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From THE TIMES of 1843

THURSDAY, APRIL 27, 1843. Price 5d.

THE SHAKESPEARE SOCIETY.—The second annual meeting of this society was held yesterday . . . the Marquis **Conyngham** in the chair. The society was founded for the publication of productions existing only in manuscript and the reprinting of such rare works as should illustrate the progress of our early drama and throw light on the origin and formation of the plays of Shakespeare and of the school of which he was the great ornament. . . . The thanks of the meeting were accorded to Mr. J. Payne Collyer, director, for his valuable services. Mr. C. P. Cooper, Queen's Counsel, the Rev. Launcelot Sharpe, Mr. B. Corney, Major Shadwell Clarke, and Mr. Charles Dickens [were] appointed council for the ensuing year.

CIGAR SMOKING.—May I entreat you to raise your all-powerful voice with a view to put down a most intolerable public nuisance? I allude to the practice of smoking now in general use by apprentices, shopboys, and others on board the numerous steam-boats that ply upon the river. . . . Have not the captains power to put down this nuisance, and would it not be to their interest to do so?

* A letter to the Editor, who appends a footnote agreeing with the view expressed in it and saying that "at every place to which the public resort to obtain fresh air some shop-boy is found (no gentleman ever is) to pollute the atmosphere around him with his *cheap* cigar."

Cons. 96 $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{1}{4}$.

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Article CS119225499

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The Clergy list for 1841 London G Cox 1841

Hon W. Eden Rector of Harbledown and Vicar of Bekebourne ^{since 1820}
Robert Eden, Minister of St. Mary's chapel, Lambeth
Robert Eden, Rural Dean, Bekebourne near Northford, Essex

CH Hallett vicar since 1843

Curate J.C. Allen
Patron - Archbp. Cant.

Hon W. Eden Six Rectors 1823 (next one appointed 1832).

Diocese > Deanery > parish
Canterbury Bridge Bekebourne
& Lambeth with Bridge } had vicars.

William Eden, son of Morton, Baron Henley

Matric Chch 17.10.1810 age 17 BA 1815 MA 1817

Vicar of Bekeston 1820

Rector of Bishopston 1845

† 4.5.1859

cf. Foote's Baronetage & Eton School Lists

Morton Eden, 1st Baro Henley 8.7.1752 - 6.12.1830
fellow 6.2.1800

Edward Adolphus SEYMOUR, Duke of Somerset

Changed spelling to St. Maur, a practical denial of the real historical origin of his family with the mother of King Edward 6th, and an act a little inconsistent in a man who had named every one of his daughters Jane. (Gentleman's Magazine, New Series, 44 425)

William Beckford in 'Liber Veritatis' p. 121 15th March 1829 said he was "so eager to prove his right to be called St. Maur and so infatuated as to prefer that empty foreign sound to all the fulness of historical recollections the name of Seymour conveys".

Bore orb at the Coronation of William IV - 1831

+

of Victoria = 1838.



 HISTORIC ROYAL SPEECHES



Portrait of Queen Victoria in her Garter robes, by Franz Xavier Winterhalter
© Royal Collection

Queen Victoria

Journal extracts during her reign: from her accession in 1832 to her Diamond Jubilee in 1897

Queen Victoria maintained a detailed diary, her famous **Journal**, which is contained in 111 large manuscript volumes. These volumes constitute about a third of the original, as her diaries were edited after her death by her youngest daughter Princess Beatrice, at Queen Victoria's request. The extracts below cover some of the more momentous events of Queen Victoria's reign.

[Accession, 1837](#)
[Coronation, 1838](#)
[Great Exhibition, 1851](#)
[Crimean War, 1855](#)
[Letter to Florence Nightingale, 1856](#)
[Prince Albert's death, 1861](#)
[Golden Jubilee, 1887](#)
[Diamond Jubilee, 1897](#)
[Final published extracts, 1901](#)



Sketch of Queen Victoria when Princess, 1833, after Sir George Hayter
© Royal Collection

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On William IV's death, and her accession aged 18 years: Tuesday, 20 June 1837 at Kensington Palace

I was awoke at 6 o'clock by Mamma, who told me that the Archbishop of Canterbury and Lord Conyngham were here, and wished to see me. I got out of bed and went into my sitting-room (only in my dressing-gown), and *alone*, and saw them. Lord Conyngham (the Lord Chamberlain) then acquainted me that my poor Uncle, the King, was no more, and had expired at 12 minutes past 2 this morning, and consequently that I am *Queen*. Lord Conyngham knelt down and kissed my hand, at the same time delivering to me the official announcement of the poor King's demise. The Archbishop then told me that the Queen was desirous that he should come and tell me the details of the last moments of my poor, good Uncle; he said that he had directed his mind to religion, and had died in a perfectly happy, quiet state of mind, and was quite prepared for his death. He added that the King's sufferings at the last were not very great but that there was a good deal of uneasiness. Lord Conyngham, whom I charged to express my feelings of condolence and sorrow to the poor Queen, returned directly to Windsor. I then went to my room and dressed.

Since it has pleased Providence to place me in this station, I shall do my utmost to fulfil my duty towards my country; I am very young and perhaps in many, though not in all things, inexperienced, but I am sure, that very few have more real good will and more real desire to do what is fit and right than I have ...

At 9 came Lord Melbourne, whom I saw in my room, and of COURSE quite ALONE as I shall *always* do all my Ministers. He kissed my hand and I then acquainted him that it had long been my intention to retain him and the rest of the present Ministry at the head of affairs, and that it could not be in better hands than his ... He then read to me the Declaration which I

was to read to the Council, which he wrote himself and which is a very fine one. I then talked with him some little longer time after which he left me ... I like him very much and feel confidence in him. He is a very straightforward, honest, clever and good man. I then wrote a letter to the Queen ...

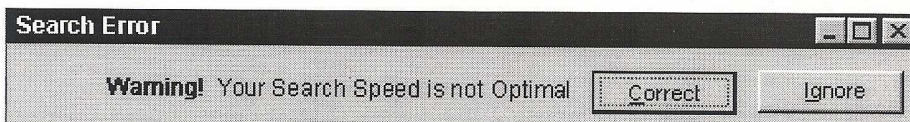
At about half past 11 I went downstairs and held a Council in the red saloon. I went in of course quite alone, and remained seated the whole time. My two Uncles, the Dukes of Cumberland (who now succeeded William IV as King of Hanover) and Sussex, and Lord Melbourne conducted me. The declaration, the various forms, the swearing in of the Privy Councillors of which there were a great number present, and the reception of some of the Lords of Council, previous to the Council in an adjacent room (likewise alone) I subjoin here. I was not at all nervous and had the satisfaction of hearing that people were satisfied with what I had done and how I had done it.

Receiving after this, Audiences of Lord Melbourne, Lord John Russell, Lord Albemarle (Master of the Horse), and the Archbishop of Canterbury, all in my room and alone. Saw Stockmar (friend and counsellor to Queen Victoria and Prince Albert). Saw Clark, whom I named my Physician ... Saw Ernest Hohenlohe who brought me a kind and very feeling letter from the poor Queen. I feel very much for her, and really feel that the poor good King was always so kind personally to me, that I should be ungrateful were I not to recollect it and feel grieved at his death. The poor Queen is wonderfully composed now, I hear.

Wrote my journal. Took my dinner upstairs alone. Went downstairs. Saw Stockmar. At about 20 minutes to 9 came Lord Melbourne and remained till near 10. I had a very important and very *comfortable* conversation with him ... Went down and said good-night to Mamma etc.

[Go to next page](#)

[HOME](#)[TOP](#)[BACK TO THIS SECTION'S INDEX](#)



Victoria Becomes Queen, 1837

She became England's longest reigning monarch, her offspring governed Europe, she gave her name to an era, but she was only a teenager when she ascended the throne of the world's mightiest empire.

The British monarchy had suffered bad times, discredited by the madness of George III (1760-1820), the excesses of George IV (1820-1830), and the unimpressive reign of William IV (1830-37). Victoria was William's niece and had been designated the heir to the childless king from her birth. On Tuesday June 20, 1837 the king died of pneumonia.



Victoria with son Edward (the future King of England) and daughter Vickie (future mother of Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany)

Awakened at dawn

Victoria lived with her mother in Kennington Palace, London (the same palace Lady Di lived in before her death). It was there that the eighteen-year-old was told of her Uncle's death.

Victoria refers often in her diary to seeing her visitors "alone" or "quite alone". This is an indication of the teenager establishing her independence with her ascendancy to the throne. Victoria's mother (the Duchess of Kent) had raised Victoria in a cloistered and highly controlled environment (the two in fact shared the same bedroom). The mother had hoped to extend her control once her child became Queen and had lobbied unsuccessfully to be named Regent. Victoria's pointed references to seeing her visitors "alone" reveal that the young girl will be charting her own course as queen. We can only imagine her mother's chagrin when Victoria tells her that her presence will not be required during her various meetings that day. Victoria recorded the day in her diary:

"Tuesday, 20th June 1837

I was awoke at 6 o'clock by Mamma, who told me that the Archbishop of Canterbury and Lord Conyngham were here, and wished to see me. I got out of bed and went into my sitting-room (only in my dressing-gown) and *alone*, and saw them Lord Conyngham (the Lord Chamberlain) then acquainted me that my poor Uncle, the King, was no more, and had expired at 12 minutes past 2 this morning, and consequently that I am *Queen*. Lord Conyngham knelt down and kissed my hand, at the same time delivering to me the official announcement of the poor King's demise. The Archbishop then told me that the Queen was desirous that he should come and tell me the details of the last moments of my poor good Uncle; he



Victoria in the 1880's

said that he had directed his mind to religion, and had died in a perfectly happy, quiet state of mind, and was quite prepared for his death. He added that the King's sufferings at the last were not very great but that there was a good deal of uneasiness. Lord Conyngham, whom I charged to express my feelings of condolence and sorrow to the poor Queen, returned directly to Windsor. I then went to my room and dressed.

Since it has pleased Providence to place me in this station, I shall do my utmost to fulfill my duty towards my country; I am very young and perhaps in many, though not in

all things, inexperienced, but I am sure that very few have more real good-will and more real desire to do what is fit and right than I have.

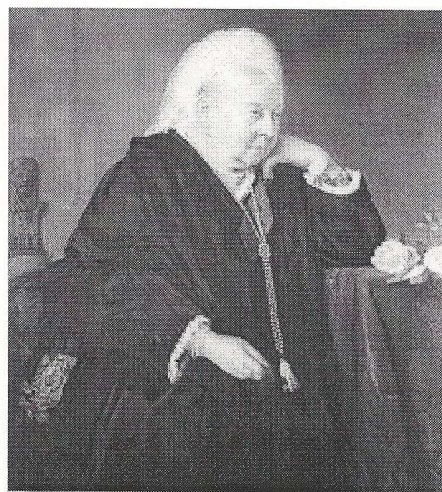
Breakfasted, during which time good, faithful Stockmar (Baron Stockmar - a friend) came and talked to me. Wrote a letter to dear Uncle Leopold (King of the Belgians) and a few words to dear good Feodore (Victoria's stepsister) Received a letter from Lord Melbourne (the Prime Minister) in which he said he would wait upon me at a little before 9. At 9 came Lord Melbourne, whom I saw in my room, and of *course quite alone*, as I shall *always* do all my Ministers. He kissed my hand, and I then acquainted him that it had long been my intention to retain him and the rest of the present Ministry at the head of affairs, and that it could not be in better hands than his. He again then kissed my hand. He then read to me the Declaration which I was to read to the Council, which he wrote himself, and which is a very fine one. I then talked with him some little time longer, after which he left me. He was in full dress. I like him very much and feel confidence in him. He is a very straightforward, honest, clever and good man. I then wrote a letter to the Queen. At about 11 Lord Melbourne came again to me, and spoke to me upon various subjects. At about half-past 11 I went downstairs and held a Council in the red saloon.

