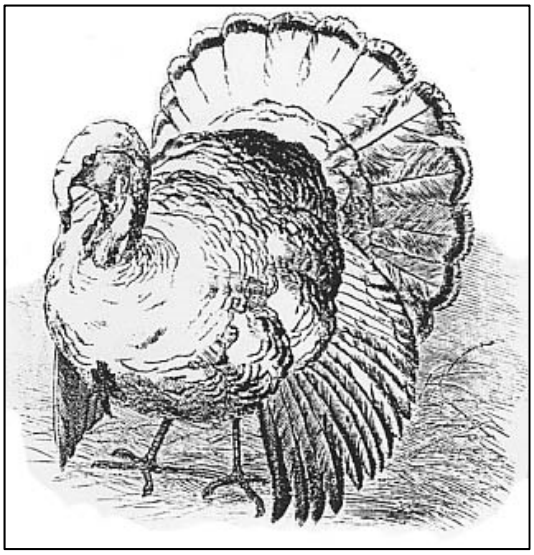
The Landmark Trust

POULTRY COTTAGE

History Album



Written by Charlotte Haslam, May 1989

Updated in 2011 & re-presented in 2015

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BASIC DETAILS

Cottage built c.1800, remodelled 1861

Fowl House and shed built 1861

Designed (probably) by W.H. Gee

Acquired by Landmark Trust 1988

Architect for repair: Andrew Thomas
of Jones Thomas Associates

Builders: Evans and Owen

Foreman: David Williams

Work on cottage completed 1989

Contents

Summary – The Fowl House & Poultry Cottage

The Fowl House, or Poultry House as it is often known, was built in 1861, the date is set above the door. It is said to have been a birthday present for Georgina, one of the daughters of John Naylor of Leighton Hall, and was probably designed by the Liverpool architect W.H. Gee, who also designed the Hall and the church.

A fashion for keeping ornamental fowl had been set by Queen Victoria, who built an elaborate Poultry House at Windsor in the 1840s. The arrival of new and exotic breeds from abroad, such as Cochins, and the growth of experience in breeding new varieties at home, led to its becoming a popular hobby among all classes of society. Few people went into poultry-keeping on such a grand scale as John Naylor, but everything he did is of similar magnificence. He came from a family of Liverpool bankers, the Leylands, and spent large sums on the development of Leighton as a model estate in the 1850s. The Fowl House must have gone some way towards fulfilling the ideal of making the country house self-sufficient in produce, even if the chief purpose of the birds kept here was for decoration and amusement.

The Fowl House was divided into compartments for the different breeds and types of birds. Several of the nesting boxes survive, showing that large birds such as turkeys and geese were kept here, as well as hens and ducks. Each was carefully segregated from the other, even when let out into the yard to scratch, or onto the pond to swim. A storm shed was provided for wet days, and the whole complex was surrounded by a fence.

The everyday care of the birds was under the supervision of a Poultry-keeper, who lived in the cottage just beside the yard, today's Landmark. It is in fact an earlier building, dating from about 1800, but was smartened up in 1861 to match its neighbours.

The Leighton estate was sold in separate lots by John Naylor's grandson in 1931. The Fowl House was included with the Forestry plantations, and has remained in the same ownership until it was sold to the Landmark Trust in 1988, which now cares for both the Fowl House and the cottage, now let for holidays.

The Hall is now again private ownership and is not accessible to the public - the outlying smallholdings and some of the buildings are still in the hands of the heirs to their 1931 purchaser, Montgomery County Council (today Powys County Council). In 2011 Mr James Potter, owner of the Welshpool based Potters Group and who has a house next to the old hall called Tudor Lodge, bought a long lease on the Model Farm and its c. 200 acres. He plans to restore them, halting their slow slide into ruin and preventing the fragmentation that has beset the rest of the estate. His long term intention is to create a National Stud Farm.

Restoration

It is unlikely that exotic fowl have pecked and scratched here since 1914, and the Fowl House had inevitably fallen into disrepair, its surroundings overgrown. The cottage had remained inhabited however and needed only minor repairs and alterations, including the reinstatement of the chimneypots and of the original lime render on the walls, to prevent damp.

Work was needed on the exterior of the Fowl House itself. Some areas of the timber framing had decayed, and new wood had to be pieced in, using Douglas fir to match the original. The finials on the gables had also to be renewed, and then the whole frame repainted with red lead paint. The roof was stripped and re-laid in sections, reusing the old slates. Damaged stained glass windows were repaired. Outside, the yard, the pond, the storm shed and the perimeter fence all look much as they did in the days of John Naylor, and Georgiana.

The Fowl House

The Poultry Yard and Fowl House (so called because it clearly contained a variety of birds, other than hens) were built in 1861, which date is set above the door. It is said to have been a birthday present for one of the daughters of John Naylor of Leighton Hall (though presumably not her 21st, as one story maintains, since her parents were only married in 1845), and surviving members of the family say that it was for Georgina, his fourth daughter. If the initials above the door are G I N, rather than C I N as appears at first glance (and which doesn't fit any members of the family) then the tradition would seem to be true. Georgina Naylor, born in 1854 was an artist and sculptress, who studied at the Slade School of Fine Art in London. She died aged 95, in 1950.

The designer of the buildings is not recorded, but it is likely to have been an obscure Liverpool architect named W.H. Gee, who was employed by Mr Naylor both for the building of Leighton Hall itself, and of the church, and several of the farm buildings on the estate.

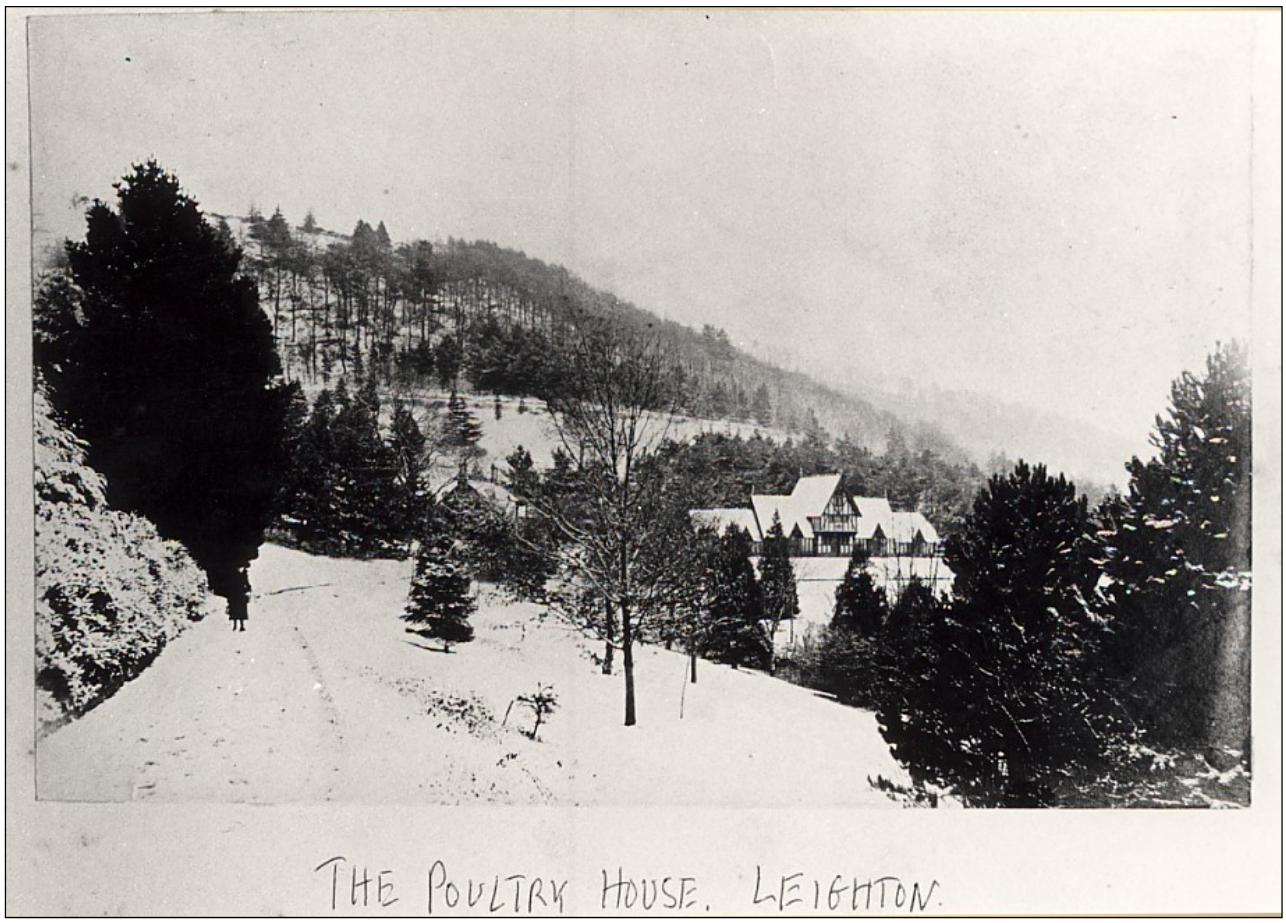
For the fitting out of the interior of the Fowl House Mr Naylor probably consulted the works of one of the contemporary authorities on poultry, such as W.B. Dickson or J.C. Morton.

The entry for Poultry Houses in the latter's *Encyclopaedia of Agriculture* (1851-5), for instance, recommends that the house should be 'lofty and spacious' with a paved floor, and a yard and shed attached (the shed or storm-house 'with proper roosts fixed all along its interior' and the yard 'surrounded by a low wall surmounted by a paling or latticed fence of wood or iron wire'); and continues:

> It is a decided improvement to place the nests not next to the wall, but at such a distance from it as to leave a passage between them and the wall. The side of the nests next the passage is then formed of lattice work, or wire netting, made to open like a door. This arrangement, besides tending to keep the nests sweet, and admitting to their being easier cleansed, allows the fowls to be set, and the eggs to be withdrawn, without going into the house - not always an agreeable duty for one whose clothes can be spoiled.

> The passage above the nests should be separated from the poultry-house by a lattice or wire netting partition extending to the roof.

All of which advice seems to have been followed at Leighton. A great many eggs must have been produced, and the Fowl House gone far towards achieving the aim of Bonington Moubray, one of the earliest writers to deal with the subject in *A Practical Treatise on Breeding, Rearing and Fattening all Kinds of Domestic Poultry, Pheasants, Pigeons and Rabbits* (first published in 1815, with successive further editions each adding advice on a new subject of which he had 'a lifetime's experience', until pigs, milch cows, bees and brewing are all covered) of 'making the country house its own mart for the supply of all necessaries.'



Possibly taken in the early 1900s.

It is clear that such an elaborate building was more than just an attempt to be sure of having fresh eggs for breakfast, however. It is perhaps more accurate to think of it as being as much an Aviary as a Poultry house, because the birds contained in it would have been valued as much for their ornamental as for their productive qualities. And in setting up such a thing Mr Naylor was entirely up with the fashion of the day, as he was in the large scale improvements being carried out all over his 'model' estate.

He was also typical in giving over its nominal supervision to his daughter, because by long and deeply ingrained tradition, poultry, whether practical or ornamental, were seen as very much a woman's interest: it was always the farmer's wife who was in charge of the hens, and of the income that came from selling the eggs. A recent example at a higher level had been provided by Queen Victoria herself, who had caused to be built in about 1843 a Poultry House or Aviary at Windsor, which was widely praised, and in which she took a close personal interest.

It was Queen Victoria too who sparked off what came to be called Cochin Mania. In the early 19th century the number of poultry breeds was small. Moubray in 1815 listed only nine, in addition to turkeys, ducks, geese, guinea and pea fowl, as being suitable birds for a gentleman's poultry house: Dunghill, Game, Dorking, Poland, Bantam, Chittagong or Malay, Shackbag, Hamburgh, Indian Cock, and the Muscovite Black Game Cock.

An interest in large-scale poultry farming on gentlemen's estates had certainly existed before this: the poultry house on Lord Penrhyn's estate at Winnington in Cheshire, described in *The Complete Farmer* of 1807, was immense, containing 600 birds, with a facade 140 feet long and colonnades and pavilions in the Italian style. And Moubray was not alone in encouraging more: J.C. Loudon in his many-times-revised *Encyclopaedia of Agriculture* included a long entry on the subject,

with a plan and elevation of a suitable house, and even Sir John Soane produced designs for a poultry house.

In general, however, until the mid-19th century the greatest concentration of interest in breeding was devoted not to domestic poultry, but to game fowl, for use in the sport of cock-fighting. On some estates several hundred birds were kept for this purpose alone, and keepers were employed to supervise the production of prize-winning cocks. Considerable skill in selective breeding had thus been built up when, from about 1830 on, popular taste started to turn against barbaric sports of this kind, leading to it being banned altogether in 1849.

Such experience now found a new outlet: in the breeding of ornamental poultry. Again, there had been examples of this since the beginning of the century and before, with men such as Sir John Sebright, President of the English Board of Agriculture, starting to breed exotic Bantams in about 1800. But over the next thirty or forty years others began to discover the satisfaction of creating new varieties - an end result that can be achieved much more quickly with chickens than with cows or pigs.

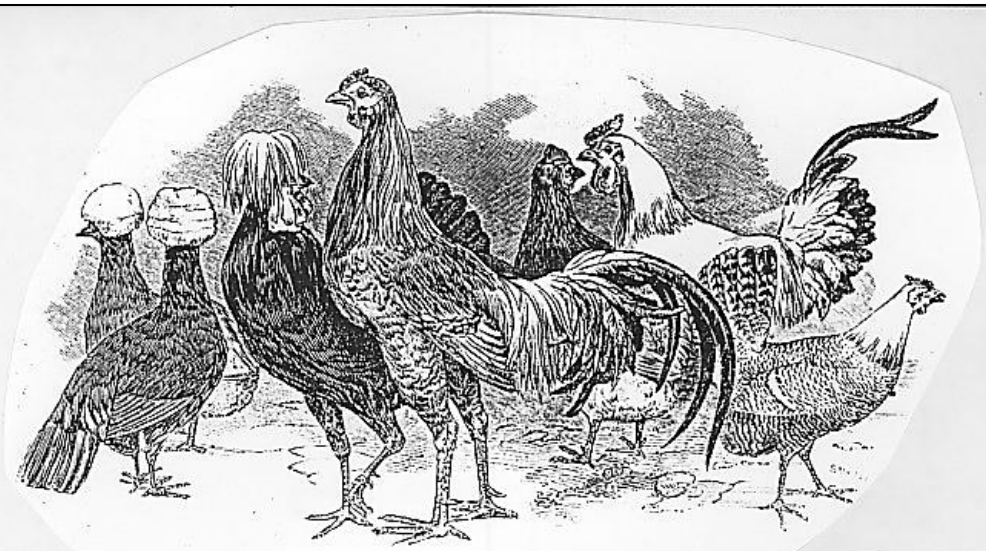
As cock-fighting became discredited, breeding for amusement and ornament became ever more popular. New breeds were introduced from abroad, and by 1838 when the first edition of Dickson's *Poultry* came out, the list had greatly increased:

Barn-door fowl	Turkish fowl
Dung-hill fowl	Dwarf fowl, or Creeper
Game fowl	Rumkin (Rumpless) fowl
Dorking fowl	Pencilled Dutch fowl
Paduan or Polish fowl	Silky fowl
Crested fowl	Frizzled fowl
Spanish fowl	Negro fowl
Hamburg fowl	Russian, or Siberian fowl
Bantam fowl	Barbary fowl
Malay or Chittagong fowl	Ever-laying fowl

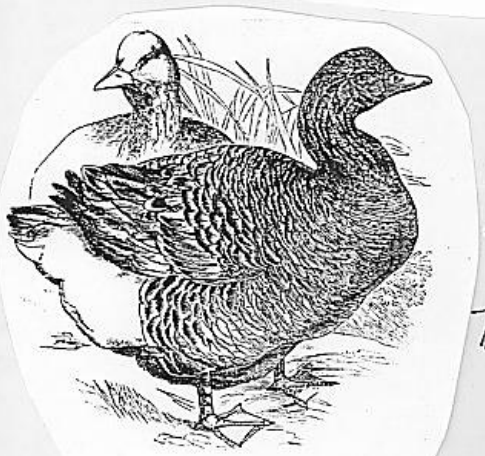
From The Illustrated London News, 17th August 1861:

"The Royal Aviary

The Royal aviary is situated very near the new dairy, a view of the interior of which we gave a week or two back, both being in the locality of the charming Home Park. The aviary is, however, of older date, but, from tits picturesque appearance and situation, we have been induced to give out readers a view of it. The long range of buildings is divided into various houses for the convenience and occupation of the feathered tribe, some of which are of great beauty. In front of the building is a network of wire inclosing a little paddock or run, also having divisions for the separate kinds of birds or fowls: these are nicely paved, and have a strip of gravel on one side, with a patch of grass, so that the birds may amuse themselves in their in their habitual pickings. There is a broad terrace in front of these, forming a nice walk; beyond this and the aviary is a semicircular basin filled with water, in the centre of which is fountain. On the opposite sloping sides of this ornamental piece of water are some tame goats, the gentle gambols of which have often amused the junior branches of the Royal family in their hours of relaxation and amusement."

