public.

For the wealthy and influential the opportunity to lead fashion by adding Turkish buildings to their gardens was irresistible. The first of these was at **Lunéville** (France) where the deposed King of Poland Stanislaw Leszczynski built a number of Turkish kiosks between 1737 and 1740. The next was a 'Turkish Tent' pavilion in London's Vauxhall Pleasure Gardens, built in 1742 to honour Frederick, the

Prince of Wales. It caused a sensation and was soon copied in many leading landscape parks of the time.

Frederick was himself a keen gardener and had several parks around London, most notably one at Kew. By the time of his death in 1751 the gardens there boasted a Moorish Temple, Alhambra and Pagoda, but a decade later William Chambers added to them by completing work on his ornamental mosque, the first of its kind in Europe.

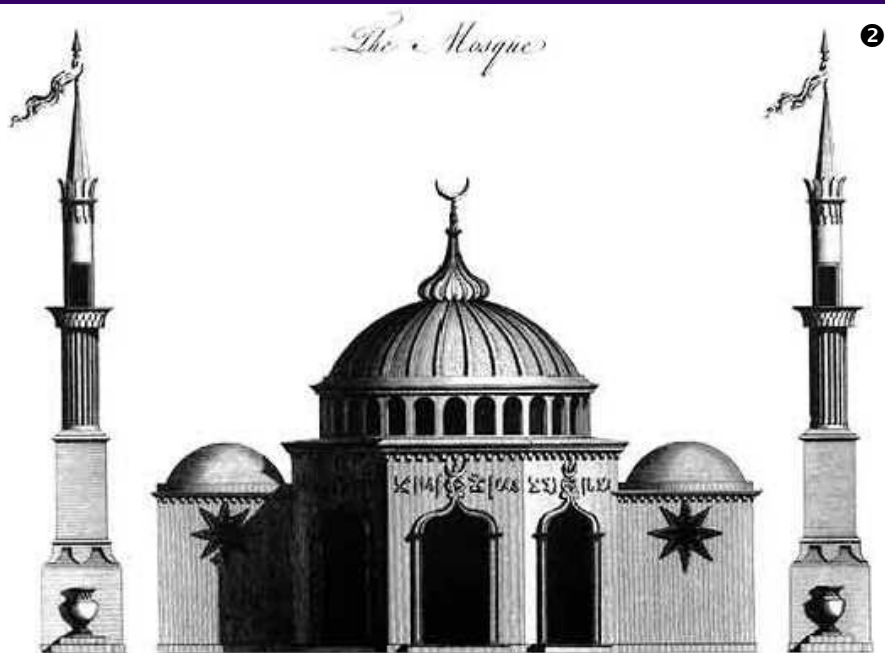
An account in the *Gentleman's Magazine and Historical Chronicle* (vol.17, 1772) records how 'the buildings in Kew-Gardens are the admiration of all foreigners; and, among them none deserves greater applause than the beautiful Mosque' which according to the architect's own description consisted of an 'octagon salon in the centre, flanked with two cabinets, finishing with one large dome and two small ones. The large dome is crowned with a crescent, and its upright part contains 28 little arches, which give light to the salon. On the three front sides of the central octagon are three doors, giving entrance to the building; over each of which there is an Arabic inscription, in golden characters, extracted from the Alcoran by Dr. Moreton, of which the following is the explanation:

Ne sit coactio in Religione

Non est Deus ullus praeter Deum

Ne ponatis Deo similitudinem

The Minarets are placed at each end of the principal building...—the latin translates as: Let religion be of free choice / There is



no God but God / Make no likeness unto God.

