FONTHILL FEVER

THE FONTHILL SALES 1822 & 1823

FONTHILL FEVER EXHIBITION
GOLD HILL MUSEUM SHAFTESBURY
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FONTHILL FEVER

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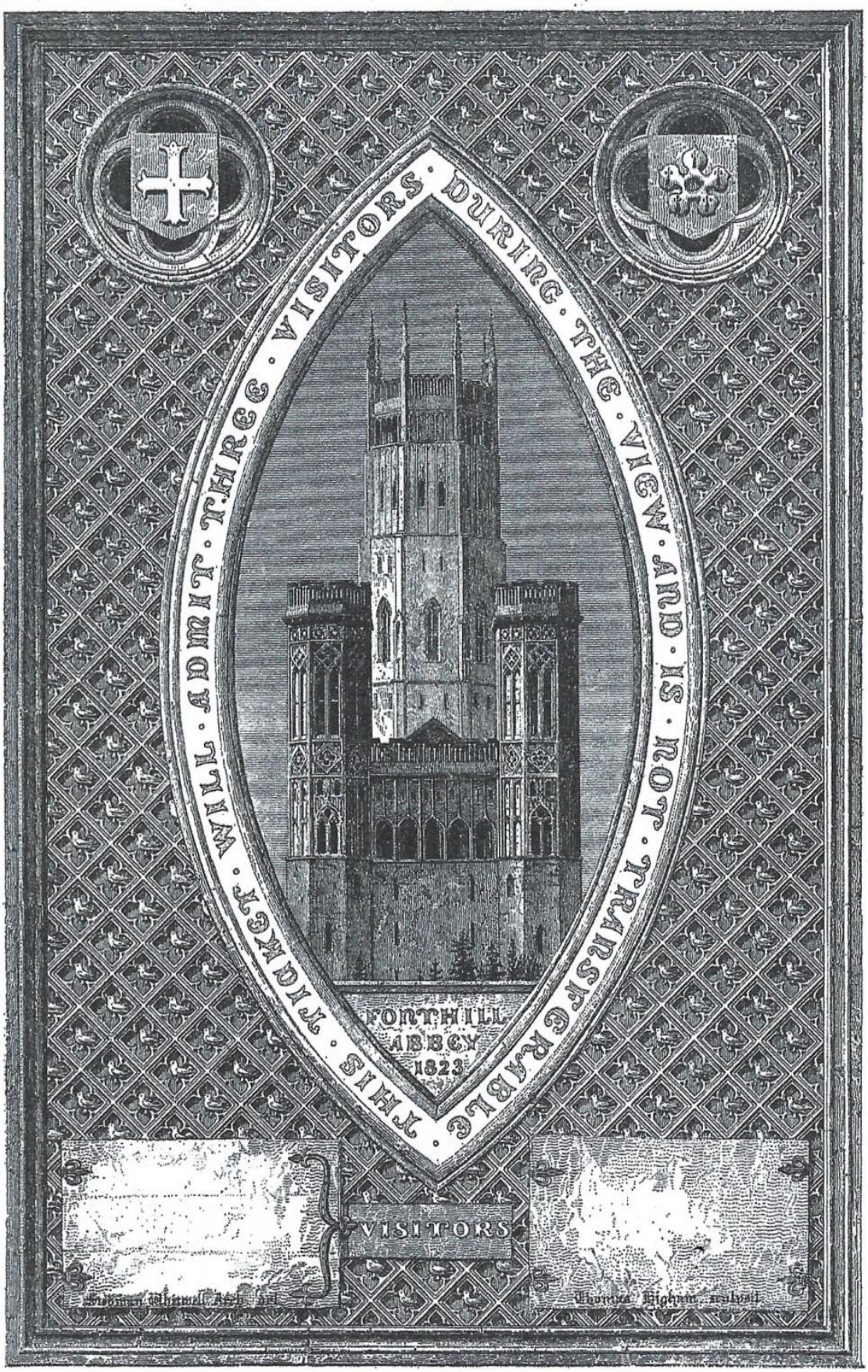
Overleaf: Admission ticket, Fonthill Sale 1823.


THIS · TICKET · WILL · ADMIT · THREE · VISITORS · DURING · THE · VIEW · AND · IS · NOT · TRANSFERABLE ·
FONTHILL
ABBEY
1823
VISITORS

FONTHILL FEVER

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THUS PASSES THE GLORY OF FONTHILL

Robert J. Gemmett

William Beckford reluctantly began to consider the sale of his beloved Fonthill properties as early as January 1819. The building of his famous Abbey and the development of the surrounding grounds turned out to be too expensive to sustain. The steady erosion of sugar prices in England over the years had continued to reduce dramatically his income from his West Indian estates. In addition, the annual interest on the mortgages on his properties and an accrued indebtedness that reached £145,000, the equivalent of £19,349,000 today, finally forced his hand.

Beckford made a desperate attempt to recoup by suggesting to his son-in-law, the Duke of Hamilton, that he liquidate a large portion of the debt in return for the guaranteed inheritance of the Fonthill estate and all of his possessions. Hamilton was unwilling to become entangled in Beckford's financial affairs, and so the inevitable result was that Fonthill had to be sold by auction in the fall of 1822, including all of its buildings, land, and most of the valuable contents of the Abbey.

The announcement of such a sale would come as a shock to a society that had come to believe that Beckford was indeed 'England's wealthiest son', as Lord Byron had dubbed him. As one contemporary writer later reflected in the *Morning Chronicle*: 'The vast wealth which he expended here, one would have thought, was a stream from an exhaustless source; but the golden tide has had its ebb; the uncalculated treasure, which in its effects rivalled the power of enchantment, is dissolved like Cleopatra's pearl'.

Beckford was now firm about the sale. As the *Morning Herald* reported him as saying at the time, that he would announce his intention without a sigh: 'It has cost me, said he, gazing at [the Abbey], with what it contains, near a million. Yet I must leave it, and I can do so at once. Public surprise will be created, but that I am prepared for. Beckford, they will say, has squandered his large fortune: to me it is a matter of perfect indifference'.

