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Cottage Ornés in Ireland

by

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It is one of the enjoyments of those habituated to live in a style of high art and refinement to take occasional refuge in the contrast produced by comparative artlessness and simplicity.

John Claudius Loudon, 1836

Introduction

This thesis sets out to examine two very different examples of cottage ornés in Ireland, namely the Swiss Cottage, Co. Tipperary and the Shell Cottage, Co. Kildare. The primary and probably the most influential difference is that the Swiss Cottage, Cahir, was the work of a professional architect, John Nash (b. 1752), and the Shell Cottage, was the work of an amateur, Emily, Duchess of Leinster. Because of this there has been a totally different approach to the design and decoration of both cottages. The professional approach of Nash (employed by Lord Cahir to provide a highly fashionable item, compulsory in his struggle for social acceptance) resulted in a highly sophisticated building and a perfect example of the cottage orné style as defined in contemporary pattern books.

The second approach was that of an amateur, Emily, Duchess of Leinster, who had a natural love for the environment and was devoted to the glorification of it. Her work therefore is very personal. Her style is a development from a childhood hobby into the time consuming pastime of shell decoration.Her work is the perfect example of the 18th century style of decoration carried out by many ladies at the time. Both cottages will be discussed individually in the course of this thesis to highlight their distinctive features and to record the decoration of both as they stand today.

The aim of chapter 1 is to trace the origins and development of rustic architecture and to examine how the style was adapted by the 18th century aristocracy and developed into an artificial form of architecture known as the cottage orné. It also attempts through reference to contemporary pattern books, to define a set of governing rules which were used as guidelines when building a cottage orné.

The rules govern every aspect from the location of the building to the type and degree of decoration and were instrumental in the spread of ideas and styles.

Chapter two has been subdivided to encompass many aspects of 18th century surface decoration. It involves an examination of the French influence on European society. Also under discussion are the strong desires to break with the formalities imposed by the 18th century aristocratic lifestyle which expressed itself through many imaginative, architectural ventures such as gothick follies and grottoes. A section of this chapter will be concerned with a general outline, and examples of, 18th century surface decoration, and the role of women as surface decorators and their varied and extensive achievements.
A detailed examination of the evolution of shells as a decorative medium will be discussed culminating in their use in shell rooms and grottoes.

Chapter three will take the form of an evaluation of Waterstown Shell Cottage on the Carton Estate, Co. Kildare with particular reference to the decoration of the shellroom. The style of decoration of the shellroom will be traced from Goodwood House, Sussex, the childhood home of Emily, Duchess of Leinster, who is responsible for the earliest work undertaken at the cottage.
The main content of this chapter will be a detailed and analytical account of the decoration from recent observations and records.
Later additions to the decoration of the shellroom will also be considered and a complete account of the decoration, as it now stands, will be compiled. A detailed analysis of the decoration at the Carton shell room has yet to be compiled and it is the aim of this chapter to do so.

The second example of Irish cottage ornés will be considered in chapter four, that is the Swiss Cottage, Cahir, Co. Tipperary. It will illustrate the cottage as a perfect example of the style, as it embodies all of the essential characteristics specified in chapter one.

When considering the Swiss Cottage it is essential to have an understanding of the social background of its original owner Lord Cahir. It was an understanding of this which probably aided in the sensitivity of the recent restoration and refurbishment.This chapter aims to provide such an understanding.

It is also necessary to consider, when looking at cottage orné, why a prominent architect such as Nash, responsible for such prestigious projects as the design of the Royal Pavilion at Brighton, should entertain himself with the design of individual country cottages. His involvement demonstrates the extent of the craze for cottage ornés at the time. It is hoped to give an understanding of the cottage orné as the direct result of contemporary society and influences.

It has been necessary throughout the research for this thesis to refer to a wide variety of publications, as books specifically written about the cottage orné have rarely been published since the 19th century.

It is these earlier publications that have been beneficial in compiling specific definitions and requirements for cottage orné design, for example:

Loudon's Encyclopedia of Cottage, Farm and Villa Architecture (1842).

It has also been necessary to refer to many periodicals such as Country Life articles, Irish Georgian Society Bulletins and the Cahir Heritage Newsletter.

These periodicals have been of enormous benefit as they are among the limited 20th century written information on cottage ornés. The work of Barbara Jones in her book Follies and Grottoes has been helpful in locating Irish examples and in illustrating the extent of this type of work throughout Ireland and England.

Chapter 1: The Principles of Cottage Orné Design.

The cottage orné as it evolved during the late 18th century and early 19th century was a highly artificial form of architecture. Examples of this style were generally non-residential and built for the amusement of the gentry. The cottage orné was very much a product of the *Romantic Movement.* This movement originated in a revolt against the formalities of neo-classicism. It was characterised at this time by a pre-occupation with an idealised view of rural life which appealed to the aristocracy because it provided a form of escape from the formalities of 18th century aristocratic life.

They looked towards rural life because it provided for them a rustic charm that was plain, simple and unsophisticated and contrasted strongly with their way of life. This idea of unsophisticated, rustic charm came to be most clearly defined by the term *picturesque*, that is, having qualities 'distinct from beauty or grandeur' but 'worthy of recognition by art' (16, p 157). In architecture this idea of the picturesque came to be recognised mainly in the form of the quaint country cottage, complete with thatched roof and rustic ornament.'The picturesque theory subordinated architectural planning, and indeed architecture itself to scenic considerations'.(13, p 32).

To trace the development of this preoccupation with rustic architecture it is necessary to look back to the work of Abbé Marc-Antoine Laugier (1713 - 1769). According to David Watkin (20, p 164-169) Laugier illustrated in a woodcut, a primitive hut to be made from tree trunks and branches,(illus.1) in the 2nd edition of his Essai sur L'Architecture (Paris 1753) around this he formulated his theory of architecture which he developed from the Greek "primitive hut" theory of architecture.

The Origin of Architecture

Illus. 1 Laugier, woodcut illustration, 1753

As a result of this trend towards rustic architecture, at this time there were two contrasting types of cottages being built in Ireland, the functional basic farmworkers cottage, built on the estate and lending itself to the overall picturesque effect. An example of this was a number of cottages built on the estate of Adare Manor, Co. Limerick by the Earl of Dunraven. The other was the cottage orné an eccentric highly decorative version of the standard cottage which exaggerates its most rustic features and imports many more.

Many books and articles were written at the time, laying down guidelines for building a cottage orné, for example: — Hints for the Picturesque Improvement in Ornamental Cottages and their Scenery — Bartell (1804) and An Encyclopedia of cottage, farm and villa architecture and furniture — J.C. Loudon (1842)
Certain rules must be adhered to in order to produce the overall required effect, rules which governed the location, materials used, as well as the type and degree of decoration. Once these basic rules were followed it was then up to the creativity of the individual. Walls were built at odd angles, the thatch of the roof was deliberately made to look sloped and irregular, even though the craftsmen employed had the means to draught them as accurately as the main estate houses. Windows mismatched and stripped branches for the trellises were painstakingly chosen in order to give a seemingly random appearance. Most features were borrowed from the traditional cottage but some others were added for effect. Verandahs were borrowed from India, trellises from France, elaborate chimney stacks from Tudor Manor houses and rustic summerhouses and hermitages which became a feature of gentleman's parks during the Rococo period.

The following guidelines have been derived from information received from John Neville of the Office of Public Works (28, p255-257). One of the main conditions regarding the location of a cottage orné was that the scenery must be picturesque, it must be surrounded by trees and sited close to running water. The house must

be composed of irregular or diversified parts and should contain:'playful and angular forms of different magnitudes and projections' (28, p255)

The height of the roof should be irregular along its length and wherever there was a: "want of interest in the outline" (28, p255). a tree or the rise of a hill in the background was essential to fill the space. Some parts of the building were to be seen complete, others should be covered by an overhanging roof, ivy or nearby trees. Chimney shafts should be used artfully to break up the outline of the roof. The front or back of the cottage should have dormer windows, with pediments and on the lower level there should be baywindows and a projecting rustic porch.

The structure of the cottage should be of oak as should the bargeboards attached to the eaves. Where there was an abundance of available wood the roof should be of tiles or otherwise covered with strong thatch of reed or sedge. The decorative elements such as the panes of glass in the windows and the furniture should be in keeping with the other details of the cottage.

The furniture should all be rustic and made of local materials and every article should be characteristic of the cottage for which it was made.
The fences surrounding the cottage were usually made of cast iron and painted green. They imitated the gnarled and knotted effects of the trees around them and brought them into harmony with their environment.

All of these elements lend to a romantic, picturesque appearance and are the chief characteristics of a cottage orné. They appear to great effect in both of the chosen examples The Swiss Cottage, Chair, Co. Tipperary and the Carton Shell Cottage, Co. Kildare. Each example puts emphasis on different elements but both are striking examples of a very creative style of architecture.

Cottage ornés were built by the aristocracy as a means of escape from the formality of their estate houses, yet when they visited them they brought with them luxuries that no ordinary cottage dweller could ever afford.
It seems that the gentry sought the simple, rustic life only as long as it still afforded them the luxuries to which they had grown accustomed.
The cottages were often carefully planted to conceal their actual size, and the fact that a basement was required to house their servants.
The decoration of the interior of a cottage orné was equally as lavish. Handpainted wall coverings, intricate rustic-furniture and whole rooms decorated with panels of delicate shellwork.

It is the combination of the basic elements of a rustic cottage with the addition of eccentric, lavish decoration and detail that makes the cottage orné such a peculiar and interesting occurance.

Chapter 2: Eighteenth Century Surface Decoration

During the second half of the 17th century France, under Louis XIV had become the dominant power in Europe and leader in all matters of taste. The aristocracy throughout Europe looked to Louis, his wife Marie Antoinette and his court as sources of inspiration regarding style of dress, decoration and behaviour. The social restrictions put upon them led them to seek a form of escape from the formality of daily court life. They looked towards the simple life of country peasants and decided that they too should share in this type of simplicity from time to time.

In painting at this time the pastoral was a favourite theme, with artists such as Watteau (1684 - 1721) and Boucher (1703 - 1770) painting genre scenes of people enjoying themselves in the countryside (illus. 2). This type of scene was popular as it suggested a closeness with nature and a knowledge of the classics as they were associated with pastoral imagery. Genre painting also flourished as a result of societies fascination with human behaviour.

Marie Antoinette caused a stir at Versailles by posing for a portrait wearing a simple, white muslin dress holding a single rose.
Critics wrote that she looked like a chambermaid when what she was in fact expressing was the ideal of the rustic life which inspired her famous dairy at Trianon.

> 'A lot of money has been spent on giving the Queen's hameau the aspect of poverty, but by spending a little more, her majesty would have been able to improve the conditions of those who are really poor'.
> Marquis de Bombelles (1, p38).

Illus. 2 Watteau, The Swing, 1712.

It was this need to escape from the boredom and pettiness of a life overloaded with rigid etiquette which lead the gentry to look to nature and natural forms and culminated in the building of romantic shell grottoes and cottage ornés. They became a 'fantasy relief from the formality of the Age (2, p18)'

Surface decoration during the 18th century was chiefly executed in what may be called the Rococo Style using naturalistic motifs.
Colour, pattern and texture were the elements exploited to best effect with little use of strong line or shape. The ideas of nature and the pursuit of happiness through simple pleasures were dominant during the Rococo period and culminated in the elaborate shell grottoes which appeared throughout Europe at this time. Rococo is a style of lavish surface decoration which during the 18th century was brought into the decoration of the simple structures of cottages by the use of shells and other natural and local materials.

Surface details and decoration held more interest than the shape of the object to be decorated, which was seen as merely a vehicle for the use of their creative, decorative talents.
An example of the diverse range of materials used to gain the required effect is described here in the Recollections of a beloved mother written by Anna Dorathea, Lady Dufferin (1824) it describes the work of an Irish lady working in Clandeboye, Co. Down.