I went in of course quite alone and remained seated the whole time. My two Uncles, the Dukes of Cumberland and Sussex, and Lord Melbourne conducted me. The Declaration, the various forms, the swearing in of the Privy Councillors of which there were a great number present, and the reception of some of the Lords of the Council, previous to the Council, in an adjacent room (likewise alone) I subjoin here. I was not at all nervous and had the satisfaction of hearing that people were satisfied with what I had done and how I had done it. Received after this, audiences of Lord Melbourne, Lord John Russell, Lord Albemarle (Master of the Horse), and the Archbishop of Canterbury, all in my room and alone. Saw Stockmar. Saw Clark, whom I named my Physician. Saw Mary. Wrote to Uncle Ernest. Saw Ernest

Baron Stockmar, a German nobleman, brokered the marriage between Victoria and Albert of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha in 1840.

Hohenlohe, who brought me a kind and very feeling letter from the poor Queen. I feel very much for her, and really feel that the poor good King was always so kind personally to me, that I should be ungrateful were I not to recollect it and feel grieved at his death. The poor Queen is wonderfully composed now, I hear.

Wrote my journal. Took my dinner upstairs alone. Went downstairs. Saw Stockmar. At about twenty minutes to 9 came Lord Melbourne and remained till near 10. I had a very important and a very *comfortable* conversation with him. Each time I see him I feel more confidence in him; I find him very kind in his manner too. Saw Stockmar. Went down and said good-night to Mamma, etc. My *dear* Lehzen (Victoria's governess as a child) will *always* remain with me as my friend, but will take no situation about me, and I think she is right."



Victoria towards the end of her reign

References:

Benson, Arthur Christopher and Viscount Eshers, ed. *The Letters of Queen Victoria 1837-1861* (1907); Erickson, Carolly, *Her Little Majesty: The Life of Queen Victoria* (1997)

Resources on the Web:

[Victoria - The Life & Times of Queen Victoria](#)

[The Victorian Web - everything you ever wanted to know about the Victorians](#)

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FAMILY PAPERS

CHARLES LENNOX (AFTERWARDS GORDON LENNOX), 5TH DUKE OF RICHMOND, LENNOX AND AUBIGNY, K.G., P.C., F.R.S., 1791-1860

CORRESPONDENCE - MAIN SERIES

- \ [from *Scope and Content*] Conyngham, Francis, 2nd Marquis of Conyngham: 42 letters, 1832-1847
- \ [from *Scope and Content*] Conyngham, Jane, Marchioness of Conyngham: 31 letters, 1831-1858

POST OFFICE CORRESPONDENCE

Post Office Administration (England and Scotland)

FILE - Letters to the Duke of Richmond from the Marquis of Conyngham, his successor as P.M.G. -
ref. GOODWOOD/1535 - **date:** Aug-Dec 1834

I

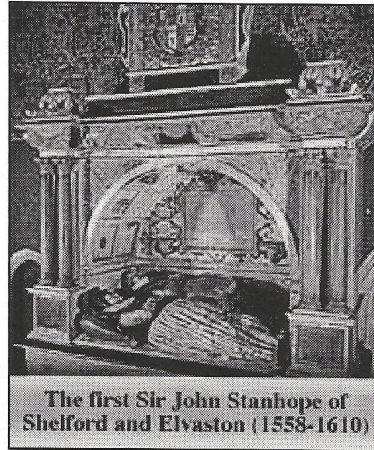


The second Sir John Stanhope (d.1638)

ELVASTON IN DERBYSHIRE HAS A FASCINATING HISTORY, TAKING US BACK TO THE NINTH CENTURY WHEN THREE DANES CALLED AELVOLD, EMBOLD AND TORULF SETTLED IN

PLEASANT COUNTRY NEAR THE RIVER DERWENT. THEIR HAMLETS BECAME KNOWN AS AELVVOLDESTUNE, EMBOLDESTUNE AND TORULFSTUNE, NAMES WE RECOGNISE TODAY IN THE VILLAGES OF ELVASTON, AMBASTON AND THULSTON. IN 1066 AN ANGLO SAXON CALLED TOCHI OWNED EXTENSIVE LANDS IN THESE THREE HAMLETS. BY 1086 WHEN KING WILLIAM ORDERED THE DOMESDAY SURVEY, TOCHI'S WIDE LANDS HAD BECOME THE POSSESSION OF SIR GEOFFREY ELSELIN, ONE OF FIFTEEN GREAT BARONS WHO HELD LAND IN DERBYSHIRE ON BEHALF OF THE KING.

The Alselins were lords of the manor for many years. They were followed by the Bardolphs and, finally, by the Blounts, who were granted Elvaston by Henry VI during the fifteenth century.



The first Sir John Stanhope of Shelford and Elvaston (1558-1610)

The Stanhopes first came to Elvaston in the mid sixteenth century when Henry VIII granted to Michael Stanhope the lordship of the manors of Shelford in Nouninghamshire and Elvaston in Derbyshire. Knighted soon after Edward VI's accession to the throne, Sir Michael was the first of the Stanhopes to make his home at Elvaston and may be regarded as the founder of this notable family. They became powerful landowners, with well over four thousand acres, and between the various family branches owned a number of very fine houses. By the mid eighteenth century they also enjoyed the rare achievement of holding three earldoms within one family.

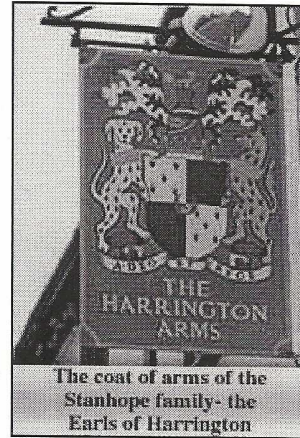
Sir Michael's grandson, John Stanhope of Shelford and Elvaston, was knighted in 1603. He died in 1610 and his elaborate canopied tomb may still be seen at Elvaston, the oldest Stanhope monument remaining in the church.



II



He married twice and by his first wife had one son, Philip. The eldest son of his second marriage was John, and it was between these two half-brothers that the great Stanhope estates were divided after Sir John's death. Philip acquired Shelford and Bretby, while John retained Elvaston. Philip Stanhope made his home at Bretby Park. He supported the royalist cause in the civil war, raising a regiment of dragoons for Charles I, and was rewarded with the earldom of Chesterfield. His most notable descendant was the 4th Earl of Chesterfield; a prominent statesman, well-known in the leading literary circles of his day.



Alexander Stanhope, son of the 1st Earl of Chesterfield's second marriage, founded another important family branch. His son, James, rose to be Secretary of State and Chancellor of the Exchequer. He was created Earl of Stanhope and later bought the magnificent house and estate of Chevening in Kent.

Charles, 3rd Earl Stanhope, is noted for his invention of the Stanhope printing press which was the first to be made of iron and in time replaced the old wooden presses.

The 3rd Earl's daughter, Lady Hester, was perhaps the most eccentric of all the Stanhopes. She was private secretary to her uncle, William Pitt, but after his death embarked on a journey to Syria where she *'assumed the dress of a native of that country and devoted herself to astrology in which she was an implicit believer'*. An intrepid horse-woman, well able to wield a sword, and afraid of nobody, Lady Hester steadfastly refused to return to England, and in 1839 *'breathed her last among foreigners and hirelings'*.

The Stanhopes maintained their loyalty to the crown throughout the civil war. Bretby Park was attacked by Sir John Gell, who also led his



troops of Roundheads against Elvaston. They ransacked the manor house in search of arms, destroyed Lady Stanhope's favourite flower garden, and then stormed the church. There they defaced the monuments, damaging the newly erected tomb of Sir John Stanhope, before entering the family vault where they thrust their swords into the coffins. Sir John's tomb was restored over a century later but still bears marks of the original damage, while on the outside walls of the church the pit marks left by volleys of musket balls are clearly visible.

It was Sir John's son, William, whose distinguished career brought a third earldom to the Stanhope family. Born in about 1690, by 1715 he was colonel of a dragoon regiment and had also entered parliament as the Whig member for Derby. William Stanhope held office as Secretary of State but was evidently more gifted as a diplomat than a politician. He was resident in Madrid both before and after the Spanish war, and this quiet and highly respected man was described by Philip V of Spain as *'the only minister who had never deceived him'*.

In 1742 William Stanhope was created Earl of Harrington and Viscount Petersham. The secondary title is always used by the heir to the earldom.

William Stanhope, 2nd Earl of Harrington, like his father was both soldier and politician. He distinguished himself at the battle of Fontenoy, and in later years enjoyed a series of promotions, attaining the rank of general in 1770. He was something of an eccentric and because of the way he walked was nicknamed 'Peter Shambles'.



III



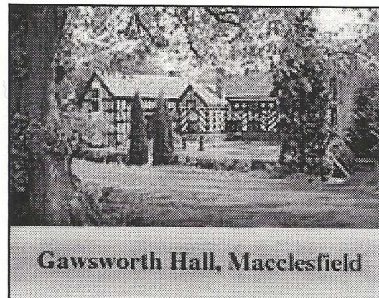
William Stanhope, 1st Earl of Harrington (1690 - 1756)

His wife, Caroline Fitzroy, was one of the great beauties of her day. She was also noted for her spirited, and occasionally wild, behaviour. A contemporary writer recorded that at the coronation of George III Lady Harrington appeared *'covered in all the diamonds she could barrow, hire, or sieze'*.

Charles Stanhope, the 3rd Earl, was quite a character and a very popular man. He travelled widely in an army career which took him to Quebec during the American War of Independence, and then to Jamaica. Diplomatic missions found him in Vienna and Berlin, and he was once offered the post of British resident at the Russian court. He declined as, owing to the low rank of the Tzarina's representative at St. James's, he could not hold the full title of ambassador!

By 1792 he was colonel of the 1st Life Guards and at this time introduced a new style of sword which was adopted by the British army.