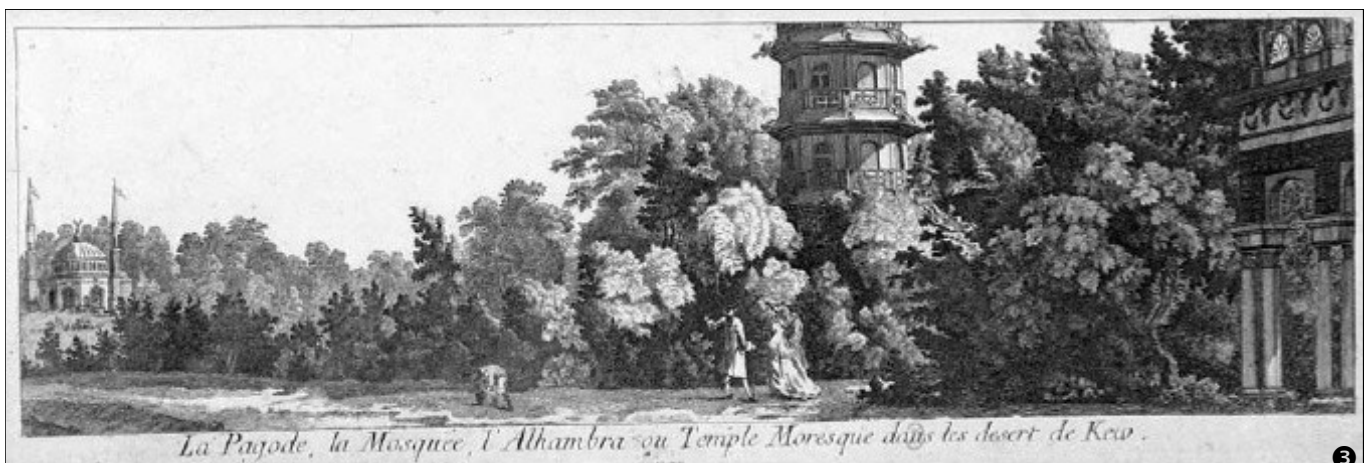
At that time it was the custom in Turkey for two minarets to be added only when the mosque had been built by the Ottoman Sultans so the inclusion of two at Kew was a clear demonstration of British Imperial power. The fact that it was built at all was also symbolic of what Frederick saw as the start of an enlightened Empire where foreign and home interests could co-exist under a benevolent sovereign.

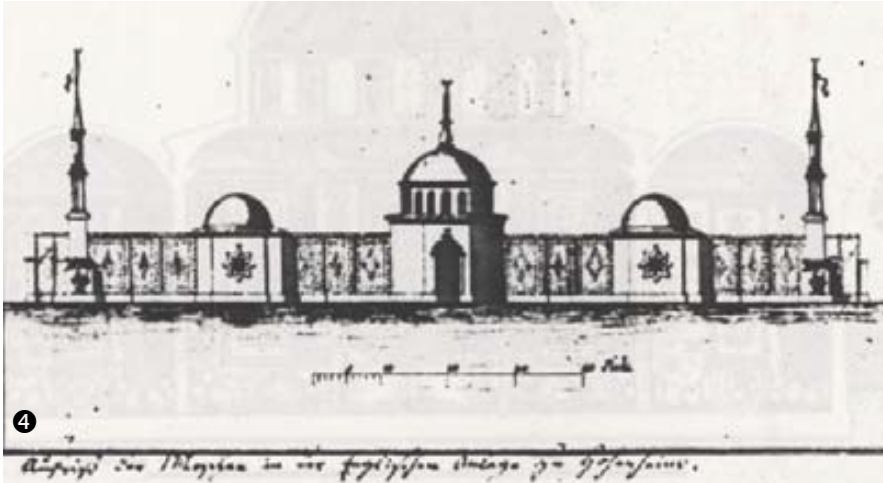
Three years after it had been unveiled at Kew, Thomas Brand (one of the founders of the Society of Dilettanti) considered adding one to his Hoo Estate at Kimpton (Hertfordshire). On 1 July 1764 he wrote to Chambers asking how many bricks would be needed to copy the Turkish Mosque which he had 'designed for the Princess's Gardens at Kew supposing all the

walls to be made of Brick till the beginning of the Domes'. In the end, however, his plan remained unrealised, probably because it would have undermined his concern for religious liberty.