> 'My mother converted the most incongruous materials into one of the most beautiful pieces of grotto work that could be imagined. Broken china, beads, lobster shells, coloured parchment, sealing wax, everything that had either colour or substance to suit the purpose were all combined with specimens of spars and shells and various description of stones and coloured glass and pieces of looking glass, and pebbles and fishbones and many more such materials, to cover the walls, which were broken across by diagonal arched partitions, which she still added as she still wanted a fresh surface on which to display any newly acquired treasures'.
>
> — Recollections of a Beloved Mother
>
> (1824) Anna Dorothea, Lady Dufferin (13, p53).

Ladies and gentlemen of great wealth and social standing during the 18th century cultivated their tastes and paid for beauty with both their time and their money. A wide variety of arts and crafts were practised by ladies at the time such as shell decoration, silk painting, paper mosaics, lace making, print rooms and the collection of china, fossils, shells and coins.

Such activities started off on a large scale because they were fashionable hobbies to fill the afternoons of a lady. Many fine examples were produced which required a real passion for the subject as the work involved was time consuming and labour intensive.

Shell Grottoes

One of the finest examples of a French shell grotto is a small pavilion in the park of Rambouillet near Versailles known as the Shell Cottage. It was built by Marie Antoinette for her close friend the Princess de Camballe. Not only are the walls and ceiling of this grotto encrusted with shells but it also contains furniture carved to imitate shells and painted with shell motifs.However, it was the use of the shell in its natural form that interested the makers of grottoes and shell rooms during the 18th century. It is necessary to begin, when describing most fashionable trends during the 18th century with France but it is in Ireland and England that most of the research for this thesis has been concentrated.

The materials used in the construction of grottoes were brick, stone, wood, glass and slate and decorated with shells, minerals, pebbles, rock and mirrorglass set in a base of mortar.

These materials were chosen for their glittering textural qualities and many others were used for effect. Some grottoes actually started as show-cases for collections of shells and fossils and their aim was towards variety and individuality. Lists of

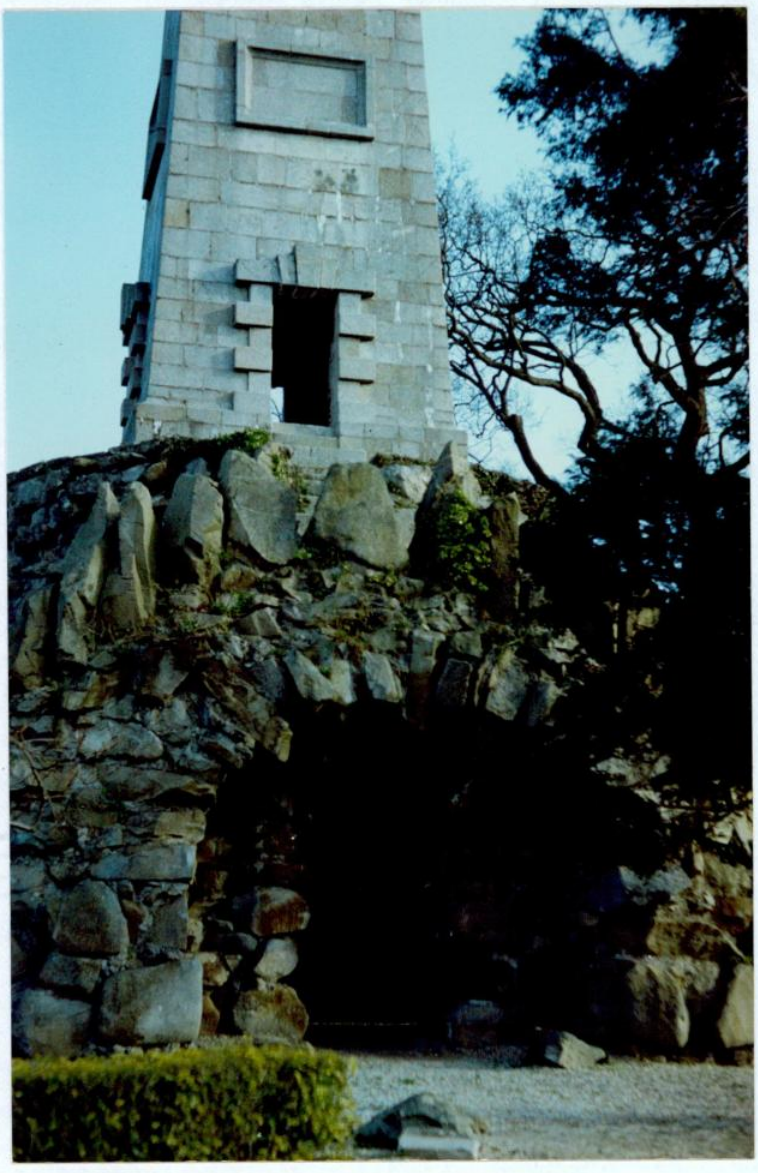
specimens were often kept as a catalogue of the collection; with no doubt an impressive account of how they were acquired.

Some collectors had their portraits painted by their cabinets of collected shells, holding a rare variety in hand. It seems to signify more than a love for the natural qualities of the object, rather a desire to be associated with a precious object which connected the owner with foreign travels. It was a part of the 18th century battle for social acceptance. By acquiring the appropriate fashionable objects proving their taste and acceptability in society.

Outdoor shell grottoes were not suited to the Irish and English climate and shellwork is generally confined to grottoes built inside rooms in the style of contemporary architecture. A grotto which has no shellwork can be found in Stillorgan, Co. Dublin (illus. 3). It has crossed grotto arches made of solid lumps of uncut rock in the form of a large vaulted chamber which supports a 100 foot obelisk. It was built for the second Viscount Allen in 1727 by either Edward Peale or Richard Castle. Castle is also believed to have designed another obelisk which was built by Mrs. Conolly of Castletown in Kildare in 1739.

Shell Decoration

Beliefs in the magical properties of shells are worldwide and have their origins deep in the roots of many religions and cultures.
The sagas of ancient Ireland show us that shells were greatly revered and used on many ceremonial occasions. There are references to 'Halls of Shells'
(18, p165) which are believed to have also been decorated in the Mediterranean in even earlier times.



Illus. 3, obelisk, Stillorgan, 1727

3.

Rooms, pavilions and grottoes decorated with real shells have their origins in ancient times. Both the Greeks and the Romans used shells as a medium to ornament their houses but it was not until the 18th century that shell decoration in Europe reached its climax with the craze for artificial ruins, caves, grottoes and romantic pavilions. It was the subtlety of colour and texture in shells that was admired by the 18th century eye.

They are very much an aspect of the 18th century awakening to the glories of the natural world. Images of shells were used to decorate many different surfaces from plasterwork to ladies embroidery.

Most fashionable people at this time had collections of shells from local beaches as well as the Mediterranean and the tropics.

However many were limited to local species unless they had connections with travellers or could afford the ridiculously high prices to be paid for rarer varieties.

The more exotic shells were introduced to Europe at this time by explorers such as Captain James Cook whose journeys to the south seas brought a wealth of new varieties to those who could afford them.

Collectors also saw the unique and decorative qualities of fossils, minerals and rocks.

The collection of shells became so popular that local newspapers advertised the sale of them:

> 'To be sold at Mr. Levie Wolfes
> in Fleet Street all sorts of
> India and Irish shells for grottoes
> and shellworks of all kinds'.
> Dublin Courant Aug. 1745. (13, p42).

Advertisements such as this would have attracted the interests of both shell collectors and ladies who were were in the process of grotto building and needed quantities of cheap shells as well as rarer centrepieces to complete their work.

Much of the shellwork of the 18th century was carried out in the Rococo style which was very much a style of intensely textured surface decoration, indeed the word Rococo is derived from the term Rocaille, a form of intricate shellwork decoration.
The Irish seashore provided a wealth of interesting specimens but writing of Waterford Mr. Charles Smith wrote that:

"There are many beautiful shells found on this coast, but which have been of late pretty scarce since the making of shellhouses and grottoes came into fashion with other works of this kind".(13, p42).

Examples such as this demonstrate the extent of the craze at the time. The use of shell to adorn arches and walls of cottages and grottoes helped to soften the more rigid architectural lines and made for an overall rustic and romantic environment. This combined with the rustic stickwork of the same period provided many ladies and gentlemen with a fashionable and time consuming hobby.

Mrs. Delany

One such lady was Mrs. Delany, who in her lifetime completed a number of shell-grottoes in Ireland and England. Most were decorated for close friends and relations such as the one at Northend near Fulham for her uncle, one at Derbyshire for her brother as well as the one she built for her own home at Delville, Glasnevin Co. Dublin where she lived for many years with her second husband Dr. Delany.

Dr. Delany was inspired by Pope's garden at Twickenham and turned the garden at Delville into a wild romantic setting.

He encouraged his wife to develop her original artistic talents in many ways. She was always willing to learn new techniques and was inspired by Chinese and Japanese lacquered work as well as the French technique of 'decoupage' (24, p23/29) which involved cutting out paper shapes for the decoration of varied surfaces.

According to Ruth Hayden (23, p23/29) she made paper mosaics of botanical subjects, cut silhouettes of family groups, painted and embroidered as well as her substantial work with shells. In her own home she is said to have decorated ceilings, walls, mantlepieces and grottoes of intricate shellwork. Of the decoration of her chapel at Delville she wrote that it was:

> 'Done with cards and shells in imitation of stucco. In the chancel are four Gothic Arches ...
> Made also of shells in imitation of stucco, the arches no deeper than the thickness of the shells, to take off the plain look the walls would have without them' (23, p25).

Her inspiration for the imitation stucco work would have been the plasterwork at such houses as Carton, Co. Kildare which she visited in 1750. Mary Delany drove by coach to Baldoyle Strand wherever necessary to hand select specimens of shells to use in the decoration of her home. She rose each morning at 6 am while working on her very time consuming hobby.

The Delanys are a perfect example of the excitement during the 18th century with nature and the natural beauty which surrounded them. They visited the giants causeway, to marvel at such a natural phenomenon and Mrs. Delany used her creative method of illustration to imitate, in cut paper, the rare specimens of plants sent to her by Kew Gardens at the request of Queen Charlotte wife of George III. (24, p23/29)

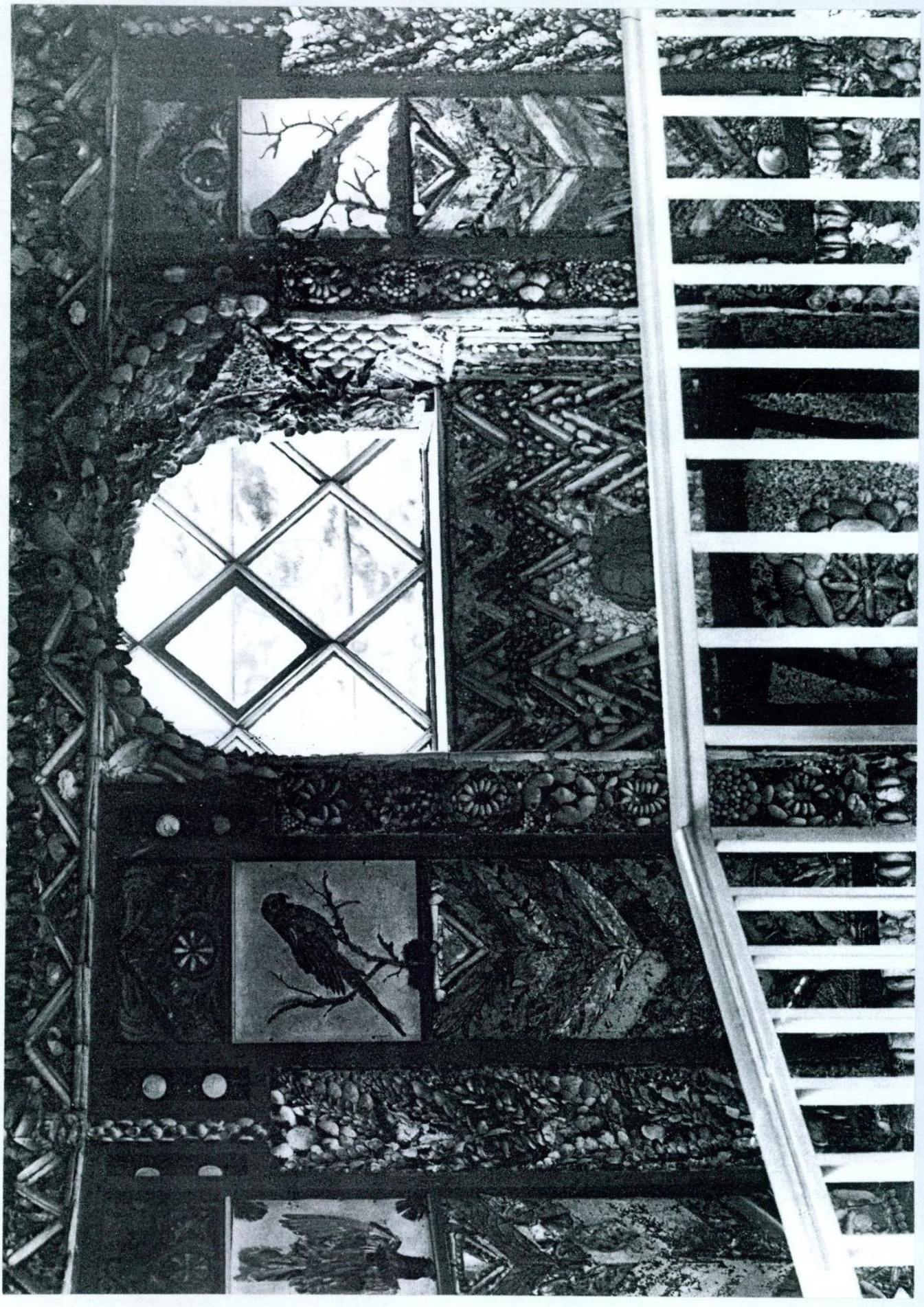
Mrs. Delany was versatile and used her talents in many creative ways. It is through her work that we can appreciate the lifestyles and daily occupations of 18th century ladies.