Subsequently, the Earl divided his time between Elvaston, where he was planning the design and rebuilding of the castle, and Harrington House, his grand Kensington home. The Stanhopes owned a large part of Kensington, and there are reminders of the family to the present day in London street names such as Stanhope Gardens, Petersham Mews and Elvaston Place. Another family property was Gawsworth Hall in Cheshire, a half-timbered manor house dating from 1480, which in the early eighteenth century was the object of a duel between Lord Mohun and the Duke of Hamilton. The duel was fought in Hyde Park and both men died as a result. Some years later the



Gawsworth Hall, Macclesfield

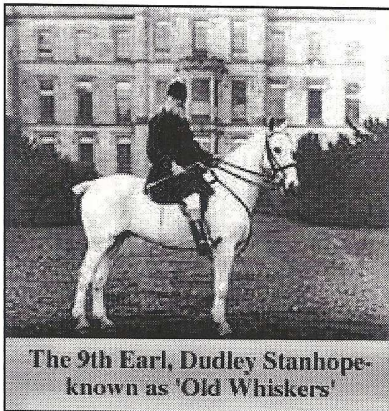
Gawsworth estate, at one time amounting to some 50,000 acres, came into the possession of William Stanhope, later 1st Earl of Harrington.

The 3rd Earl's fondness for tea was legendary and tea drinking parties at Harrington House ranked high in social circles, particularly as George III and Queen Charlotte were frequent visitors. Jane, Countess of Harrington, was Lady of the Bedchamber and a great favourite with the queen.

The Earl's retiring appointment was as Constable and Governor of Windsor Castle. He died in 1829, the oldest general in the British army, and his memorial by the great Venetian sculptor, Canova, is the real treasure of Elvaston church.



IV



The 9th Earl, Dudley Stanhope-
known as 'Old Whiskers'

Viscount Petersham, the 3rd Earl's eldest son, was almost fifty when he succeeded to the title and had long since earned himself a reputation as a Regency buck. Never seen in public before 6.00 p.m. 'Beau' Petersham was a trendsetter. He attracted the attention and friendship of the Prince

Regent who emulated his clothes, his tea drinking and his addiction to snuff. Lord Petersham's sitting room contained canisters of tea in great variety and an equally wide range of snuff. He owned 365 snuff boxes and used a different one on each day of the year.

Tall and handsome, Lord Petersham was said to resemble Henry IV; a flattery he emphasized by growing a small pointed beard. He designed many of his own clothes and his fashions, however odd, were quickly copied. He gave his name to the Petersham overcoat, of which the Prince Regent ordered one for each day of the week, and to the Harrington hat.

Rumour had it that Lord Petersham fell in love with a lady by the name of Brown and from that time brown was to be the colour of his clothes, his carriage, his horses and his servants' livery. When he finally married in 1831, it was to Maria Foote, a Covent Garden actress seventeen years his junior. Their affair had met with the old Earl's great disapproval and had over several years been the gossip of London and Derbyshire.

'Beau' Petersham's youngest brother, Fitzroy, was a completely different character. A keen sportsman and talented engineer, he designed the Stanhope gig, a small two-seater vehicle drawn by one horse, which, by the 1830s, was very popular and used widely in London for journeys between the suburbs and the city. He followed this with a successful design for a larger carriage which became known as the Stanhope phaeton.

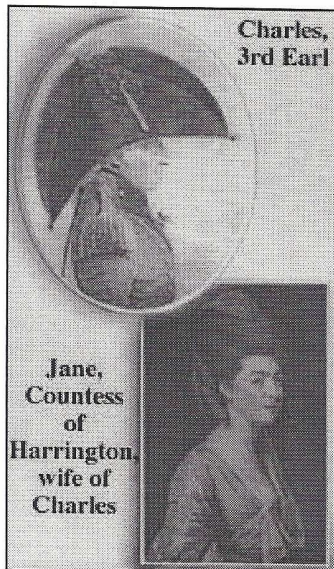
Leicester Stanhope, who succeeded his brother as 5th Earl, followed the now familiar pattern of army and political life. In 1823 he went to Missolonghi in Greece where he built a printing press, set up a newspaper, and opened a school. Lord Byron joined him but their political views differed greatly and they did not get on well. However, after Byron's death it was Leicester Stanhope who brought the poet's body and all his papers back to England.

The 5th Earl died in 1862 and was succeeded by his son, Seymour, a boy of sixteen who survived his father by only four years. The title then passed to his cousin, Charles, a man in his late fifties. This 7th Earl of Harrington, Fitzroy Stanhope's son, had inherited some of his father's creative talent and was addicted to playing and making violins.

The Stanhope talent for invention featured again in the next generation. Charles Stanhope, the 8th Earl, was an amateur engineer and designed, among other things, a steam-powered lawn-mower. He was a cavalry officer and in his younger days was *'rarely out of the saddle except when nursing broken bones'*. The 8th Earl died tragically, as the result of burns received in an explosion in his own workshop.

The 9th Earl, Dudley Stanhope, was a patriarchal figure with a bushy white beard, affectionately known to younger members of the family as 'Old Whiskers'. A talented wood carver, his work may be seen in Elvaston church in the restored portions of the chancel screen and the cross which surmounts it. He shared his father's love of horses and left instructions in his will that his hounds were to hunt on the first suitable day after he was buried. His huntsman obeyed his wishes and on the day after the funeral the hounds set off in full cry across Elvaston Park. They raced past the golden gates and on into the churchyard where, to the amazement of the small field of followers, they were found to have checked at Lord Harrington's grave. This popular man, once described as *'the best loved man in the Midlands'*, was succeeded by his grandson, Charles. He was 10th Earl for only two years, dying in 1929 as the result of a fall from his horse. His son, William, is the present 11th Earl of Harrington.

V



Elvaston Castle, as we see it today, dates from the early nineteenth century and the time of the Gothic revival. It was Charles, 3rd Earl of Harrington, who ordered the rebuilding to replace the old brick-built, gabled manor house that had been home to the Stanhope family for some two hundred years. A small part of that building remains at the right hand end of the south front, where a red brick section with mullioned windows bears the date 1633. That would have been

during the lifetime of Sir John Stanhope who lived at Elvaston in the years leading up to the civil war, and it is thought that he may have replaced an earlier, perhaps Tudor, manor house. Some of the rooms behind those mullioned windows are in keeping with the date; one is the old library, completely panelled in oak.

The 3rd Earl was sixty when he turned his attention to rebuilding Elvaston, by which time he was established and influential enough to commission the leading architects of the day. He chose James Wyatt who began his designs for Elvaston in 1812.

James Wyatt was a Staffordshire man who at the early age of fifteen was taken to Italy by Lord Bagot to become a pupil of Antonio Visentini in Venice. He quickly acquired great skills as an architectural draughtsman and two years later moved on to work in Rome. After his return to England he designed the Pantheon in Oxford Street, acclaimed by Horace Walpole as *'the most beautiful edifice in England'*. That was in 1772 when Wyatt was twenty-six.

Following this success James Wyatt was appointed Surveyor General to the Crown where his work included alterations to several of the royal palaces and the building of a castle for George III, at Kew. He also received many private commissions and during his

career worked on over a hundred country houses in England, Ireland and Wales.

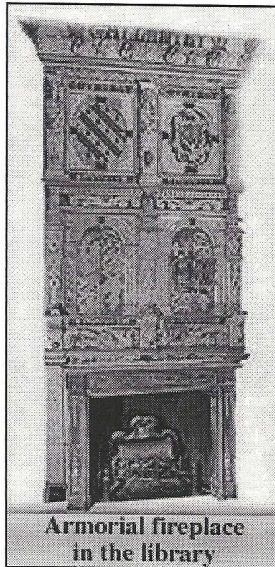
Wyatt's great love was Gothic architecture and it was this style which brought him fame. His greatest masterpiece is probably Belvoir Castle, remodelled for the Duke of Rutland in the early years of the nineteenth century. His skills as a Gothacist were sought also for restoration work in colleges, churches, : and cathedrals, among them Lichfield and Salisbury.

Elvaston Castle was one of James Wyatt's last commissions and he did not live to see his designs carried out. He was killed in a coaching accident in September 1813 and another two years were to pass before Lord Harrington appointed Robert Walker to continue the work. He was a much younger man than Wyatt, a pupil of Thomas Leverton's, who had entered the Royal Academy Schools in 1792. Walker never achieved fame but from 1815-1819 he supervised the rebuilding of Elvaston Castle to James Wyatt's design.

The new castle witt its battlements and turrets was linked to a large courtyard, complete~ with a water tower of the same Gothic design. On the south side of this new courtyard was the hound enclosure and two gatehouses, one either side of a Gothic archway. On the west side, another archway under a clock tower led through to the pump yard, with its deep coach wash, coach house and harness rooms, beyond which lay a fine new stable block.



VI



Armorial fireplace
in the library

Nearby, on the south-west, Elvaston Church, with its much earlier, embattled tower, complemented the scene.

The 3rd Earl would have liked a new landscaped garden to complete his plans and with this in mind he approached Capability Brown. He turned down the commission explaining that, 'the place is so flat and there is such a want of capability in it'. However, he did present a disappointed Lord Harrington with six seedling Cedars of Lebanon which were planted to the east of the castle and grew into magnificent trees.

After Lord Harrington's death in 1829 it was left to his son, Charles, to finish the work at Elvaston. The 4th Earl, like his father, favoured the Gothic style but in his case it was an obsession and for the next twenty years he watched over the creation of a garden that became the talk of England.

Lord Harrington, the 'Beau' Petersham of earlier days, began by appointing a new architect to rebuild the east wing of Elvaston Castle and refurbish parts of the interior. He commissioned Lewis Cottingham who, like Wyatt, was a devotee of the Gothic style and much in demand.

Lewis Cottingham was born in Suffolk in 1787 and apprenticed to an Ipswich builder before moving to London, where his architectural career began in 1814. He designed his own house in Lambeth and included a museum which over the years he filled with



The 9th Earl, Dudley Stanhope-
known as 'Old Whiskers'

collections of medieval woodwork, Gothic carvings, and plaster-casts showing many different architectural styles.

After his death these collections formed the nucleus of the Royal Architectural Museum.

Among Cottingham's major designs were Snelston Hall in Derbyshire and the new Armagh Cathedral. His restoration work was to be found in colleges and churches all over the country but particularly in the cathedrals of Rochester and Hereford.

The east front of Elvaston Castle was completed in 1840. It overlooks the long tree-lined Elvaston Avenue and with its symmetrical nine-bay facade is most impressive. The centre is decorated with a number of coats of arms. At the top are the arms of the Earls of Harrington. Below them are those of Leinster, Bedford, Newcastle, Somerset and Grafton; five ducal families to which the Earls of Harrington were related by marriage.



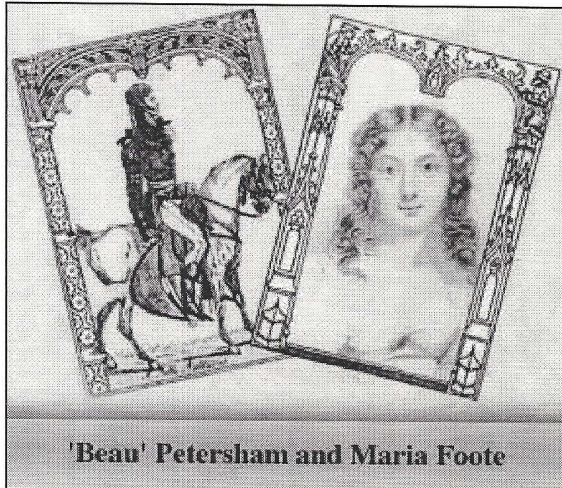
VII



ALL FOR LOVE

THE

GOTHIC DREAM



'Beau' Petersham and Maria Foote

The love affair of 'Beau' Petersham and Maria Foote that was to bring such changes to Elvaston began in the 1820s. The couple were the talk of fashionable London and the scandal of Lord Harrington's heir living with an actress delighted

the society gossips. But there was no talk of marriage until after the 3rd Earl's death in 1829.