THE FONTHILL SALE OF 1822

To assist in the disposal of the Fonthill property and its magnificent contents, Beckford chose Christie's, the Pall Mall firm that had handled four earlier sales for him, the most recent in 1817, but this auction was a coup for the firm, headed up at this time by James Christie, because it contained some of Beckford's most valuable possessions. Notices began appearing in the press throughout the land that this major auction would take place in September 1822:

> *MR. CHRISTIE has the Honor very respectfully to inform the Nobility and Publick (the Connoisseurs and the Lovers of Virtú in particular), that on TUESDAY the 17th of September, and nine following Days (Sunday excepted), he will SELL by AUCTION, at FONTHILL ABBEY—The MAGNIFICENT ORNAMENTAL CONTENTS of that distinguished Mansion. .*

An enthusiastic James Christie highlighted some of the most important contents to be sold in the preface to the catalogue he issued, beginning with the pictures:

> *... The Laughing Boy by L. da Vinci, which was long preserved and admired in the Cabinet of the famous Earl of Arundel; the Sibylla Lybica by Lod. Carracci, formerly in the Lansdown Collection; (Job and his Friends, the famous Santa Croce Masterpiece of Sal. Rosa;) the Poulterer's Shop by G. Dow, and several precious Gems by Berghem, Mieris, V. Huysum and other Masters, from the Choiseuil and Praslin Cabinets….*
>
> *The Assemblage of Porcelain are of the finest Oriental, and of the old Seve, and other European Manufacturers: that of the old Japan Lacquer upon wood is without rival in this or any other Country. It will exhibit unexpected examples of the Ingenuity and Taste of the Japanese... especially a Coffer of Japan, incrusted with animals of solid Gold and Silver, formerly the property of Cardinal Mazarin, and a casket of extreme beauty, which formed a principal ornament of the collection of Madame de Pompadour.*
>
> *The Sculptured Vessels of Topaz, Sardonyx, Agate, and Crystal, are numerous. One of them, in particular, is presumed to be from the tool of some Asiatic Greek Artist of the times of Classic Antiquity—others are Sculptured by Benvenuto Cellini, or mounted with exquisite Jewellery and Chasings.*

Copies of the catalogue were on sale in London and elsewhere in England, and since in Christie's mind this auction had international interest, in bookshops in Amsterdam, Brussels, and Paris as well.

In accord with Beckford's wishes, the 'contents' of this sale did not include the library, though there were more than 30,000 volumes on the shelves in the Abbey at the time. While he was willing to forego some remarkable paintings, furniture and *objets d'art*, Beckford's attachment to his books was too strong to endure separation from them easily. It was an exceptional library and bore his personal imprimatur since many of the volumes were arrayed in his armorial bindings and contained pencil notes he was in the habit of writing on the flyleaves. He was not yet ready to make this supreme sacrifice—financial problems notwithstanding. It was for this reason that when Christie issued the pink wrappered catalogue in July the books were conspicuously absent.

For the first time in its history, the sealed precinct of Fonthill Abbey was open to the public. The admission tickets issued with the catalogue for a guinea granted multitudes access to the building and grounds and hopefully to a glimpse of one of the most renowned recluses in England. Once the gates were open for visitors on 1 July 1822, a pilgrimage to the Abbey became a major social event, and the reaction to the experience was often described in hyperbolic terms. 'Since the days of Henry, the Eighth', announced the *Morning Herald*, 'there has been nothing in England that might be compared with the scenes to which the opening of this edifice has given rise'. 'It is impossible', explained another report on the event in *The Gazette of Fashion*, 'to do justice to the extraordinary beauty and splendour of Fonthill: 'so long jealously secluded from the world's gaze, it now bursts upon the public eye like a region of enchantment'.

Captivated by Beckford's acknowledged reputation as a wealthy connoisseur and by the impenetrable secrecy of his pleasure dome, the public found itself afflicted by the 'Fonthill Fever', as Thomas Dibdin characterized it in a series of articles about the event in *The Museum.* 'The FEVER raged without control', he wrote. 'The whole country seemed to feel, in a *socia*l degree, what the earth would, in a *physical* degree, if a slight shock of an earthquake had agitated it. Across the country, in all directions, for some 50 miles, parties were in a perpetual state of locomotion'.

Symptomatic of the rage to participate in the 'view', letters and essays about the Abbey and the grounds appeared in numerous newspapers and magazines throughout the country. The excitement surrounding the event also spawned a

number of entrepreneurial ventures. One of the earliest of these was hatched by the Shaftesbury Quaker, John Rutter, who hastily produced a guidebook to Fonthill that ran through six editions before the end of the year. Many artists seized the opportunity to produce original drawings which were then engraved to accompany the written accounts that were published at the time. Some individuals reacted by writing poems celebrating Fonthill as an astonishing artistic creation.

As soon as the gates were opened in July, the roads leading to the estate were crowded with people from all levels of society. The press fuelled the intensity of the event by printing the names of prominent citizens who came to pay homage. The Duke of Gloucester, the King's brother-in-law, spent a night at the Beckford Arms on the estate to give him sufficient time to examine the contents of the Abbey and was impressed by what he saw. He was followed by the Duke of Wellington who after his visit declared that nothing could be compared to Fonthill anywhere in Europe. The Dukes of Buckingham, Beaufort, and Devonshire also came as did an array of lesser-titled individuals. The news-sheets noted that Romeo Coates, the actor, spent three nights at the Lamb Inn in Hindon to indulge himself in the experience, living up to his motto 'While I live, I'll crow'.

Many visitors came in private coaches, others on horseback, and still others on foot to see first-hand what had only been the stuff of rumour or daydreams. Kendell and Richardson's public coach service ran three days a week to carry passengers from Salisbury to the Abbey on the road that became the main thoroughfare to the Abbey. Once at the Abbey, the *Morning Herald* noted, 'there is no idea of rank. A Marquis's equipage is obliged to wait until a tax-cart full of the farmer, his wife, his grown-up daughters, and his whole nursery, have passed in'. On one day, more than 700 people inhabited the Abbey at one time. By 14 September nearly '15,000 guineas' were received for tickets of admission to the grounds and the Abbey.

Rooms in nearby Hindon, Tisbury, Mere and the surrounding towns were impossible to come by and the source of inevitable frustration. 'He is fortunate', *The Times* reported, 'who finds a vacant chair within twenty miles of Fonthill… Falstaff himself could not take his ease at this moment'. Every week the numbers swelled until a total of more than 7,200 people were admitted to the grounds.