A LA RONDE

At a la Ronde near Exmouth in Devon we are given another example of the varied skill and patience of Georgian ladies. It is the work of two cousins, the Misses Jane and Mary Parminter. Having returned from a ten year tour of Europe during which time they had recorded interesting buildings and styles of decoration, they set about the task of building and decorating their home, a 16 sided structure supposedly inspired by San Vitale in Ravenna.

The building has a hall sixty feet high surrounded by a gallery mosaiced in shells and feathers.(illus. 4). All of the upper walls are encrusted with patterns of shellwork and mirror glass and feather pictures of birds.
Other items in the house are decorated with cut out paper flowers and geometric patterns. Also hanging in the downstairs rooms are pictures made of sand and seaweed. The grotto work at a la Ronde is almost as fine and architectural as that found at Goodwood House, Sussex. The Parminter ladies kept an elaborate garden in the grounds of which they had a small building which served as a type of schoolroom where they taught local children.

They spent their time productively and the variety of crafts a la Ronde are endless, printed paper cameos, silhouettes and miniatures as well as the shell and featherwork already mentioned.



Illus. 4, A LA RONDE, Gallery Shellwork.
The decoration at A LA RONDE is similar in treatment to that at Carton

Chapter 3: Carton Shell Cottage, Co. Kildare.

Goodwood

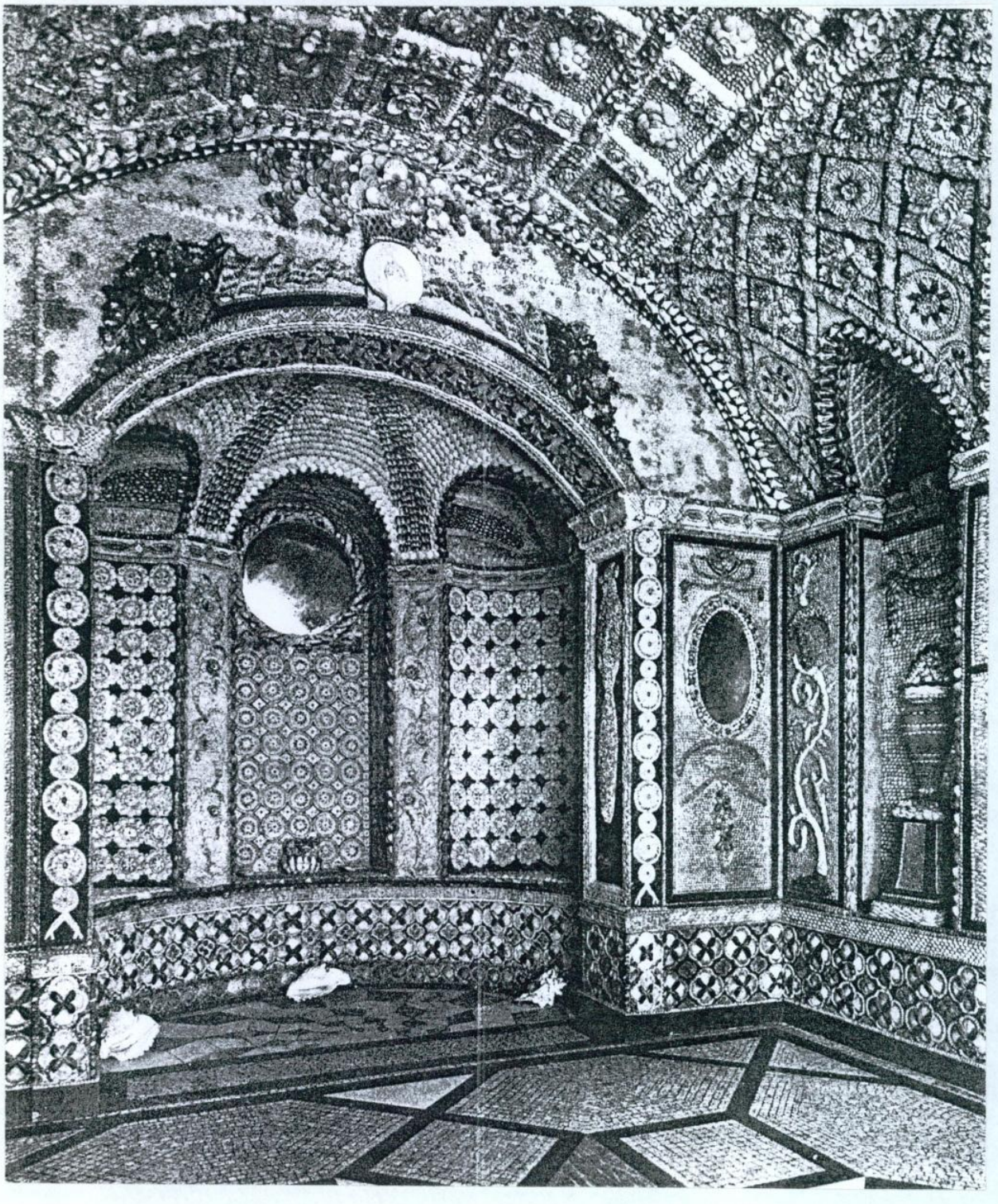
In 1732, in Goodwood Park, West Sussex, Sarah, Duchess of Richmond began work on a small pavilion in the grounds of Goodwood House. Using shells and mirror-glass she lined every moulding of the room with shells following the familiar lines of the Georgian architecture. She used the shells as a decorative tool just as others were using wood, stone or plaster.(illus. 5)

As a result it is not immediately obvious that the entire grotto is made up of shells, it appears to be mosaiced in tile or other fragmented materials. Overall it does not have the deep encrusted appearance of many other grottoes. Because it is well lit it has none of the gloom of grottoes made in caves or other dimly lit areas.

The Duchess of Richmond spent seven years decorating the grotto with the help of her daughters and her husband. Many of the shells used for the grotto came from British Navy Officers as the first Lord of the Admiralty was a close relative of the family.

At Goodwood the beauty of the individual shell is sacrificed to the overall design of the grotto. Shells are used as a medium rather than for their individual qualities. Indeed an attempt was made to minimise variations from shell to shell in order to give the design an all-over effect.

According to Barbara Jones (9, p154) the walls of the room are covered in white shells which form, neat narrow bands and are outlined with rows of small black shells which emphasise the direction of the decoration. The use of a particular species is always consistent. If one species is used to emphasise a vertical theme some variety will be carried up into the vaulting and will lead the eye around the forms of the room. It is thought that professional help may have been sought by The Duchess of Richmond in the design of the grotto. This was not an unfamiliar practice at the time as many leading architects were employed to design grottoes. After all they were as much a statement of wealth as a labour of love and as such



Illus. 5, Goodwood Shell Grotto, 1730.
The Duchess of Richmond.

they were as professionally constructed and decorated as possible.
Certainly, help of a labouring kind would have been needed to mix mortar and clear shells and perform all of the less glamourous tasks.

The shellwork at Goodwood is mostly based upon a background of pebbles or flint in a mortar setting. The use of the pebbles was to reduce the number of decorative shells required, as the acquisition of these became quite a problem when the fashion was most popular.

CARTON

The shellwork at Goodwood park links it to a cottage on the Carton estate in Co. Kildare. It is the work of Lady Emily Lennox, the daughter of the second Duke of Richmond. Emily was born just one year after work began on the shell room at Goodwood. She spend her childhood helping her mother decorate the grotto and from her developed a passion for this type of decoration which she brought with her to Ireland when she married James, the twentieth Earl of Kildare in 1747, later to become Ireland's premier Duke when he was created first Duke of Leinster. In 1744 James' father had died and he became heir to the Carton Estate. They aimed to deformalize the landscape and rid the estate of the straight avenues and geometric patterns which were fashionable under Charles 2nd and later under William and Mary. The formal gardens had little regard for the natural features which they sought to develop. They aimed to enhance and emphasise the natural qualities of the demesne.
It required years of determination and perseverance and Emily dedicated herself fully to the improvement of the demesne (illus. 6).
Being born of a wealthy family Emily had always known security. She did not need to be a slave to such fashionable trends as the building of ruins and gateways in an effort to achieve social acceptance.

Illus. 6, Painting of the Duke and Duchess of Leinster by Devis.
This illustration shows Emilys' involvement with the landscaping of the demense.

Emily paid frequent visits to London and was in contact with influences there, so she was aware of all current fashions, but chose to accept and exploit only those which appealed to her on a personal basis.

She chose to fill her time with pursuits such as shell decoration as they were her childhood pastimes.

Entertainments such as this were natural for her, unlike Lord Cahir (ref. chap. 4) who slavishly followed every trend and gave not of his time and talents but commissioned the necessary items with his newly acquired wealth. In comparison Emily, Duchess of Leinster, took great personal pleasure in all of her achievements.

There are many accounts of life at Carton at this time, through the letters of Emily and the many frequent visitors to the Estate.