Maria Foote's first stage appearance, as Juliet in 1810, was followed four years later by her debut at Covent Garden. She was sixteen years old. It was the start of a glittering career that owed far more to the beauty and charm of the courtesan than to Maria's talents on stage.

At seventeen she became the mistress of Colonel Berkeley, the future Earl Fitzhardinge, by whom she had two children, but who had no intention of marrying her. Her next conquest was another Regency dandy known to society as 'Pea Green' Haynes, a nickname acquired from the colour of his coats. He promised to marry her but then changed his mind. Miss Foote sued for breach of promise and was awarded a gratifying three thousand pounds. It was after this that



The romantic Gothic entrance hall.

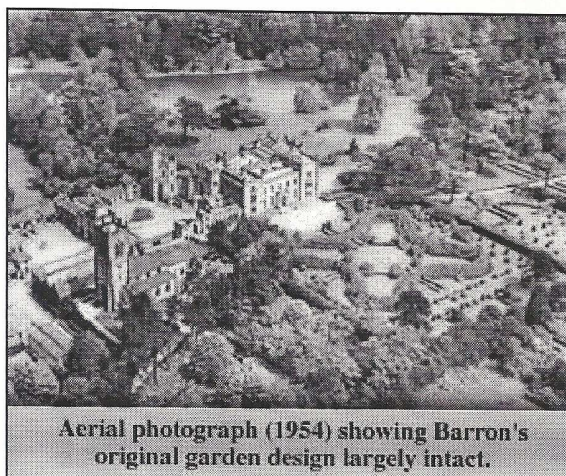
she captivated Lord Petersham.

After their marriage in 1831 the 4th Earl of Harrington and his Countess took up residence at Elvaston Castle. This was no coincidence but the result of social pressure. London society may have welcomed Maria as Lord Harrington's mistress; as Countess of Harrington they certainly did not.

The lovers were by all accounts totally absorbed in each other. The Earl would not allow Maria outside the grounds and neither would he allow anyone in. Apart, that is, from the army of workmen and gardeners employed to transform Elvaston into a world of Gothic fantasy; a shrine to their undying passion.



VIII



Aerial photograph (1954) showing Barron's original garden design largely intact.

Lewis Cottingham was commissioned to redecorate Wyatt's original entrance hall which was renamed the Hall of the Fair Star. This Gothic extravaganza stood as a symbol of the chivalrous

pursuit of love. Numerous pillars covered with lances led the eye up to the elaborate vaulted ceiling. More lances and swords covered the walls while niches around the room displayed whole suits of armour. Gold, black and scarlet, in fact all the colours of heraldry, were there in an abundance of arms and symbols. Mottoes appeared on every available surface; Faithful to Honour and Love; Gallantry, Courtesy and Love; Fayre beyond the Fayrest.

Outside work progressed on a larger scale. The task turned down by Capability Brown was accepted by William Barron, a young Scot, who had trained at the Botanical Gardens in Edinburgh. Under his direction long avenues of trees were planted, and a large lake excavated, while a series of theme gardens began to take shape to the south of the castle. There was an Italian garden based on authentic designs from Tuscany, and the Alhambra garden with its Moorish temple. This was one of the Earl's favourite haunts and inside was a statue of the couple, depicting an adoring Charles kneeling at Maria's feet.

The most famous of the individual gardens was Mon Plaisir, the bower garden. Based on a seventeenth century design, this riot of topiary and statues became known as the Garden of the Fair Star. In the centre a monkey puzzle tree stood in a star shaped bed surrounded by yews clipped to form bowers for statues. A dark curving tunnel of arbor vitae enclosed the central part of the garden giving it a maze-like quality. Peacocks strutted on the gravel amid numerous green and yellow

yew trees clipped to a variety of exotic shapes.

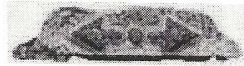
The Earl and Countess were impatient to see this dream become reality and so established shrubs and trees, yews, cedars, conifers and monkey puzzles, were transported to Elvaston and planted for immediate effect. This was made possible only by William Barron's unique skill at transplanting mature specimens, many of which were brought over long distances. It is said that trees carried through the streets of Derby on their way to Elvaston shattered more than a few windows!

The Countess was in her element in this make-believe world of chivalry but perhaps there were times when she longed for the company and acclaim of Covent Garden. Always the actress, she could still play to the gallery and would occasionally scatter the servants as she rode her horse straight through the kitchens.

For twenty years Lord and Lady Harrington lived here in their private world while around them matured the gardens that were to make Elvaston famous.



IX



William Barron was born in Berwickshire in 1805. He was a gifted boy who excelled at school and father a Scot from Aberdeen, gave his son every encouragement. At thirteen William took first prize in mathematics in a class of ninety-four and as a reward his father allowed him to learn Latin! It turned out that he had a gift for languages and it later years mastered French and Greek and also enough Hebrew to enable him to read his Bible in the original text.

No doubt he could have entered a variety of careers but at an early age William Barron became interested in gardening and this was soon his main study and ambition. At eighteen, after his apprenticeship at the Blackadder estate in Berwickshire, he went to the Botanical Gardens in Edinburgh. There he gained wide practical knowledge and was able to continue his studies, attending lectures in botany, chemistry, natural philosophy and mechanics. At twenty-two he left Scotland and for three years worked for the Duke of Northumberland at Syon House.

William Barron came to Elvaston in August 1830, employed by the 4th Earl of Harrington to make him a garden 'second to none'. Soon after his arrival in Derbyshire he viewed the task with misgiving. The land was flat and water-logged and apart from two avenues of trees planted by the 3rd Earl, at the suggestion of Capability Brown, had never been landscaped. There was an enclosed kitchen garden of two acres but no hothouses, and the Harrington's head gardener, - retired after forty years, warned Barron that the high water levels prevented anything flourishing before June. He pointed out a large open drain crossing the grounds which, in his opinion, could not be lowered.

Later William Barron was to record the experience: *'I had made up my mind that after proving his statement to be correct, I should relinquish my charge, but on going over the whole with my spirit level, I found, that commencing a mile from the garden, I could lower the stream four feet seven inches, this I did at once, and cut*

drains in the Kitchen Garden six feet deep, and for days the water ran through the pipes into the brook with a black and fetid smell. Thus the foundation was laid for successful operations all over the grounds.'

While this drainage was in progress there was time to plan how best to carry out the 4th Earl's wishes. Barron got on well with Lord Harrington whom he described as *'a nobleman, every inch of him. He never treated me like a servant, but more as a brother.* Together the two men discussed and planned each stage of the garden. It was a partnership which lasted until the Earl's death twenty years later, but in those early years it gave William Barron the chance to fulfil a long held ambition.

'From the commencement of my professional studies, I have been passionately fond of evergreens, and cherished the scheme of planting them largely, whenever an opportunity should be presented which would enable me to do so.'

And so William Barron began to design a winter garden, planting avenues of pines and conifers which would soon form shelter for more tender specimens and in time would grow to great height and splendour. At first the Earl thought of evergreens in terms of the familiar laurels, common yews and holly, but before long he found Barron's enthusiasm infectious and work gathered pace.

Unlike many of the nobility Lord Harrington was not a member of the Horticultural Society and found he was unable to buy at source and had to rely on stocks from public nurseries. This was unsatisfactory and so Barron began a programme of propagation, putting to use the many skills he had learned at Edinburgh and elsewhere. A tree nursery was established with the result that as each new area was designed it could be cultivated and planted immediately. Lord Harrington was always impatient to see his ideas take shape and with each new project was, according to Barron, *'like a child with a new toy'*. Work went on unceasingly as Barron supervised his staff of over eighty gardeners.

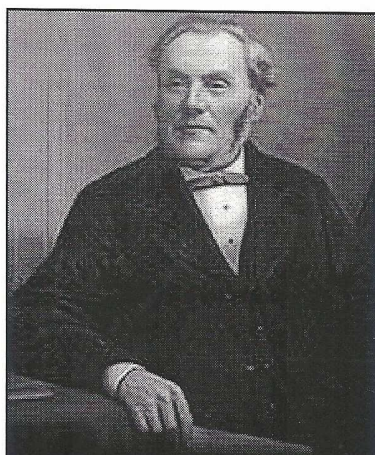
Once the initial clearing and planting of the avenues had been achieved Barron began work on a sixteen acre Pinetum, collecting and planting every available species. In time Elvaston became a showcase with rare and

interesting trees that were to be found nowhere else in Britain. As the trees matured Lord Harrington began to see his winter garden taking shape with its year round variety of greens and yellows, grey, gold and silver.

The tree moving operations for which Barron was to become so famous began soon after his arrival at Elvaston. In November 1830 the Earl pointed out three cedars of Lebanon ranging from twenty-eight to thirty-five feet in height and asked if they could be moved according to the methods given in Sir Henry Stewart's book on the subject. This method was achieved by digging a deep trench around the tree which was then filled with good rich soil. A new root system was allowed to grow in this soil and then two years later the tree was lifted and moved to its new site. Barron began the operation but not before explaining to Lord Harrington that Sir Henry Stewart moved deciduous trees during their dormant period and carried them horizontally. To transfer a large cedar tree and keep it upright so as not to dama the branches was a very different matter.



X

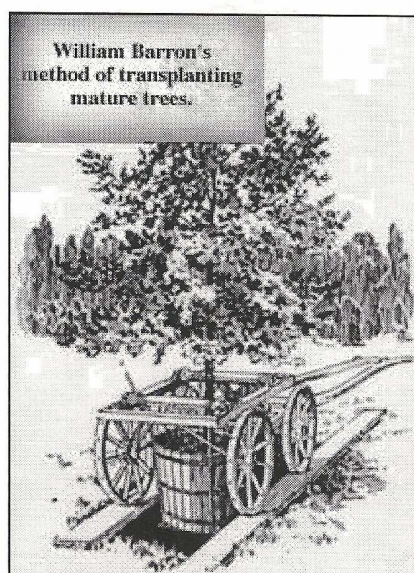


William Barron, 1800 - 1891

In this project, too, the Earl's impatience took over and to Barron's amazement he asked for the trees to be moved to their new positions in February 1831, less than three months after the trenches were dug. Much later, in his book *The British Winter Garden*, Barron was to recall those early days at Elvaston.