Throughout the acclaim, Beckford was elated. He relished the attention and knew that in the end this mania would facilitate the sale and alleviate his financial woes. What was not known at the time by either the public or James Christie was that Beckford was angling for a private arrangement that would allow him to

dispose of the entire estate at an attractive price without an auction. In the end, the Christie sale became the bait to attract the right buyer. The Duke of Somerset, the brother-in-law of the Duke of Hamilton, was interested as was Harriet Mellon the actress and recent widow of the wealthy banker Thomas Coutts. Others, such as Earl Grosvenor, flirted with the idea but were unwilling to pay the £300,000 Beckford wanted to close the deal.

The puffery in the press was more than Beckford anticipated, but he nevertheless continued to spin his own web behind the scene to extricate himself from a difficult financial situation. He was aided initially by a member of his inner circle, Abbé Ange Denis Macquin, who contributed to the promotional effort by providing a series of four articles, an original drawing and a poem celebrating Fonthill and its creator in the August and September issues of William Jerdan's *Literary Gazette.*

If the celebratory nature of Macquin's pieces were not enough, Beckford approached him in August and proposed that Sir George Beltz, the Lancaster Herald, prepare an informative article on the armorial bearings in the Abbey which led to the lengthy work that appeared in several issues of the *Gentleman's Magazine* in the autumn of 1822. Beckford understood the importance of timing and the role the 'rage' would ultimately play in serving his personal interests.

The original date for the auction was set for 17 September but then postponed to 1 October and then delayed again until 8 October. No cause for the delay was given to the public. Most assumed that it was due to the constant stream of people to the estate which seemed to increase rather than diminish on a weekly basis. What was not known was that negotiations were taking place behind the scenes to sell the entire estate to the wealthy merchant John Farquhar.

Farquhar, who was represented in the negotiations by the auctioneer Harry Phillips, was a native of Aberdeen, Scotland. He had made a great deal of money by manufacturing gun powder and selling it to the Government. He was also a partner in the London agency house of Basset, Farquhar & Co. and a major shareholder of Whitbread's brewery. He was known to have a weakness for speculation and found Phillips's argument compelling that the purchase of Fonthill would elevate his social position instantly as owner of one of the great estates in England.

The deliberations remained a secret until an agreement was reached on 5 October 1822, three days before the auction was to begin. James Fownes,

Beckford's solicitor from the London firm of Fownes and White, drafted a memorandum of agreement entitled 'Argument for the Sale & Purchase of the Fonthill Abbey Estate & Effects'. Various maps, plans, and surveys were supplied by James Still, Beckford's land steward. James Christie was now out of the picture, but his catalogue was a document of record in the agreement. Beckford identified certain lots in the catalogue that he wanted set aside for himself.

Farquhar, a serious book collector in his own right, wanted the library to be included among the effects. This was a sore point for Beckford, but he ultimately relented after negotiating the retention of one-third, or approximately 10,000 volumes of 'bound Books, Works in letter press, Manuscripts, Books of Prints, Prints and Drawings'. In the end, Beckford agreed to accept the sum of £275,000 for the estate and an additional £25,000 for all remaining effects, the equivalent today of approximately £40,031,334.

So secret were these negotiations that not even Christie knew that they were taking place. While notices of the cancellation of the sale were posted in towns near Fonthill on 6 October, it was only when he arrived at the Abbey on Monday, 7 October, that he learned that he would not preside over the scheduled auction. Dismayed and undoubtedly feeling undercut by his competitor Harry Phillips, Christie dashed off a letter to the *Salisbury and Winchester Journal* in which he made it clear that he was not a party to these deliberations:

> *. . . I arrived at the Abbey on Monday at one o'clock, to undertake the sale, in consequence of the latest notices I had been directed to publish up to the time of my departure from London on Saturday—It was then only that I was informed of orders that had been received, forbidding further proceedings and the admission of company. . .*

The general public's reaction was one of dismay—a 'Grand Disappointment', as the *Morning Post* characterized it. 'Humbug Fonthill Abbey' another dubbed it. Some dealers and connoisseurs felt duped by what they ultimately perceived to be a great marketing scheme. Reports also followed in the press about the possibility of some legal actions initiated by individuals to recoup the expenses incurred from travelling great distances to the Abbey. Another spurious account indicated that Beckford was so financially embarrassed that the Bailiff had actually taken entire control of the contents of the Abbey, disguising his own officers as servants during the view, to ensure liquidation of the indebtedness. But rumours and strident complaints faded quickly as winter approached and as the Fonthill rage abated.

Meanwhile, Beckford expressed great relief that he was finally free from his debts. He felt that he was delivered from an insupportable financial burden and now felt independent and tranquil.

There were problems. The selection clause involving the identification of the property to be divided between Beckford and Farquhar proved to be contentious, causing an extended delay of the legal transfer and the final payment from Farquhar. Beckford's book agent William Clarke and secretary Chevalier Franchi participated in these negotiations as Beckford's representatives. Farquhar hired the bookseller George Lawford to help with the division of the books and prints. The wrangling was almost inevitable.

By December, with these matters not resolved, Beckford was beginning to have second thoughts about the entire contract with 'old Filthyman', as he dubbed Farquhar. In advance of a scheduled meeting to obtain agreement, Beckford urged Fownes to find a way to cancel the contract. 'They ought not to quit the Cabinet', he wrote, 'without a signed paper authorizing the specific offer required for the annihilation of the agreement in all its branches. This would give me more heartfelt joy than all the 100,000s in the miserable old Reptile's Den'.

The loss of Fonthill was troublesome—'a place I can never forget'—but the loss of his library that he spent years collecting was particularly galling. 'All the collective importance of the Library', he lamented, 'is destroyed. The gaps in every class are so wide that the repurchase of 10,000 volumes would hardly fill them. O that the galling contract was dissolved & my books restored!...How cheerfully would I pay all incurred expences & square matters so as to exist upon capital till the sale of effects, gutting of the Abbey, disposal of Hatch & of Jamaica the 1st favourable moment, came to my assistance. God send the miserly old Man one ray of intelligence. What a dreadful load would he take off his own shoulders & what a burden of eternal regret from mine'. [Beckford Ms., Bodleian Library]

It was too late to turn back. The negotiations at that meeting must have been successful because a report surfaced in the *New European Magazine* in January that a final agreement had been reached which was 'either agreeable to the original contract, or in consequence of subsequent purchase'.

