



Mr Hamilton's Elysium: The Gardens of Painshill

Michael Symes

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The Hon. Charles Hamilton was one of those extraordinary 18th-century gentlemen who, like Lord Cobham at Stowe and Henry Hoare at Stourhead, turned their gardens into works of art. Inspired by his time in Italy, Hamilton set out to transform the "accursed hill" at Painshill into a picturesque landscape complete with a serpentine lake and water wheel, Turkish tent, Chinese bridge, ruined abbey, grotto, and hermitage with hermit. The Surrey garden soon ranked with the best in the land but its decline was rapid and it lay forgotten until rediscovered in the 1980s. The restoration over the last 30 years has been as careful and dramatic as any, and now Painshill Park is visited by thousands — even the famous vineyard is flourishing again. This book — fully illustrated with archival images and wonderful modern-day photographs of the park and its amazing buildings — is the first to give the story of Charles Hamilton and his creation.

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