'In pointing out to my noble employer the utter impossibility of accomplishing his object . . . and witnessing his disappointment . . . I told him that if he would risk his trees, and would support me in forming a system that would answer, I would risk my character, which was all that I could afford . . . and would attempt their removal in February . . . The thought occurred to me that if it were possible to remove a tree with a large mass of earth, something similar to that containing the roots, after Sir Henry Stewart's preparation, I should be stealing a march upon him, and be as forward at once as he would be in two years. I then set about conquering the mechanical difficulty . . .'

In this task Barron succeeded, boring tunnels under the trunk and inserting heavy wooden beams which supported the tree when it was levered up and hauled to its new site. To Lord Harrington's delight the three cedar trees were successfully transplanted in February 1831. They were the first of many. In November another cedar forty-three feet tall with branches forty-eight feet in diameter was moved from the front of the castle to the bottom of the Garden of the Fair Star. From then on Barron scoured the countryside for fine specimens, some of them yews

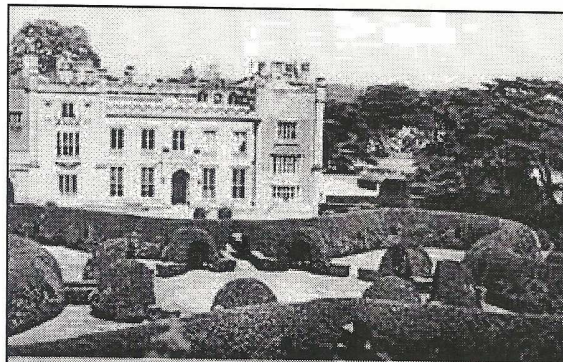


hundreds of years old, which were brought distances of up to twenty miles to grace the gardens at Elvaston.

By the late 1840s Elvaston was transformed. The theme gardens to the south of the castle were well established, while to the north-east lay a large ornamental lake landscaped with islands and rockwork. Behind the eleven miles of yew and holly hedges Elvaston Castle remained a secluded and unknown place. To the end of his life the 4th Earl of Harrington refused to allow visitors to share his exotic world. *'If the Queen comes, Barron'* he once said, *'show her round, but admit no one else.'*



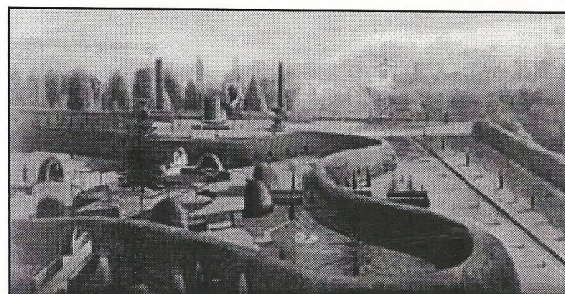
XI



Mon Plaisir (Bower Garden): north view.



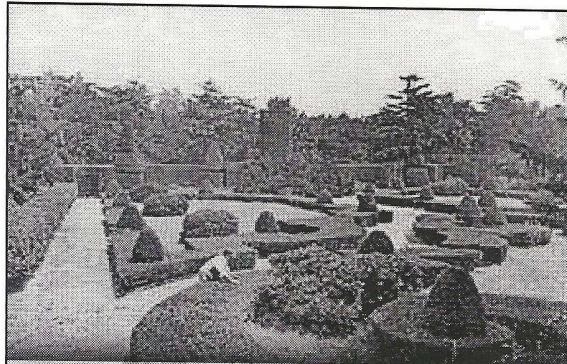
Summer shelters



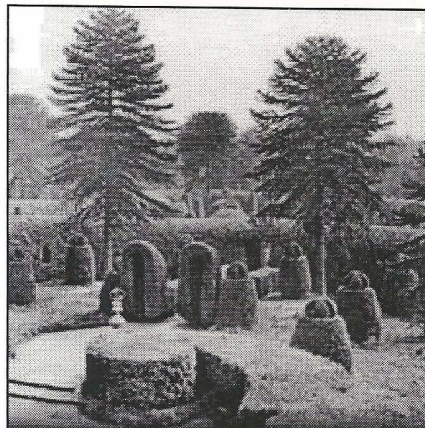
**The garden of 'Mon Plaisir'
(view by E. Adveno Brooke, 1856)**



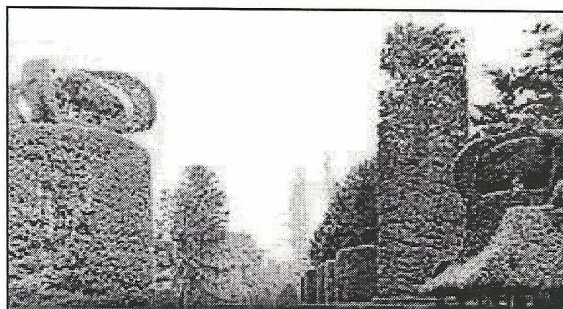
XII



The Alhambra Garden



**Mon Plaisir (Bower garden):
south view**



The topiary garden



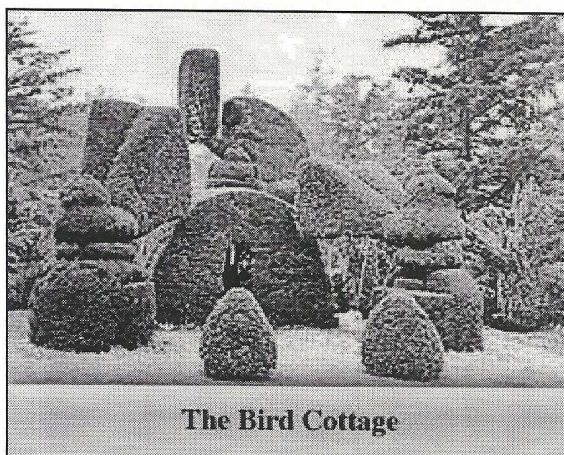
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The topiary gardens



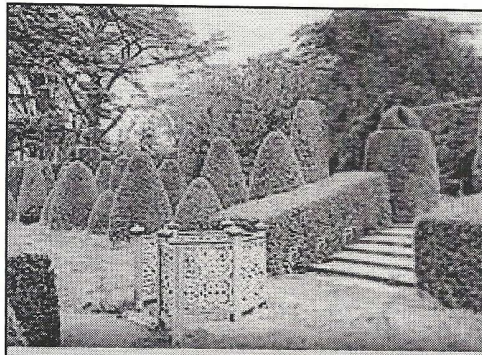
The Pavillion



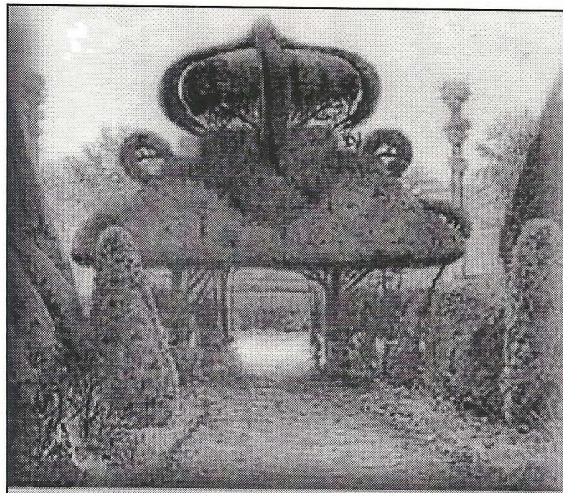
The Bird Cottage



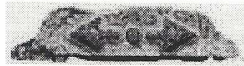
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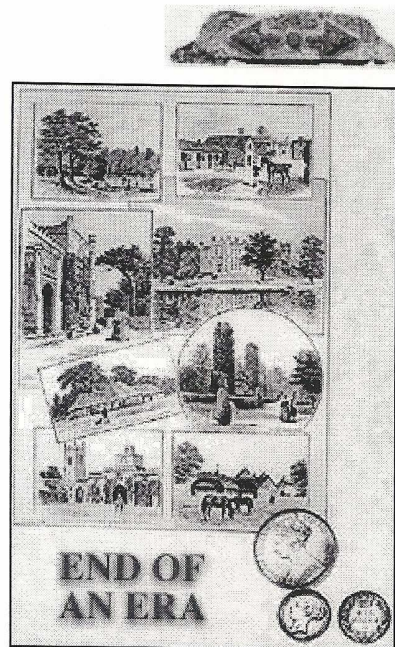
The Golden Yews



The Moors' Arch



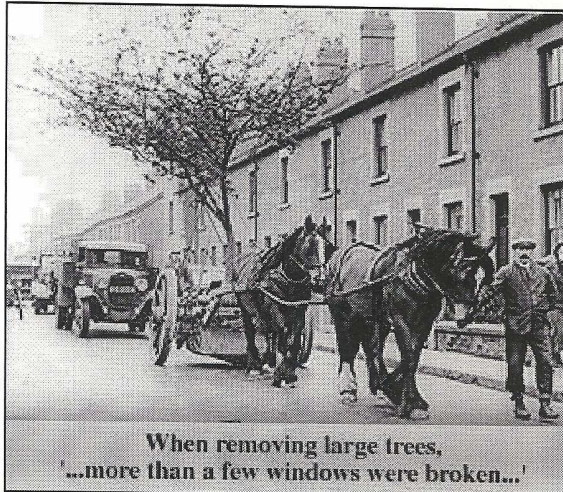
XV



The death of the 4th Earl of Harrington in 1851 was indeed the end of an era for Elvaston and with it came an opportunity long awaited. The 5th Earl, Leicester Stanhope, opened Elvaston to the public at an entrance fee of 3s. a head. It was a high charge for those days but such was the reputation the gardens had acquired that it made no difference; people flocked to Elvaston in their thousands.



XVI



Lord Harrington was not a wealthy man. Change was inevitable and the days when Elvaston employed up to ninety gardeners were over. Barron's staff was reduced to eleven and it would take them all their time

to trim the hedges and maintain the formal gardens.

But Lord Harrington was a fair man. He continued to pay Barron's salary and told him, '*your talent cannot be buried here, your time will be your own, you must go out as a landscape gardener, and I will do all I can to further your interests*'. They drew up an agreement and Barron took over the Elvaston tree nursery where he continued to propagate many varieties of evergreen. On behalf of the Earl he gradually sold existing stock to the value of 3,000 pounds. All were trees he had propagated or reared from seedlings, including some more mature specimens which he felt could be spared from the grounds. A number of conifers were sold to Sir Joseph Paxton and transplanted in the grounds of the Crystal Palace.

On one occasion Queen Victoria's gardener sought Barron's help. He was searching for a specimen of *Picea nobilis*, the Silver Fir, to replace the only one at Osborne which had been lost, much to the disappointment of the Prince Consort. Barron remembered well the visit of Mr. Ingram, the royal gardener.



XVII

'I took him to the East Avenue and showed him a host of them, I pointed out a fine plant seven feet and four inches high, and asked him what the thought it was worth, he at once replied "Twenty Guineas".'

The tree was lifted, complete with a ball of earth weighing half a ton, and transported to the Isle of Wight where, to the satisfaction of the Prince Consort, it was successfully planted at Osborne.