As it turned out, the final settlement of the Fonthill sale did not take place until after 25 March when Beckford sent a letter to Farquhar expressing relief that the protracted negotiations were 'upon the eve of final settlement' and offering him as

a present the ‘fine works of plate [which] still remained at Fonthill Abbey’. [Beckford Ms., Bodleian Library]

The conclusion of the Fonthill proceedings enabled Beckford to establish permanent residence in Bath by the purchase of houses in Lansdown Crescent in the summer of 1823 where before long he would build another tower amidst a landscape garden on a much smaller scale than Fonthill. The loss of two-thirds of his library would remain a permanent source of discontent, and he spent the rest of his life buying back ‘Fonthills’, as he called the books he lost in the sale, and when he could not afford to take them in, he would have his bookseller run up the price at an auction to teach the bidders the value of even the worst books in the Fonthill collection.

The other loss he lamented was the role he played as the major employer of the poor and needy in the population surrounding Fonthill. Despite the rumours about his imperious manner, he was known to have been a generous landlord. To alleviate the stress of poverty, he had established a House of Industry in 1800 at his own expense near Fonthill to feed, clothe and employ sixty children who would learn how to spin wool under the care of resident teachers.

As a proprietor of Fonthill, his reign had come to an end. It was Sir Richard Colt Hoare, long captivated by the Abbey and its owner, who wrote the epitaph for the *Gentleman’s Magazine*:

> *The pleasing vision is now past, and the noise of the Auctioneer’s hammer will not be heard—silence pervades the long-drawn ailes—the lofty portal is closed—and the Abbot is returned to his Cloysters, with thanks to his Patron Saint, St. Anthony, for the numerous Pilgrims who have been attracted to his shrine. But with a farewell look he will shortly bid adieu to his cloistered walls, and extensive solitudes, which are now doomed to greet a second Abbot.*

THE FONTHILL SALE OF 1823

Almost immediately after the contract settlement, Farquhar decided to dispose of Beckford's valuable collections since he felt they were not suited to the Gothic character of the Abbey. His taste tended towards a more traditional style of interior décor, according to the *Morning Herald*, one marked by simplicity and formal grandeur and more characteristic of the other great estates in England. It was also rumoured that Farquhar was inclined to promote a national interest in the Abbey by making it an English *Louvre*, open to the public certain times of the year as a museum set up to display splendid specimens of the fine arts marked by his own interest.

Phillips, as a reward for assisting Farquhar in the original purchase of Fonthill, was hired to preside over the sale of the 'effects' scheduled to begin on 9 September 1823. Providing public access to the Fonthill estate for the second time within a year was bound to create an even greater stir than Christie's aborted sale. The Christie sale, after all, was much more limited in scope than the sale of 1823, as was evident from its scheduled run of ten days. The Christie catalogue included pictures, gold and silver plate, antique cabinets, rare japan, agate, and porcelain, some furniture, but no books and prints. By comparison, the sale conducted by Phillips on behalf of Farquhar was so much more extensive that it took thirty-seven days to complete.

Both Phillips and Farquhar anticipated an increase in the volume of visitors and planned accordingly. During the Christie view, many of the rooms of the Abbey were closed off to the public. Farquhar, by contrast, ordered the opening of all of the previously closed rooms.

In the year before, the Beckford Arms, Lamb, Swan, and Crown Inns nearby were filled to capacity, much to the disgruntlement of the crowds looking for overnight accommodation. For the 1823 sale some of the pressure on the local inns was relieved by fitting up the pavilion -- a remaining wing of Fonthill Splendens, Alderman Beckford's house -- under the direction of Thomas Harrington, proprietor of the Black Horse Inn in Salisbury.

The unfinished Eastern Transept of the Abbey was set up under the direction of the architect Stedman Whitwell as the site of the auction to provide ample room to display to advantage the objects of virtu, paintings, furniture and books for sale. The walls were covered with tapestries while the rafters and joists above were cloaked with a false ceiling made of striped muslin. The auction rostrum stood in the middle of the floor surrounded by a range of wooden benches which rose from the floor in amphitheatre effect to the upper sections of the walls.

Tickets for visiting the Abbey on any two days sold for a guinea each; tickets with sale catalogues, which admitted three persons every day, except Sundays, during the viewing and sale went for 5 guineas each. The ticket required for entrance was an impressive design by Whitwell, displaying the great tower from the perspective of the rear façade of the Eastern Transept. At the bottom of this card were two ornamented panels. One would be detached for the first visit; the second removed on the return visit. All tickets were checked at a single entrance gate at the barrier wall. In lieu of a guard house that was used for the previous viewing, Farquhar had a rustic lodge in the form of a 'moss clad shed' constructed at the gate which John Rutter depicted in a vignette that appeared in the title-page of his 1823 guide book, *A New Descriptive Guide to Fonthill Abbey and Demesne*.

Public inspection of the estate began on 16 June. Heavy rains marked the weather for the two months preceding the auction, but the public was undeterred. They continued to travel for hundreds of miles from all parts of the country to obtain a first-hand look at Beckford's palace and its lavish contents. By 8 August newspaper reports indicated that over 5,000 people had visited the estate.

In view of the abrupt cancellation of the Christie auction, there was a great deal of anxiety and suspicion about the likelihood of the second sale meeting the same fate. In 1822 some dealers and connoisseurs felt duped by what they ultimately perceived to be a shrewd marketing scheme that Beckford had engineered. The cynicism that developed at this time continued to be strong as Farquhar's sale approached. To alleviate such fears, frequent reassurances in the press were made that this sale would take place and, indeed, this time no postponement occurred. It began as announced on 9 September at 1 o'clock in the afternoon.

Public cynicism also extended to the contents of the forthcoming auction. Undoubtedly as a consequence of the division of property that occurred as part of the sale contract between Beckford and Farquhar, rumours began to circulate in public that many of the most valuable books and articles present in the previous 'view' of the Abbey, were not going to be available for purchase this time. A letter

published in the *Morning Herald* on 29 August suggested that there was a grand deception afoot that needed to be addressed in the interest of public truth.