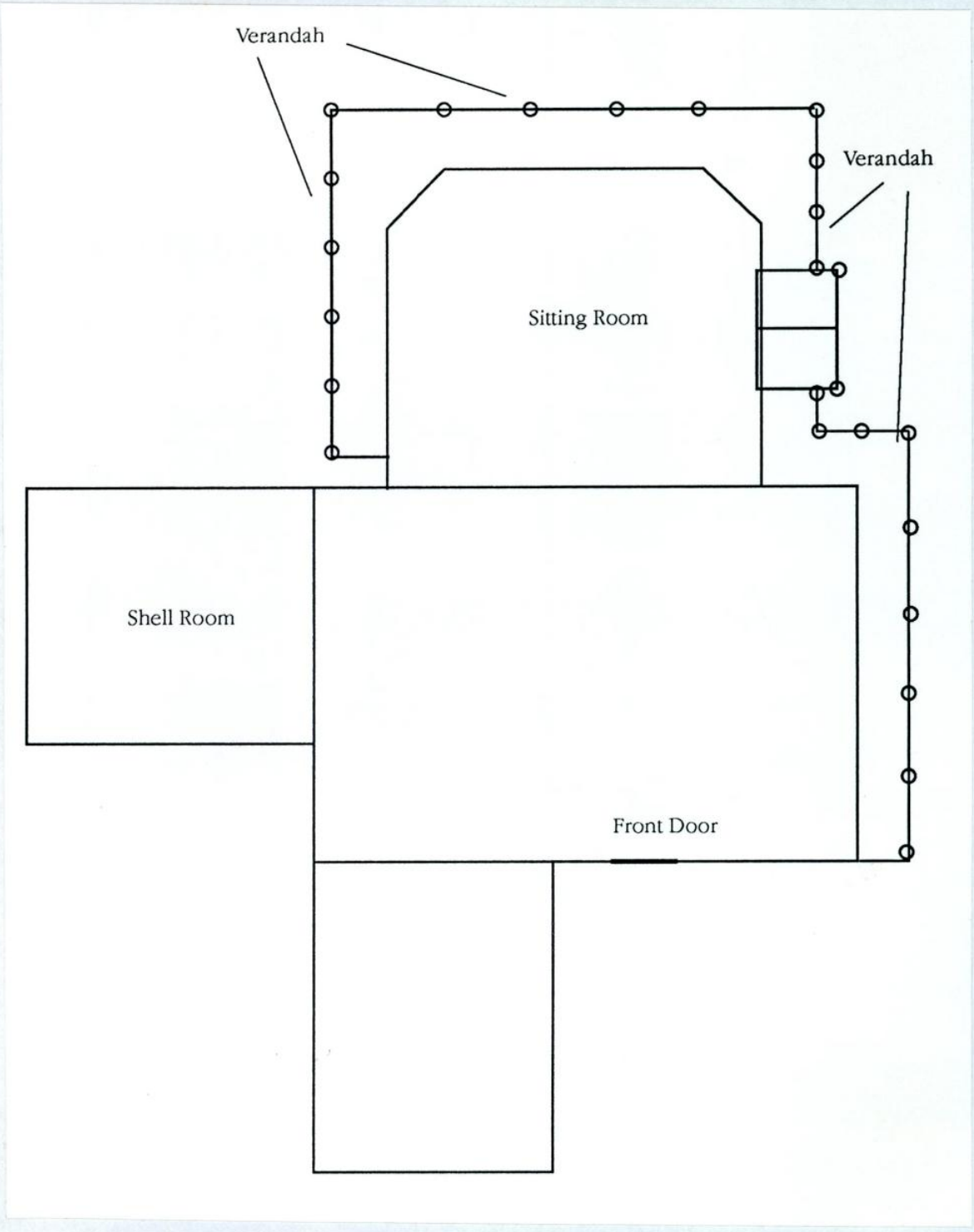
During the mid 1760s, with the help her sisters Louisa and Sarah, Emily undertook the conversion of the thatched cottage on the estate into a shell grotto known as Waterstown Shell Cottage (illus. 7).

She created the ornamental cottage among trees which were newly planted in an effort to produce a romantic setting which would serve as a terminal point for riverside walks and picnics.

Emily accomplished her plans for a picturesque setting, as while visiting Carton in 1776 Arthur Young commented that

> There is a great variety on the banks of the vale; part steep banks of thick wood, in another place they are formed into a large shrubbery very elegantly laid out and dressed in the highest order with a cottage, the scenery about which is uncommonly pleasing"
>
> - A.W. Hutton (ed)
> Arthur Young's Tour in Ireland
> (1776 - 1779) (25, p82)

Despite the admiration of others Emily was never totally happy with the landscaping of the Demesne as most of the land was too flat to give it the rugged look she desired. However, the cottage, by the trees, close to the river must have been a great pleasure to her as it embodied all of the elements of a picturesque setting.



Illus. 7, Ground plan of the Watersown Shell Cottage, Carton.

Waterstown Shell Cottage, Carton

The cottage is situated down a narrow almost overgrown pathway, bordered by tall trees on either side which obscure the sunlight. These trees are most probably the same ones planted by The Duke & Duchess in their effort to provide a picturesque setting for the cottage. A description of the estate by Lady Caroline Dawson in 1778 stated that the estate had many trees but none of any growth, as most had been planted within the previous 20 years (8, p187).

The cottage itself is to be found in a clearing in the trees. The setting for the cottage orne is perfectly in keeping with the guidelines laid down in many contemporary pattern books. It was close to running water, surrounded by trees in a picturesque setting. (ref. A. W. Hutton previous page). The roof is of tile, it is wide eaved and supported by 25 cast iron rustic 'treetrunks' (illus. 8). Cast iron was widely used at the time for exterior details such as fences and pillars. It was an important vehicle for the spread of styles, as prefabricated parts could be sent around Europe.

INTERIOR

Once inside the cottage the decoration is evident on the approach to the shellroom. Outside the door are window panels worked in Abalone and mussel shells bordered by panels of bark arranged in vertical and diagonal patterns (illus 9).The arch of the window is encrusted with pine cones in relief. The door to the shell room is heavy, made of wooden panels worked in chevron and striped patterns with large insets of mirrorglass.

The decoration immediately inside the door is varied. At first glance it appears that there are just two elements to the designs, bark and shell, but within the shellwork many species have been chosen for their variety of colour, shape and scale.(illus. 10) The decoration consists of shamrock, circular and chevron shapes

Illus. 8, Examples of the 25 cast iron "treetrunks' which support the roof of the Shell Cottage.

Illus. 9, Carton Shell Room, entrance passage.

fig 2.

9.

Illus.10, Within the shell and bark work many species have been chosen for their variety of colour, shape and scale.

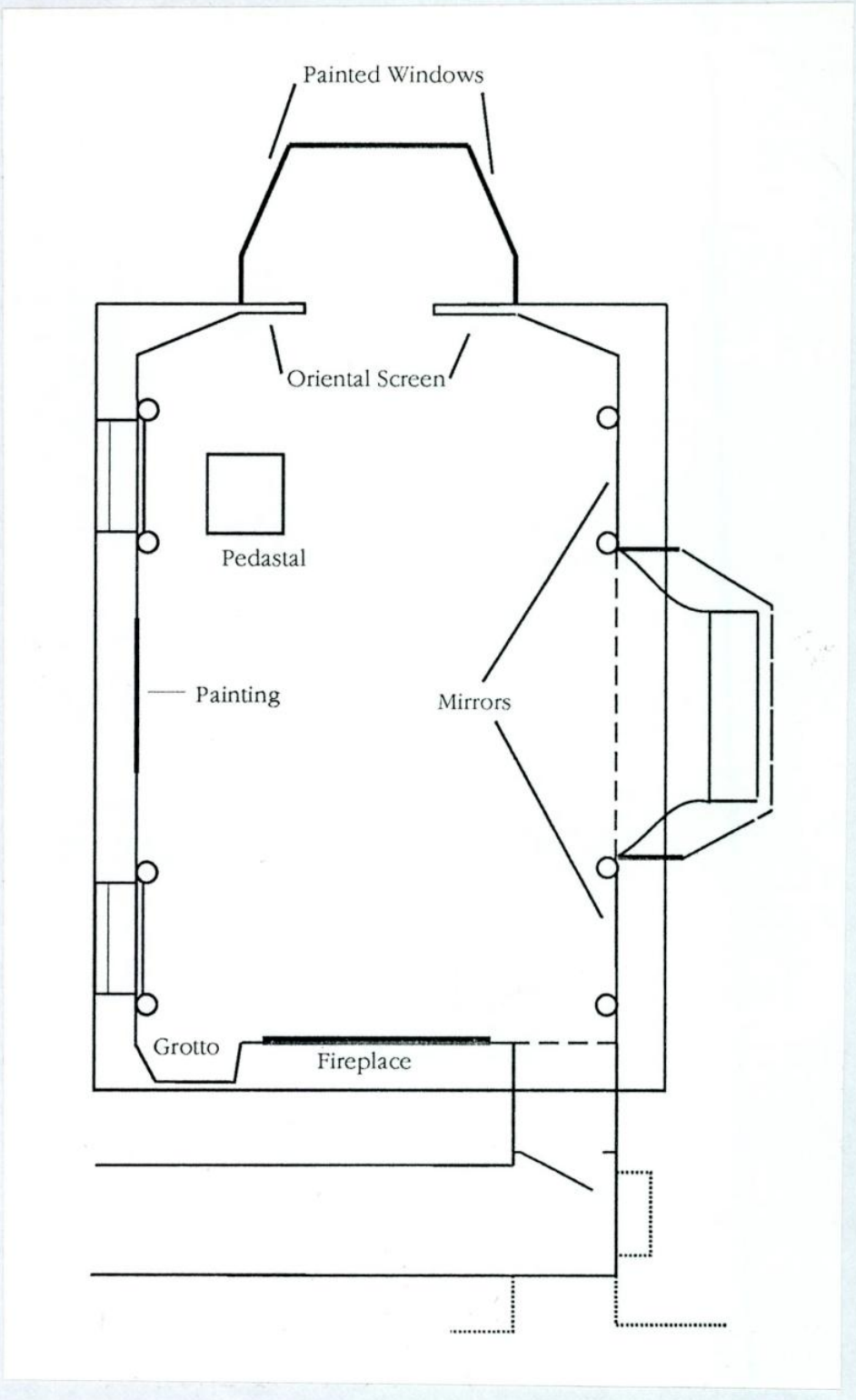
worked in panels of cockle, mussel and abalone shells with sections of wood work added for contrast with the subtle blues, whites and creams of the shellwork. The contrast gives the entrance a dramatic mosaic type feel.
On the ceiling of this small passage is a suspended ostrich egg shell surrounded by layers of fir cones (illus. 11). Patterns of wood radiate from the shell in a star shaped motif around which are raised clusters of shells in flowerlike formations.

Between the entrance passage and the main room there is a Gothic pointed arch encrusted with jagged broken shells and flint. The use of less precious materials in this section would probably have been a practical decision as the use of more expensive shells may have resulted in loss or damage. Indeed may of the 18th century grottoes still intact today contain sacks full of shells which have fallen over the years and remain unreplaced.

Once inside the main room (illus.40) to the left of the door is a carved wooden Baroque fireplace (illus. 12), with twisted columns and blue tiles. Directly above the fireplace is a large mirror encrusted on all sides by pieces of broken shells and flint surrounded by larger abalone shells and decorated at the edges by dried flowers (illus. 13). On either side of the mirror hanging on the wall are strings of birds eggs of different sizes, they are all white and hang in loops of 6.
It seems that, like her mother, Emily was interested in shells as a medium rather than as individual showpieces, as is evident from her panels of regular but not symmetrical designs, but she also seems to have developed an appreciation of the natural beauty of simple items such as birds eggs and flowers and offers them a random place in her designs. They were not collectable items and had no monetary value but she collected them out of a natural love for nature.

In front of the fireplace, leaning up against the wall is a large circular piece - possibly a table top. It is filled in with a beautiful mosaic of tiny shells and pebbles. To the left of the fireplace is an alcove containing three ceramic oriental

Illus.11, Shell Room, entrance passage ostrich egg and star motif.



Illus.40, Plan of Shell Room.

Illus.12, It is believed that the baroque fireplace in the Shell Room was originally from Maynooth Castle, the formal seat of the Earl of Kildare.

Illus.13,Carton Shell Room, shell encrusted mirror.

mantelpiece
panier
detail
b

temples set in varied layers of grotwork with coral on the ceiling and tufa and dyed wool on the floor (illus. 14).

The texture of this section is rough and irregular and it differs from the rest of the room in that it contains no shellwork. It has a natural appearance, as if etched out of a rock and is the true grotto element to the room.

The treatment of the two windows on the left wall is similar to that of the panelling inside the entrance to the room. The same method of regular bark motif work has been used inside the arch of the window.(illus. 15). The arches of the windows are worked in rows of white abalone shells with neat rows of woodwork and coloured shells radiating from the top of the arch (illus. 16)..