Many leading figures of the time came to see the buildings at Kew. Among them was Karl Eugen, the Duke of Württemberg, who saw the gardens in 1776 and was inspired enough by the mosque to build one of his own at his Hohenheim Palace near Stuttgart (Germany). Charles-Joseph, Prince de Ligne, also built a Tartar Village at Beloeil, his family home in Belgium, where he kept a herd of Alpine cattle tended by servants dressed in Turkish costume. The cattle were milked in dairies that were concealed inside a mosque where the minarets also doubled up as dovecotes.

In the same year George-Louis Le Rouge published the first of his





21-volume *Jardins anglo-chinois* (1776-89), in which he included engravings of Kew. His drawings of the mosque inspired others to be built, including one at the Steinfurter Bagno Park (Germany) where Count Bentheim-Steinfurt built 39 follies between 1765 and 1787, including Greek and Roman pavilions, and Chinese and Oriental temples. By 1817 most of them were in poor condition and only three have survived.

Another was built in 1765 at Armainvilliers (near Paris) for Louis-Jean-Marie de Bourbon, Duc de Penthièvre. Four years earlier the Prince de Ligne had complained that 'Chinese buildings reek of the

boulevards and sideshow fairs... [and]...Gothic houses, too, are becoming too common', so it was no surprise when he furnished his gardens at Beloeil with a range of Moldavian huts and Turkish and Arabic pavilions.

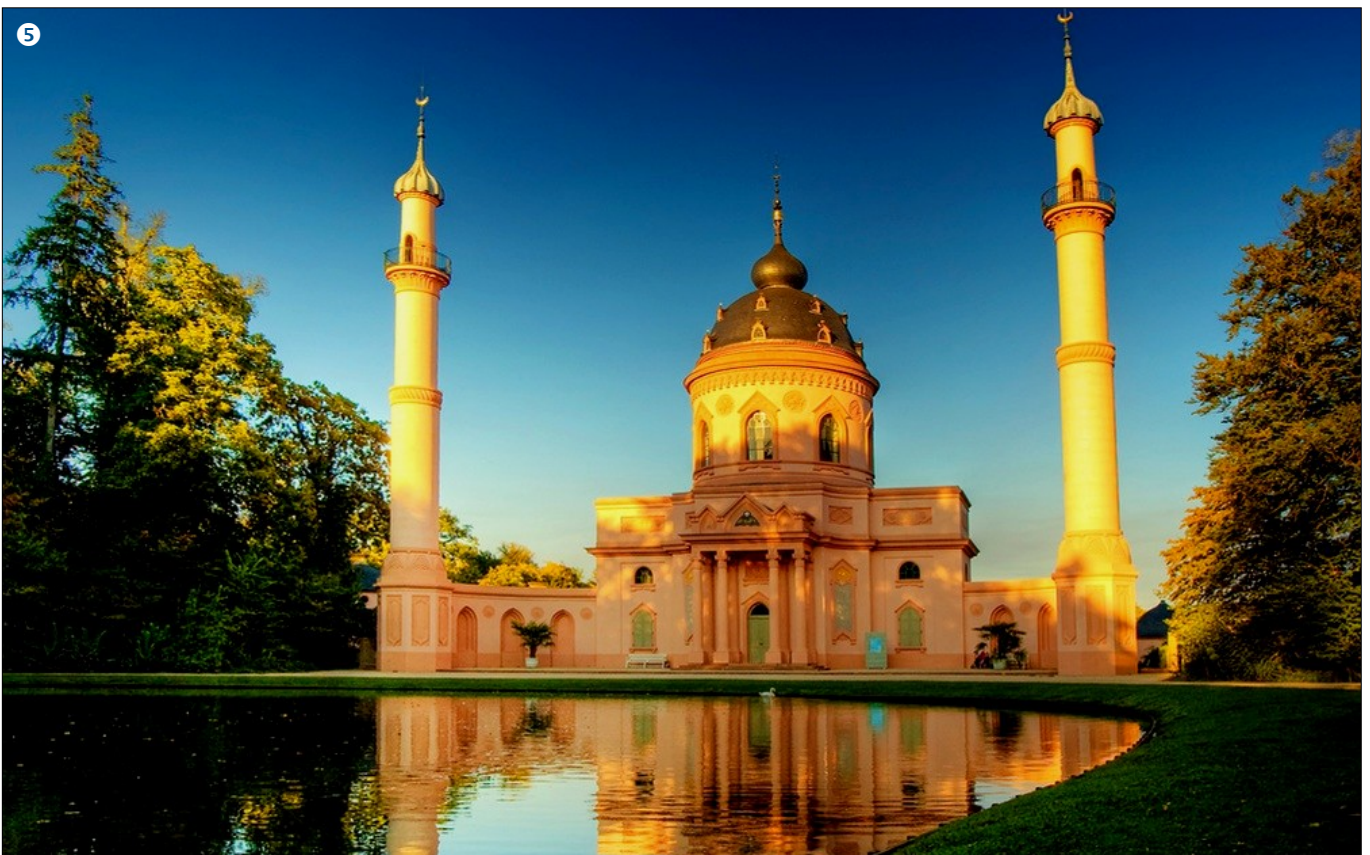
In 1784, Johann Heinrich Müntz completed an ornamental mosque at the Wilhelmshöhe Park near Kassel (Germany). It was again based on the model at Kew, which is unsurprising given that Müntz worked there with Chambers in 1759.