Thomas Dibdin returned to the Abbey for a second visit about the same time adding fuel to the fire with a letter he sent to the *Morning Chronicle* signed with the pseudonym 'Isaac Littlebury'. Joined by his colleague Joseph Haslewood, collector and a founder of the Roxburghe Club, Dibdin complained that many of the rare books they had previously seen a year earlier were now missing. A rejoinder followed in the *Morning Herald*. A correspondent signed 'TRUTH', possibly by Phillips, affirmed that not 'an *item* of any class has been sold or removed from the Abbey since the purchase' with the exception of only those books and miscellaneous objects 'which were, by previous arrangement ceded to Mr. Beckford' in accordance with the contract of sale.

As was the case in 1822, a pilgrimage to the Abbey achieved the status of a major social event stimulated by extensive press coverage. The mania became so intense that the *New Monthly Magazine* announced at one point that the 'world may just at present be divided into two classes; those who have seen Fonthill Abbey, and those who have not'.

Some of the most privileged and well connected were invited to stay overnight at the Abbey. Among them were the Marquess and Marchioness of Lansdowne, with their son Lord Petty, the Dowager Lady Roden, Mr Pares (the business partner of the Lord Mayor of London), Douglas Kinnaird (Byron's London banker and literary agent), and the Bishop of Winchester, who ended up incurring an injury to his leg after falling on the stone stairs in the Great Western Hall.

The press enjoyed noting the differences in rank all brought together in one place. But understandably they concentrated on the higher echelons of British society and identified them by name whenever possible. Almost every newspaper article on Fonthill published in 1823 included a list of the most prominent visitors who travelled to the estate. The *Morning Post* even identified the existence of a book that all visitors signed upon entering the Abbey. Their correspondent used it on one occasion to transcribe the names of those who signed it and then published the list in the issue of 13 October. The whereabouts of this record is not known and unfortunately may well be lost forever. It would have provided a valuable account of those who passed through the Fonthill portals. In the absence of this document, the only sources of information are the auction catalogues of 1823, containing the names of successful bidders, and the list of prominent figures reported by the press.

These included the land-owning aristocracy, representing families of wealth, blood and title, members of Parliament and other persons who held high positions in government, officials of the Anglican Church, military figures—in short, those individuals who collectively constituted the cultural establishment of the country. The irony of their presence at Fonthill could not have been lost on Beckford whose secluded life there was to a great extent due to his ostracism from the very social groups who were now eager to see his residence and its trappings. Having been a place of peace and privacy, Fonthill was now transformed into a watering place, the 'scene of crowded resort', the 'gay haunt of eager curiosity'.

Under Beckford's ownership, there had been an air of mystery and solitude about this forbidden place which now yielded to 'business, pleasure, fashion, and popular wonder' as variegated groups of people revelled in the delights that Beckford had at one time reserved for himself. For so long a symbol of isolation and security, Fonthill had now become a poignant object of loss and transiency with its treasures about to be dispersed throughout the world. Two years later, its fate would be further reinforced as a symbol of mutability when its proud and lofty tower came crashing down to earth.

The first ten days devoted to the sale of a portion of the books were surprisingly uneventful with attendance being lower than expected. On the opening day of the auction, Phillips made it clear that there would be no reserve on any of the lots offered for sale. The first lot *Memoirs of the Rev. Alexander Geddes* sold for twelve shillings.

The prominent London booksellers Rodd, Lawford, Triphook, and Longman were among the heaviest buyers. John Upham, a bookseller from Bath, outspent many bidders. William Clarke was present as Beckford's representative doing his master's bidding and took in thirty lots the first day of the sale. But many of the books were knocked down to private individuals, including Sir John Wrottesley, William Miles, son of a Bristol merchant and banker, and the Earl of Arundel. The ubiquitous collector Richard Heber was there, taking in items at his usual rate. Members of the nobility and other prominent members of society could also be seen in the grounds or examining the treasures inside the Abbey. Lord and Lady Lansdowne spent the night entertained by the strains of Mr Goodall, the organist to the Earl of Arundel, who played by candlelight in the Grand Saloon and elicited the admiration of the listeners with a piece called 'The Storm', and the 'music of the witches' scene in *Macbeth*. Lord Francis Leveson Gower was at the sale as was Sir James Mackintosh. Sir Henry Wilson made the most ostentatious entrance by arriving in a coach drawn by six horses.

It was not long into the sale before a controversy broke out accusing Phillips of adding books and paintings that were never owned by Beckford. The strongest onslaught came from the *Leeds Intelligencer.* Following a comparison of the paintings listed in Christie's catalogue with Phillips's a year later, the *Leeds Intelligencer* noted that while Christie had listed 115 paintings, Phillips's catalogue included 415 pictures. Where Christie had one work by Teniers for sale, Phillips offered 22 by this artist. This published report also went on to argue that a man of Beckford's taste would not have owned some of the books listed in Phillips's sale catalogue:

> *We should deserve to be scorched to a cinder by the terrible eye of the Caliph Vathek, if we could bring ourselves to believe for a single moment that Mr. Beckford, of Fonthill, who spared neither pains nor expense in the collection of his books, could ever have been prevailed upon to admit within the precincts of his splendid library… such common trashy Auction Mart works.*

Some of the booksellers present at the sale labelled the added books 'foists', believing that the sale was 'made up' from rakings from the stalls of London. Another accusation claimed that the prices Beckford recorded on the inside cover or flyleaf for each book he bought had been altered in an effort to push up the prices artificially. The *Literary Gazette* provided further fuel to the controversy by hinting that the bookseller Lawford was involved in the scam and identified the libraries from which many of the books supposedly came.

Copies of the *Leeds Intelligencer* article circulated freely at the sale and in the local inns to the dismay of Phillips who protested his innocence from the podium, chastised Thomas Barnes, the editor of *The Times*, for reprinting the damning piece and attempted to shift blame to Longman by pointing out that he was the proprietor of both the *Leeds Intelligencer* and the *Literary Gazette*. He did allow that Farquhar had added some furniture and valuable effects from the Marshal Bessières estate in Paris, but he believed that this was the prerogative of the new owner of Fonthill. Thomas Adams Jr., the Shaftesbury historian and bookseller who attended the sale, characterized the atmosphere that had evolved, claiming that he 'never was at a Sale where so much suspicion and jealousy reigns'.