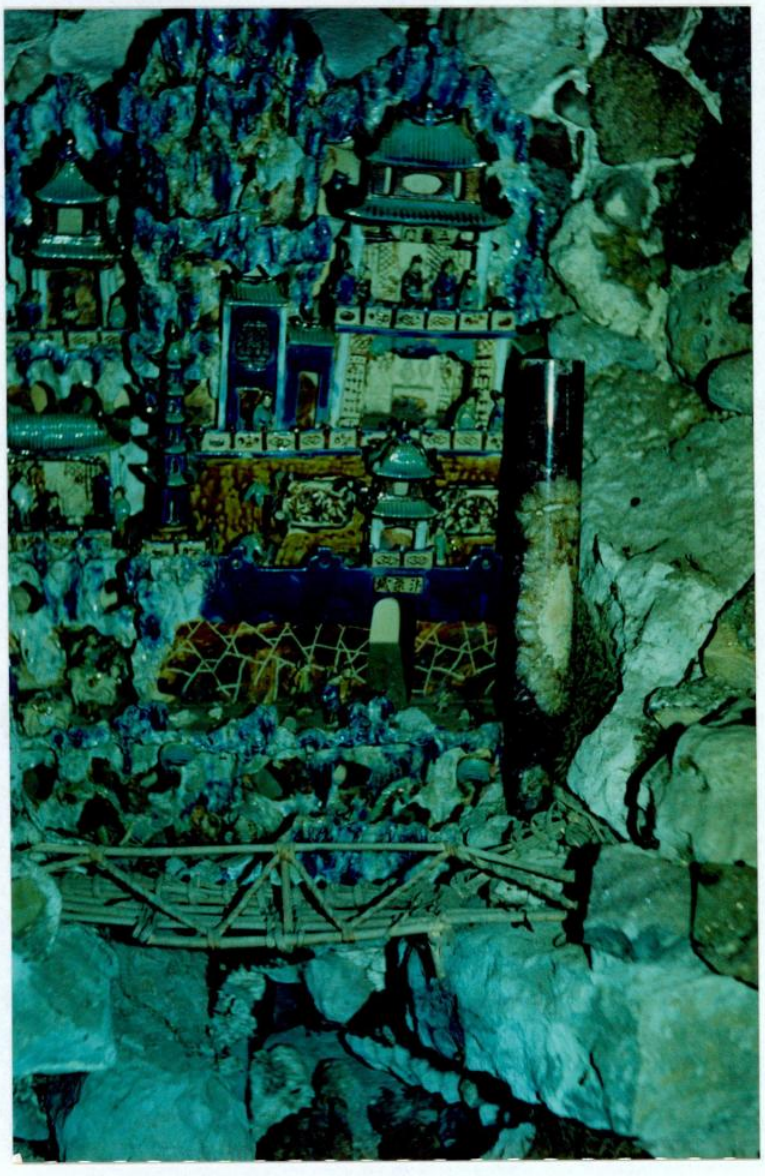
In the centre of the left wall, between the two windows is a large wooden panel containing a painting, which Barbara Jones, in her book ' Follies and Grottoes' (9, p155) claims was installed to mark the visit of Queen Victoria in 1849 (illus 17). The rest of the panel is broken up with flowerlike formations on either side of the painting (illus 18). Beneath the shellwork are panels of mirrorglass and panels of chevron patterned woodwork. Rows of different species of shells run from ceiling to floor within the panel to break it up and to bring it into harmony with the rest of the room.

In front of the painting and in the centre of the room is an open pedestal supported by gnarled and twisted columns in the rustic fashion.(illus. 19).

In her book Barbara Jones describes and illustrates a 'gesturing figure of a plump chinese boy wearing two flat hats and his feet surrounded by shells.' (9, p155)

There is photograph to support this but on my visits I saw no such figure on the pedestal.

I do not know what has become of the figure, but suspended from the ceiling vault I saw large "shells" not unlike those surrounding the feet of the figure in Barbara Jones photograph.



Illus. 14, Ceramic oriental temples and grotwork, Carton.

Illus. 15, Regular bark and shellwork, Carton.

Illus. 16, Shellwork on window arch, Carton.

Illus. 17, Painting installed for the visit of Queen Victoria, 1849.

Illus. 18, Section of shell and wood decoration, Carton.

Illus. 19, Pedastal, Carton Shell Room.

The two corners of the room facing the door are as identical in pattern and detail as is possible with such irregular materials(illus. 20).

They consist of six wooden panels, either side of a large central panel, covered in shellwork interspersed with mirrors, fossils and coloured glass. The six wooden side panels run from roof to floor with the wooden patterns worked from vertical to horizontal alternately.

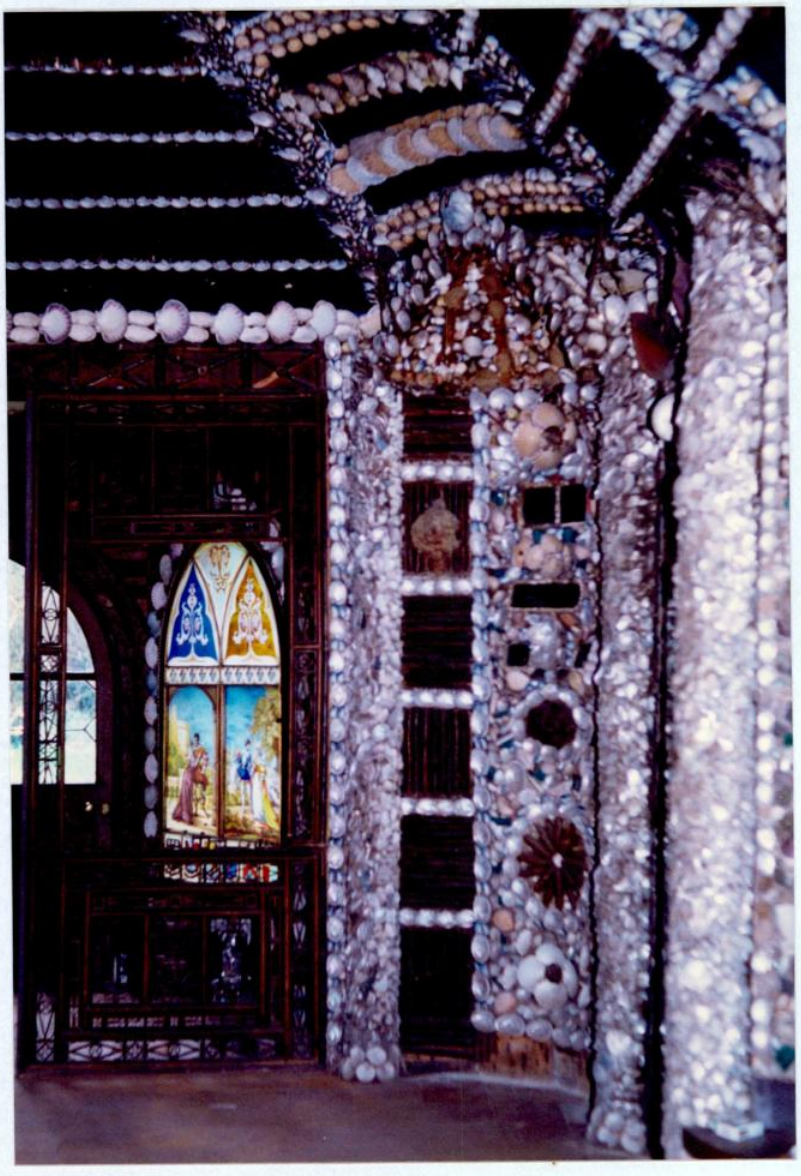
Outside the wooden panels are thick strips of fragmented white shells, glass and fossils bordered by a row of clams and mussels from ceiling to floor. The large central panel contains circular motifs made by fir cones and large shells.

There are squares and rectangles of mirror worked into the panels(illus. 21). The arches above the corners are very rich in colour with shells of browns and ochres in a random arrangement (illus. 22).

Connecting the two corners is an oriental style rustic screen lined with wood in star shaped patterns. This screen separates the main room from the bay window which was added by the third Duchess, Charlotte Augusta Stanthorpe in 1834. The 3rd Duchess had a renewed interest in the cottage and it was she who renovated the shellroom at this time (25, p80).

She added to the attraction of the exterior of the cottage by creating a small waterfall nearby. Which would enhance the picturesque effect. The Duchess also painted the bay windows of the shellroom with very vivid colours and in them has made reference to herself (illus. 23).

She seems to have had a loyalty to the shellroom that hadn't been obvious since the work of Emily, Duchess of Leinster. Sarah Bunbury, who remained at Carton after Emily, had planned to replace Waterstown cottage with an italian building until Louisa informed Emily of her sister's intentions (25, p80).

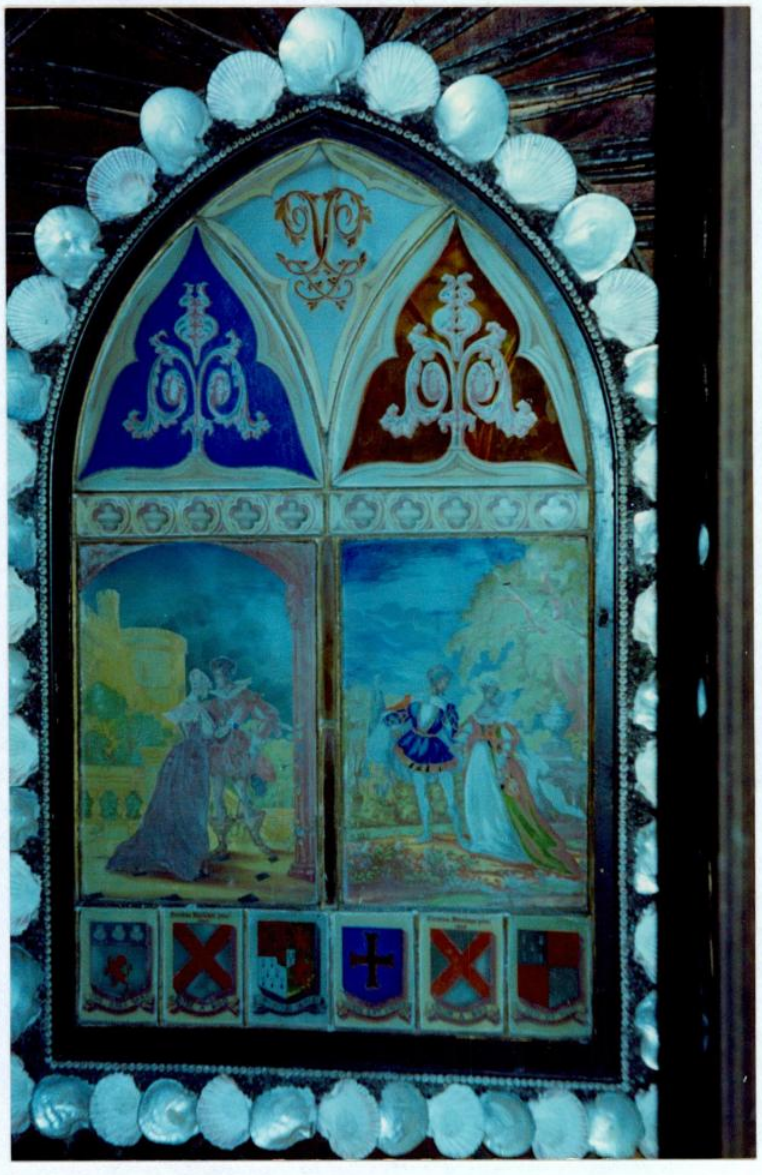


Illus. 20, Section of Shell Room showing oriental screen, painted windows and intense shellwork.

Illus. 21, Mirror work, Carton.

detail of top corner

Illus. 22, Corner niche, Carton Shell Room.



Illus. 23, Painted window by Charlotte Augusta Stanthorpe, 1834.

On the 4th and final wall of the room - that to the right of the door, is another large window which is decorated entirely with odd shells - abalone, tortoise, cockle, scallop and mussel to mention but a few.

There is no regular scheme or pattern of decoration around this window, unlike the regular patterns of the windows on the facing wall. There is no woodwork to break the intensity of the texture of these scattered shells.

There is a candlestick with three prongs on either side of the interior of the window, encrusted with shells, ceramic, glass and fossils.(illus. 24)

On either side of this window there is a floor length mirror with an assembly of large shells of different species at the top.

The arrangement of the shells is again almost identical on either mirror (illus. 25).

Great care has been taken throughout the decoration of the room to keep a regularity of design on similar features as in the case of these two mirrors.

The positioning of these mirrors make the room seem larger than it actually is as most of the light from the opposite windows is reflected in them.

To catch sight of oneself reflected in these mirrors causes a sense of unease as the surroundings are so roughly textured and unnaturally natural.

The Ceiling

Some of the most detailed work is concentrated in the ceiling where work most probably began.