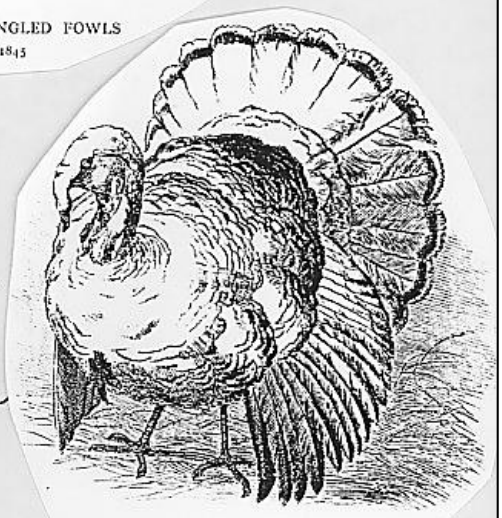


POLISH, CHINESE AND SILVER-SPANGLED FOWLS
From "Illustrated London News," 1845

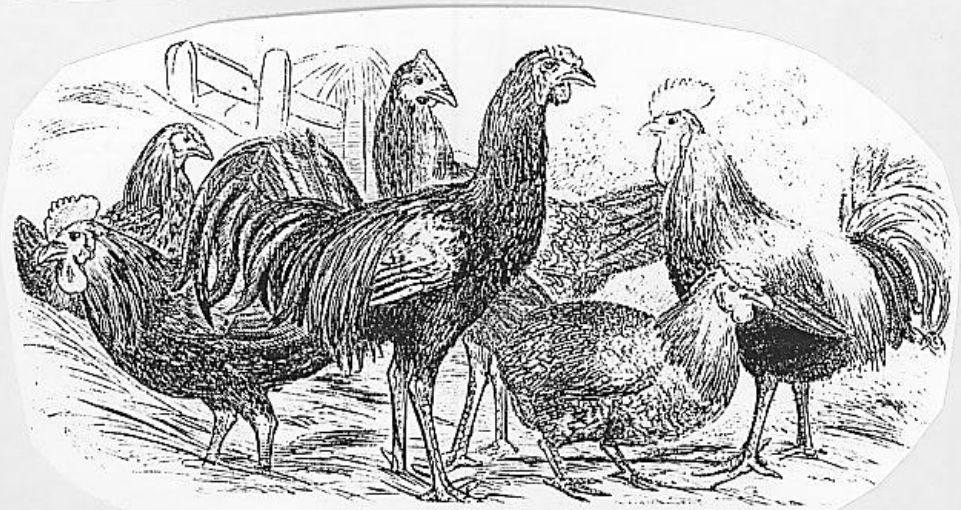


COMMON GOOSE
From "Illustrated London News," 1845

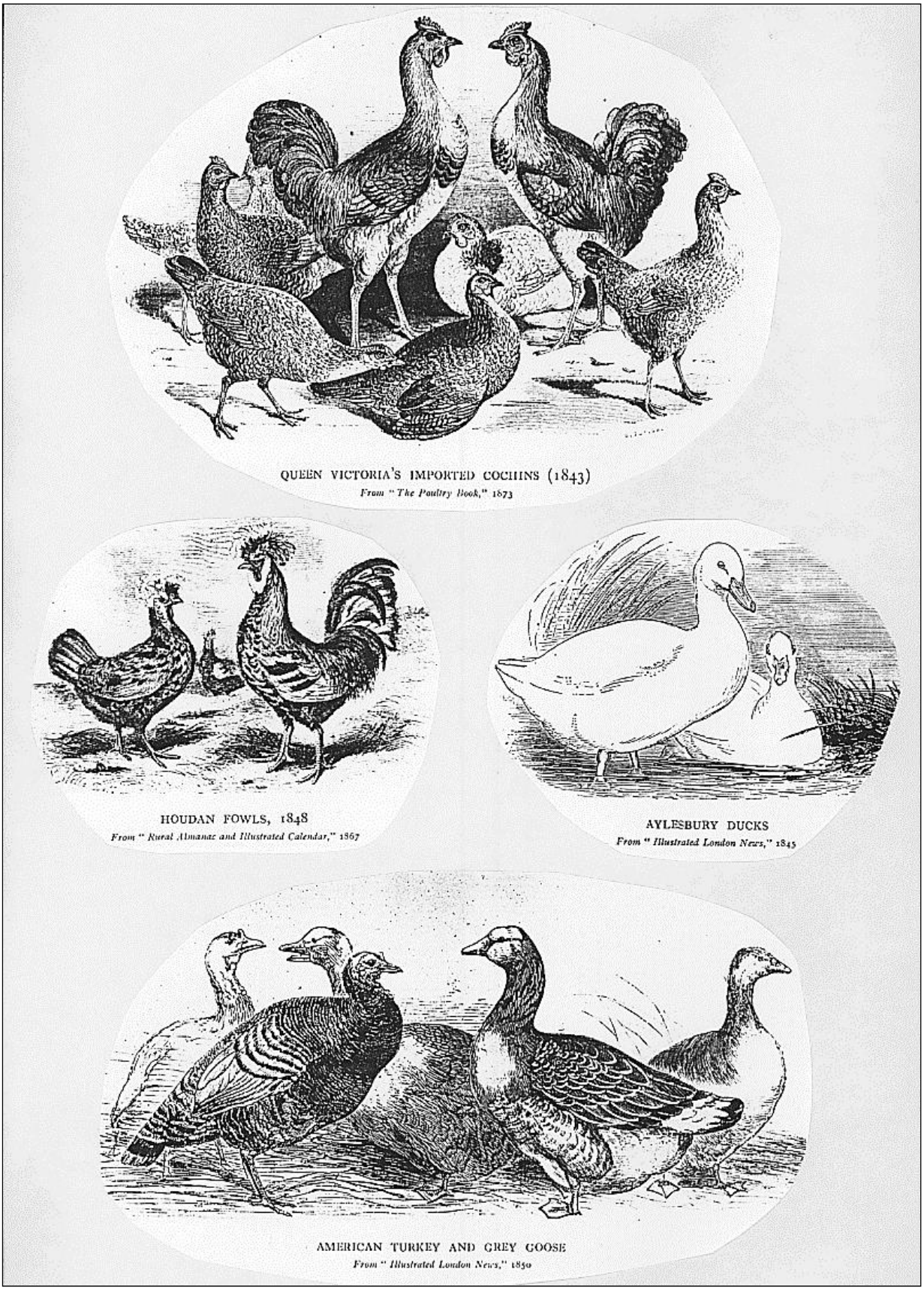
Some Likely Inhabitants of The Fowl House



SPANGLED TURKEY
From "Illustrated London News," 1845



KENT, MALAY AND SUSSEX FOWLS
From "Illustrated London News"



QUEEN VICTORIA'S IMPORTED COCHINS (1843)
From "The Poultry Book," 1873

HOUDAN FOWLS, 1848
From "Rural Almanac and Illustrated Calendar," 1867

AYLESBURY DUCKS
From "Illustrated London News," 1845

AMERICAN TURKEY AND GREY GOOSE
From "Illustrated London News," 1850

So it was to a public fully ready to appreciate them that the next arrivals were introduced: in 1843 Her Majesty was presented with five pullets and two cockerels just off the ship from China, of a breed which was given the name of Shanghai, or Cochin. They caused a sensation. An illustration of them was included in *The Illustrated London News*, and soon everyone wanted them. Her Majesty gave eggs or chicks generously, but before long a lively trade developed. In 1846 The Queen sent a pair on exhibition to Dublin Cattle Show and they 'created such a sensation from their great size and immense weight and the full, loud, deep-pitched crowing of the cock, that almost everyone seemed desirous to possess some of the breed and enormous prices were given for the eggs and chickens.' (£100 is recorded as having been paid for a good cockerel).

For the duration of the Mania, which lasted about ten years, poultry breeding became a universal hobby, taken up by men as well as by women - C.M Yonge in *The Daisy Chain* (1856) accurately describes the phenomenon:

> 'Why, George, that is a finer egg than ever', as he entered with a Shanghae egg in each hand, for her to mark with the date when it had been laid. Poultry was a new hobby, and Ethel had been hearing in her tête-à-tête dinners with George, a great deal about the perfections of the hideous monsters that had obtained fabulous prices. They had been the best resource for conversation; but she watched, with something between vexation and softness, how Flora roused herself to give her full attention and interest to his prosing about his pets, really pleased as it seemed; and, at last, encouraging him actually to fetch his favourite cock to show her; when she went through the points of perfection of the ungainly mass of feathers, and did not at all allow Ethel to laugh at the unearthly sounds of disapproval which handling elicited. ... Ethel did her best, and said the cock had a bright eye - all she could say for him - and invited her to a poultry show, at Whitford, in two days' time - and they sent him away to continue his consultations with the poultry woman, which pullets should be preferred as candidates for a prize.'

A main source of the Cochin's attraction was the great number of eggs that it laid (though this proved to be a biological freak, since after it had become well-established in its new surroundings its egg production proved less prolific). As time went on, however, the breeding and showing of birds for ornament became separated from their usefulness as egg- producers. Egg production pure and

simple remained firmly the province of the farmer's wife, and although breeds were crossed and improved, exotic plumage was not of the first importance.

As an illustration of this divergence between poultry- keeping as a hobby, and as a straightforward source of food, Queen Victoria is again a good example, because she seems to have been as influential in this field as her husband, Prince Albert, was for agriculture as a whole. In the mid-1850s a new and extensive farmstead was erected at Windsor, called the Shaw Farm. Among the beautifully planned and laid out buildings was an extensive range of poultry houses, with a poultry-woman's cottage attached. It was here that the serious business of egg production was to take place. The older poultry house, or Aviary, became the place for birds whose chief attribute was the beauty of their appearance - beautiful hens, yes, but also golden and silver pheasants, peacocks, turkeys and other rare birds.

It was on the Aviary, rather than the more matter-of-fact poultry houses of Shaw Farm, that the Leighton Fowl House was modelled, at least indirectly. With its ‘semi-gothic’ appearance, and its bargeboards, it even resembles it architecturally. It went further than the Windsor Aviary in that it also contained water fowl, but otherwise the arrangement is quite similar to that described by Dickson or *The Illustrated London News*. It is easy to imagine the pleasure that it must have given to the Naylor children.

From J C Loudon, An Encyclopaedia of Agriculture (5th edition) 1844

7427. *The Genet cat* (*Viverra Genétta*) is a species of weasel, with an annulate tail and spotted blackish tawny body. It is a native of Asia, Spain, and France; is mild and easily tamed; and answers all the purposes of a cat at Constantinople and other places.

7428. *The ferret* (*Mustèla Fùro* L., *fig.* 923.) is an animal of the weasel and polecat kind, distinguished by its red fiery eyes.

923

7429. *It is a native of Africa*, but is tamed in Europe for the purpose of catching rabbits. It procreates twice a year, is gravid six weeks, and brings from six to eight young; smells very fetid. The ferret is very susceptible of cold, and must be kept in a box provided with wool or other warm materials, and may be fed with bread and milk. Its sleep is long and profound, and it awakes with a voracious appetite, which is most highly gratified by the blood of small and young animals. Its enmity to rats and rabbits is unspeakable, and when either are, though for the first time, presented to it, it seizes and bites them with the most frenzied madness. When employed to expel the rabbit from its burrows it must be muzzled, as otherwise it will suck the blood of its victim and instantly fall into a profound sleep, from which it will awake only to the work of destruction, committing in the warren, where it was introduced only for its services, the most dreadful waste and havoc. It is possessed of high irritability, and when particularly excited is attended with an odour extremely offensive.

Chap. IX.

Animals of the Bird kind employed in Agriculture.

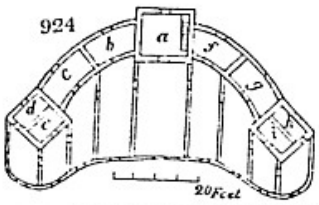
7430. *Though poultry* form a very insignificant part of the live stock of a farm, yet they ought not to be altogether despised. In the largest farm a few domestic fowls pick up what might escape the pigs and be lost; and on small farms and among cottagers, the breeding and rearing of early chickens and ducks, and in some situations the rearing of turkeys and the keeping of geese, are found profitable. There are few who do not relish a new egg or a pancake, not to say the flesh of fowls; and there are some of these comforts which happily can be had in as great perfection in the cottage as in the palace. The various kinds of domestic fowls and birds which are used in agriculture may be classed as gallinaceous, or with cleft feet; anserine, or web-footed; and birds of fancy or luxury. Before proceeding to the first division we shall offer some remarks on poultry hovels.

Sect. I. *Poultry Houses and their Furniture and Utensils.*

7431. *The situation of the poultry house* should be dry, and exposed either to the east or south-east, so as to enjoy the sun's rays in winter as soon as he appears above the horizon. Though in many cases all the commoner sorts of poultry are lodged in the same apartment; yet to be able to bestow on each species its proper treatment, they ought to be separated by divisions, and enter by separate doors. Apartments for aquatic fowls may be made in part under those of the gallinaceous tribe, and the peacock often prefers roosting on a tree, or on the roof of high buildings, when it forms an excellent watch bird to the poultry-yard or farmery.

7432. *Where a complete set of poultry houses* are intended, then a situation should be fixed on near or close to the farmery, and with ample space around for the fowls to disperse over in the day-time, and one or more ponds for the aquatic sorts. A space thirty feet by fifty feet may be made choice of for the buildings and yard (*fig.* 924); the building may be ranged along the north side, and the three other sides enclosed with a trellis or wire fence from six to eight feet in height, and subdivided with similar fences according to the number of apartments. The hen-house (*a*) and turkey-house (*b*) may have their roosts (*c c*) in part over the low houses for ducks (*d*) and geese (*e*), and besides these there may be other apartments (*f*, *g*, *h*) for hatching or newly hatched broods, for fattening, to serve as an hospital, or for retaining, boiling, or otherwise preparing food, killing poultry, and other purposes. A flue may pass through the whole in moist or very severe weather; the walls should be built hollow in the manner already described (7002.), which will at the same time be a saving of material; and the windows ought to have outside shutters, both for excluding excessive heats and excessive colds. In every apartment there ought to be a window opposite the door, in order to create a thorough draught when both are opened, and also a valve in the roof to admit the escape of the hottest and lightest air. Every door ought to have a small opening at bottom, for the admission of the fowls when the door is shut. The elevation (*fig.* 925.) should be in a simple style, and there may be a pigeonry over the central building.

924



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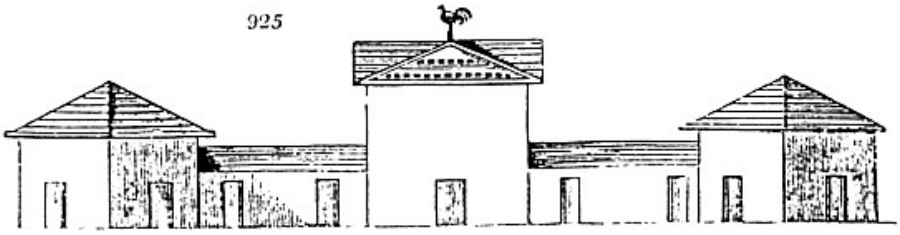
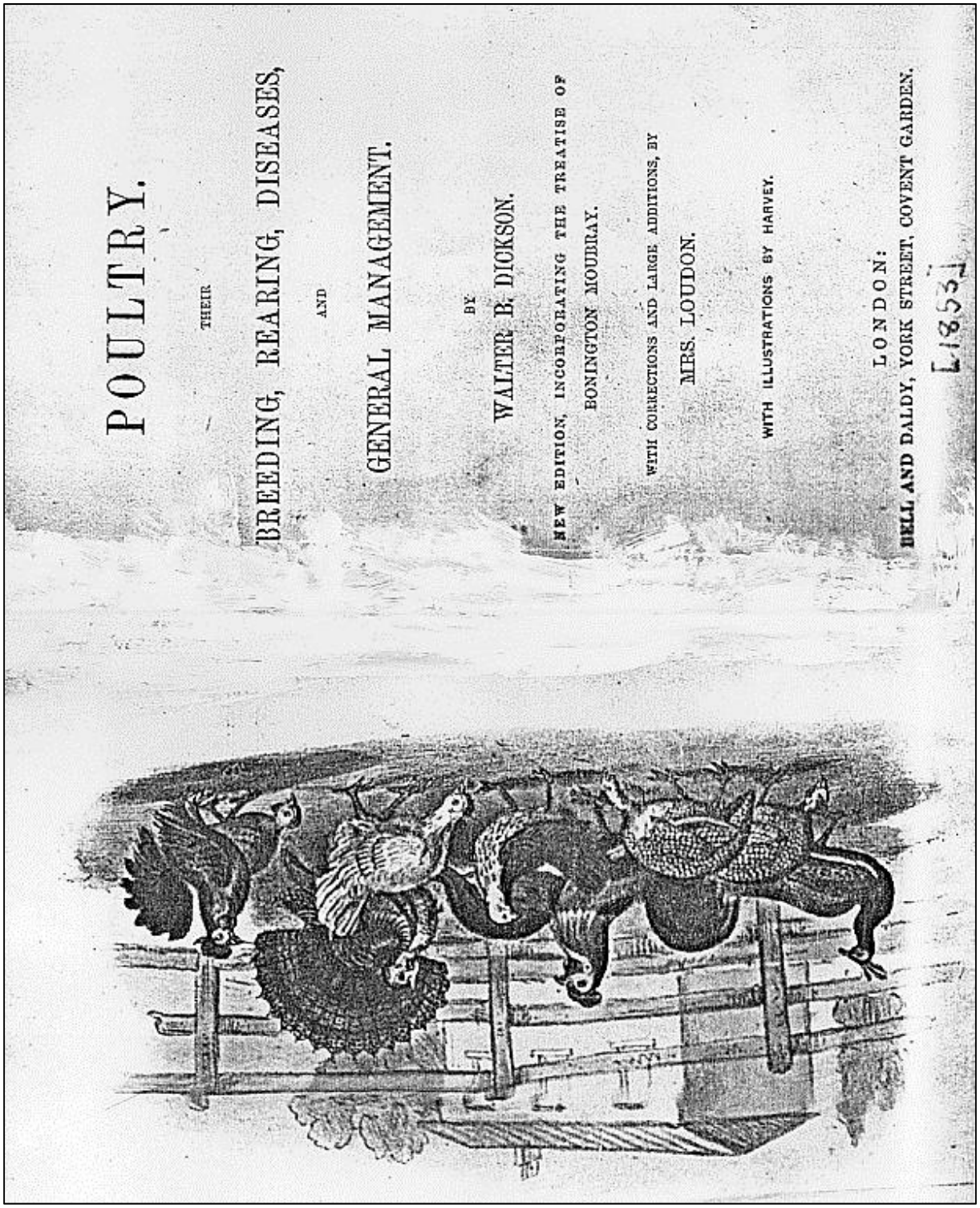




Dickson's 1st edition was published in 1838 and was the principal work of reference for the years of "cochin mania". As revised by Mrs Loudon it continued as a leading work on poultry-breeding for the rest of the 19th century. It is interesting to compare his descriptions of Queen Victoria's poultry-houses at Windsor (the 'principal house' being the Aviary) and Lord Penrhyn's at Winnington, with that at Leighton.