The sale of books continued, nevertheless, with the finest items being readily identifiable by the knowledgeable buyer. But just when the dust had settled, a new, more dramatic flap occurred involving one of the most highly touted works of art in the collection. This was lot 1567, described as a topaz cup with a dragon handle

of enamelled gold, set with diamonds and mounted on a tripod stand, and said to have been made by Benvenuto Cellini as a wedding present for Catherine Cornaro. Phillips offered it for bidding on 23 October, the 32nd day of the sale whereupon its authenticity was immediately challenged by Kensington Lewis, a London silversmith and antiquities dealer, who asserted publicly that it was not a topaz but a crystal. Phillips countered that he would never sell an item under a false description. The *Salisbury and Winchester Journal* reported the dramatic details of the incident making it a public event.

While managing to sway the crowd in the room, Phillips was still anxious about being undercut in a way that would deflate the hammer price of the item. He then appealed to Robert Hume, Beckford's London agent who was on the scene, and Hume declared that Beckford had always considered it to be a topaz. A heated argument followed wherein Phillips suggested that Lewis's motive was to try to buy the cup himself at a depreciated price and threatened to secure redress if the 'cup should be injured by his unjustifiable attack upon it'. The cup was finally put up for sale at 300 guineas and sold for £630, a sum that was considered far below its value. Still agitated, Phillips cited William Buckland, chair of mineralogy at Oxford, as an authority who had examined the cup earlier and declared it to be his conviction that it was formed of a block of genuine Hungarian topaz. A report in the *Salisbury and Winchester Journal* concluded that the 'highest credit is due to Mr. Phillips for the great coolness and spirit with which he conducted himself, and we do not envy the reproof which Mr. Lewis received'.

The Times, keeping an ever watchful eye on activities at the Fonthill sale, republished a great portion of the article from the *Salisbury and Winchester Journal* on 28 October, which drew a detailed response from Lewis a few days later in which he defended himself and continued to question Phillips's integrity on the conduct of the sale: 'As to his threat of legal proceedings against me, he may be assured that I shall meet him in Westminster-hall, where, perhaps, I may have an opportunity of exhibiting a little more of his "practices, sense of honesty, and manner of doing business" '. This was a strong personal attack against Phillips which might have been dismissed as intemperate, but then Lewis provided some provenance of the cup that continued to cast a shadow over its authenticity:

> *And now, Sir, for the history of this topaz (which I have taken some time and trouble to ascertain) — I have traced it originally to have been in the possession of Mr. Stanley, of Bond-street, who offered it twice for sale by auction for about £300, but was unable to obtain that bidding, and ultimately sold if for considerably less. I have Mr. Stanley's authority for*

stating, that the vase was in his possession for a year and a half at that price; and that during that time he repeatedly offered it to the trade, including Mr. Farmer, of Tavistock-street, and Mr. Foster, who are well-known dealers in articles of vertu, without being able to obtain a purchaser. It ultimately got into the hands of Mr. Baldock, of Hanway-street, who sold it to Mr. Beckford for less than £300.

Lastly, Sir, permit me to repeat my opinion, that the vase is not a topaz; and to state that my judgment has been since supported by some of the most experienced jewellers, and dealers in articles of vertu, in London; including Mr. Hawley, of the Strand; Mr. Jarman, of St James's-street; and of Mr. Farmer and Mr. Foster, whose names I have already mentioned.

Lewis's history of the ewer appears to be credible, based as it was on his own familiarity with the principal dealers and auctioneers in the trade. Beckford did, in fact, buy the ewer in 1819 from Edward Holmes Baldock, a prominent antique dealer of 7 Hanway Street, London. There is a document among the Beckford Papers entitled 'Description of Vase of Topaz of Saxony — Work of the Celebrated Benvenuto Cellini', which Beckford received from Baldock when he purchased it. The document outlines its spurious history from the time it was executed as a wedding present when Georgio Cornaro married Elizabeth Morosini and then from the Cornaro family to the ducal family of Gonzaga of Mantua and then to London sometime in the eighteenth century. It eventually ended up in Lord Rothschild's collection where it remained until it was sold to Jack and Belle Linsky of New York. From the Linsky collection it went to the Metropolitan Museum where it remains today.

Lewis's mineralogical assessment that it was rock crystal instead of topaz also turned out to be correct. In fact, another article appeared in the *Salisbury and Winchester Journal* on 17 November 1823, testifying that by then several 'eminent mineralogists' had examined the cup and even dismounted it to determine its specific gravity. They concluded that it was indeed quartz, but the report went on to cite René-Just Haüy, founder of the science of crystallography, whose book *Traité de minérologie* was published in Paris in 1822. Haüy explained that quartz had different names depending upon its colour. If yellow in colour, it was called smoky or Indian topaz, brown crystal, oriental or Bohemian topaz, violet in colour was amethyst. The writer advanced the view that 'the article in question, we believe, was smuggled into England within a rough block of marble, in which it was carefully imbedded, and the two pieces of the block ingeniously cemented together'.

There is no record of Beckford's reaction to Lewis's charge, but he was aware of the possibility that it was not an authentic Cellini and was attempting himself to investigate its provenance. He bought it as a beautiful work of art, admired its craftsmanship and felt it had an alluring and magical quality about it.

The Topaz cup incident stirred up such controversy in the press that it found its way to the London theatre in a Christmas pantomime at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane in December 1823, entitled *Harlequin and the Flying Chest; or, Malek and the Princess Schirine.* Arranged and produced under the direction of William Barrymore, it included a series of dioramic views painted by Clarkson Stanfield. The diorama featured a series of moving scenes of the Plymouth breakwater in the process of construction and a striking view of 'Fonthill Abbey and a Village' by David Roberts—a picture of the surrounding grounds and an interior view of King Edward's Gallery in the Abbey. But the highlight of the play was a pantomime by Mr Paulo. In the pantomime, Paulo donned a black coat and hat in imitation of Harry Phillips at the Fonthill sale to recreate the scene of selling the Cellini ewer as a great hoax. *The Times* reported the crowd's reaction: 'The happiest part of Paulo's performance last night was, where, as an auctioneer, he knocks down a celebrated topaz vase, and afterwards a picture by a great artist of "Finchley", at the Fonthill sale. The pantomime went off with much *éclat* and was announced for repetition amidst cheers of the audience'.