By this time Barron's tree moving achievements were famous. He had refined his methods and his machines, one of which is preserved at Kew, so that it was possible to transport trees of an age and size never previously attempted. Such an operation took eight men and six horses. His greatest feat was the moving of the Buckland Yew in Buckland churchyard near Dover. This tree, mentioned in the Domesday Book, was over a thousand years old when it was successfully moved to make way for the extension of Buckland church.

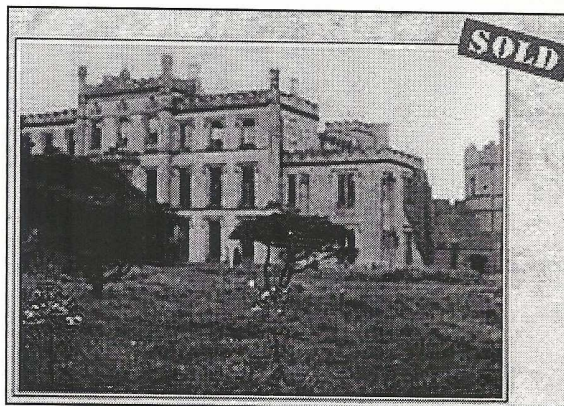
In 1865 Barron resigned and went to live in Borrowash, just a mile from Elvaston, where he and his son had set up their own nursery. He continued to work for many years, finally retiring in 1886 when he was eighty-one. Barron had long been an eminent figure in the horticultural world and was acknowledged as the leading authority on coniferae. His was perhaps the widest collection of evergreens in the country and included several species which originated at the nursery of Messrs. Barron and Son of Borrowash. Pride of place went to the famous golden yew, *Taxus baccata variegata* 'Elvastoni', developed by William Barron and used to

such great effect in the gardens at Elvaston.

The new head gardener at Elvaston, Mr. Goodacre, maintained the formal gardens, supervising the clipping of miles of hedge and thousands of individual trees. He was also an expert fruit grower and under his care the kitchen garden and hot houses flourished. Apart from native species of apple, pear, quince, cherry and soft fruit, Elvaston became known for more exotic crops. Peaches, nectarines, figs, pineapples and melons were grown along with numerous varieties of grape and the Earl of Harrington's name featured in the prize lists at produce shows all over the country.



XIX



In the late 1930s, William Stanhope, 11th Earl of Harrington, left Elvaston for County Limerick in Eire, where the family still live. The Harringtons had connections

with Ireland over several centuries and had owned a property there for many years.

During and after the war (1939-1950), Elvaston Castle was home to a teacher training college, evacuated from Derby city, five miles away. Finding room at Elvaston for over one hundred and fifty students and staff was a feat of ingenuity. Every available room was pressed into service. The dining-room could hold only half the students and so meals were in two sittings, while the Hall of the Fair Star served as lecture room, assembly hall and common-room.

The students were privileged to use the beautiful Elvaston church as their private chapel. The gardens and grounds were greatly enjoyed, particularly by those studying natural sciences, and the lakeside lawns with their grottoes and fountains provided idyllic scenery for open air theatre.



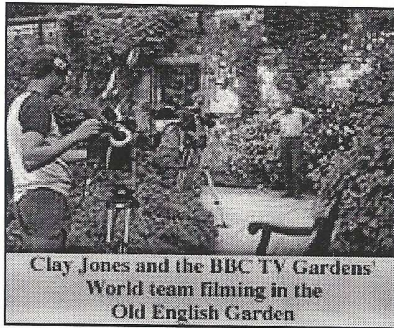
'Black-out' rules had to be obeyed and the cellar was fitted out with bunks and used as an air raid shelter. One stick of bombs fell close to the castle, shattering windows, but that was Elvaston's only experience of war.

In 1963 Elvaston was once more in the news. The Earl decided to sell the estate to meet the expense of death duties. As Sothebys prepared for the sale of fine English furniture, prior to the auctioning of the castle itself, the press gave details of just a few valuable items. an Adam state four-poster bed, Chippendale mahogany settees, eighteenth-century wall mirrors, and a pair of rare and fine George III library globes. This specialist sale at Somebys in London was followed by a two-day sale of contents at Elvaston Castle.

The Elvaston estate was sold to the Needlers Development Company in 1963. In 1969 the castle and 390 acres of land were bought jointly by Derbyshire County Council and Derby Corporation, for the establishment of a Country Park.



XXI



Clay Jones and the BBC TV Gardens World team filming in the Old English Garden

The park and gardens of Elvaston were well maintained through the early years of this century right up until the 11th Earl left for Ireland. During the war and in later years, although the lawns were kept mowed, work on trees and shrubs was left.

There was a time, too, when it was thought that the park and gardens would be destroyed in order to recover the valuable gravel which lies beneath.

With the passing of time the gardens, and in particular the topiary, began to show signs of neglect. In 1969, immediately after they bought Elvaston, Derby Parks and the County Council put into action a plan to restore the grounds which were to be opened to the public just twelve months later. An extensive programme of tree surgery began. The avenues were cleared of scrub, bringing light and air to magnificent specimen trees, now over one hundred and fifty years old. Many of the golden and green yew trees were pruned and restored. The bower garden unfortunately had deteriorated beyond any hope of restoration and it was decided to uproot all the conifers. A new parterre garden was designed on the same site to the south of the castle. Now, twenty years on, the scroll patterns of green and yellow box, reminiscent of an Elizabethan knot garden, on their background of immaculate lawn, are well established. Beyond the parterre garden are many of the original topiary yews together with William Barron's Moors' Arch.



Before

William Barron was undoubtedly a major influence on planting style during the mid 1800s, and Elvaston Castle Country Park stands as the most complete example of his work remaining to the present day.

In October 1990 English Heritage listed the gardens and grounds of Elvaston as 'outstanding'; an indication of its

unique historical importance.

Since 1969, the management committee has continued to maintain and improve the grounds and buildings, providing a wide range of facilities which include a caravan and campsite, tea rooms and a gift shop. Much of the country park and its facilities have the added advantage of being accessible to the disabled.



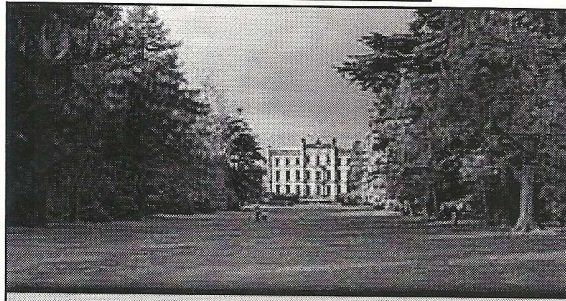
Restoration work has included the setting up of a museum, 'The Working Estate', giving a glimpse of life as it was for craftsmen, labourers, and their families, some eighty years ago.



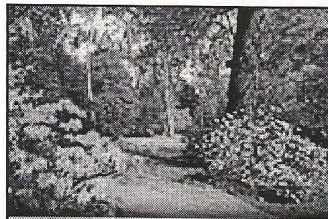
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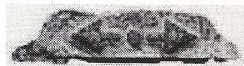
ELVASTON TODAY



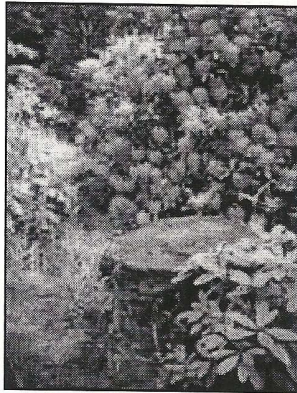
The East Avenue



**Woodland walk
with Azaleas**



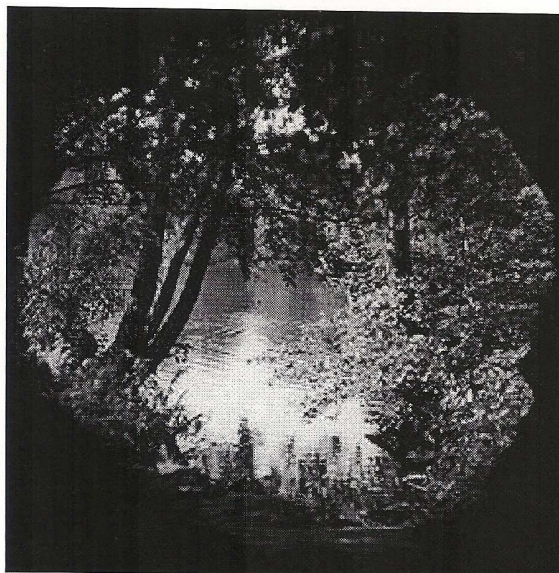
XXIII



**The Working
Estate Museum**



XXIV



**Elvaston Castle Country Park
Eyam, Sheffield, Derbyshire
S30 1QW
Tel: 01433 631976**



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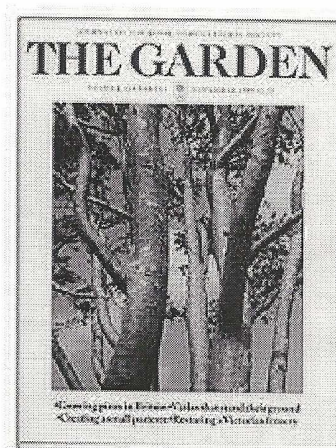
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December 1999

Volume 124 Part 12
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News	879
Perspectives	929
Tradescant's Diary	887
Winter Wonders Subtle highlights of the season MIRABEL OSLER	888
<u>Prickly creations in Lanzarote</u> <u>Under the Volcano</u> JILL BILLINGTON AND JOHN FINLAY	892
Cos Célèbre Lettuce cultivars on trial LIA LEENDERTZ	898
Appraising winter gardens Cold Comfort MICHAEL LEAPMAN	902
Naturalist in the Garden A Hard Night's Roost ROBERT BURTON	908
Woody plants from seed Nurturing Nature DUNCAN GOODWIN	909
<u>Elvaston Castle recalled</u> <u>Return to Camelot</u> JOHN GLENN	912
Plants That Should be Better Known <i>Ilex x koehneana</i> ROY LANCASTER	918
Problem Profiles	920
Letters	923
Books	925
1999 Index	938





- About Us
- Events
- Plants
- Advice
- Science
- Gardens
- Education
- News
- Join Us
- e-Shop
- Search

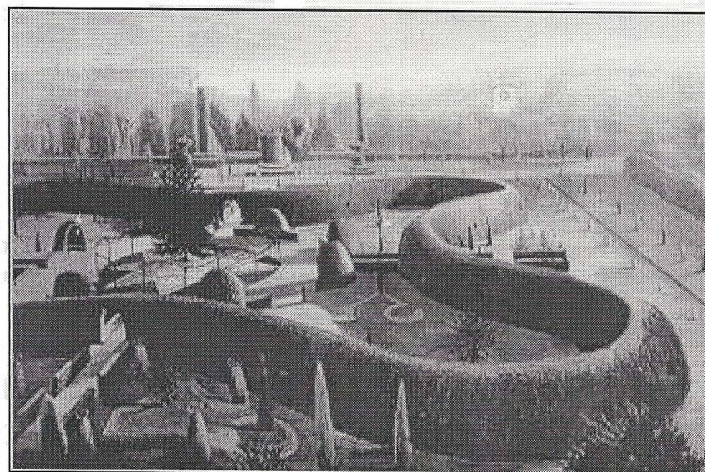
Publications

RHS Journals

The Garden
December 1999

Return to Camelot

Few visitors to Elvaston Castle, near Derby, today are aware that in the last century its gardens were among the most famous in the country. John Glenn traces the remarkable story of their creation and subsequent decline



Above: The first public glimpse of Elvaston, these pictures by E Adveno Brooke caused a sensation when published in 1852

The extensive park and gardens that surround Elvaston Castle, near Derby, are nowhere near as well known among gardeners today as they were to their 19th-century counterparts. Only a pale impression of their former splendour remains, but at their peak the new gardens amazed the horticultural world after the first description appeared in 1849 in the *Gardeners' Chronicle*. The relatively short time it had taken was particularly remarkable: serious planting on the site had only begun in 1835.