Barbara Jones estimates that the fireplace, walls and ceiling originated in the 18th century and the bay end and most of the woodwork can be attributed to the 3rd Duchess in the 19th century (9, p155).

As well as the light entering the room from the windows on the three walls of the room, there is a skylight in the dome of the roof which picks out the subtlety of colour in the large individual shells suspended there.

The decoration of the dome takes the form of rows of shells curving in towards the skylight (illus. 26).

In between these shell patterns are some of the largest and rarest shells in the

Illus. 24, Shell encrusted candlestick, Carton.

Bay window detail

Illus. 25, Shell arrangement, mirror, Carton.

Illus. 26, Dome (detail), Carton.

room. They appear to be suspended from the dome at irregular intervals. This dome is like a showcase for rare varieties of shells and attributes them more space for individual admiration. Leading from the dome down to the corners of the room is a pattern of shellwork which is repeated with great regularity in contrast to the decoration of the dome.

There are eight bands of shells in each panel, each one hosting a particular species arranged in regular formation (illus. 27). Again, as with Goodwood, the close selection of shells has minimilized variations within the design. This pattern leads the eye down to the four corners of the room which is where most of the major curiosities lie. The rest of the ceiling is filled in with rows of abalone shells surrounded by brown razor shells. The spaces in between this shellwork on the ceiling are filled in with black pitch.

The lighting of the shellroom is all natural and so plays a large part in determining the atmosphere. It is easy to imagine that, nearly 250 years ago when it was built the room was radiant with the glitter of so many different shells.

Making his Grand Tour, William Robert, son of the first Duke of Leinster, wrote to his mother from Lyons in October 1766 of how he envied all those who were dining at Waterstown."pray do not let Waterstown be out of fashion before I return"(25, p82).

The Duchess' enthusiastic letters to her son must have sparked off in him an interest in the cottage orné and the lifestyle associated with them.

Illus. 27, Regular 8 panel shell formation (ceiling), Carton.

Chapter 4: The Swiss Cottage, Cahir, Co. Tipperary.

John Nash (b. 1752).

The main appeal of cottage ornés is their natural rustic feel, yet these cottages are far from a natural occurrence nor are they the naive efforts of local craftsmen improvising with convenient materials. They were cleverly conceived and executed by prominent architects such as John Nash who designed every 'spontaneous' or 'natural' element with the same attention to detail that characterised his more elaborate projects.

Many other contemporary architects also designed cottage ornés, such as William Chambers (1726-1796) as well as the landscape designer Humphry Repton who collaborated with many prominent architects to produce cottage orné. In 1810 he worked with Jeffrey Wyatt to produce the cottage orné at Endsleigh, in Devon. In the same year Repton combined with Nash to draw up plans for a series of cottages to be built in the village of Blaise Hamlet, near Bristol.

John Nash was born in England in 1752 and having studied Architecture became part of the Prince of Wales entourage at Brighton. He soon earned the title of Prince Regent's architect and designed many major projects for him such as the famous Royal Pavilion at Brighton (illus. 28). Nash was also responsible for such extensive projects as the design of Regent's Street, Regent's Park and Trafalgar Square.

Even with such prestigious projects to his credit Nash seemed to have a special interest in the less formal cottage orné.
They appear to have been a form of escape for him from the formalities of Architecture. It was also a form of escape for his patrons — an escape from the social formalities imposed by 18th century aristocratic life.
Nash, in partnership with the landscape designer Humphry Repton produced a number of ornamental cottages for the grounds of English County Estates.

Illus. 28, The Royal Pavilion at Brighton, by John Nash.

No job was too insignificant for Nash not to warrant his full attention and he developed a style of his own in the design of Cottage Ornés.
An element which links all of Nash's diverse cottage designs is the device of the 'continuous penthouse' (27, p197). This is an area of thatch or tile which sits above the ground floor windows and continues around the house to cover porch, bay-windows and any other projections.
Other favourite details of Nash's designs are his peaked dormer windows, large bay-windows, porches and pents, twisted whole tree columns, rustic open verandahs and tiny diamond shaped trellises.

While in Ireland in 1810 Nash drew up plans for a series of cottages to be built in the village of Blaise Hamlet near Bristol. These cottages were extremely eccentric in design with deeply overhanging, heavily thatched roofs.
Another project which Nash undertook while in Ireland were the plans for a cottage orné to be built for the Earl of Glengall in Cahir, Co. Tipperary — the Swiss Cottage. This building was constructed to Nash's designs in 1810 and is a perfect example of Nash's style as well as that of the cottage orné in general.

There may have been a little improvisation where drawings or control were inadequate but the Swiss Cottage is on the whole a highly sophisticated building and very much the work of John Nash.

Lord Cahir

The Swiss Cottage, Cahir, Co. Tipperary was built in 1810 for the Lord and Lady Cahir following designs by John Nash. This thesis has brought to light many differences of opinion regarding the date of the building and indeed some authors doubt whether Nash had any part in its design.

John Nash left no drawings of any of his work although with projects such as the Royal Pavilion at Brighton contemporary writings prove it to be his work. With smaller undertakings such as the Swiss Cottage it is the style and integrity of Nash's designs which prove them to be his.

The dating of the cottage is another point of disagreement. Some articles (particularly American publications) date the cottage as late as 1820.

I must agree with Mark Girouard (Country Life Oct. '89) and Mr. Joseph Walsh (Cahir Heritage Newsletter Sept. '89) when they date the cottage 1810.

There are several reasons why I believe this to be so.

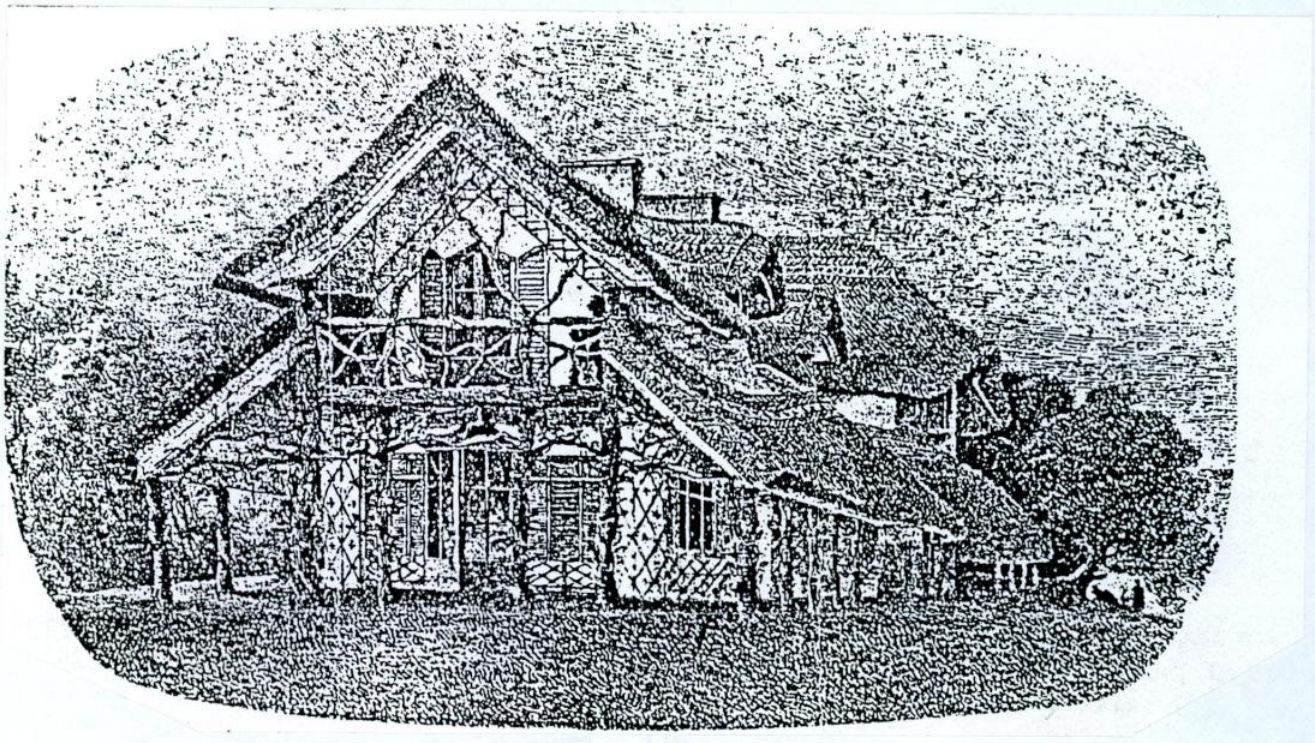
One reason is that the cottage was definitely completed before 1814 when a local artist Mr. J. S. Alpenny made a sketch of it.(illus.29)

It is through the early life and marriage of Richard Butler, Lord Cahir, that we are given clues as to why the cottage was built and a possible reason for its being built in the year 1810.

According to Joseph Walsh (30, p3) Lord Cahir was born Richard Butler, the son of a beggar woman in the village of Cahir. Richard's father James abandoned his wife after the birth of two children and may have concealed the marriage. He was a distant cousin of the 9th Lord Cahir, and also his ultimate heir.

Richard and his sister were kidnapped by rival family members in their bid to gain the family estate. The children were taken to France to conceal their existence.

At the age of 13 Richard became rightful heir and his existence was discovered by Lord Fitzgibbon the Irish Lord Chancellor, who sent his sister to France to find the two children.



Illus. 29, Sketch of the Swiss Cottage by J.S. Alpenny, 1814, showing the roof of the verandah to be of thatch rather than the cedar shingle which replaced it within 50 years.

She found them living in very miserable conditions and took them into her care. Later she married Richard to her daughter Emily.

Lord and Lady Cahir soon became a very fashionable young couple and contemporary society seemed to be fascinated by the romance associated with the young pair. In 1809 Lord and Lady Cahir invited the Duke of Leinster and his travelling party to a fete at the Mountain Lodge owned by the Countess of Kingston, without first having the approval of the owner. The Countess gave orders not to admit them and the whole party were forced to take refuge from the rain in a humble peasants cabin. It is possible that this humiliation suffered by Lord and Lady Cahir at the hands of the Countess was one of the main factors which led to the construction of the Swiss Cottage. The Cottage was build just one year later on a superior setting to that of the Countesses and was designed by one of Britain's leading architects.

It must be remembered that during the early years of his life Richard was brought up with extreme poverty. It is therefore ironic that having obtained a high social position he should use his wealth to imitate the simple life of the poor by way of his cottage orné. If it was necessary for the aristocracy in general to keep up with fashionable trends then it was even more so for Richard.

He strove to be socially accepted and one of the fashionable ways to do this was to possess a rustic cottage orné. Only the really wealthy could afford to play at seeming poverty and by employing the best designers and filling his cottage with fashionable furniture Richard achieved the social acceptance he desired.

The Swiss Cottage Cahir, stands on a small hill in the valley of Kilcommon (fig. 30) surrounded on all sides by trees. It is reached by a bridge across the River Suir which runs picturesquely alongside.
Access to the cottage, since 1989 when it came under the care of the Office of Public Works is by way of a narrow tunnel etched into the hill which leads to a concealed cellar.