The controversy over the authenticity of the Cellini ewer faded as the sale continued. There were, after all, many spectacular works of art to consume the interest of the insatiable collector or his representative. Among the furniture, for example, there were the chairs that once belonged to Cardinal Wolsey from his palace at Esher; the ebony state bed of Henry VII with its crimson damask hangings and purple quilt worked with gold; the massive table inlaid with marble, jaspers, and oriental onyx from the Borghese Palace; the 'Holbein' cabinet that Beckford thought was designed for Henry VIII; the celebrated 'Bernini' cabinet encrusted with agates, jaspers and other striking jewels, a large Japanese lacquer chest once owned by Cardinal Mazarin; Japanese cabinets from the Duc de Bouillon's collection; and the desk made by J. H. Riesener for Comte d'Orsay. There were silver plates of various designs, a Meissen dinner service of 363 pieces made for the Prince of Orange, the Rubens vase, the Limoges enamel reliquary, and the Japanese lacquer Van Diemen Box.

There were also 424 paintings which took four days to sell, including works by Rubens, Rembrandt, Teniers, Dürer, Da Vinci, Dow, Van Eyck, and Gainsborough, among others. In short, the Fonthill sale of 1823 offered a dazzling

array of rarities that makes it difficult to accept William Hazlitt's judgement expressed in the *London Magazine* in 1822 that Beckford's taste was meretricious and the Abbey a 'desart of magnificence, a glittering waste of laborious idleness, a cathedral turned into a toy-shop, an immense museum of all that is most curious and costly, and at the same time, most worthless, in the productions of art and nature'.

The fact is that for many of Beckford's contemporaries Fonthill lived up to its mythical reputation. Now its wonders and glories were dispersed in a thousand directions 'scattered and parcelled out at the fall of the salesman's hammer'. As one author lamented in the *New European Magazine*: 'Fonthill, as connected with Mr. Beckford, is no more! and the great rival of Wiltshire's other wonder, Stonehenge, will hereafter lose half of its interest and its glory since it can no longer be associated with the author of *Vathek*'.

The attention in the press, whether positive or not, inspired interest in the event and made participating in the actual 'view' of Fonthill even more irresistible. The sale of the books and prints, which occupied twenty days, had the lightest turn out with reports estimating approximately fifty people in attendance each day. The numbers swelled to sometimes 200 a day for the paintings, furniture and other works of art. Beckford did not personally attend, but his agent William Clarke bought over 640 lots in the book portion of the sale. In the end, Farquhar realised £43,869 14s from the sale, the equivalent today of approximately £5,484,069.

In one of his final acts before the closing of the sale on 29 October, Farquhar ordered the illumination of the Abbey at night and invited the public to the spectacle. The event took place on the evening of 22 October, with a large crowd in attendance. On hand for the event were Sir Henry and Lady Onslow, Sir Alexander Malet, Wadham Wyndham and family, Richard Heber, and the poet Thomas Moore and his wife, among other prominent figures. For the occasion, all of the heavy curtains were pulled aside in the Abbey to expose candlelight flickering its incandescent glow in every room. Light poured out through the windows radiating the colours of the stained-glass portraits and the array of rich heraldic symbols. The lantern in the tower streamed its radiance against the dark sky to the silent amazement of those stationed outside on the lawn.

The doors of the Abbey were then thrown open to the on-lookers who passed through the rooms to indulge more intimately the fully illuminated spectacle inside. To enhance the visual effects, the grand organ filled the air with its 'high and holy harmony'. The journalist J. Sidney Taylor for the *Morning Chronicle*

found the visual effect of the play of light inside the Grand Saloon particularly impressive: ‘The light playing along the shafted arches which lead off to various parts of the structure, and flickering upon the enriched work of the interior of the tower, the height and symmetry of the poetic architecture — the splendour of the lanthorn — all whose stained windows were in a blaze of coloured radiance — the clear brightness of the circular windows beneath, and the deep relief of draperies of solemn richness, all produce the effect of a magical illusion’. Looking up and down St Michael’s and King Edward’s galleries was an equally imposing sight. ‘The lengthened streams of light, along which the eye had an indistinct vision of glittering and accumulated ornaments which yet decorate the walls, gave the impression of a place where genii held their fanciful dominions, or reminded one of those depositories of the treasures of Eastern Caliphs, in which gold and jewels are surrounded by spells, mystery, and enchantment’. It was a fitting farewell for this palace of enchantment, a Keatsian event with a sensory appeal that Beckford himself would have appreciated and indulged.

The villagers of Hindon and Tisbury expressed their own farewell to Beckford as the landlord of Fonthill on 29 September, when they celebrated his birthday. As reported in the *Morning Post*, the band played throughout the day in Hindon, bells rang, and the air was rent with exclamations of ‘Beckford forever’, ‘good luck to Beckford’, and ‘may he last forever *till the world is without end*’. Guns were fired in his honour, while revellers who were voters proclaimed that they would never vote for anyone but him or for the candidate he supported. Contrary to various reports that appeared in the press from time to time that Beckford mistreated those he employed, this occasion was indicative of the good will and gratitude they felt towards him as a generous benefactor, feelings that continued throughout the years that followed. Beckford expressed his own gratitude to the workers on the Fonthill estate by continuing to pay the annual bounty to them in 1823, long after he had any obligation to do so.

As the second Fonthill sale came to a close, the woods and pathways of the estate once again fell quiet, and the new Abbot proceeded to settle down to refurnish the Abbey to reflect his own interests. It was not long thereafter, however, that Farquhar received word that the structural weakness of the Abbey was a threat to its survival and a danger to the inhabitants. The information came from Beckford who had been summoned to the death bed of Wyatt’s Clerk of the Works and learned from him that, although money had been supplied, he failed to provide an adequate foundation for the octagon tower according to the established specifications. Consequently, the tower was unsafe. Beckford felt it was his duty to

report this incident to Farquhar who accepted the information with a cool indifference, saying that he felt the tower would last a lifetime.

Farquhar might, in fact, have known about this possibility after living in the Abbey for a while. Whenever a strong wind was up, it creaked, groaned, and whistled which once led Beckford to say that because of his own awareness of the situation that he feared that someday he would be crushed like a lobster in his shell.