The ensuing 14 years had brought the gardens to such a state of horticultural excellence and maturity that they were described as 'the greatest work of gardening skill, both in extent and design, which

perhaps any man achieved in one lifetime before'. Today, although much has vanished in the intervening century and a half, parts of the garden still possess more than a tincture of their original magic, and remain recognisably a special and dramatic place.

The most impressive remnants of the 19th-century gardens lie to the immediate south of the castle. There, massive topiary in both common and golden yew is complemented by a parterre, planted in the early 1970s when the estate was converted into the first English country park. The estate also retains several splendid, if overgrown, avenues of exotic trees.

[Romantic leads](#)

[Set design](#)

[Set building](#)

[Stage struck](#)

[Stealing the scene](#)

[Curtain fall](#)

[Elvaston's recent history](#)

John Glenn is Horticultural Director of Anderson & Glenn, consultants for historic buildings and gardens



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- About Us
- Events
- Plants
- Advice
- Science
- Gardens
- Education
- News
- Join Us
- e-Shop
- Search

Publications



Choose an Option go

RHS Journals

The Garden
December 1999

Return to Camelot

Romantic leads

The story of the creation of these fabulous gardens began in 1830 with the hiring of a remarkably skilled gardener, and the scandalous marriage of two devoted lovers the following year. It was this trinity of Earl, mistress and gardener that provided the catalyst to turn a flat, uninspiring site into a fairytale world of opulent garden rooms and parkland.

The Fourth Earl of Harrington inherited Elvaston in 1829 at the age of 49. Formerly known as the Regency dandy 'Beau' Petersham, he was a tall, handsome man, of eccentric habits. Never seen out before 6pm and invariably dressed in clothes of a brownish hue, he was a great connoisseur of tea and snuff. His room was so filled with gilt-labelled canisters of both items that it was said to resemble a shop.

After his accession to the earldom, he married his mistress, the famous actress and beauty Maria Foote, who had a notorious reputation earned from former scandalous relationships. She had two children by a previous aristocratic lover, and had successfully sued another, 'Pea Green' Haynes, for £3,000 as settlement for breach of promise of marriage. Of medium height, with an abundance of light brown hair, she had an expressive face and her acting was described by those who fell under her spell as fascinating.

The marriage scandalised society, and both were shunned by former acquaintances. They left London and retired to the Earl's neo-gothic castle at Elvaston where almost immediately they began to construct their own private world of fantasy based on the then-fashionable concept of medieval chivalry and romance.

- About Us
- Events
- Plants
- Advice
- Science
- Gardens
- Education
- News
- Join Us
- e-Shop
- Search

Publications



Choose an Option

RHS Journals

The Garden
December 1999

[Return to Camelot](#)

Set design

No contemporary records of the creation of their gardens have yet been found, but it is known that Lewis Cottingham, an architect with an academic knowledge and interest in Gothic design, was consulted. Certainly comparisons of Cottingham's published work with some of the elaborate metal features used inside and outside Elvaston Castle give a clear indication of his possible influence on the design of the gardens. It is also known that the Earl had 'a passionate fondness for artistic gardening' and probably played a part in their design.

What is certain is that a talented 25-year-old Scot, William Barron, was appointed Head Gardener in 1830, and was soon given specific instructions 'to create a garden second to none'.

Unusually, however, this was not to be a public show of wealth and status. Instead the Fourth Earl and his bride wanted a romantic, private place to enjoy in peace and seclusion, away from the prying eyes and gossiping tongues of the hostile society that had expelled them. To emphasise this point, the Earl gave clear instructions to Barron that if the Queen came he was to show her round, but to admit no-one else. As he was not a young man, he also wanted the gardens to be as mature as possible.

From his early days as a gardener, Barron had been 'passionately fond' of evergreens and favoured planting them whenever an opportunity presented itself. He soon persuaded the Earl to share his enthusiasm and the opportunity to fulfil his gardening dream was given to him at Elvaston.

Barron was required to produce quick results, and

to achieve this he needed to successfully plant trees and shrubs of as large a size as possible. The art of moving large trees at this time was rather primitive. The root ball was not usually kept intact and the tree was moved horizontally, resulting in the need for heavy root and top pruning, magnifying the stress to the plant. Losses were usually high.

Barron devised a better system of transplanting that ensured success rates of near 100 percent. His major innovation was to minimise root disturbance, moving the tree or shrub to its new home in an upright position with the rootball intact. This allowed trees of up to 15m (50ft) high, including yews hundreds of years old, to be bought and moved to Elvaston.

Massive established topiary pieces were purchased from other gardens and parks and were moved by the improved tree-lifting machines. One topiary arbor in yew about 4.3m (14ft) square and 5.5m (18ft) high was transported 40km (25 miles).

Planting was made quicker by placing the trees in position and mounding soil around the root ball; a system of ropes and pegs held them upright during establishment. This mound planting, and previous work to improve drainage, were major factors in Barron's success on such a flat, poorly-drained site.

The importation of large trees was not achieved without some inconvenience to the surrounding population however. Many windows were apparently broken in the houses of Derby by branches as they were brought through the city streets to Elvaston.

Set building



About Us

Events

Plants

Advice

Science

Gardens

Education

News

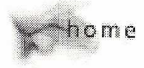
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Publications

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RHS Journals

The Garden
December 1999

[Return to Camelot](#)

Set building

The site became famous for its golden yews and by 1849 there were more than 1,000 in the gardens. Many of these still remain today. Sir Joseph Paxton, Head Gardener at Chatsworth and the designer of the Crystal Palace, described them as the 'chandeliers of the place'. Specimens were bought from far afield; one cost 40 guineas and a round trip of 450km (280 miles) was made to lift and transport it.

Barron developed many new cultivars of golden yew, two of which, *Taxus baccata* 'Elvastonensis' and *T. baccata* 'Barronii', commercially produced in the last century, are now almost impossible to obtain. The former was described in a nursery catalogue as 'a bright orange colour, and unlike all other golden or silver yews, not variegated but a self colour...' and, 'by far the most brilliant of any in winter'.

Barron was a skilled horticulturist but he was not concerned with imitating nature, scorning this as the unimaginative use of the commonplace. 'If I have but one stall in my stable, and keep for only one horse, I think I can manage better than put a donkey in it,' he is reported to have said.

He was, however, conscious that even the 'rare and beautiful' needed careful siting, and believed no tree should be planted without good reason. With great energy and speed, he and his gardeners, grafted, clipped and transplanted against the ways of nature to form a seemingly-mature garden of more than 40ha (100 acres) in extent.

[Stage struck](#)

- About Us
- Events
- Plants
- Advice
- Science
- Gardens
- Education
- News
- Join Us
- e-Shop
- Search

Publications

Choose an Option

RHS Journals

The Garden
December 1999



Return to Camelot



Above: The clipped perfection of the Alhambra Garden from the Moorish Temple, visible at back right in the portrait of the even more opulent garden called Mon Plaisir

Stage struck

Words alone were insufficient to do justice to the magnificence of these gardens at their peak around 1850. However, the *Gardeners' Chronicle* was of the opinion that, 'if any artificial assemblage of trees can reach the sublime in gardening, this we imagine, is no mean example of one.'

The grounds contained about 18km (11 miles) of evergreen hedges, 'shorn as smooth as Axminster carpet' and 'an assemblage of the most valuable trees and shrubs.' The pinetum of 6.5ha (16 acres) was said to contain specimens of every conifer then known to British gardeners. Many of the rarities were probably secured by William Barron's links to the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh, as the Earl continued to be ostracised by his peers.

A lake was also constructed using huge artificial formations of rockwork, thought by the Duke of

Wellington to be the most natural he had ever seen in a garden. Great avenues of exotic trees were planted, some grafted with bizarre top work. Fine gilded statues and magnificent topiary were used extensively.

It was, however, the gardens of 'Mon Plaisir' and 'Alhambra', created to the immediate south of the house, that became the most famous features of Elvaston Castle, primarily through the contemporary illustrations by E Adveno Brooke.

Stealing the scene



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[About Us](#)
[Events](#)
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[News](#)
[Join Us](#)
[e-Shop](#)
[Search](#)

Publications

 go

RHS Journals

The Garden
December 1999

[Return to Camelot](#)

Stealing the scene

Mon Plaisir was the most dramatic garden room. It was based around a continuous tunnel walk of *Thuja occidentalis* (arbor vitae), nearly 2.4m (8ft) high and wide internally, with regular entrances and windows, described by the Gardeners' Chronicle as looking like a 'pincushion whose four sides had been pressed in'. At the centre was a space 15m (50ft) in diameter with an eight-pointed star made of beds planted alternately with golden holly and common yew, kept clipped to a height of 23cm (9in), surrounding a magnificent example of the then-rare *Araucaria araucana* (monkey puzzle). Arranged with geometric precision around this central area were eight clipped bower seats, also of arbor vitae. Smaller monkey puzzles were placed in the four corners of the pincushion, encircled in summer with bedding such as scarlet pelargoniums, lobelia and calceolaria. The whole was surrounded by alternating green and gold yews, with one enormous topiary piece, of green yew with gold sections grafted in, forming a crown at the garden's south entrance. This was flanked by yews clipped into cylinders almost 12.2m (40ft) high.

The Alhambra garden, lying behind and to one side of Mon Plaisir, was laid out with low scrolls of clipped yew, 30cm (12in) high by 1.2m (4ft) wide, defined by paths made of octagonal bricks. Statues and topiary provided vertical interest while heathers, sedums and *Senecio cineraria* (syn. *Cineraria maritima*) gave colour contrast among the massed evergreens.

Firmly proclaiming the ethos behind the garden was a Moorish Temple, built primarily to facilitate the Earl's passion for taking tea. Its sumptuous interior contained a plaster image of a medieval

knight kneeling to his lady, a direct reference to the two lovers whose garden it was, the Earl and his theatrical wife using the gardens as living stages for the ongoing performance of their fairytale romance. Maria could also be eccentric; it is claimed she would ride her horse through the castle kitchens. However, the lifestyle at Elvaston ended abruptly in 1851 with the Earl's death, although his wife lived until 1867.

It would seem society became more accepting of Maria as only three years after the death of the Earl their only surviving child, Lady Jane Stanhope, married the heir to the Marquis of Conyngham.