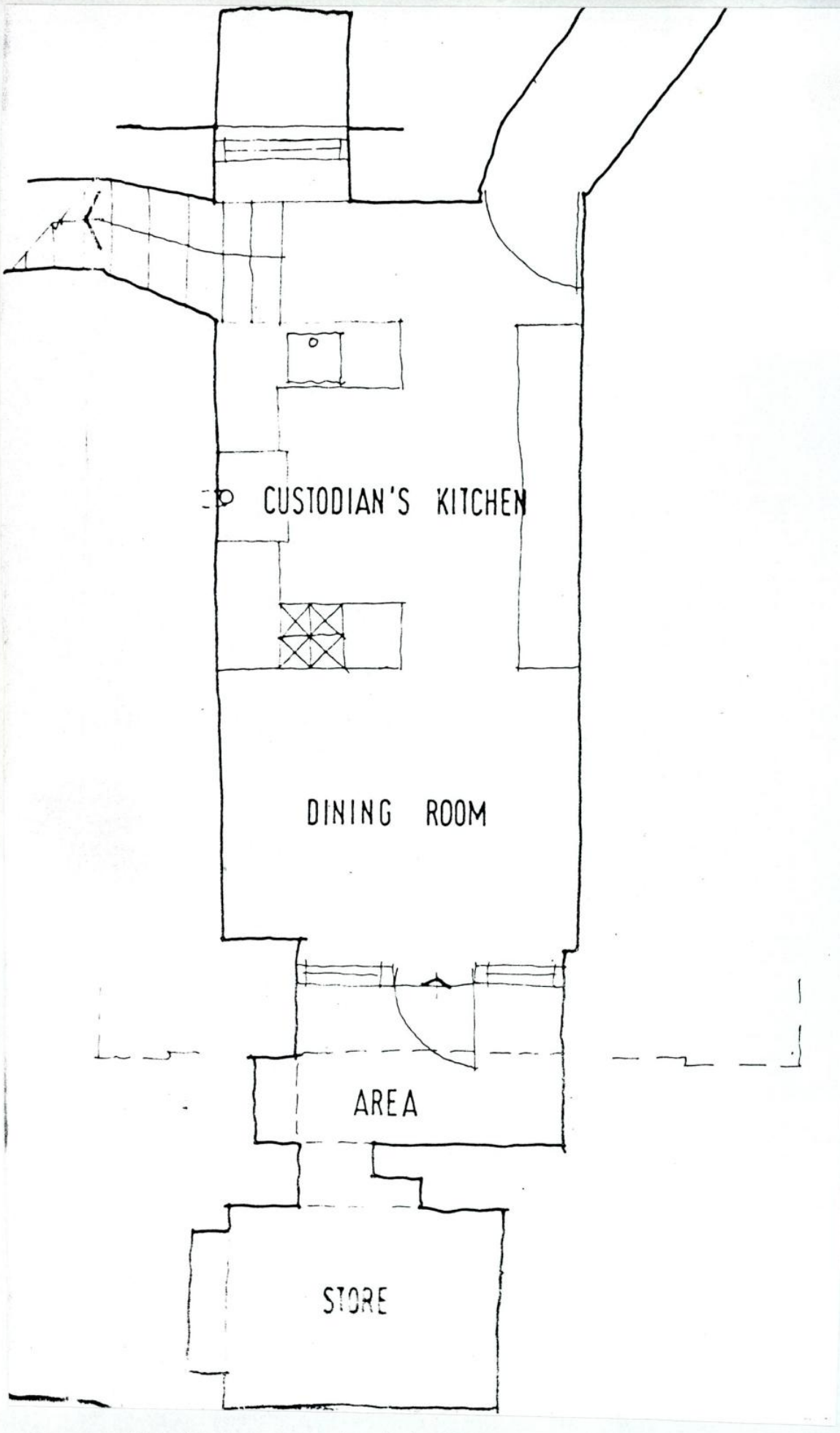
The deteriorating cottage was purchased by amalgamation of concerned parties in 1985 for £35,000. Most of the costs were sponsored by the American Port Royal Foundation under instruction from its president Sally Aall. Other benefactors were Bill Roth, the Irish Georgian Society, Bord Failte and the Cahir Community Council. The cottage was handed over, on completion of restoration work, to the Office of Public Works.

The two roomed cellar has been taken over by the Office of Public Words as an office but was originally the kitchen, servants quarters and wine cellar (illus. 31). The original lighting for these rooms was provided by fanlights placed around the flagged pathway which surrounds the cottage.
The cellar was concealed in the grassy sward in a deliberate attempt to mask its existence and make the cottage appear modest. It also disguised the fact that there were servants used by the 'would be' peasants.
The cellar rooms are connected to the ground floor of the cottage by a narrow staircase which leads through a concealed door to the main Entrance Hall. Another passage from the cellar leads to a clearing in front of the cottage.

Exterior

The Cottage has, since 1985, undergone extensive restoration, after it was purchased by an amalgamation of concerned groups and was handed over to the nation.Mark Girouard realised some of the problems involved in a restoration of this kind when he wrote that:

Illus. 30, Swiss Cottage, Cahir.



Illus. 31, Basement plan, Swiss Cottage.

'the restoration of the exterior is purist but not always sensitive; that of the interior sensitive but certainly not purist."(23, p77).

With regard to the exterior the insensitivity Mr. Girouard refers to is in the remodeling of the Rusticwork on the verandah as he feels that the rustic theme has been taken too literally and may have been clumsily applied (illus 32).

Mark Girouard feels that there was actually a considerable degree of calculated pattern in the original work which was overlooked during the restoration.

Mr. Girouard describes the restoration of the exterior as purist and I must agree, having referred to the earliest available drawing of the cottage by J.S. Alpenny in 1814 I feel that most details, however insignificant they appear, have been faithfully retained.

One instance where there has been a misinterpretation of the original design is in the thatch of the verandah. The sketch made by Alpenny (illus. 29) shows a heavily thatched verandah which must have been replaced with cedar shingle sometime within the first fifty years.

The earliest photograph of the cottage dates from this time and shows a roof of cedar shingle which was faithfully copied during the recent restorations.

Just after the completion of the tile work the sketch by Alpenny was discovered showing the verandah roof to be of thatch.

This proved a disappointment to Mr. Austin Dunphy, the architect in charge of the restoration as he had thought to replace the original shingle with thatch but decided instead to remain true to the original design.

I believe the thatch of the main roof to have been more enveloping than has been recreated. The angle of the thatch at the eaves tends to be more acute after the restoration than it was earlier in a photograph dated 1960 (National Library). (illus 33a - 33b)

Using references such as the sketch by Alpenny, I am confident that in every other respect the exterior of the cottage appears now just as it did in the early 19th Century. Having been restored it has all of its original fresh charm.

Illus. 32, Rustic work on the verandah, Swiss Cottage.

Illus. 33 a, The Swiss Cottage before restoration, showing the deeply overhanging thatch.

Illus. 33 b, Swiss Cottage after restoration. The thatch seems to be less enveloping.

SWISS COTTAGE, CAHIR

GENERAL VIEW

AN TEACH ELVEISEACH, CATHAIR DHUN IASCAIGH

Fig 33(a)

The rustic stickwork which decorates the gable ends and both verandahs was uncovered during the restoration having been overgrown for many years. The cast iron railing which encircles the cottage has also been uncovered and found to be in a good state of preservation (illus. 34). It was originally cast in Malcomson's iron foundry at Portlaw (30, p4). It has been repainted green as has the trellis work which covers most of the exterior wallspace of the cottage. The trelliswork comes in a variety of designs with a variety of influences being apparent. In some places such as outside the oriental style window on the ground floor a Greek fret style pattern has been adopted. In other areas the design is based upon semi-circular and lozenge motifs which are irregular and asymmetrical.
The design most frequently used is the typical lattice design where the crossbars intersect at regular intervals forming a criss-cross pattern (illus. 35). In some areas the wooden grating has been replaced by stencilled designs, applied directly to the walls for a *trompe l'oeil* effect.

Another element which features a diversity in both inspiration and design are the windows of the cottage. Only two of the windows are the same. Every other window has its own shape and style and dictates the shape of the thatch above it (illus. 36). This is one of the reasons why the thatch is so diverse in its outline. Influences for the windows come from oriental and tudor sources and add to the curiosity of the cottage, where very contrasting styles have been united.

The attitude of Lord Cahir is evident here, he was a slave to fashion and felt the need to incorporate every fashionable element into one design. It also displays the architect Nash's expertise as he is capable of uniting very diverse element successfully.

Illus. 34, Rustic cast iron fence, Cahir.

Illus. 35, Trellis work, Swiss Cottage.

Illus. 36 (a, b, c), Only 2 windows of the Swiss Cottage are the same, the remainder are individually shaped and dictate the shape of the thatch above

Illus. 36 b.

Illus. 36 c.

INTERIOR

The ground floor of the cottage consists of a ballroom, a saloon or tearoom and a large diamond shaped entrance hall with a mahogany spiral staircase (illus. 37). On the first floor are two bedrooms and a small hall area with window seats, affording a view across the valley to Cahir House (illus. 38).

Mark Girouard understood the problems of recreating the interior as it was during the 19th century, but he obviously appreciated the style and variety of decoration that would have been there when he wrote that the restoration of the interior was "sensitive but certainly not purist" (23, p77).

Saloon

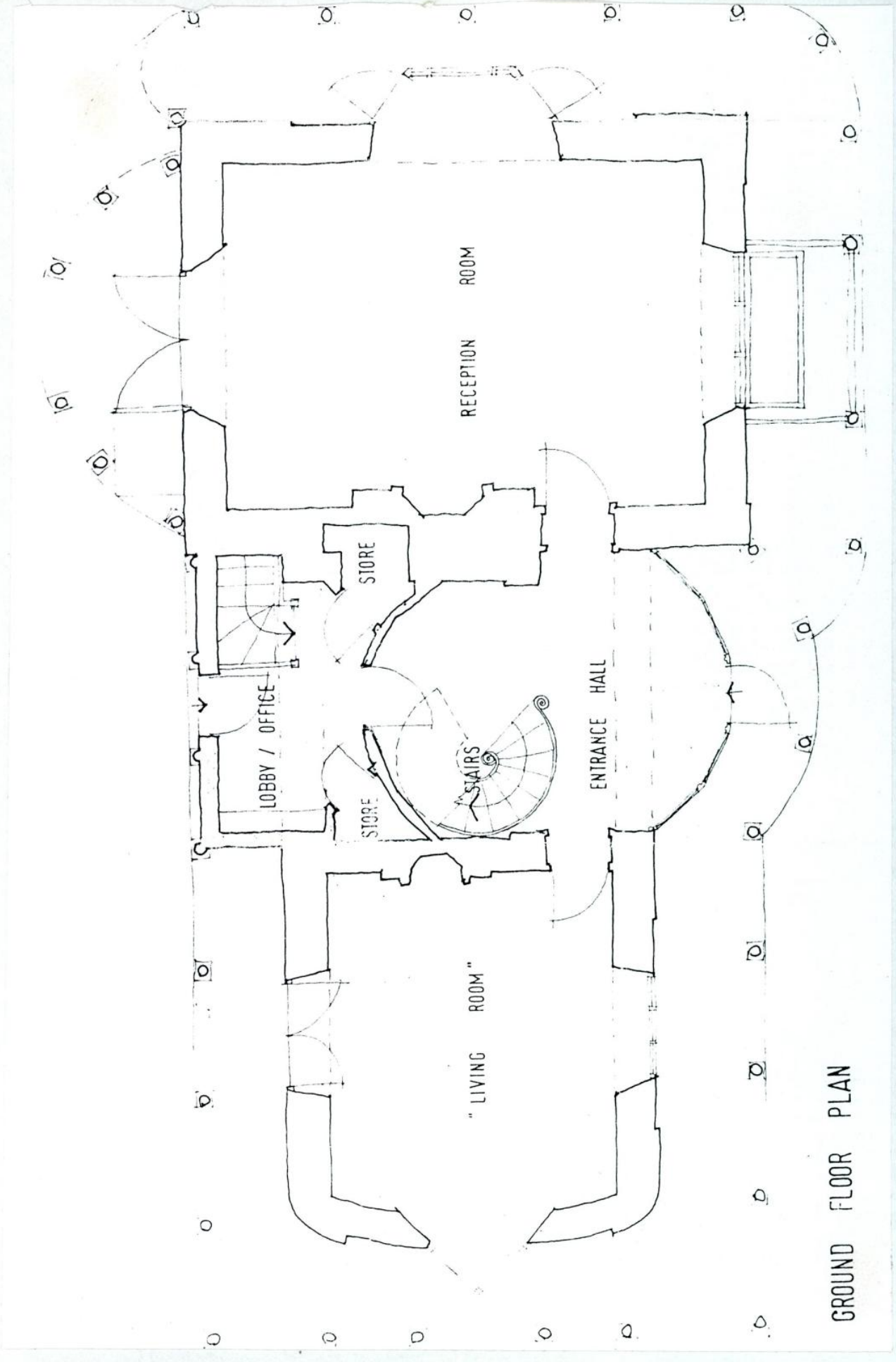
The walls of the saloon are decorated with scenic wallpapers from the factory of Dufour in Paris. One of the papers illustrates in panorama the Rives du Bosphores which depicts scenes from the Bosphoros and Dardanelles with trousered ladies and turbaned turks set against an imaginative background of domes (illus. 39). Portions of another wallpaper Monuments de Paris also hang in the saloon.