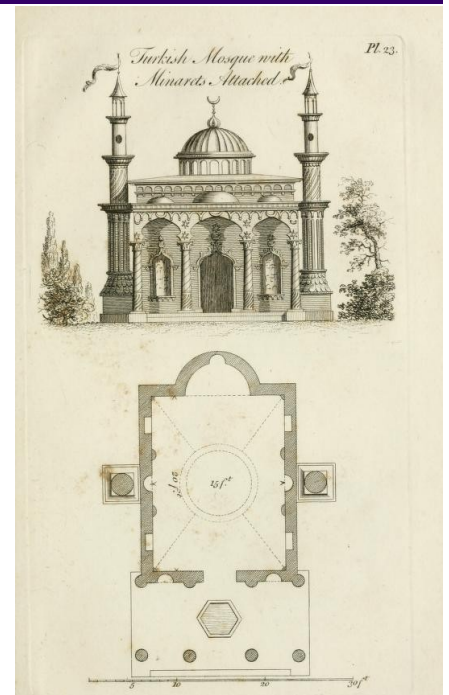
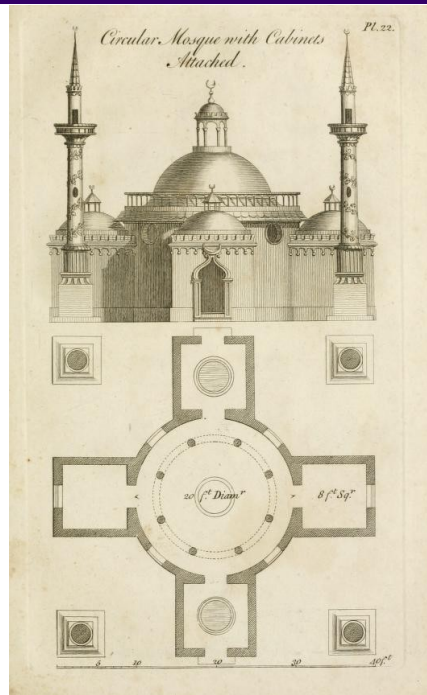
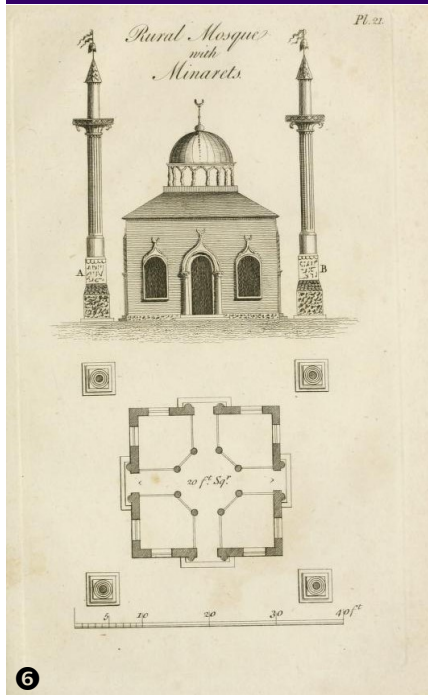
The largest example was built in 1780 at Schloss Schwetzingen (Germany) by Nicholas de Pigage for the Emperor Karl Theodore. Its