34 HER MAJESTY'S POULTRY-HOUSES.

Her Majesty's poultry-houses at Windsor consist of several extensive yards and small fields; a large building containing the laying, roosting, feeding, and sitting-houses; a hospital for sick fowls; and courts warmed by flues, to afford exercise for the more tender kinds during severe weather. The principal house is a very elegant building, with a central pavilion for feeding and inspecting the fowls, over which is a pigeon-house, something in the style of the Italian bell-towers; and on each side are numerous compartments for laying, roosting, and sitting-houses. In front of the house is a large court, divided into compartments, and protected by a wire fence; and beyond it the ground slopes down towards the park. The space enclosed by the wire fences, which is considerable, is laid out in grass plots, bordered by gravel walks, for the fowls to exercise in.

It is well known that fowls, when left to choose a nest for themselves, generally fix upon a hedge, where the hen buries herself from observation under the branches of the hedge-plants, and among the grass. This peculiarity has been taken advantage of at Windsor; and the laying-nests for Her Majesty's hens are composed of heath or heather, and

Fig. 5.—Nest with sliding-door closed.

HER MAJESTY'S POULTRY-HOUSES. 35

branches of hawthorn are trained over and round them as shown in *figs.* 5 to 7. *Fig.* 5 shows an empty nest with its

Fig. 6.—Nest with the door removed.

sliding door closed: *fig.* 6 a similar nest with the door removed; and *fig.* 7 a nest with the hen sitting.

Fig. 7.—Nest with hen sitting.

Lord Penrhyn's poultry-house at Winnington, in Cheshire, consisted of a handsome regular front, extending about 140 feet, at each extremity of which was a neat pavilion, with a

D 2

(Dickson's advice on separating different breeds was clearly followed by Mr Naylor, since both the yard and the pond had dividing fences originally).

large arched window. These pavilions were united to the centre of the design by a colonnade of small cast-iron pillars painted white, which supported a cornice and slate roof, covering a paved walk, and a variety of different conveniences for the poultry, for keeping eggs, corn, &c. The doors into these were all of lattice-work, also painted white, and the framing green. In the middle of the front were four handsome stone columns, and four pilasters supporting likewise a cornice and a slate roof, under which and between the columns was a beautiful mosaic iron gate; with, on one side of the gate, a little parlour, and at the other end of the colonnade a very neat kitchen, excessively clean, and in high order. This front was the diameter or chord of a large semicircular court behind, round which there was also a colonnade, and a great variety of conveniences for the poultry. The court was neatly paved, and had a circular pond and pump in the middle of it. The whole fronted a rich little field or paddock, called the poultry-paddock, in which the poultry had liberty to walk about between meals. At one o'clock a bell used to ring, and the beautiful gate in the centre was opened. The poultry being then mostly walking in the paddock, and knowing by the sound of the bell that their repast was ready for them, might be seen flying and running from all corners, and rushing in at the gate, every one striving which could get first in the scramble. There was about 600 poultry of different kinds in the place; and although so large a number, the semicircular court was kept perfectly neat and clean.

This poultry-house was built of brick, excepting the pillars and cornices, and the lintels and jambs of the doors and windows; but the bricks were not seen, being all covered with a remarkably fine kind of slate from his lordship's estate in Wales. These slates were closely jointed and fastened with screw-nails, on small spars fixed to the brick, and afterwards painted, and fine white sand thrown on while the paint is wet, to give the whole the appearance of the most beautiful freestone.

The lower classes of Scotch who keep poultry have abundance of eggs, as their fowls are generally kept in their dwelling-houses, and frequently roost in the upper part of the box beds of the family, where they have plenty of warmth. The want of cleanliness, however, attendant on this arrangement, would render it intolerable to an English cottager.

CAGES AND COOPS FOR PARTICULAR PURPOSES.

In both large and small establishments, it will often be requisite to separate some of the fowls from the rest. Ailments and diseases, for instance, are not uncommon, and, as the healthy fowls do not like the diseased ones, they ill-treat and often kill them. Pens, therefore, should be set apart for any that appear drooping, till they get better.

When peculiar breeds also, such as full-bred game-cocks, are to be reared, separate pens must be provided, either at some distance from each other, which is the best way, or with divisions to prevent any intrusion, by which improper crossing might be produced, or the fowls be injured by fighting. Places may be made with this view, by preparing a row of cages equal in number to that of the species to be preserved. These cages will be an ornament to the poultry-yard, and will cost but very little, if made of lattice-work, either with hoops or with small laths in the form of a bower, five feet high, about three feet broad, and their length determined by that of the ground at disposal. They should be divided by means of partitions, also of lattice-work, as slightly wrought as the rest, into a number of portions, each whereof forms a cage or pen, the smallest four feet, and the largest six feet and a half long. The least of these is suffi-

1988

The Poultry-Keeper's Cottage

Georgina Naylor would not have cared for the birds herself, although she probably enjoyed collecting the eggs without spoiling her clothes. Their day-to-day care and supervision would have been the responsibility of a full-time poultry-keeper, male or female. Sir Edward Brown in *British Poultry Husbandry* (1930), his history of the development of poultry breeding, says that it was these poultry-keepers on large estates, who had been brought up, perhaps, to breed fighting cocks, who proved to be the experts in the creation of new varieties and breeds. And Dickson is firm in recommending the employment of a full-time keeper, where great numbers of birds are to be kept.

The poultry-keeper had to be close to the birds, day and night, so a special cottage was generally provided, and Leighton was no exception in this. Here the cottage overlooks the enclosure but is slightly removed from it; though not far enough off to prevent it being part of the same picturesque group.

Its picturesque appearance is slightly deceptive, however, since it has been applied to what is basically a perfectly ordinary cottage of the late 18th or early 19th century - a time when solid, symmetrical cottages and farmhouses, of one or two stories and often with a lean-to at the back as here - were being built in great numbers in rural areas, as the economic effects of the agricultural improvements of the 18th century began to be felt.

When the Fowl House was being built in 1861 the cottage was smartened up with new stone windows and chimney pots - the same as those on the main house and quite possibly left over from it. It was also newly fitted out inside, with a range in the living room, and new joinery. The woodwork seems actually to have been grained in the fashionable manner, since a small area of this survived inside a cupboard, so that the whole building became a true, if late, example of the *cottage orné.*

The cottage in 1988, before restoration work started.

Landmark's Acquisition and The Repair of the Fowl House and Poultry-Keeper's Cottage

It is many years since exotic hens have pecked in the poultry yard, or rare ducks swum in the pond. It is in fact unlikely that either the Fowl House or the Poultry-Keeper's Cottage have been used for their original purpose since the First World War; and certainly not since the whole Leighton estate was sold in 1931.

At the time of the sale this part of the estate, with all the woodlands, was bought by Major Charles Ackers. A past president of the Royal Forestry Society, Major Ackers was keenly interested in forestry, for which the Leighton estate was already famous. He presented the 33 Redwoods planted by John Naylor in 1857 to the Society, and in 1935 planted a further 6.5 ha/16 acres of Redwoods. These Redwoods are the largest *Sequoia Sempervirens* stand in Europe, and there is further stand of Dawn Redwoods (*Metsequoia Glyptostroboides*) and many other magnificent trees within the 900 acres of the estate. Major Ackers was less interested in poultry. The cottage was used to house one of the woodmen, but the Fowl House, inevitably, was left to decay.

Since 1977 the woodlands have been owned and managed by Mr C.F.E. Shakerley. Soon after this, necessary economies meant a reduction in the number of men employed, and the cottage was no longer needed as estate housing. As a result in 1987 the whole Poultry Yard was put up for sale.

Hearing about this, the Landmark Trust was immediately interested. The Fowl House, like everything at Leighton, represents Victorian model farming at its most grand; more than that, almost no other building of this kind survives, especially with its fittings so nearly intact - even Queen Victoria's at Windsor has long been converted into cottages. If sold to a private buyer, it was unlikely that the Fowl House itself would escape conversion into a house. Landmark, on the other hand, had all the accommodation it would need in the cottage, and could leave

The sitting room fireplace in 1988 and kitchen (below).

the rest as found, with its array of nesting boxes, roosts, storage bins for food and so on, for visitors to enjoy. The purchase was completed in 1988.

Work on the Cottage

Work began with the Cottage. This is built of a local stone, which is of poor quality, being very shaley. It was almost certainly rendered when it was first built (traces of plaster were in fact found under the eaves), and this would have prevented water from penetrating. However when the cottage was 'improved' in 1861 the render was taken off. As a result the cottage was suffering from damp, and so the decision was made to render it again, using a lime plaster mixed with coarse grit to give it a rough texture.

The roof also needed renewing, which was done using second-hand slates. Those of the old slates that were still sound, were used to cover the lean-to at the back. The chimneys were repaired at the same time. Two of the chimney pots had been taken down, being badly cracked and broken. Copies were made of these, although instead of being moulded out of a composite material, intended to look like Bath stone, they were actually carved from Bath stone proper, which turned out to be both easier and less expensive.

The lean-to, containing the kitchen and bathroom, was in very poor condition, and had to be almost completely rebuilt. The back door was moved at the same time to improve the layout of the kitchen. The windows in the lean-to are all new, but are copies of the Victorian, one of which survived. In the main part of the cottage the work was straightforward. In the sitting room the original fireplace was re-opened. A concrete tile floor was taken up and a new pitch pine board floor laid - there was already a wooden floor in the room next to it.

Upstairs, the floorboards in the bedroom to the left of the stairs are old, a mixture of those that were sound from both rooms. Those in the other bedroom are new, and are also pine.

The paintwork on all the old doors was copied from the surviving patch of graining, which was on the inside of the cupboard door at the top of the stairs. . This, unfortunately, was itself painted over, by mistake.

The poultry yard in 1988.

Work on the Fowl House

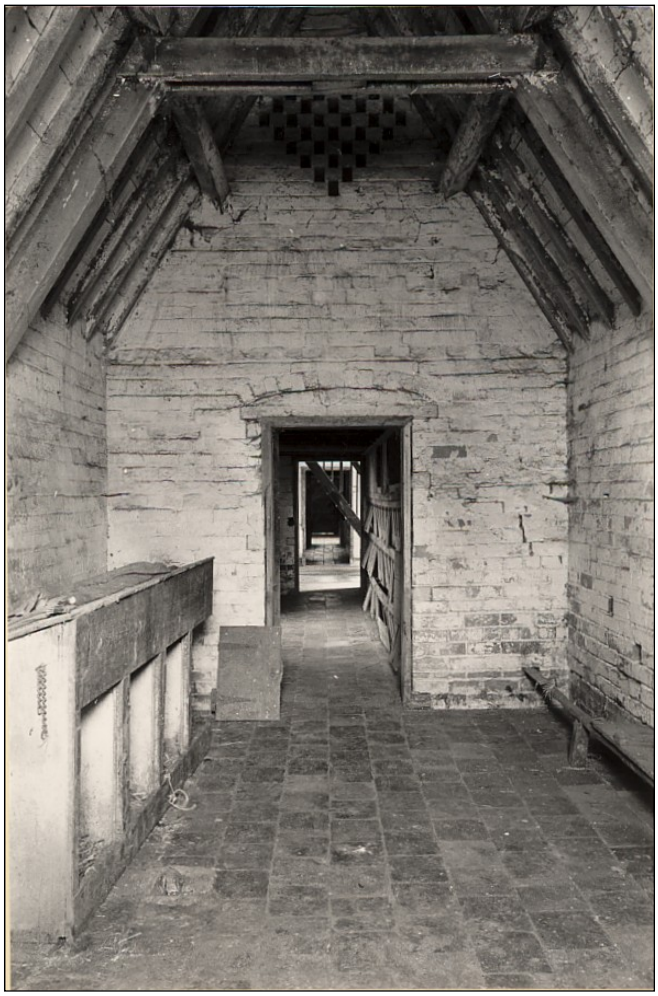
On the Fowl House itself the repairs have so far been concentrated on the outside. Some areas of the timber frame were rotten and needed to have new wood (Douglas fir to match the original) pieced in. The finials on the gables were renewed, and then all the external timber was repainted, using the same pure red lead paint. The roof was stripped and re-laid in sections, reusing the original slates. The stained glass of the windows was mended and re-instated when the exterior works were completed.

The interior was left much the same as in John Naylor's day. W.B. Dickson in his book *Poultry* (1838) writes of nesting boxes that 'every carpenter knows the form.' We took the view that the best thing was simply to repair and secure what was left, and do no more. However, it is tempting to imagine a time when visitors in the cottage might wake to the 'deep-pitched crowing' of a Cochin cockerel.


18 N 61


18 N 61

Nesting boxes for large fowl….and small.



The Naylors and Leighton Hall

John Naylor, who transformed the old Montgomeryshire estate of Leighton into a model of Victorian agricultural efficiency, came, on his mother's side, from two families of Liverpool bankers, the Leylands and the Bullins. Of his father's family, originally Lancashire yeomen, his grandfather Thomas Naylor was Mayor of Liverpool in 1796. John's father died when he and his sister and brothers were very young, and they were effectively brought up by two uncles, Richard and Christopher Bullin, but very much under the shadow of a great-uncle, Thomas Leyland, from whom came the fortune that enabled John and at least one of his brothers to become landed gentry on a grand scale.

Leighton was bought for John as a wedding present by his uncle Christopher in 1845. It had belonged to the Corbett family, of Longnor, but had for some time been leased to the Parrys of Pooltown. No record survives of the old house, which was soon to disappear without a trace, as John set about the construction of Leighton Hall.

This took four or five years to build, but was largely complete by 1851. W.H. Gee, the architect, is otherwise unknown, apart from an undistinguished church in Liverpool, but his work, if rather heavy-handed, is certainly competent - the detail of the stonework, for instance, shows considerable skill and imagination. For the interior of the house, and for the gardens, John went higher up the artistic scale - J.G. Crace, using Pugin's designs, was responsible for the decoration of the main rooms, and Edward Kemp, a pupil of Paxton's, laid out the elaborate and extensive gardens.

The Hall was only the beginning, however. Soon afterwards came the church, the village school and hall, farmworkers cottages innumerable, and of course the whole immense layout of the model estate, with its own gas works, railway

Mr and Mrs John Naylor with a Keeper and a Dead Stag, by Richard Ansdell, 1847(Philadelphia Museum of Art)

siding, workshops and elaborate system for distributing manure, besides the purely agricultural buildings of the Home Farm, which include a circular piggery.

Forestry was another of John Naylor's interests; the woodlands soon contained some fine specimens of both native and imported varieties. Redwoods were a particular favourite; and in 1888, a year before his death, a new hybrid cypress was propagated, the Cypress Leylandii, named after his great-uncle Thomas.

At the same time he continued to embellish his house, with a collection of pictures including works by Landseer, Turner and Wilkie; and the gardens were crammed with statues, as can be seen in the *Country Life* articles of 1902.

All this while he had kept up his links with the family bank, the Leyland and Bullins, where he had gone to work after leaving Eton, and to which he had been admitted as a partner in 1844. In 1846 he had married Georgiana Edwards of Ness Strange, Shropshire. It is perhaps typical of him that for their honeymoon they went to the Highlands, then only just becoming fashionable, and to commemorate it had themselves recorded in oils, complete with stag, by Richard Ansdell A.R.A.

John was above all things an enthusiast. In all fields he wanted, it seemed, the latest and the best. A member of the Royal Yacht Squadron, he owned a series of ever larger yachts, culminating in the 267 ton schooner, 'Sabrina', which he sailed from 1863 until 1887. When he was High Sheriff of Montgomeryshire in 1853, or when his eldest son, John Christopher, came of age in 1870, he staged grander and more extravagant festivities than had ever been known in the county before.