Curtain fall



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- About Us
- Events
- Plants
- Advice
- Science
- Gardens
- Education
- News
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Publications

Choose an Option

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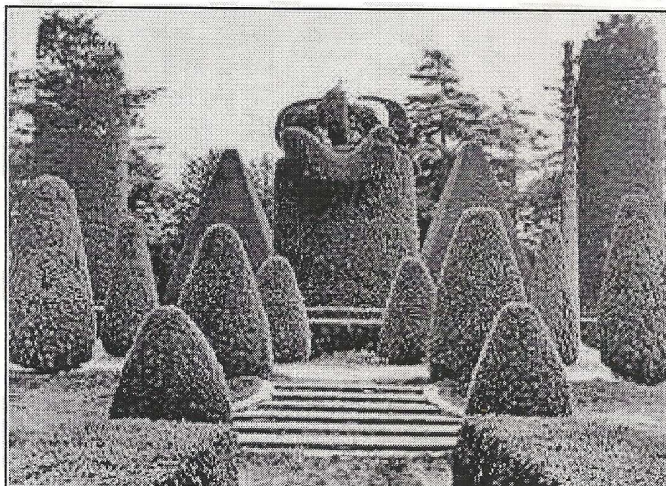
The Garden
December 1999

Return to Camelot

Curtain fall

The couple's only son died in 1836 at the age of just four, and as a result Elvaston Castle was passed to the Fourth Earl's brother, the more conventional Leicester Stanhope, who claimed he was not wealthy enough to keep the gardens up to the incredibly high standards maintained during the previous 20 years.

Barron's staff of nearly 90 gardeners was reduced to eight overnight, Barron himself was told to look for commissions as a landscape gardener and, in 1852, the Fifth Earl opened the gardens to the public for the first time, at three shillings per head (equivalent to more than £7 today in real terms). The gardens soon began a steady decline that continued for the next 100 years.



Above, far left: When *Country Life* photographed Elvaston in 1899 some topiary pieces, such as the central, crowned column and its flanking towers at the exit from Mon Plaisir, were in terminal decline. Two original monkey puzzles were already dead

The dereliction of the ornamental gardens at

Elvaston was not only due to lack of money and maintenance but was partly inherent from its creation. It was an 'instant garden', conceived and built as an extravagant expression of two people's devotion to one another at a specific time in history. That time ended with the death of the Earl who had created it – without both lovers whose stage it had been, the 'spirit of the place' was allowed to simply fade and die.

Gardening authorities of the mid-19th century predicted just such a fate for Elvaston and by the late 1860s signs of decay in the gardens were already becoming evident. As expected, mature trees and shrubs planted too closely for instant effect had to struggle and compete for space and light. Many of the less-vigorous trees and shrubs were simply overcome. Others were sold or moved to Barron's commercial nursery at Borrowash, set up in 1865 after his resignation from Elvaston. Without the will or resources to maintain and manage the grounds to the previous level of care, such a decline was inevitable.

Within 20 years of the Fourth Earl's death many gilded statues and garden ornaments had been sold or removed; the once-splendid gardens of Mon Plaisir, Alhambra and the Garden of the Fair Star (also called the Italian Garden) looked shabby and drab. Contemporary records also show the paltry numbers of flowers used in the bedding displays.

page 1 | page 2



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- About Us
- Events
- Plants
- Advice
- Science
- Gardens
- Education
- News
- Join Us
- e-Shop
- Search

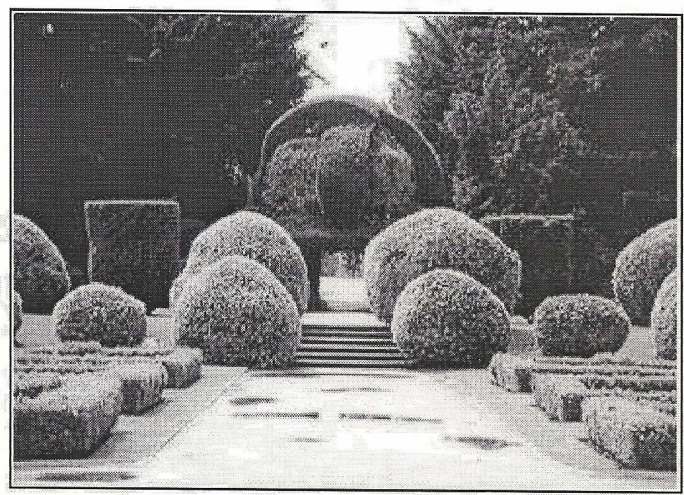
Publications

RHS Journals

The Garden
December 1999

Return to Camelot

For more than 100 years these once great gardens drifted further into decay. Views published in Country Life in 1898 showed that although the gardens remained in their original form, some of the topiary – particular the tall, columnar yews – was looking ragged with dieback. The resurrection of Elvaston as England's first country park (see box, left) halted the slide, but in turn introduced new problems associated with approximately 700,000 visitors a year. While Derbyshire County Council seeks commercial partners to redevelop the house and grounds, and despite an application to the Heritage Lottery Fund for major restoration, the ultimate fate of these important historic gardens remains uncertain.



Above: Today only the 'Moor's Arch', originally behind the yews, is still extant. The pyramids to the fore have become amorphous blobs (Photograph by Anderson Glenn)

Elvaston's recent history

page 1 | page 2



- About Us
- Events
- Plants
- Advice
- Science
- Gardens
- Education
- News
- Join Us
- e-Shop
- Search

Publications

Choose an Option go

RHS Journals

The Garden
December 1999

Return to Camelot

Elvaston's Recent History

The Earl of Harrington's family, the Stanhopes, lived at Elvaston until 1939. From then until 1952, it became a teacher-training college. The grounds and castle were vacant until 1963, when the family sold the estate to a quarrying company who planned to extract gravel deposits which lie under the gardens. The castle's contents and the remaining garden statuary were auctioned in 1964.

Fortunately, a consortium formed by Derby Borough and County Councils bought the site and thus saved it from total destruction. With great foresight and remarkable speed (and a substantial grant of public finance), they set about turning it into England's first country park.

The state of the two most-famously illustrated features of the gardens decided their fate. Alhambra had already been cleared by the Harringtons to make a tennis court. The dramatic garden of Mon Plaisir was considered impractical to restore, and was condemned as a fire risk due to the decayed condition of its sinuous tunnel of Thuja. The centre of the garden was cleared and the present parterre created in its place.

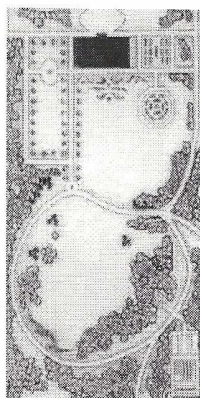
A consortium of landscape architects have recently prepared a feasibility study on the future management of the site. They are recommending a £7-million project, part-funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, to include the erection of a security fence around the formal gardens, the destruction of the present parterre and conjectural re-creations of Mon Plaisir and other areas such as Alhambra and the Garden of the Fair Star (Italian Garden).

[Back to Index to The Garden](#)

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Mixed Style: Keydate 1810

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Towards the end of his career, Humphry Repton argued that there is no more absurdity in collection styles in a garden than historic books in a library or historic pictures in a gallery. This led to a vogue for American, Chinese and other eclectic gardens. Victorian gardens came to be characterised by their mixed collections of areas laid out in different styles. As the century drew on, the 'Italian' style came to be the most popular.

Examples of historic gardens which have been influenced by the mixed, or eclectic, style of Victorian garden design

Alton Towers, Anglesey Abbey, Arley Hall and Gardens, Arlington Court, Ascott, Ashridge Management College, Ashton Court Estate, Belmont Park, Biddulph Grange Garden, Capesthorpe Hall and Gardens, Chastleton House, Chatsworth, Compton Acres, Doddington Place Gardens, Elton Hall, Elvaston Castle Country Park, Endsleigh House and Gardens, Forde Abbey, Gidleigh Park, Heligan, Hughenden Manor, Hutton-in-the-Forest, Killerton House and Garden, Lyme Park, Montacute House, Newby Hall and Gardens, Pencarrow, Rode Hall, Saltram House, Sezincote, Spetchley Park Garden, Stapehill Abbey Gardens, Stratfield Saye House, Sudeley Castle, Tatton Park, Torosay Castle and Gardens, Tullynally Castle and Gardens, Univeristy of Exeter, Waddesdon Manor, Woburn Abbey,

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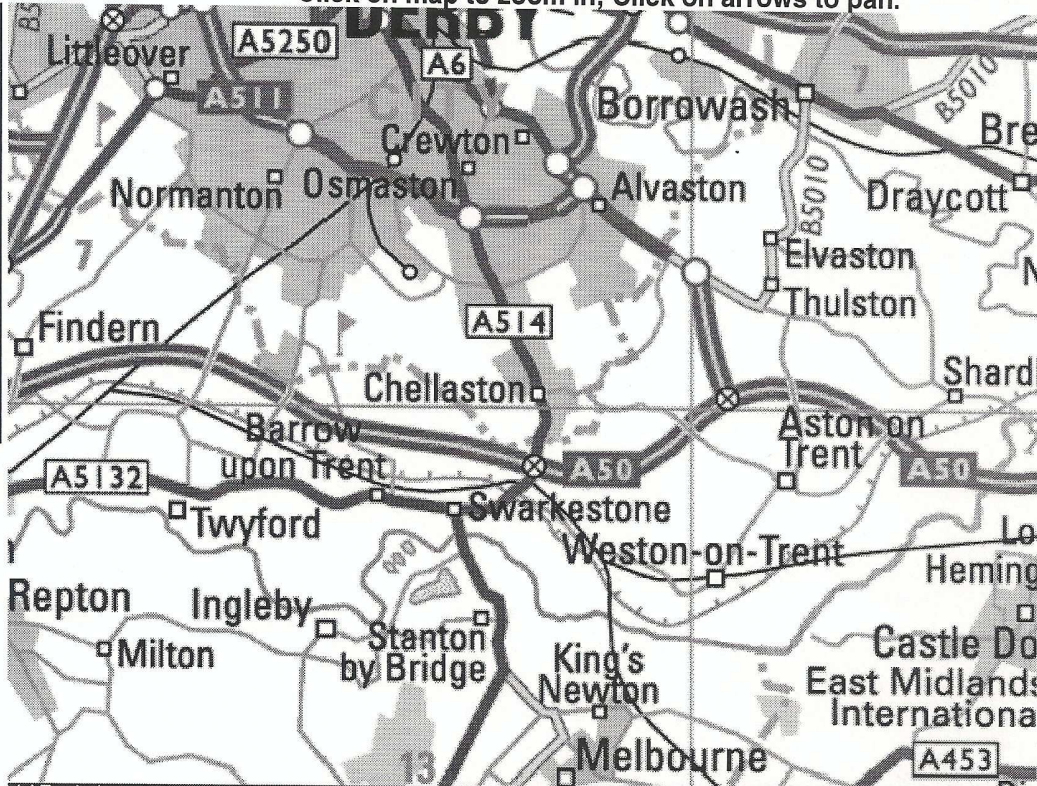
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