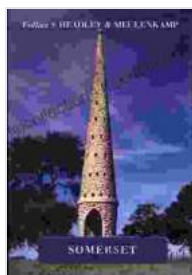


The Enchanting Follies of Somerset: An Exploration into England's Architectural Whims

Nestled amidst the rolling hills and picturesque landscapes of Somerset, England, lies a collection of extraordinary architectural follies that defy convention and capture the imagination. These whimsical structures, often described as folly towers, sham castles, and rustic retreats, were built by eccentric individuals with a penchant for the unusual and a desire to leave an enduring legacy.



Follies of Somerset (Follies of England Book 31)

by Nicoletta Arbia

★★★★☆ 4.5 out of 5

Language : English

File size : 6190 KB

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Screen Reader : Supported

Enhanced typesetting : Enabled

Word Wise : Enabled

Print length : 66 pages

Lending : Enabled



The Origins of Architectural Follies

The concept of architectural follies emerged during the 18th century as a reaction against the prevailing neoclassical and Palladian architectural styles. The growing popularity of picturesque aesthetics and the influence of Gothic Revivalism inspired architects and landowners to create

structures that were intentionally non-functional and purely ornamental. These follies became a testament to the playful spirit of the era and the desire to evoke a sense of wonder and surprise.

Somerset's Notable Follies

Somerset is home to a remarkable concentration of architectural follies, each with its own unique story and architectural style. Among the most renowned are:

- **Bishop's Palace Folly Tower:** Located in Wells, this 15th-century tower is one of the oldest known follies in England. Its intricate carvings and spiral staircase evoke a sense of medieval grandeur.
- **Cadbury Castle Hillfort:** This sprawling hillfort, dating back to the Iron Age, features a 19th-century folly known as the "Round Tower." With its crenellated turrets and sweeping views, the tower offers a glimpse into the area's rich history.
- **Claverton Manor Sham Castle:** This 18th-century folly resembles a medieval castle with its turrets, crenellations, and faux drawbridge. It was designed as a picturesque focal point within the surrounding parkland.
- **Dunster Park Rustic Retreat:** Nestled within the picturesque grounds of Dunster Park, this 18th-century retreat is a charming example of rustic architecture. With its thatched roof, cobblestone walls, and decorative timber framing, it creates an idyllic setting.
- **Prior Park Palladian Bridge:** This 18th-century bridge, spanning the River Avon, is a masterpiece of Palladian architecture. While it serves

as a crossing point, it was also designed to enhance the picturesque beauty of the surrounding landscape.

The Purpose and Significance of Follies

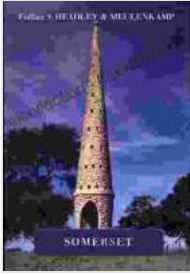
Architectural follies served various purposes beyond their aesthetic appeal. They were often used as landmarks or viewpoints, providing breathtaking vistas of the surrounding countryside. Some follies were built as symbols of wealth and status, while others were intended as memorials or tributes. They also played a role in the development of landscape gardening, creating focal points and enhancing the experience of exploring natural surroundings.

Today, follies continue to fascinate and inspire visitors from around the world. They offer a glimpse into the architectural whimsy of the past and provide a unique insight into the mindset of those who created them. Whether exploring the ruins of a medieval tower or admiring the elegance of a Palladian bridge, the follies of Somerset invite us to embrace the unexpected and appreciate the beauty of architectural imagination.

The architectural follies of Somerset are a testament to the enduring power of human creativity and the desire to leave a lasting legacy. These whimsical structures, scattered throughout the county's picturesque landscapes, serve as reminders of the playful spirit of the past and continue to inspire awe and wonder in the hearts of those who encounter them. They are a unique and valuable part of England's architectural heritage and a testament to the enduring power of imagination.

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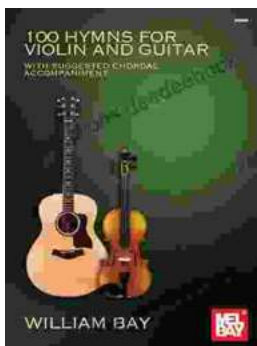
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