It is easy to dismiss men such as Naylor as upstart nouveaux-riches - and certainly some of the display at Leighton must have been intended to outshine Powis Castle on the other side of the valley; but with his energy, and intelligence,

and generosity - he was adored by those who worked on his estates, to whom he doled out regular gifts of coal and blankets - his readiness to learn, and to experiment, he was also an example of all that was best about the vigorous and frequently over-sized Victorian Age.

John Naylor died in 1889, and by complicated family arrangement it was his third son, John, who inherited Leighton: to the eldest son, Christopher, went the bulk of the Leyland fortune and with it Haggerston Castle, Northumberland, where he lived, and this was regarded as quite enough, without the Montgomeryshire estates as well.

While managing the Leighton estate, John Jnr. remained an active partner of the Leyland and Bullins Bank (until it amalgamated with the North and South Wales Bank in 1901). He never actually lived at Leighton Hall, however. This had remained the home of his mother, with those of his seven sisters who were unmarried, and she outlived her son by three years, dying only in 1909.

Thereafter John's widow and four sons made it their home, until the eldest, John Murray, decided to put it all up for sale in 1931. It is sad for us today that there was no single buyer for at least the heart of the estate. In the event the woodlands became separated from the Home Farm, and the Hall itself had another owner again. Although the owners of the two former parts have individually kept to the tradition of good management laid down by John Naylor, it is inevitable that in a fragmented estate much will be lost that was designed to serve the whole.

It is fortunate that in recent years the Ironbridge Institute and the Royal Commission on Ancient and Historical Monuments for Wales combined to make a detailed survey of the estate buildings and machinery, before too much disappeared. From this study it has emerged more clearly than ever what a remarkable place Leighton is, both in its original creation and in its survival until

now. It would be better still if as a result of it, a united policy of preservation could be developed.

The Hall, and the park, have not fared so well. In 1931 the purchaser of the Hall itself was John Murray Naylor's aunt, the Georgina for whom the Fowl House was built. Aunt Gina, as she was known, was a talented painter (her copies of her father's Turners hang in the Powysland Museum) who had studied at the Slade, but had thereafter lived with her mother at Leighton. When it became clear that the whole place was to be broken up she stepped in to salvage what she could, and bought the house with the aim of keeping it going for any members of the family who wished to live there or stay there. Her scheme was not successful, however, and a few years later she in her turn had to sell it. There have been several owners since then, the gardens were extensively damaged by flood in 1973, and the park has been developed for housing.

The Hall is now again private ownership and is not accessible to the public - the outlying smallholdings and some of the buildings are still in the hands of the heirs to their 1931 purchaser, Montgomery County Council (today Powys County Council). In 2011 Mr James Potter, owner of the Welshpool based Potters Group and who has a house next to the old hall called Tudor Lodge, bought a long lease on the Model Farm and its c. 200 acres. He plans to restore them, halting their slow slide into ruin and preventing the fragmentation that has beset the rest of the estate. His long term intention is to create a National Stud Farm.

Charlotte Haslam, May 1989
Updated August 2011

COVNTRY HOMES GARDENS OLD & NEW

LEIGHTON HALL, WELSHPOOL,

THE SEAT OF

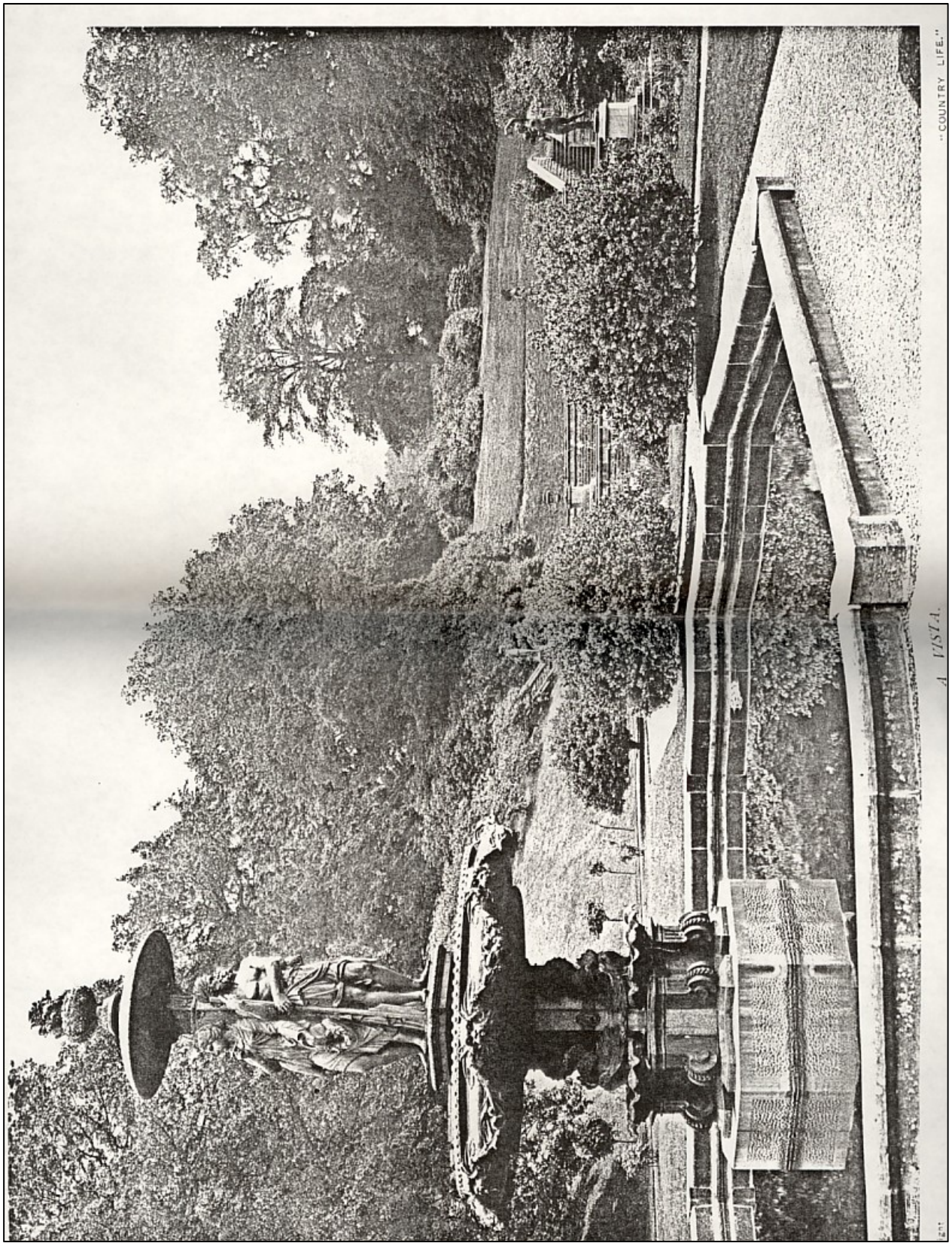
MRS. NAYLOR.

THE judicious guide who instructs the visitor as to how best to see the notable places in the upper valley of the Severn, in that romantic part of it which lies adjacent to Welshpool and below Montgomery, will often tell him to drive from the former place to Powis Castle, where he may survey its ancient glories, and then, crossing the Severn by the bridge, to visit the splendid modern domain of Mrs. Naylor at Leighton Hall, and so beneath the shadow of Leighton Church to return to Welshpool. Something like this has been done in these pages, for the reader has looked with delight upon the pictures of antique Powis, and the glory of the terraces on the steep, and now has before him the picturesque and noble mansion of Leighton Hall, and the loveliness of its well-kept gardens and grounds, from which Powis Castle is itself a prominent object in a beautiful landscape, famous for its grand hills and wooded steeps, and the meadows by the River Severn, here but a youthful stream. Hereabout are fine prospects of the Vale of Severn, and from the heights one may look upon Moel-y-Golfa and the Breiddin Hills, and, if the day be clear, even Plinlimmon, Cader Idris, Snowdon, the Arans, and Arenigs are within the view.

Leighton is a small parish in the hundred of Cawrse, in Montgomeryshire, about two miles from Welshpool, and the Hall lies at the foot of the Long Mountain, which forms a range running north-east between this point and the Breiddin Hills. It is a region full of history and rich in romantic traditions and associations, and here was fought the last contested battle for Welsh independence in 1294, when the Welsh were commanded by Madoc, Llewelyn's brother. It is not surprising that such a district should have attractions, and the region is somewhat famous for the beautiful seats that distinguish it. In the neighbourhood of Leighton are Garth, Glansevern, Vaynor, and other fine places. To the late Mr. John Naylor, J.P., D.L., at one time Sheriff of Montgomery, the architectural beauties of Leighton and the perfection of its surroundings are mainly due. In the work of erection, and of adornment within and without, there was scope for much wise planning, and for the exercise of fine artistic taste. How well all was done the pictures will disclose. In bringing to perfection such a place as Leighton Hall, developing its individual character, and surrounding it with gardens like these, many qualities were called for, but the chiefest of them was love for the higher forms of art, and the resolve to give splendour to the dwelling.

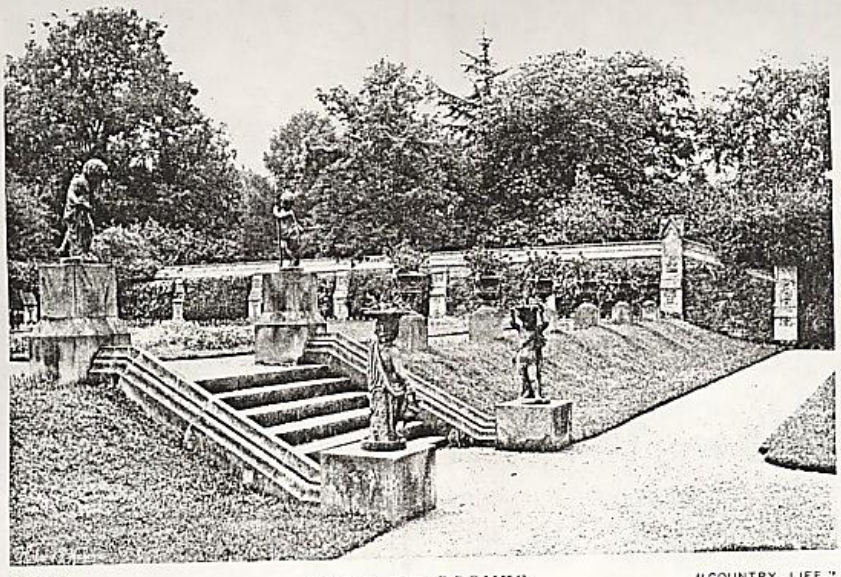
Architecturally, *Leighton Hall* is imposing and stately. It is well and substantially built of stone, in a tasteful adaptation of the mediæval style of the fourteenth century, with tall gables and mullioned windows, and covers an ample space of ground There rises from it a lofty octagonal buttressed tower, with an

From the South East


"COUNTRY LIFE."
A VISTA.

embattlement, somewhat ecclesiastical perhaps in its character, and having a turret and a gallery for the outlook. There is much to survey in this romantic vale, and the tower promises to those who climb a truly glorious prospect. Within, the house is choice and beautiful in design and plenishings, and is famous for its pictures and other art treasures. Without are the artistically attractive gardens, which are mainly our subject. Such a house demanded beautiful grounds for its complement, and it is deserving of note that the harmony between the mansion and its surroundings is such as we should desire. The opportunities were many, and they have been well used. An undulating space at the foot of the hills suggested special treatment, and gave unusual opportunities to the garden architect. It was decided, for the convenience of the ways, and also, we may suspect, for the stronger character of the gardens, that the hollows should be spanned by bridges. The Lion Bridge illustrates the style of work, and alike in solidity and elegance is admirable. Its buttressed piers rise from a sylvan dell, and carry a roadway flanked by a balustrade, and having pleasant seats for those who would linger thereby. Those who would descend may do so by a simple but truly admirable stairway, which leads by several flights into the enchanting region below.

On the east side of the house is the principal garden, which is in a measure formal. A terrace lies along the front of the mansion, stone-edged, and having stairways down to the level space of greensward, with its flower-beds and flowering bushes. Here is a magnificent



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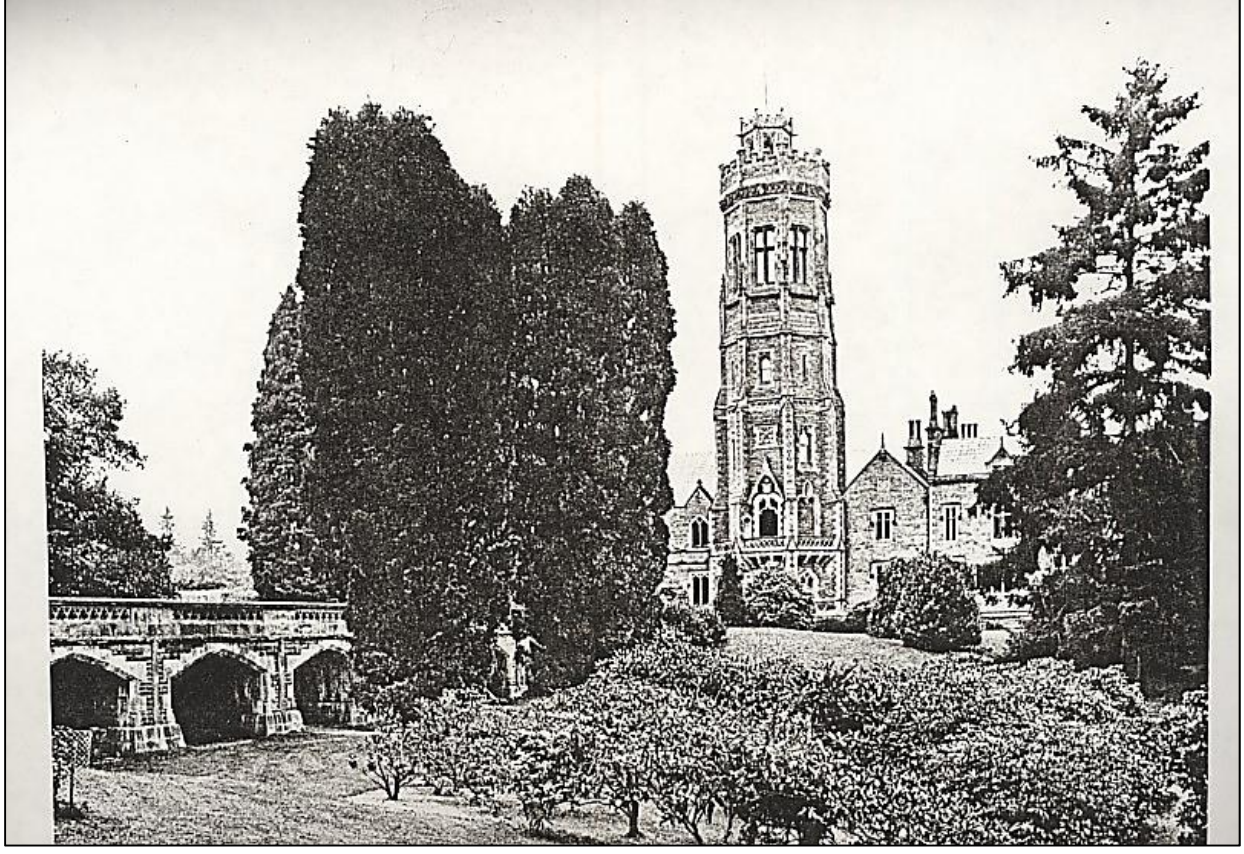
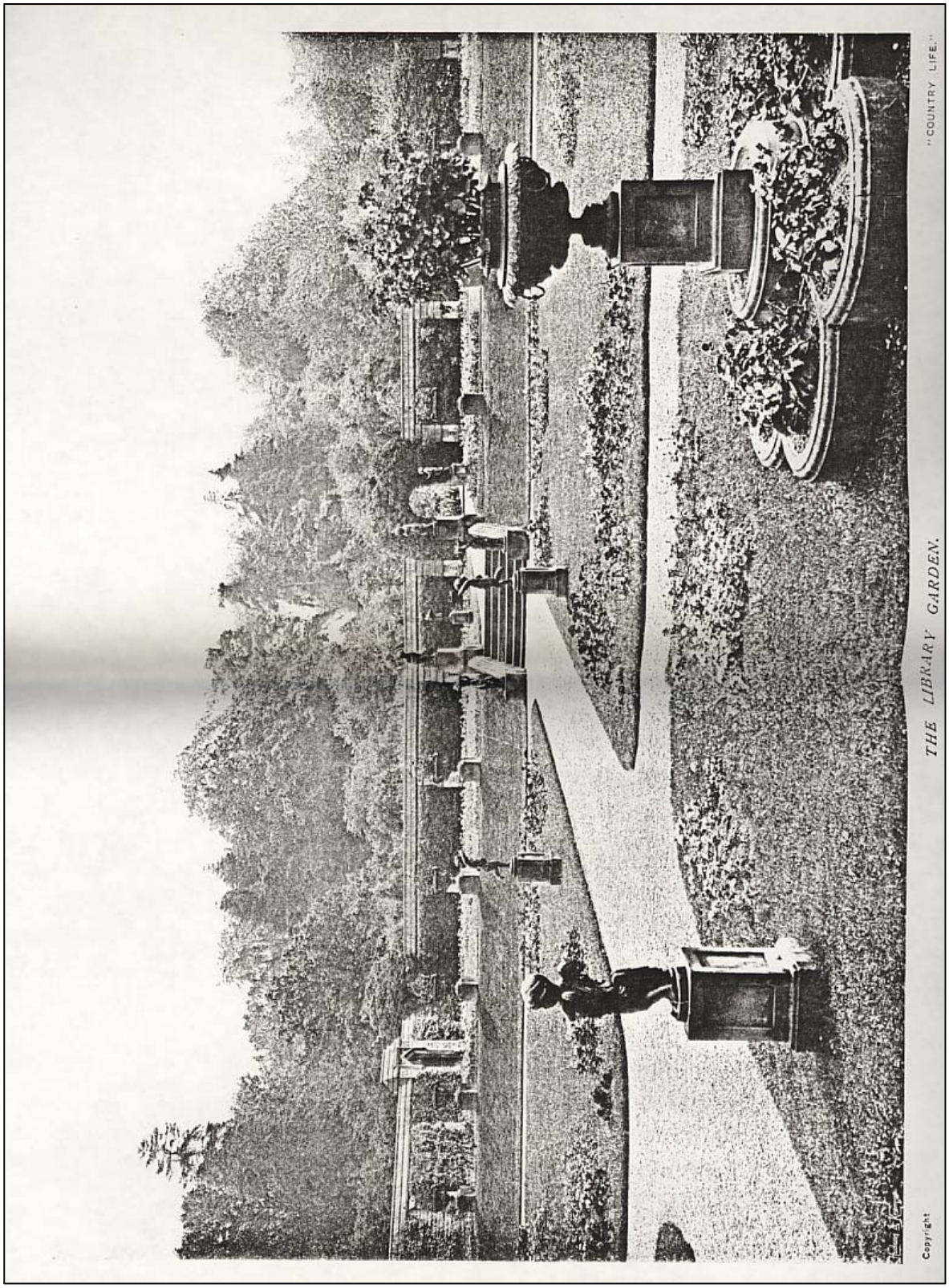
BOYS IN BRONZE.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

fountain rising from an octagonal basin, with dolphins below, and very finely modelled figures above. It is well seen in one of the pictures, and is truly a glorious work in bronze. There is much statuary in the gardens, and this is the material of nearly all of it. The effect is superb, for bronze, like lead, has a hue that falls well into a garden picture, and it has the advantage that its hardness and quality make it the fitting vehicle for fine artistic expression. Now the statuary in this material at Leighton Hall is by eminent artists, and in pose, lovely contour of limb, and modelling is most excellent work of the sculptor's hand. The Aurora and the Infant Day below the