design bears no relationship to the one at Kew, and its only similarities are the addition of twin minarets and an inscription from Surah 3:2 proclaiming in gold lettering that 'There is no God but God' in both Arabic and German.

Built soon after the Bavarian wars of succession from which Karl Theodore emerged victorious, the mosque bears a notable likeness to Fischer von Erlach's *Karlskirche*, his masterpiece Church of St Charles Borromeo in Vienna, completed in 1721. That similarity has generated speculation that the mosque was built to taunt Caroline II whose Austrian imperial ambitions he had defeated; it showed too his support for the Ottoman people who at that time were being menaced by Austria and Russia. The theory is supported by recognition that Nicolas Pigage was the most talented of all the French architects working in Germany at the time so he was more than capable of designing something unique.

Whatever the motive, the Schwetzingen mosque remains one of the finest garden buildings in Europe and one of the most expensive at fl 120,000. Not that





this impressed everyone. In a letter to Friedrich Jacobi on 14 July 1780, the author Wilhelm Heinse wrote 'The Turkish building they are working on seems silly to me; I can see neither a point nor a use.' The author Count Platen-Hallermund had a different view. After visiting Schwetzingen on 7 June 1815, he noted in his diary that the mosque was unlocked and that 'Inside there is a number of fine inscriptions, e.g. "The fool carries his heart on his tongue, the wise man keeps his tongue in his heart", or "Gather gold as much as you need, and wisdom as much as you can". It would have served its purpose already if every curious visitor would only take these sayings to heart.'

In a further twist to the story, neither Karl Theodore nor his architect had first-hand knowledge of Turkish architecture, but Nicolas Pigage was born and raised in Lunéville where Stanislaw Leszczyński built his Turkish kiosks almost half a century before.

The fashion for building ornamental mosques was confirmed by their inclusion in some of the pattern books published at the end of the eighteenth-century. William Wright's *Grotesque Architecture or Rural Amusement* (1790) had three designs of increasing complexity, each based on Chambers' original.

In the early nineteenth-century interest in Turkish (a synonym for 'Muslim') architecture waned and

follies had to be practical as well as ornamental. Monighetti Rossi's mosque (1852) in the Catherine Park at Tsarskoe Selo (St. Petersburg) was used as a bathhouse, while the one at Potsdam (Berlin and built in 1842), served as a steam-driven pumping station.

It has long been claimed that Schwetzingen is the last surviving ornamental mosque in Europe, but that is no longer correct. In recent months another has been discovered in Poland's Kościelec Park (Wielkopolskie), reviving interest in the subject. At the moment little is known about the folly other than it appears to date from the 1830s.

Pictures

1. The Mosque at Armainvilliers—from the original watercolour © by Andrew Zega and Bernd H. Dams on <http://architecturalwatercolours.blogspot.fr/>
2. The Mosque at Kew—from: Chambers, W. "Plans, elevations and perspective views of the gardens and buildings at Kew in Surrey", London (1763)
3. Le Rouge's view of the Alhambra, Pagoda and Mosque at Kew (1776-89).
4. The Mosque at Hohenheim, Germany—from a drawing by David Dillenius (1780)
5. The Mosque at Schwetzingen, Germany—Photo: Wolfgang Staudt on Flickr
6. Three designs by William Wright—the Rural Mosque (left), the Circular Mosque (centre) and the Turkish Mosque (right).
7. The Mosque at Koscielec Palace, Poland—Photo: Fotogwal on Wikimedia Commons.