French scenic wallpapers were inspired by chinese handpainted wallpapers. They generally depicted classical stories, architecture and exotic lands. They were designed to be hung in sequence on all four walls of the room to form a continuous panorama.

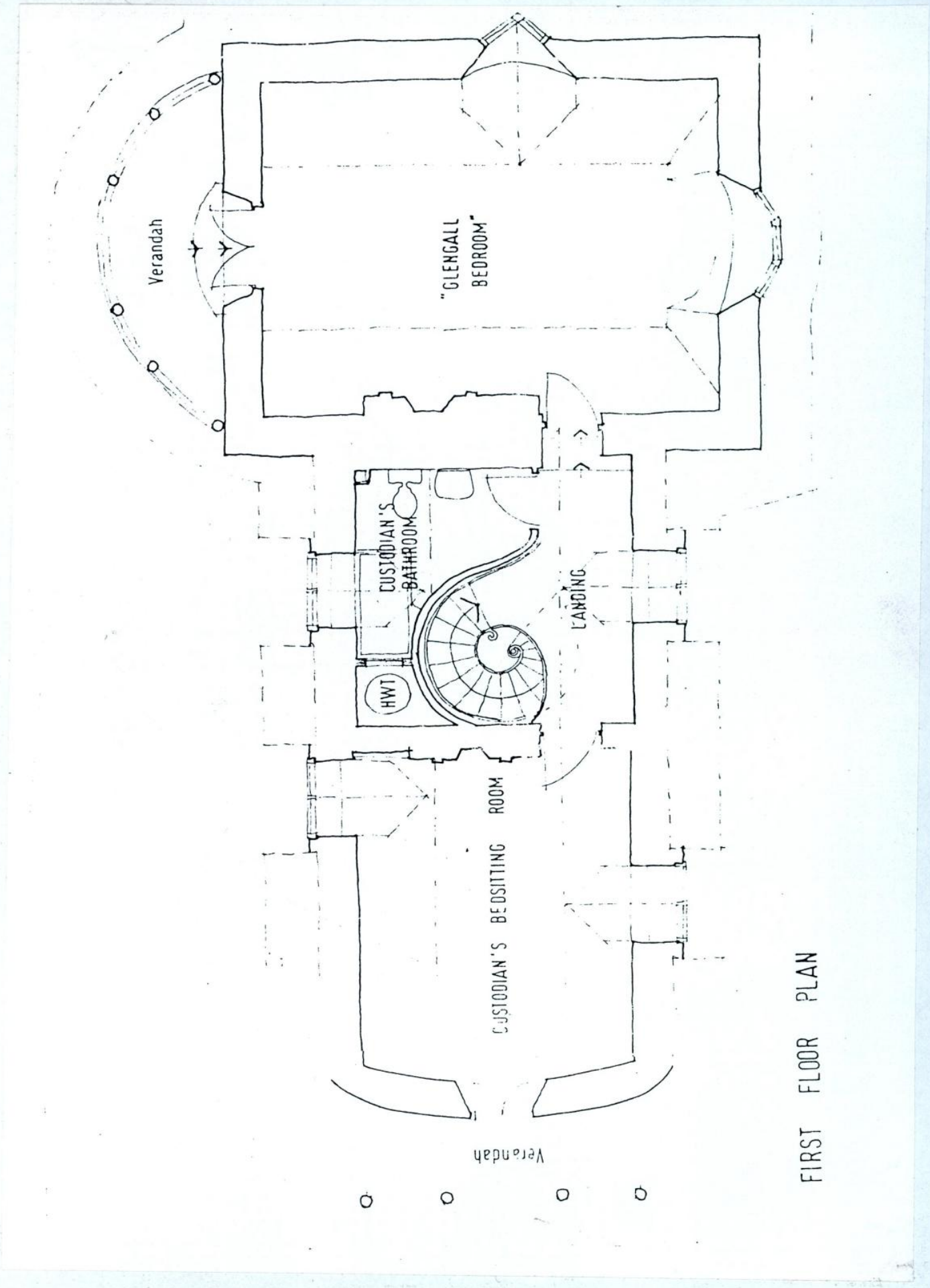
The paper Monuments de Paris was block printed in 1814 by the Dufour factory in Paris after designs by Jean Broc (14, chap 7).

It was a panorama of the main buildings of Paris).As with most papers of this type considerable artistic license has been allowed.

The design shows the buildings arranged along the banks of the Seine with sightseers and grazing cattle scattered along the bank in a very picturesque manner.



Illus. 37, Ground floor plan, Swiss Cottage.



Illus. 38, First floor plan, Swiss Cottage.

Illus. 39, Rives du Bosphores, Dufour, Paris.

The main paper in the room Rives du Bosphore is an example of the endlessly popular theme of exotic lands.

A copy of this paper was located in Bayoubend Museum in Heuston, Texas and was copied by Garth Denton for the restoration (30, p4).

David Skinner restored the fragments of the original paper which had been rescued by local people over the years.

The etched glass window of the saloon showing scenes of rustic country life was also removed by local people for conservational reasons and was returned to the cottage during the restoration (illus. 41).

An example of interest in chinoiserie is an imitation painted ebony and ivory chest which is also in the room. It is yet another *trompe l'oeil* showing an interest in creating effects rather than possessing the genuine article. I believe that it was intended from the earliest design stage that this room be decorated with influence from the orient. One window of the saloon is very much in the chinese "pagoda" style and reflects very well the mood and style of the room that it serves (illus 42).

Few people at this time would risk decorating more than one room in this style as it was appreciated that it was a passing fashion for a very distinct taste. But for a fashionable couple like Lord and Lady Cahir it was an essential element.

Nash was very much influenced by the orient, as is obvious from his designs for the royal pavilion at Brighton (illus.28). The installation of these influences to the basic rustic framework of the cottage are subtle and unobtrusive.

The Ballroom

The ballroom, to the right of the entrance hall is the room where the visiting aristocracy were entertained. The saloon on the other hand was a more formal room, a showcase for Lord Cahir's oriental treasures.

The Ballroom is spacious, considering the scale of the cottage, and possess a lot of natural light by way of the patio door and many windows.

The fireplace surrounds and mirror frames simulate gnarled and twisted branches similar to that of the cast iron fence outside the cottage. (illus. 43).

Illus. 41, Etched glass window, Saloon, Swiss Cottage.

Illus. 42, Oriental style window, Swiss Cottage, reflecting the style of the room within.

Illus. 43, The rustic theme is exploited in the Ballroom, with the mirror surrounds, borders and fireplace simulating the gnarled and knotted effect of the rustic chairs.

In the centre of the mirror is a striking double portrait of Lady Cahir, painted by Sir Thomas Lawerence, not long after her marriage.

The set of rustic chairs in the ballroom are copies of an original dated circa 1820, which is housed in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

They are carved from a solid piece of wood and follow the rustic theme (illus. 44).

The design of the fabrics and wallpapers for the cottage can be attributed to Sybil Connolly.

Toile de Jouy

In the main bedroom, the walls and bed are covered by an Irish toile de jouy fabric, originally designed by Robinsons of Ballsbridge in the 1770s,(illus. 45) long before the Jouy factory in Paris made the style popular from 1783. Typical designs for toile de jouy are rustic scenes of everyday life, pastoral landscapes, ancient buildings, classical figures and motifs, chinoiserie, current events and mythological subjects. I believe that Lord Cahir would have strongly wished to have Toile de Jouy fabrics in the cottage as they were an important fashionable item, and would have been an essential element of decoration for Lord Cahir.

Influences such as John Baptist Jackson would have convinced Lord Cahir that Toile de Jouy were absolutely necessary to complete his tasteful decoration of the cottage.

> 'The person who cannot purchase
> the statues themselves may have these prints in their place, and may effectually show his taste and admiration of the ancient artists ..... or if landscapes are more agreeable, for variety sake, prints done in this manner, taken from the works of Salvator Rosa, Claude Lorrain, Gaspar Poussin, Burgher, Wavemann, or any other great master in the way of painting may be introduced into panels of the paper, and show the taste of the owner'.
> John Baptist Jackson (1754)
> (An essay on the invention and printing in Chiaro Oscuro) (15, chap 7).

John Baptist Jackson obviously realised that there were many people, such as Lord Cahir who needed to be directed in ways of taste and whose insecurity would guarantee a slave like reaction to any new trend.

Illus. 44, Rustic chairs, Ballroom, Swiss Cottage.

Illus. 45, Toile de Jouy, Robinsons of Ballsbridge.

Conclusion

The 20th Century

The work of recent grotto restorers Diana Regnell and Roger Capps (working under the name Grottoes and Castles) has highlighted the intensity of labour that is required for any kind of grotto work. Descriptions of how the pieces are assembled sound tedious and time consuming.
They work with a team of students every summer restoring Grottoes such as that at Painshill Park, Surrey (circa 1740) with the backing of the English Heritage Trust and the Painshill Park Trust (illus. 46). However, the work is slow and not many people in the convenient 20th century are inspired enough by the labours of 18th century to forfeit their time to aid in the restorations.

Why in this century are so few people willing to become involved in "hands on" surface decoration? There are plenty of 'drawing board' based interior designer but how many work directly with their medium to create interiors.
An example of one man who has become directly involved in the intensity of decoration previously only associated with the Rococo and 18th century shellwork is the antique dealer Keith Skeel. Skeel converted a passageway in his London shop into an "alliance between the terrifying and the delightful" (29, p 194-199).

The walls have been covered in his 'invalids' or broken pieces of furniture, china and architecture which he 'recycles' in the form of a heavily textured collage of contrasting elements (illus. 47). Natural elements have also been incorporated in the form of pine cones, liberally scattered throughout the passage in a 'decorative disarray'. The result of this work is an obsession with eccentricities of this kind and the desire to create artistic works by the use of recycled debris. It appears that the hands on approach of both Skeel and the eightteenth century shell decorators became an obsessive, creative outlet.

Illus. 46, Restoration work, Painshill Park, 1991.

Illus. 47, Recycled passage, Keith Skeel, 1991.

18th century surface decorators exploited their new found natural history in the form of shell rooms and grottoes. With the awareness of the limitations of our natural resources in the 20th century it is the use of recycled materials that have become one of our newest media .

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Throughout this thesis references have been constantly made to the gender and social standing of both the Duchess of Leinster and Lord Cahir as they are important factors which influenced both the Shell Cottage at Carton and the Swiss Cottage, Cahir.

Having been born of a socially established family the Duchess of Leinster was secure in her social standing and need not slavishly follow contemporary fashions, instead she developed her own personal interests in a way that was characteristic of 18th century ladies of her class.

At that time professional architects were all male. It was men during the 18th century who designed the structure and form of architecture and women who practised the arts of surface decorations and were mainly concerned with colour, pattern and texture.

No attempt has been made to compare the work of the Duchess of Leinster with that of John Nash as it is appreciated that both were interested, from the initial design stage in accomplishing very different aims.
The Duchess of Leinster sought to enhance the natural elements of the Carton Demesne and provide herself with a personal retreat to practice her creative skills. Whereas the Swiss Cottage is a professional calculated attempt to execute a fashionable style of architecture. One thing that they both have in common is that they are sympathetic to their environments, it is probably more correct to say that

the environments are sympathetic to the cottages as the very ground they stand on was sculpted to provide an effect and setting.

Work on the shellroom at Carton carried on after the death of Emily, Duchess of Leinster because it was the work of an amateur, leaving room for individual improvement and interpretation. The Swiss Cottage, on the other hand, was a complete, sophisticated design allowing no room for later additions as it had been designed as a whole by Nash.

It is beneficial for us in the 20th century that such contrasts of interests existed as they provide us with very different reasons for the production of cottage orné and consequently two very different examples of the same creative form of architecture. One exploiting the principles of the style to best effect, as specified in contemporary patterns books, and one showing the creativity of 18th century ladies through the shellwork of Emily, Duchess of Leinster.

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