Bridge on the South East


THE LIBRARY GARDEN.
"COUNTRY LIFE."
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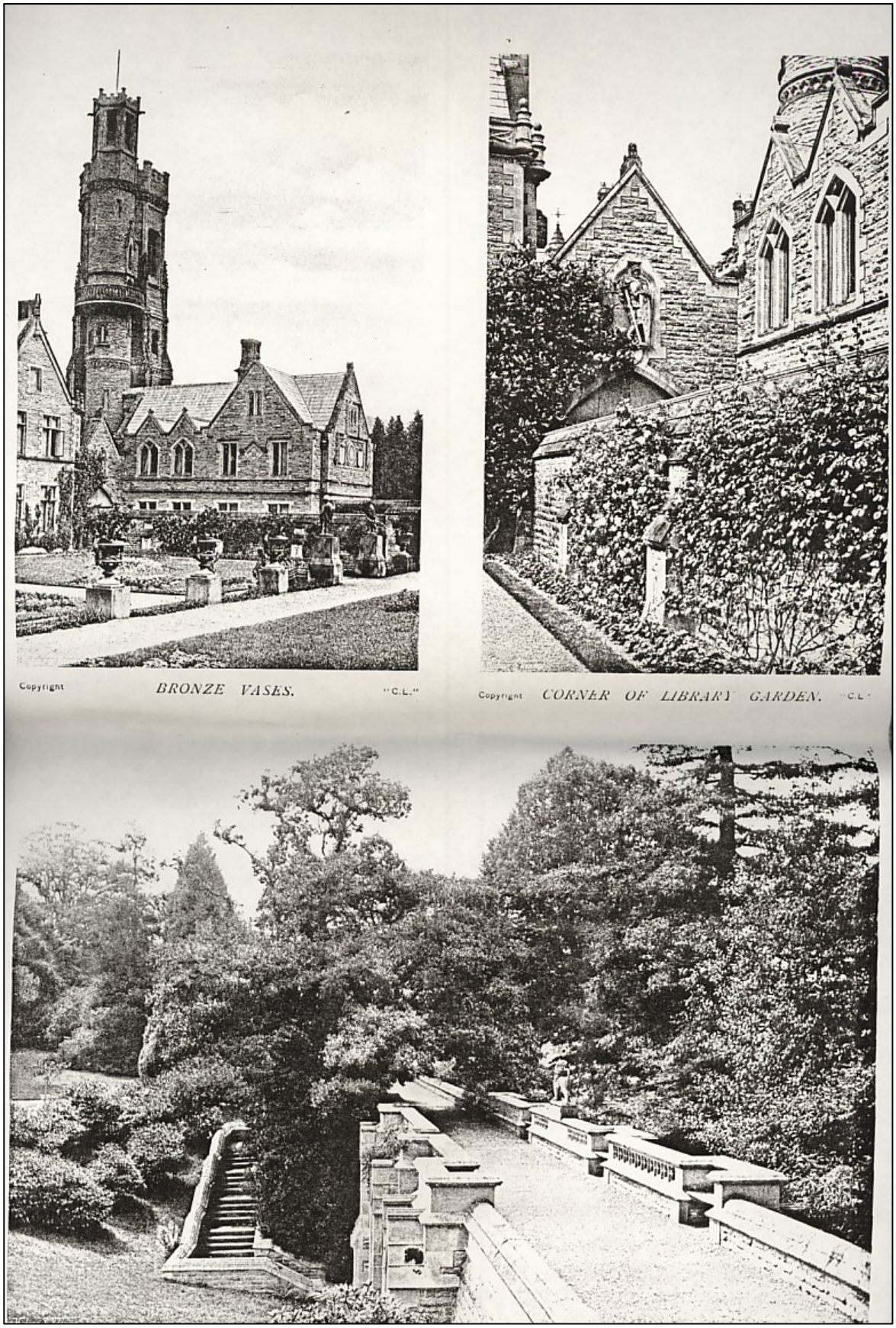

The Lion Bridge

Copyright THE EAST TERRACE. "COUNTRY LIFE."

east terraces in this garden is a lovely example of work, and the amorini everywhere have individual merit and character, while the Icarus, in defeated ambition, falling headlong into the pool as a miniature Ægean, is both original and admirable. The vases also are bronze, and are most beautifully wrought. There is nothing more difficult than to place sculpture well in a garden, but the success at Leighton Hall is complete, and very few gardens can boast of such admirable statuary. At the east end of the garden the ground rises, and the terraces and stairways, which are of fine and unusual character, lead up the slope to the park, where the foliage is magnificent. The belts of trees that enframe the garden are a fine and reposeful feature, and are of varied hue and foliage. At the other end of the principal garden the ground falls, and there the landscape character will delight those who love the natural garden. In this quarter is a small lake or pool—the same into which the son of Dædalus plunges in his headlong fall—bordered by grass slopes, and reflecting the umbrageous landscape. Here are great masses of water-lilies and other water-loving plants, and on the banks the rhododendrons are glorious in the summer, while the trees are of beautiful ornamental varieties.

It will have been noticed that the formal and landscape features are closely juxtaposed, and, indeed, each is the foil and complement of the other. So far, we have noted nothing of the really old school of gardening, but this is found in the walled library garden, which lies near to the south of the house. This is a most beautiful and sequestered resort, seemingly set apart for studious reflection or pleasant converse. The wall that encloses it has an excellent coping, and the low buttresses are of the same period as the house. The area is grass, with flower-beds framed in the turf, the garden being divided into spaces by gravel paths, and where the ground rises a low terrace has been formed, with a grass slope and a flight of steps ascending, beyond which is a vista through a green archway to the garden beyond. Flanking the stairway and the path are delightful little amorini of individual merit, all in bronze, like the rich flower vases which are in the area, and upon their stone pedestals line the top of the grass slope that

The south east terrace

has been alluded to. The walls of this library pleasaunce are themselves gardens, and have a vesture of loveliness in the flowering climbers that clothe them. Here roses flourish abundantly, and the fine sylvan background completes a truly beautiful garden picture.

Though there is at Leighton a most charming dwelling-house, with attractive pleasure grounds, and a considerable estate, the character of the whole is simple, and there is little to delay the pen. What we observe is a happy union of various styles of gardenage—the broad and effective character of the principal garden, with its fountain and admirable statuary, the excellent and original terraces at the east end, where the ground rises to the sylvan park, the charming landscape features on the other hand, with the lake as the gem of the whole, and the radiant space of the retired library garden within its walls. Various periods and features of gardening are thus represented, and an admirable setting is provided for the architectural splendour of the mansion. Reserve is another distinguishing character of the gardens. There is no lack of richness, as the visitor realises when he traverses these enchanting places. It was no small thing, for example, to bring together so many excellent works of sculpture, and to dispose them well. They import into the garden something of a spirit that is alien to that of the architectural period to which the house belongs, but the result is undeniably pleasing and attractive. There is a partial breaking and intermingling of styles which adds a freshness to the older forms. Here, perhaps, a lesson may be suggested. Let not the garden-planner set up too rigid a method in his work, else will he most certainly exclude some things which, with a broader view, he might have welcomed to his satisfaction. Charming, indeed, is the sculpture in the garden at Leighton Hall, though some purists might have been willing to exclude it on the ground of its being the evidence and outcome of the classic and naturalistic school. There are many beautiful gardens and estates in this part of Wales neighbouring the Severn, and those of Leighton Hall deserve to be accorded a high place among them. They are radiant, beautiful, varied, and architecturally interesting, therefore both admirable and attractive. The tall spire of the modern Early English church, erected by the late Mr. Naylor, adds to the attractions of the landscape.

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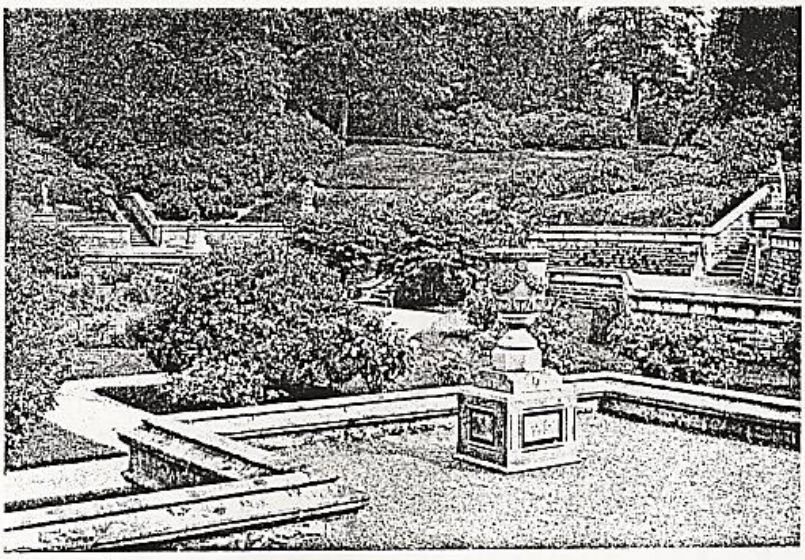

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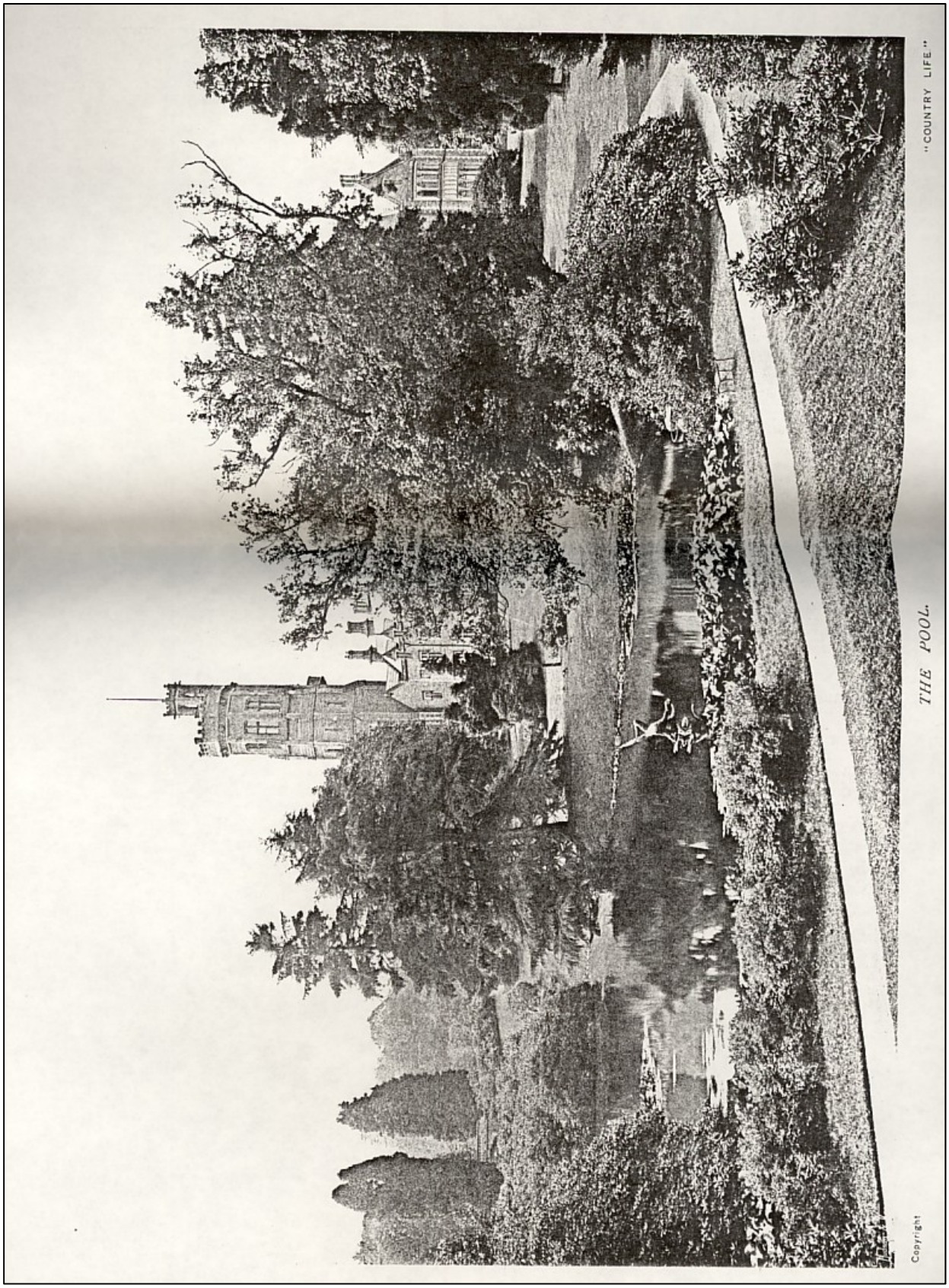
SUMMER SEA- . . FISHING.

LET me tell your readers—and there must be a big proportion of them who go down to the sea for sport—what happened to a friend of mine and his son, a youngster, off the coast of Cornwall. It did not occur this year, but when he went out it was August 7th, and as he knew the south-west of Cornwall well, what to provide for a prospectively successful time, where the pollack rocks were, how the tides affected the fishing, and where to get a good sort of fellow to manage the boat, matters were tolerably smooth when the campaign was opened.

The sea can be smooth, too, sometimes, even outside the dear old exposed county of fish, tin, and copper; and the long ground swells which roll in, finishing a course of a few hundred miles, seas such as are never seen elsewhere round England, can be agreeable and friendly, and even seductive, in the holiday months. Such, in fact, were the conditions met with by my friend as he put off with confidence to the pollack grounds.

One need not go far from the mouth of a harbour to get fish around Cornwall. Some fishers prefer the harbour itself, where, with the killick down and the boat brought up, an arm hangs out over each side


"COUNTRY LIFE"
THE POOL.
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John and Georgiana Naylor (both 1857), by Francis Grant (1803 – 1878). Both portraits are in the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool

From *The Family of Naylor* from 1589 by Thomas H. Naylor 1967:

CHAPTER VI

JOHN NAYLOR OF LEIGHTON HALL

AS John's is the branch of the family in which we are directly interested we will now follow him from childhood.

John was born on 15th April, 1813, in Mount Pleasant, Liverpool, and his birth was registered at St. Peter's Church there on 1st June. Sponsors were Richard Bullin, Christopher Bullin (uncles) and Mary Naylor (aunt). He was just three years of age when his father died and as already recorded his mother Dorothy and his two brothers and his sister left their home at Hartford Hill and went to live with her brother Richard Bullin in Liverpool. John was fourteen years of age when his great-uncle Thomas Leyland died.

It is not known where he went for preparatory schooling, but he was at Eton from about 1826-32. He then spent three years at Trinity College, Cambridge. The next definite date we have is 1844 when, on the death of Richard Leyland (Bullin), he was admitted to partnership in the Bank by his uncle Christopher Bullin (thenceforward Leyland). Richard Christopher Naylor younger brother of John was made a partner at the same time. No doubt both the brothers had served an apprenticeship in the Bank for some years previously.

Shortly after this, John married on 20th August, 1846, GEORGIANA EDWARDS, daughter of John Edwards of Ness Strange, Salop, who was descended from Lady Mary Murray, ninth child of the third Duke of Athol.

John was thirty-three years of age when he married and the wedding was celebrated at Great Ness, Shropshire. The diary of Charlotte Edwards (mother of the bride) records:

1846. Thursday, 20th August—'My dear Georgie's wedding day. The day proved so very wet we were obliged

37

to go to the Church in carriages.—The Farmers and Tenants formed a procession with Mr. Cotton (Agent) at their head to speak a congratulatory address, which was responded to by Mr. Edwards and Mr. Naylor. There was an ox gaily decorated in a wagon preceded by an excellent Band,—but the day was too wet to allow of all the rejoicings taking place;—there were about sixteen large and small arches erected in honour of the Bride and Bridegroom, and everything was conducted in the most gratifying and orderly manner possible by Mr. Marshall and Mr. Smith.—The Bride looked and behaved most beautifully and all was well done.—After the ceremony the Bride and Bridegroom and Groomsman (Capt. Naylor) set out in Mr. J. Naylor's carriage for Birmingham. The day continued so wet we could not get out, and further rejoicings were stayed till another day.'

John and Georgiana spent their honeymoon at Corndavon Lodge, Aberdeenshire, a shooting property owned by the Farquharsons of Invercauld, situated on the river Gairn a few miles from Balmoral Castle.

During their stay there both made crayon sketches of the Lodge as it was then. In August, 1965, just a hundred and nineteen years later, the author and his cousin Hilda Stevenson Hamilton (*née* Cholmondeley) made an expedition there and were able to locate the exact position from which the two sketches were made. Unfortunately, the old Lodge has now fallen on evil times and is almost derelict, except for one room in a part of the building added at a later date; having been reconditioned, it is now used as a luncheon room by the Queen Mother, who rents the shooting from the Invercauld Estate.

As at that time the railway did not go further north than Perth, presumably the newly-married couple travelled thither from Birmingham by train; the remainder of the journey to Corndavon must have been accomplished by carriage and entailed driving over the Devil's Elbow to Braemar and thence to Crathes en route for the Gairn Valley, no mean undertaking for a young bride.

Richard Ansdell, R.A., who was a pupil of Sir Edwin Landseer, R.A., painted more than one Stag picture for John Naylor, who helped him to become established as an artist. He painted a delightful picture of John and Georgiana on their wedding tour; Georgiana is mounted on a white pony and John, standing by her side, carries a rifle and has evidently just 'grassed' a stag which the Highland Ghillie is about to gralloch.

Photographs of this picture have survived (one is reproduced opposite page 41) but unfortunately the original oil painting, which hung first at Brynllwyarch and later at Haggerston, was sold in about 1940. It now forms part of a collection of nineteenth-century paintings in the possession of Mr. Henry P. McIlhenny of Philadelphia, U.S.A., who owns Glen Veagh Castle, County Donegal, where the collection is housed.

The picture was, of course, painted in the artist's London studio and a story has survived in the family that in order to attain realism John Naylor arranged that a stag's carcass should be sent down from Scotland and that, as was to be expected, its condition before the 'sitting' was concluded became quite unbearable. More than one member of the family sincerely regrets the sale of this very delightful picture, for sentimental reasons, if not wholly for its artistic qualities.

On their return from their honeymoon they went to live at Liscard Manor, Wallasey, where they resided for only four or five years until Leighton Estate, Welshpool, was ready for their occupation. This Estate had been purchased in 1845 from P. Corbett by Christopher Leyland who gave it to his nephew as a wedding present. Payment appears to have been made as follows:

		£	s.	d.
27th March, 1845	—P. Corbett	8,450	0	0
18th October	—Roy Co. in London	11,728	12	7
20th October	—Cash	65,195	0	0
21st October	—Mr. North—Stamps	30	0	0
20th January, 1846	—Harrison's Fees	100	0	0
		£85,503	12	7

JOHN NAYLOR
1813-1889

RICHARD CHRISTOPHER NAYLOR
from an engraving in *Baily's Magazine*, August 1863

In addition to this handsome present, Uncle Christopher on 2nd February, 1847, gave £100,000 to each of his two nephews John and Richard Christopher.

On entering into possession of the Estate John proceeded to re-build completely the old house in Victorian Gothic style. During the next forty-five years he developed and improved the Estate, which extended to some four thousand acres, building farms, houses, roads, drainage and water supplies on a lavish scale. He also did a great amount of tree planting. Between 1847 and 1863 they had ten children, three sons and seven daughters. Of these seven married. The little volume called *Family Stories* compiled and published privately for members of the family in 1887 testifies to the truly happy upbringing that the family had at Leighton.

In 1933, Mr. Robert Owen, F.R.Hist.Soc., gave a lecture on the history of Leighton from very early days. This was published in the *Montgomeryshire County Times* on 1st July, 1933, and two extracts are worth quoting:

> 'The last of the Corbett squires, Panton Corbett of Longnor, sold the estate to Christopher Bullin Esq., who devised it to his nephew John Naylor. The Corbetts were non-resident squires, and during a long period of their tenure at Leighton they let Leighton Hall to the Parrys of Pooltown, who were regarded as the squires of the place by the Leighton folk: they seem to have lived in some state there, for every Christmas a team of oxen used to drag the yule log into the Hall, accompanied by the usual ceremony and much hospitality.'
>
> 'Then came the Naylor family, and with them came Leighton 'Industrial Revolution'—perhaps a better term would be 'Industrial and cultural transformation'. Not the oldest of us now living can remember the period of transformation, but some of us possessed parents who could remember those happenings in the 'Fifties' and 'Sixties'—in the spacious days of good Queen Victoria. In those days the neglected little hamlets of Leighton and Pentre Leighton

40

'A SCENE IN THE HIGHLANDS' by R. Ansdell, A.R.A.

suddenly found themselves 'on the map'—in fact becoming quite famous—and the outside world began to take an interest in what was to be seen there: something new in agriculture, something new in forestry, and ideas to be picked up in estate planning, gardening, etc. Leighton's fairy godfather and fairy god-mother were Mr. and Mrs. John Naylor (senior). They were a fine couple in more senses than one. Two arresting pictures of these two can be seen in the portrait-gallery of the Corporation of Pool in the Powysland Museum. Perhaps many of you have seen the original painting in Leighton Hall? Their monument is to be found covering the whole of Leighton: the Hall and its beautiful surroundings, the Church of the Holy Trinity, the school, the model farm buildings, the wonderful forestry on the hill, the irrigation and land fertilising works, the workmen's cottages, the stately bridge of Pont-y-Carryg, the Cilcewydd Mills, a Parish-room and other communal institutions, etc. And there is just one object more that I shall mention—one that the burgesses of Welshpool can take part credit for in its erection—I refer to the Severn Bridge.'

A memorandum book itemising all these expenses from June, 1848, to April, 1856, shows that the total expenditure on major constructional work on the Leighton Estate amounted to at least £200,000. It is not altogether surprising that by that date Mrs. John Naylor was expressing considerable alarm at the mounting expenditure.

Love of the sea was strong in John and in his younger brother Richard Christopher, as we shall see later. Both were members of the Royal Yacht Squadron.

John died on 13th July, 1889, aged seventy-six years and until his death remained a partner of the firm of Leyland and Bullins. His brother Richard Christopher had retired from the Bank in 1852 when George Arkle became a limited partner: finally two of his sons were admitted to partnership in 1879, and a third in 1888. His widow Georgiana survived her husband for twenty years and continued to live at Leighton

41

Hall until her death on 30th January, 1909. John and Georgiana were buried at Leighton Church which he had built in 1853.

The fine collection of oil paintings and water colour drawings which over the years John Naylor amassed at Leighton Hall was renowned among his contemporaries and admired by future generations. His taste was versatile, and included such artists as Turner, Landseer, Ansdell, Collins, Wilkie, Delaroche, Cooper, Copley Fielding and many others.

John Naylor generously lent several of his works of art, valued at some £20,000, for exhibition at the opening of St. George's Hall, Liverpool, on 18th September, 1854. Some weeks later, on 24th November, the pictures were returning to Leighton in a road van which arrived at the level crossing at Gobowen railway station, near Oswestry; the van tried to cross the line but fouled the gates and was dashed into by an approaching train, which damaged the pictures very seriously, and is reported to have caused about £12,000 of damage.

That his artistic temperament was latent from early days is shown by a collection of pencil drawings in a sketch book which bears this inscription:

'Drawings by J. Naylor at Eton. Brought from the Bank by his son, John Naylor.'

Another book, *Burnet on Painting* 1827, has this inscription on the fly-leaf:

'This Prize given to Naylor ma for the best Studies from Nature made during the summer of 1832'

Adjudged by— William Evans
E. R. Carter
F. Keate
A. H. Keate

It is reasonable to assume that these two volumes are complementary to one another. John Naylor's artistic sense reappeared in at least one of his children. His fourth daughter, Georgina, who studied at the Slade School in London was a proficient modeller and sculptor, and a high class copyist in oils. In fact,

before they were sold, she copied all the principal Turner pictures at Leighton, where some of her copies still hang.

In the course of time the artistic strain again reappeared in her great-niece Hilda, daughter of Georgina Cholmondeley and grand-daughter of Christopher John Leyland.

John Naylor in his Will left his real Estate to his eldest son with the proviso that if he should subsequently inherit the Leyland Entailed Estates his interest in Leighton and Brynllywarch should be for life only and thereafter Leighton would go to his third son John and Brynllywarch to his second son Rowland, in each case 'in tail male'.

Evidently he intended to establish a dynasty but in 1889 could not foresee the tremendous increase in Income Tax, Estate and succession duties during the next two decades, which were bound to defeat his intention.

Indeed, by 1931 his grandson had to sell Leighton.

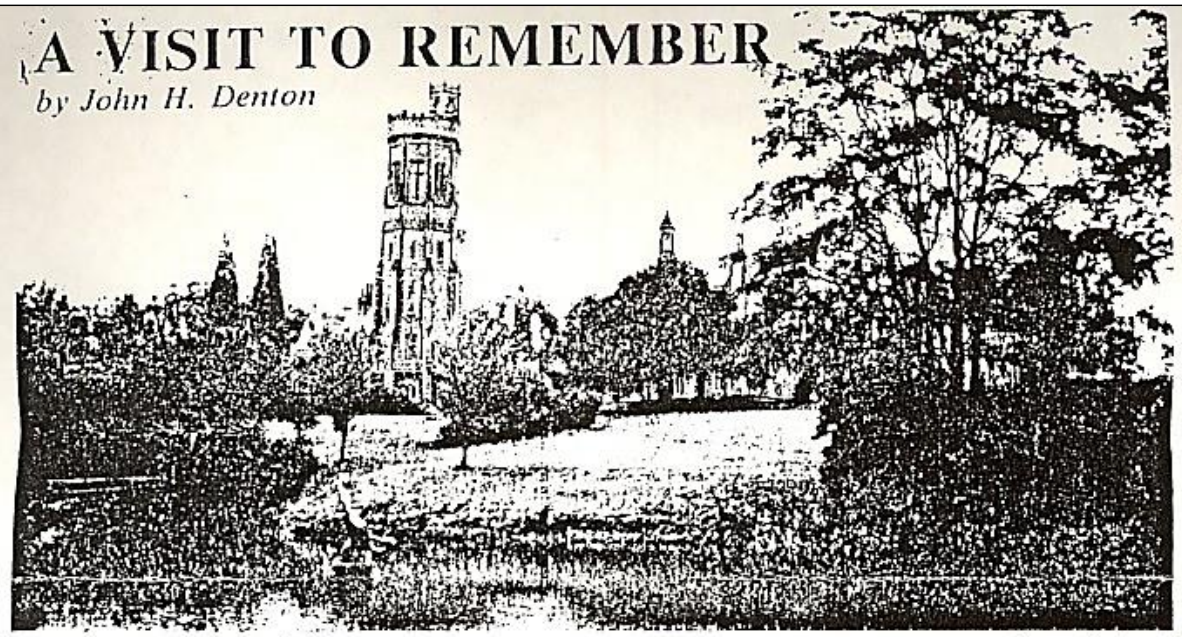
Leighton Park Estate; Repairs of Student Survey; The Ironbridge Institute

In the Introduction to the first Research Paper No 23 (1987), Dr Michael Stratton summarises the forces behind John Naylor's work at Leighton:

> The high capital investment in the Leighton Park estate reflects the tendency among Victorian farm improvers to increase efficiency and reduce labour, by new mechanisation and better design. The Victorian boom in new farmstead construction reached a peak between 1850 and 1870. During this period, the principles of model farming were laid down.
>
> A. Bailey Denton, (engineer to the General Land Drainage and Improvement Company) set out many of his principles in his book The Farmsteads of England (1863). These included more shelter for stock, better utilisation of manure, and the designing of homesteads in such a manner as to make them partly, if not completely, covered. The manufacturing industry was used as a source of comparison, with its efficient arrangement of production in order to economise on time and labour.
>
> Leighton Park estate embodies these principles both in the layout and construction of the farm, and in the use of water powered machinery. A barn was essential to any farm, especially with the farm improvers demanding that hay should be better appreciated as a source of food. The barn at Glan Hafren (designed by Gee) is an example of the high quality design and workmanship that Denton considered necessary in model farm building. Elements of the barn, such as the windows, rolling doors and stock yard can be seen in Denton's book.
>
> The preservation of farm manure was very important to Victorian high farming....The use of manure for fertiliser would appear to have exploited at Leighton Park Estate. An article in the *Express and Times Gazette* quotes people who could remember manure being pumped up to a sewage tank on top of Moel y Mab, on the estate. The manure was stored in this tank and then pumped back down to the estate as fertiliser. A tank still exists on Moel y Mab to substantiate this claim. It would appear that a funicular railway was originally used to transport the manure up the hillside (though further investigations for a subsequent report doubt that this was so; the railway seems to have been built for the transport of people only, possibly to mark some great family event).
>
> At Leighton John Naylor continued to develop the ideas of model farming. He adopted as many principles as possible to make the estate cost efficient and also save as much on labour as possible.

A VISIT TO REMEMBER

by John H. Denton



"Icarus still plunges"

THE LEIGHTON ESTATE

3rd October 1981

It is difficult to write objectively of Leighton. Once the magic of this extraordinary place has seeped into the veins, one's perceptiveness is coloured with a feeling that everything there is larger than life. And in a sense it is — for no-one today, in a materialistic world where successful investment is measured only by the amount of monetary return, is likely to create another Leighton. It belongs to a world now lost, a world where no expense was spared to enhance one's property in the interests of aesthetics, enterprise, experimentation and grandeur — not necessarily in that order.

When I was asked to help with a CPRW Open Day at Leighton, I was delighted. It is now over ten years since I acquired a cottage and five acres on the edge of what had been, until its sale in 1931, a four thousand acre estate. Even in my humble holding one finds evidence of the magnitude of activity by John Naylor, the Liverpool banker, who inherited Leighton in 1849 and turned it into a place of wonder. The CPRW Open Day was clearly an excuse to get to know the area better.

At the edge of my garden was a hedge bordering a sort of no-mans land, for another hedge parallel to it and some eight feet beyond bordered my neighbour's land. I knew a small stream passed between them in the wetter months but the area had been used as a tip for old oil drums and a variety of other rubbish by some previous occupant of my cottage. Although probably beyond my legal boundary I started cleaning it out in odd moments. I had lived in the house for six months before my cleansing activities were rewarded by the discovery beneath the debris of a delightful stone bridge, facing my front path in one direction and fields leading to the centre of the estate in the other. I removed part of the hedge, restored some of the stonework — and it has given me much pleasure ever since.

The bridge is typical of John Naylor. There are bridges everywhere. Some were built to carry nothing more than pipes — yet even these were sometimes embellished with all manner of ornamentation. Some were erected purely for pleasure, for the vista they gave of cascades and other landscaping features of the park; others, such as the great High Bridge, built in 1858 to give access across a ravine, formed part of the improvements made in the interests of efficiency and good husbandry.

The 'improvements' were quite outstanding. They show there is nothing new in attempts at self-sufficiency and Naylor illuminated many of his buildings with gas made in his private gasworks. From it there ran a network of pitch-fibre pipes installed fifty years before they were in general use. The buildings of the Home Farm, acquired by the County Council in the 1931 sale together with 518 acres of land, have to be seen to be believed. Factory farming may have a different connotation nowadays, but to Naylor it meant a vast range of buildings to house not only animals of normal domestic kinds (his kangaroos, bison and emu were a personal indulgence on a different part of the estate), but also their food together with machinery for sheep shearing, chaff cutting, grain handling and other operations, powered by a 'Scotch turbine, a recently invented and very novel water motive power' (newspaper report on the estate in 1851). Pigs were kept in one of the two huge round buildings with their central manure pits, tunnels linking them to sophisticated disposal apparatus. Tramways ran underground to unite various parts of the complex and massively heavy sash-type doors to barns can still be lifted with ease with the aid of hidden counter weights concealed behind lofty pillars. On our visit to this we were indebted to Mr. John Markwick for his permission and guidance.

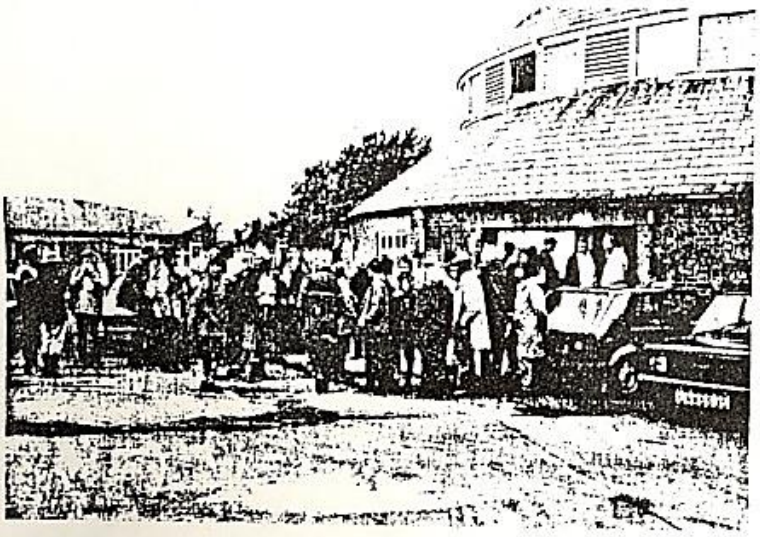
Some features on the estate have long been disused and it may now be too late to discover fully their mode of operation — yet so substantially were they built that outline remains are likely to survive for many years to come. The greatest example of this is the huge tank and its surrounding buildings on Moel-y-Mab. It is 160 feet long and nearly 100 feet wide. Some of the buildings have been truncated or removed altogether but originally the east side consisted of three storeys the lowest wintered cattle while the middle is an exceptional example of the bricklayer's craft in arch vaulting and formerly housed sheep. The walls up to the springing of the arches were lined with pitch made in the estate's gasworks. The tank

itself is usually called a sewage tank and accounts say this consisted of animal manure from the home farm, ground bone from the estate bone mill and guano from South America, all of which was piped to various parts of the estate below. It is likely, however, that for periods of drought the tank was used for plain water irrigation of the fields and elaborate methods were employed to ensure supply. Hydraulic rams at Leighton Ford and Cil-cewydd pumped water to intermediate reservoirs and in times of adequate supply in the streams below the Mab, these were harnessed to turbine pumps to raise water from the reservoirs to the tank itself as a reserve when required.

Not far away is the top building of what is probably the happiest fantasy of its opulent owner — the funicular railway. Accounts conflict regarding its conception. Some say it was built to convey the materials used to build the tank, but there is now clear evidence that the tank was built first. Others say it was used to convey the sewage solids to the tank and ground evidence tends to confirm this by the earthworks of a tramway rising from the home farm to the octagonal tower adjoining the water-driven winding engine house at the foot of the incline. It would now appear, however, that its primary function was to convey the Naylor family to their Summer House at the top! This attractive two-storey building consists of a stone walled ground floor with windows for illumination and slits to take the funicular's cable which would have passed round a large pulley installed at approximately floor level. Above this is an attractive room, externally of brick and pseudo half-timbering covered by a steeply pitched slate roof with two levels of dormers in addition to the normal fenestration below. The whole is topped by a flat roof surrounded by decorative ironwork. If all bankers used their money this way one might be less resentful of their charges!

In the break-up of the estate fifty years ago the biggest parcel to remain intact was the area devoted to forestry, approximately one thousand acres. This ranged from a substantial cash crop of Christmas trees to longer term growth of many varieties, among them the tallest Grand Fir in Great Britain, about 170 feet high. For obvious reasons the area is not normally open to the public and we are indebted to the owners for permission to visit and to Mr. Charles Dutton, the Head Forester, who gave us an interesting talk on this part of the estate's activities, which forms the main commercial enterprise to have direct continuity with the Naylor period.

Through the kindness of Mr. John Lee we were invited to visit the Hall and gardens. In the latter much of the statuary collected by Naylor has long since gone but Icarus still plunges headlong into the lake though we saw no sign of the sun that melted his wings. The Hall was built on the site of a Tudor mansion demolished by Naylor on taking possession and is well described by Richard Haslam in his Powys volume of the Buildings of Wales series (Penguin).



Some of our visitors at the piggery.

The top of the funicular railway.

Our final destination was the internationally famous Redwood Grove, planted by Naylor and presented to the Royal Forestry Society in 1963 by Mr. C. P. Ackers. Our guide here was Mr. David Williams, the Forestry Commission's Senior Forester for the Dyfnant Forest and Honorary Warden for the RFS, who showed us some interesting features of this unique 125 years old grove. The Sequoia Sempervirens or Coastal Redwood here grow to only one-third the height of the American Westcoast trees but nevertheless some have already reached 35 metres high and are still growing well. More remarkable is the estimate that the standing volume of timber is now at a density of 2,500 cubic metres per hectare which means that it is possibly not only the most heavily timbered woodland in Britain but also in Europe.

The day had begun in the quiet dignity of Holy Trinity Church, designed by W. H. Gee, and paid for like everything else by John Naylor. It ended at a building in the heart of the woods and far from public gaze, yet a building every bit as ornate and well built as many a church. But there was nothing ecclesiastical in its function: it was the estate poultry house. Despite grey clouds and a little rain the ninety or so people present had spent a fascinating day. A history of Leighton is in preparation by the writer of this note and hopefully in due course a wider public will thus be able to learn something of the results of a great Victorian banker's enthusiasm and its practical applications.

WELSHPOOL'S OTHER LIGHT RAILWAYS

The Leighton Park Funicular Railway

ANDREW CAREY

Of all the local tramway systems, this was far and away the most impressive and is also surrounded by an intriguing air of mystery on many points. It ascended Moel y Mab, which is part of Long Mountain, on the opposite side of the Severn Valley to Welshpool. Leighton Park was a gentleman's estate developed in the late 1850s by John Naylor, a wealthy Liverpool banker, who seems to have wanted to satisfy a frustrated ambition to be a civil engineer. He appears to have spent about £500,000, and the results are spectacular.

Much though by no means all, of the work was related to the running of the estate on the most advanced methods available at the time. The rest is sheer grandeur. Apart from the usual hall, church and estate houses, the place had its own gas works and a massive and extraordinary complex of buildings for the home farm. (The barn doors don't swing on hinges — they rise on counterweights into the roof). An extensive network of pipes and pumps supplied water to the reservoirs and pools around the estate from the River Severn. There is an only partly completed network of scenic drives that includes a three arch viaduct about 80ft high, many lesser bridges and quite a collection of weird and wonderful buildings.

At the top of Moel y Mab was built a manure tank, some 160ft by 100ft, and a very intensive animal rearing unit. From the tank, pipes (said to have been of copper) led down the hill to spread out in a dense network all over the fields at the foot of the slope so that watered down manure could be spread at the turn of a valve . . . . how lovely!

Connecting the home farm with The Tank was the funicular railway. The line was in three parts. The lower section led from Leighton Park Farm to the foot of the incline and was about 450 yards long. It had a gradient of about 1 in 12 and must have been cable operated. The trackbed — including an embankment with a small stone bridge — is quite narrow and appears suitable for a single line of narrow gauge.

The centre section was the funicular itself, ascending at 1 in 2 for a distance of about 250 yards. The earthworks are substantial, wide enough for two parallel tracks of up to about 6ft gauge. The lower part is on an embankment while the upper part passes through a rock cutting with a stone bridge over an estate road in the middle. The lower station, recently converted into a house, is an elegant oblong brick tower. At the north end of this building, at right angles to the incline, is a paved terrace leading to a nine sided gothic style turret, approached up steps.

The upper station is of two storeys with a stone base, a pseudo half timbered upper floor and an elaborate mansard roof. Facing down the incline are three flat topped buttresses which must have acted as platforms between the tracks. There are square holes in the front wall which would have allowed the cable to pass from one track to the other round pulleys in the ground floor. The building is clearly designed to double up as a summer house for which purpose it is still used.

The layout would require the use of one incline bogie on each track, with wheels at an angle to match the slope and a horizontal platform above, like a wedge of cheese. This would come to rest level with the buttress platforms so that the truck or persons could move off sideways on the level.

Connecting the top station with The Tank must have been the upper section of the line, a gently rising tramway about 250 yards long. This is the most shadowy part of the system, since apart from the logical need for it to reach The Tank, there is no clear evidence for its existence. It is just possible that this tramway also had a branch to the right of the funicular station, curving back to make an almost complete circle round the top of the hill and leading to the lower level of The Tank buildings. It depends on how you interpret ambiguous map evidence.

What purpose did all this complex and elaborately engineered system serve? Local tradition is pretty unanimous. It simply carried manure! It seems incredible that so

Lower station — conjectural arrangements. *Space exists for the supposed tramway deviation and loop but the exact layout, including details of the termination of the funicular, is uncertain.*

Llanfair Railway Journal, No 101 (1986)

The ornate upper station showing the buttresses where the funicular cars stopped and the opening in the wall for the winding cable (J. Horsley Denton).

mantled and what may be just part of the line on the top of the hill. It is my guess that the 'freight' operation was shortlived, perhaps only a year or two. It must rapidly have become obvious that the system was hopelessly over-elaborate and complicated for such a simple task. However, the funicular itself, the 'fun' element remained in place for very much longer. A relative of the Naylor family said that he was given a ride on it as a boy, probably about 1918 or 1919. With a 60 year old cable, this could have been distinctly hair raising. He thinks the incline was dismantled in the early 1920s.

It seems surprising that such a prominent feature never seems to have been photographed. At any rate, I have been unable to trace any pictures although there are plenty of Leighton Hall. No documents relating to the tramway have turned up either and so many matters of detail remain a mystery. The most difficult thing to understand is the motive for building the system. If local tradition is to be believed, it must have been the most spectacular manure tramway in the world.

The Leighton estate also had some considerable private standard gauge sidings from the Cambrian Railways at Cil Cewydd Mill. One of these is shown in the 1887 OS map as continuing over the River Severn (but without any indication of a bridge) to Glanhalren, another large estate farm

16

WITH ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS to E. D. Chambers, W. Cooke, J. H. Denton, B. Thomas, Mr Markwicks and Mr and Mrs Pelch. SEE ALSO The East nos. *10 and 18*

way side of the turret are clearly visible.

The asymmetric nine sided construction reflects the slight change of direction needed from the terrace to the tramway. As shown on the plan, I would suggest that the track diverged from the cable a few yards before the turret, curving gently on a slight downhill slope to reach the loading platform for the incline.

It would seem reasonable to assume a track gauge of two to three feet for the upper and lower sections of the railway. Nothing larger would have fitted on the incline bogies as I have described them. In total contrast to this is a piece of surviving track in Leighton Park Farm. There is just one rail in place with a matching mark in the cobbles opposite . . . 7ft 10in away. It seems to have been of a later date and used for a large truck to take hay into the barns. The earthworks leading away from the farm are just not wide enough for such a broad gauge to be used for the tramway.

The life of the complete system may have been brief. An 1855 estate map shows no sign of the line but 1887 OS maps show the incline as disused, the lower tramway dis-

The winding house at the lower station of the Leighton Park funicular ca. 1961 before conversion to a private dwelling. The funicular rose through woods to the right. (J. Horsley Denton).

in cast iron frames which can still be seen built into the walls. It has been stated that this arrangement worked the incline. Although this is possible, with two tracks available it seems to me that a water balance system would have been a more logical way of doing things. However, logically, the whole system makes no sense so that is perhaps an unreliable test.

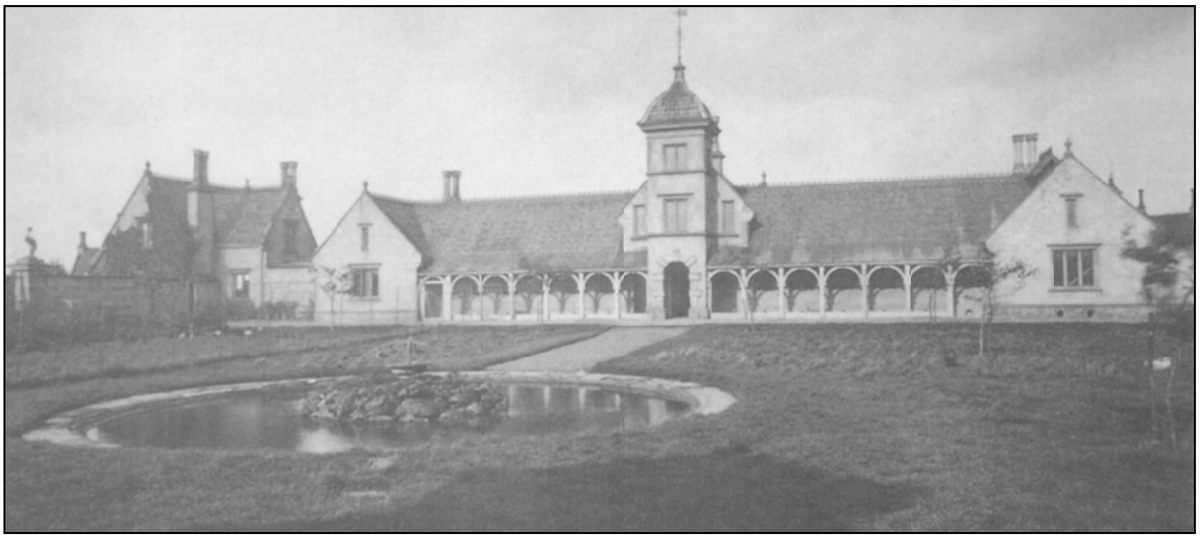
Whether or not the turbine and drum worked the funicular, there can be no doubt that they powered a cable to work the lower tramway. There is a vault under the terrace leading from the engine house to the turret through which the cable must have passed. The housings for the bearings necessary to bring the cable up to ground level in the tram-

much money should have been spent for such a lowly purpose but there it is. The Tank and its associated buildings were built before the railway so that seems to rule out the transport of building materials. Fodder seems also to have been taken up the hill on the railways, an idea I prefer as I cannot imagine Mr Naylor wanting steaming slurry delivering via the front door of his summer-house. Passengers were carried from time to time, presumably after suitable cleansing of the surroundings.

Motive power for the incline is something of a mystery. Power was necessary because the loads went uphill. The lower station building housed a water turbine in the basement, supplied by a pipeline carried over the neighbouring stream on a substantial stone bridge. The main part of the building accommodated a large winding drum supported on bearings

The lower station of the Leighton Park funicular showing the 'turret' and the winding house. In the foreground is the embankment at the top of the lower tramway (editor).

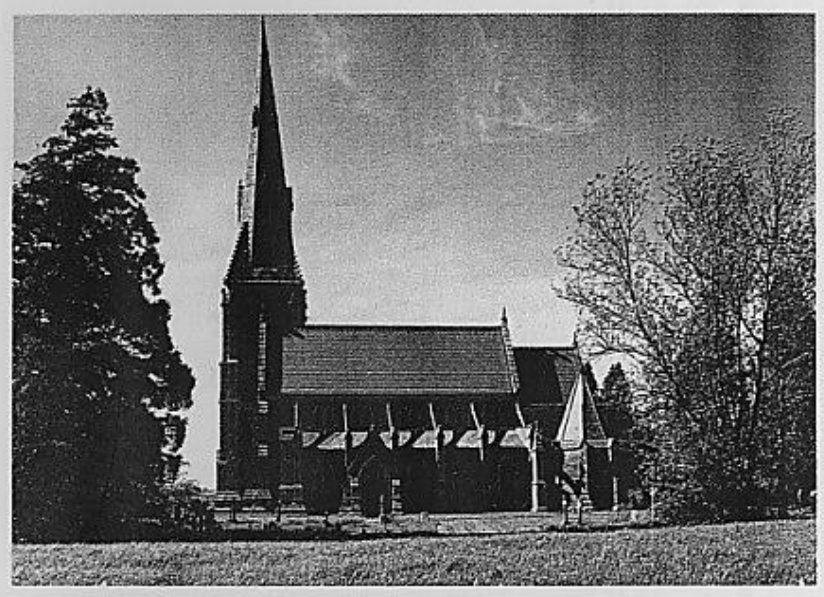
15

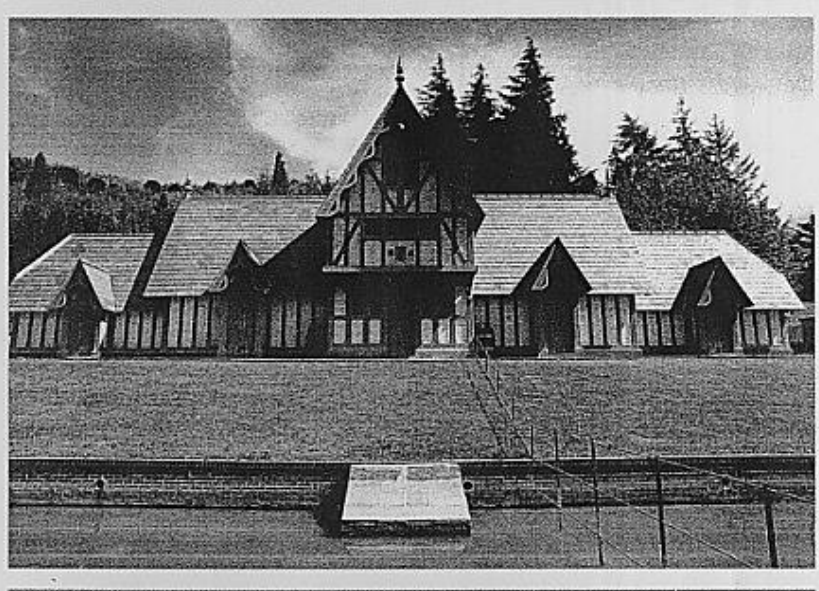


An even grander Poultry House at Welbeck Abbey in Nottinghamshire, built by the reclusive fifth Earl of Portland in the mid-nineteenth century.

LEIGHTON HALL ESTATE, POWYS

by RICHARD HASLAM





IN the years when the Great Exhibition was being planned for London, a practical application of similar attitudes, also on the most ambitious scale imaginable, was being started on the Welsh border. The model agricultural estate at Leighton, in the Severn valley near Welshpool, must count as one of the wonders of the Victorian age. It is hardly less lavish than the Prince Consort's farm in Windsor Great Park, though sadly less well preserved.

No longer run by the Naylor family, divided in ownership, confused by housing development and overtaken (as is the fate of all technology) by other advances, the Leighton estate nevertheless deserves the same heroic status as the great industrial monuments of the 19th century—and perhaps the same degree of protection.

Even though the Welsh sense of history does not always embrace the merits of the squirearchy, an atmosphere of legend pervades the physical remains at Leighton. Maybe the estate's background in the fabulous wealth built up by the Liverpool merchant and banker Thomas Leyland has something to do with it, together with the sheer number and size of the structures realised for John Naylor from the late 1840s to the 1880s. Until recently, his whole achievement—including the Redwood plantations of 1855 on the Welsh slopes of the Long Mountain, which are now the most heavily timbered of any in Europe—was little appreciated. This may have been the result of the endearing confidence he placed in an unknown, and really somewhat indifferent, architect to realise his splendid vision in stone and brick.

The relationship of the Naylor family to the Leyland and Bullins Bank was mentioned in an article on Nantclwyd Hall (COUNTRY LIFE, December 29, 1988), the home of another branch of that family in Wales. The originator of the bank (founded in 1807 and merged with the North and South Wales Bank in 1901), and of all that flowed from it, was Thomas Leyland (1752-1827). He began in shipping and in public service in Liverpool—where he was mayor three times—but he built his great fortune (he left £600,000) in property and banking. His will directed that, after 21 years, the bank should invest in country estates, while his personal wealth should devolve to his heirs according to certain conditions.

Who these persons were is explained in *The Family of Naylor from 1589* by Thomas H. Naylor (1967). Thomas Leyland did not marry, and his nearest kin were his sister's children, Richard and Christopher Bullin. The first, the co-founder of the bank, had to take his uncle's name in 1827—as did the second when, on his brother's death in 1844, he succeeded to the life tenancy. Neither of

(*Top*) 1—The Church of the Holy Trinity at Leighton, Powys, designed by W.H. Gee of Liverpool. (*Middle*) 2—The Fowl House of 1861, repaired by the Landmark Trust. (*Left*) 3—Leighton Hall from the north

Country Life, June 27th 1991

Between 1845 and 1888 the Leighton Hall estate, near Welshpool, was developed by John Naylor as a model of mechanised agriculture. Many farmbuildings remain—on a scale unparalleled elsewhere in Britain—around the house and church designed by W. H. Gee of Liverpool.

4—The tower of Leighton Hall seen from across the Icarus Pool. The gardens were designed by Edward Kemp, a pupil of Joseph Paxt

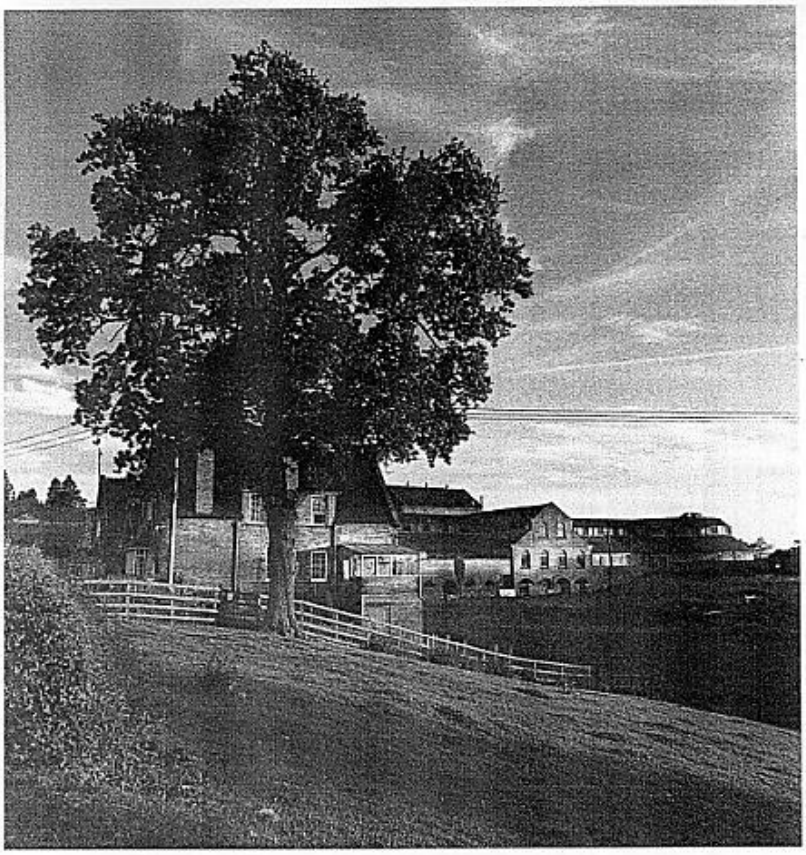
these had children either, so Thomas Leyland's next provision was for the children of the Bullins' sister Dorothy, who in 1809 had married John Naylor (who died in 1815).

Her first son, Thomas Naylor Leyland, was the heir; the second, another John Naylor (1813-89), was the subsequent developer of Leighton; the third was R.C. Naylor. Architectural patronage by R.C. Naylor provides the link between three Naylor houses worked on by J.K. Colling: his own at Hooton Hall, Cheshire, his nephew's at Nantclwyd and his sister Elizabeth Gold's at Garthmyl Hall, which was built near Leighton in 1859.

It was Thomas Leyland's second nephew, Christopher, who was, in turn, his nephew John Naylor's benefactor. A partner in the bank at 31, he was given the recently bought Leighton estate as a wedding present in 1845. This was followed by the gift of £100,000 in 1847, which made investment in improvements possible. His grandfather also had been mayor of Liverpool; his father had died young; and he had had a conventional education up to Trinity College, Cambridge.

In all of this there is little to foreshadow a thorough interest in agricultural improvement, and it seems sensible to attribute the model-farm methods he adopted at Leighton to the scientific and practical climate of his times, and in particular to t spate of 19th-century books on farm desi and agricultural improvement. Little known, however, of who advised him or what books he had in his library.

John Naylor spent more than 40 yea modernising every sort of function Leighton. His was the only generation of family to do so. His wife outlived by years both him and their second son, wi was to have inherited Leighton (he ha bought out the life interest of his eld brother, a pioneer of steam turbines, whom the Haggerston estate in Northur berland was entailed instead). His grandso sold the 4,000-acre estate in 1931.



5—Leighton Farm and the former engine house, seen from the north. The haybarns intersect with other ranges to form courtyards. (*Below*) 6—One of two circular piggeries

Such wide-ranging innovations urgently need the kind of investigation which since 1987 the Ironbridge Institute of Industrial Archaeology has been carrying out at Leighton. Its findings have been published in several *Reports of Student Surveys* and elsewhere. This article aims to place them in their past and present cultural context.

The first steps were to build the Hall (Figs 3 and 4) and the Church of the Holy Trinity (Fig 1), in 1850-56 and 1851-53 respectively. These sum up the anomalies of the whole enterprise, in that they are in the tradition of the landed gentry, yet their inexperienced architect, W.H. Gee, was, like the patron, a Liverpudlian.

Stylistically they fall short of fully realising the old ideal, yet they incorporate features of national quality, such as the Pugin and Crace decoration in the house, and perhaps the Minton tiles and Forrest and Bromley stained glass in the church. They are nothing if not ambitious, with the stone-spired church set on one eminence in the vast valley of the Severn, and the spreading house with its breathtakingly tall tower at the other end of a long vista.

It is only just becoming possible to see Naylor's estate improvement, and especially the philosophy behind it, more clearly. There are perhaps two powerful ideas represented in this prototype mechanised landscape. One was the then modern industrial and political ideals of Cobden and Peel concerning the general benefit to be gained from applying new knowledge and new sources of power to agriculture. The other was the traditional pride of an owner in his improvements, expressed not in the 18th-century language of temples but in the post-Enlightenment language of technology.

It would be stretching things too far to see in the various wonders at Leighton—whether the huge and orderly farm complexes or the turbine-driven mountain railway—an affirmation of the same nature as a great Georgian landscape garden. The ideals of progressive scientific culture are too far from those of the Classical world and too close to those of today. But there are things in common nevertheless: the pioneering of various inventions, the co-ordination of labour, and the extraordinary breadth of interest, including a sense of landscape and the importance of the arts.

This argument can easily be laid low by contrasting the prestige of piggeries with that of porticoes, but to do so undervalues the force of a humanistic tradition which combined recognising the benefits of manure with appreciating a panorama of hills. In the Naylors' day both could be found on Moel-y-Mab, the hilltop 400ft above the house, by taking lunch up their amazing inclined railway and eating it in the black-and-white summerhouse on top, before inspecting the huge tank in which effluent from the cow-byres surrounding it on three sides was mixed with water and fed down to the valley fields by pipes.

Ironically, there is perhaps more interest in the Leighton estate now that it is far gone in ruin than there was when it was in working order. Little comment seems to have been made at the time on an achievement for which it is hard to find parallels in Britain. Some of the smaller elements would have been found for generations on any large estate—haybarns, cornbarns, sawmills, forges and brickworks, even a gasworks. The larger ones are another matter.

Take the colossal barn at Glan Hafren, on the valley floor near the Cambrian railway, which was built about 1871 (the date on a water tank). This, too, is by W.H. Gee, but made of red brick and Welsh slate like all the estate buildings, in contrast to the Cefn sandstone used for the Hall and the church.

What distinguished the Leighton improvements in particular was the use of water-powered machinery—driven not by wheels, that is, but by turbines. Such inventions were everywhere, though partly dismantled long ago, like the pipework systems; the Ironbridge team is recording the evidence where it finds it. The Glan Hafren barn, and the nearby, five-storeyed

Cilcewydd corn mill of 1862 and 1868, were both powered in this way (at the latter the turbines, built by MacAdam Brothers of Belfast, survive).

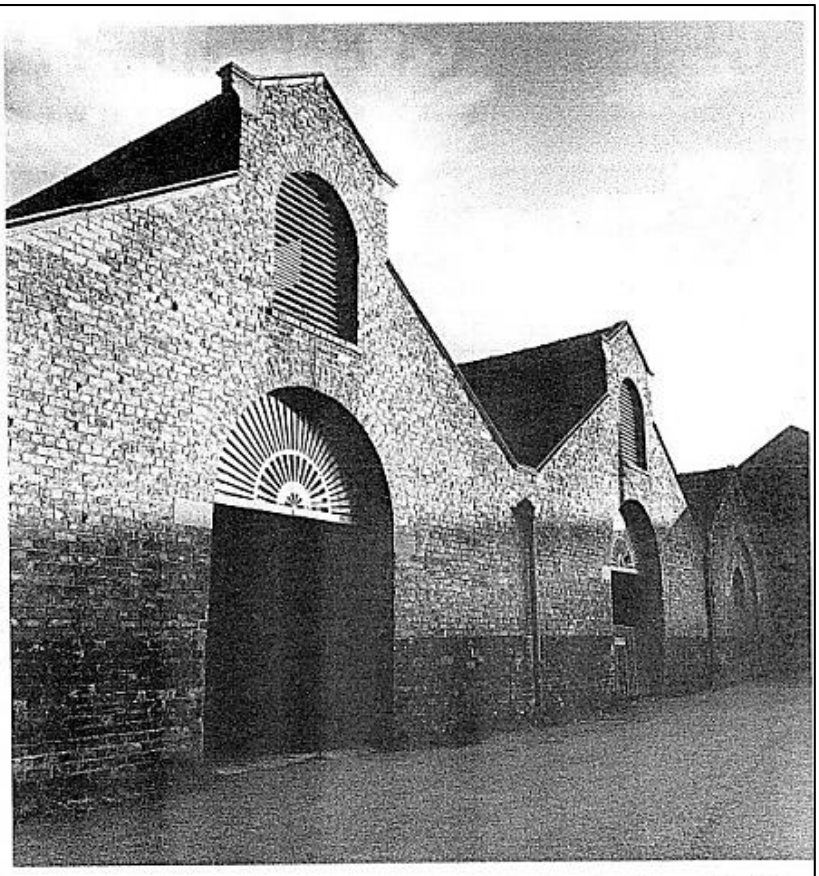
Some of the machinery was clearly complicated, such as that for the two-track "funicular" railway of the 1870s, which appears to have been a pioneer of its kind and remained in working order for nearly 50 years; no photographs seem to exist of it. The cable house at the bottom is a private dwelling now, though other features remain, such as its nonagonal stone tower.

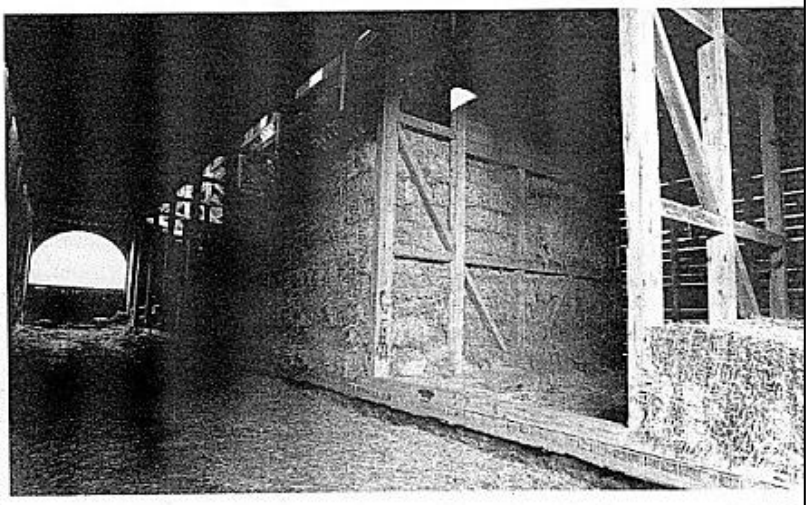
Several important parts of the estate still fulfil their original purposes—the church and vicarage, and the immensely large and complex Leighton Farm (Figs 6 to 8), on the way from the Hall to the church. On a rectangular grid plan of some eight courtyards, the farm's red-brick structures shelter both animals and foodstuffs. It dates from the first building period, and it, too, was probably designed by W.H. Gee. Incorporated in it are an extraordinary variety of advanced agricultural installations—an engine house and a tank house, several great barns (Figs 7 and 8) for hay and for roots, two circular piggeries (Fig 6) complete with slurry-gathering chambers beneath, and a reservoir for the turbines and rams which powered the machinery for grain-handling, chaff-cutting and sheep-shearing. It was the key facility for the farms.

Two miles away, up the hill in the forestry, is the Fowl House (Fig 2). The unusually ornate timber structure of this curious building of 1861 betrays its origins in the tradition of country-house aviaries, as well as in the role of women (including, at that time, Queen Victoria) in the keeping of hens and the development of better strains. At Leighton this activity is ascribed to John Naylor's fourth daughter, Georgina. The older cottage for the fowl-keeper beside it is now run by the Landmark Trust, which has repaired the large Fowl House with its many nestboxes of various sizes, and also the open-sided storm shelter across the yard and the rectangular pond for the ducks below.

This contrasts with the present state of the Hall (Fig 3). W.H. Gee's house has a picturesque skyline and changing grouping. The design of its masonry reveals that the architect's stylistic origins, if not his training, derive from the Wyatts' Gothic, and not Pugin's (despite the fine Palace of Westminster interiors). Although part of the courtyard has been pulled down, this large house would still divide into several dwellings, but it is suffering from not having been lived in for some years. Its interior decorations lived up to the picture collection, which included seven Turners (one, *Keelmen Heaving Coals by Night*, now in the Tate Gallery) and many canvases by Landseer, Grant, Delaroche and Ansdell.

The garden (Fig 4), designed by Edward Kemp, a pupil of Joseph Paxton, is especially to be regretted, in view of the photographs taken at its maturity (COUNTRY LIFE, October 25, 1902). Tragically little has survived sales, neglect and a flood which seems to have carried away a bronze figure of Icarus falling through the surface of the lower pool. Further elegiac thoughts arise from contemplating the likely fate of other structures round it, particularly the High Bridge of 1858, which takes a carriage drive 40ft above a valley.





7 and 8—Two views of the farm's barns, built in the 1850s. They closely resemble designs shown in contemporary books on agricultural improvement

Although the industrial archaeologists have proposed the repair and public display of parts of the machinery and the agricultural structures, there is no co-ordinated plan of management for the whole of the Leighton estate. It deserves one. An initiative may yet arise, perhaps from a number of sources simultaneously. Leighton Hall could prove the focus for this, in collaboration with the county council, which in its old Montgomeryshire incarnation bought the central 518 acres in 1931 including the crucial model farm.

As various people in the vicinity demonstrated during the preparation of this article, there is a reserve of enthusiasm that this monument to High Victorian idealism should not be left to fade away.

Photographs: Paul O'Connor.