Many had hoped that the tower would remain as one of England's finest monuments, raised proudly on its eminence and reaching high into the 'silent fields of air'. But, as feared, the tower did collapse on 21 December 1825, at three o'clock in the afternoon, falling into the fountain court, destroying the octagon and a great portion of St Michael's and King Edward's galleries and the Great Western Hall. Intact were the great organ in its established place and the statue of Alderman Beckford in its niche, 'as if it remained to point to the ruins of his son's ambition'. Sir Richard Colt Hoare published a farewell to the passing of Fonthill in the *Gentleman's Magazine* a few months later — 'Sic transit gloria Fonthill'—and arranged to have John Buckler do a dramatic picture of the Abbey in ruins as an historical record of the event.

Once Farquhar realised what had occurred, he observed in his usual cool manner that he was glad it fell, for now the house would not be too large for him to live in. Beckford was supposed to have responded with equal aplomb when he learned of the incident, noting that the tower had made a bow to Farquhar that it had never made to him. From that time on, according to Cyrus Redding, the relationship between Beckford and Farquhar grew stronger to the point where Farquhar considered bequeathing Fonthill back to Beckford, 'for he frequently observed he had a great inclination to do so'. When Beckford was asked whether he would have liked this legacy, he replied, 'Good heavens, yes, I should have been in an extacy? at it, for it would have falsified the old proverb, 'You can't eat your cake and have it too'.

Oddly enough, Fonthill Abbey remained in ruins throughout Beckford's lifetime. The rubble was finally removed in 1844, the year of his death, after Earl Grosvenor, later Marquess of Westminster bought the estate. Except for the northernmost fragment everything was removed from the site. It remains standing today.

Few individuals sought entry to the Fonthill estate in the years that followed the ruin of the Abbey. One on record was Thomas Adams Jr., the Shaftesbury historian, who wrote his Farewell to Fonthhill in the *Gentleman's Magazine* in 1826:

> *To the pensive mind there is there is a melancholy interest still lingering about the Abbey of Fonthill. A natural sigh is drawn on viewing the great tower prostrate—the total destruction of the octagon—the oratory "shorn of its beams"—the annihilation of the Third Edward's and St. Michael's galleries—and the architectural and armorial embellishments which lie scattered about in sad confusion.*
>
> *"SPIRIT OF THE PLACE!" where are the thousands that erst have thronged its portals, and with audible accents of admiration, paced with increased astonishment and delight the princely apartments of this mystically-raised edifice?*
>
> *. . . In the plenitude of its attraction, an illusion possessed the mind, that future ages would look with wonder on the fabric, adorned as it was, with an assemblage of all that was matchless and costly; at the same time that the mind reflected with awe, that the convulsions of a neighbouring kingdom alone could have empowered the projector to amass the rare and exquisite decorations which he concentrated here.*
>
> *The well-known lines of our immortal Avonian Bard, might with singular propriety be applied to this once magnificent structure.*

Beckford himself returned to survey the ruins on at least one occasion that is certain. It was on 19 July 1835 that he decided to ride his horse from Bath to Fonthill after being away for twelve years. In a draft to an unidentified person, he recorded the experience, revealing the sense of distance he now felt from the Fonthill phase of his life: 'T'other day I rode all over Fonthill. The woods are still magnificent & on point[?] of the ruins— sublime. Mephistopheles could not have contemplated the whole scene more impartially or with greater composure'[Beckford Ms., Bodleian Library]

The most complete account of the ruins was given by the Bath artist Henry Venn Lansdown, who in his *Recollections of the Late William Beckford* (1893) recorded a visit of the remains on 28 October 1844, after Beckford's death and before the broken structure was dismantled and hauled away.

Upon gaining access to the grounds, he walked to the site and stood in awe before the extensive assemblage of ruins. There stood the Eastern Transept still

imposing with its twin towers rising 120 feet into the air but now roofless and completely open to the elements. The remains of the Great Western Hall were now covered with briars and brambles. The lofty painted windows, the heraldic symbols, and the heavy thirty-foot doors were gone. Theakston's statue of St Anthony was in its place still holding out his right hand but tottering in the wind and soon to be a victim of time.

As Lansdown climbed the circular staircase in the octagon, ultimately reaching the balcony that overlooked the great octagon, where he could view the whole desolate scene at once: 'How deep were my feelings of regret at the destruction of the loftiest apartment in the world', he wrote, 'twenty years ago this glorious place was in all its splendour. High in the air are still seen two round windows that once lighted the highest bedrooms in the world'. He then walked away from the building lamenting the loss of the 'gem and the wonder of earth'.

'A groupe of the rarest articles of virtu',

from John Rutter, *Delineations of Fonthill and its Abbey,* 1823

ENTRANCE TICKETS, CATALOGUES AND GUIDEBOOKS

A CHECKLIST

Jon Millington

ENTRANCE TICKETS

CHRISTIE'S ENTRANCE TICKET TO THE 1822 SALE.

Produced by Perkins, Fairman & Heath.

Line engraving, 7.2 × 10.9 cm.

Britannia appears with three figures on either side representing the Arts. On buying the catalogue, a visitor would have found the ticket tipped in to a blank area at the top of page iii. As the ticket had to be surrendered on entry, very few can have survived, especially as there is nothing to associate them with Fonthill Abbey. At this period Christie's held about forty-five sales a year, mostly at their 'Great Room, Pall Mall'. Only one of the catalogues of the few sales which were held elsewhere mentioned tickets, and this was for a sale of antique casts on 27 June 1822. So it seems almost certain that, although Christie's possibly intended the ticket for other country house sales as well, it was probably just used at Fonthill.

PHILLIPS' ENTRANCE TICKETS TO THE 1823 SALE.

Stedman Whitwell, Arch. del. Thomas Higham, sculpsit.

Line engraving, 18.6 × 11.8 cm inside the border.

Within a field of martlets an oval depicts the Eastern Transept in front of the central tower and, in an exergue, Fonthill Abbey 1823. Surrounding the oval is one of two legends. By far the more common reads: 'This ticket will admit two visitors

on any two days during the view and is not transferable', and it cost one guinea. Season tickets, where 'three visitors' replaced 'two visitors on any two days' could be bought for five guineas and included a copy of the catalogue (see frontispiece). Roundels at the top depicted motifs from Beckford's coat of arms, a Latimer cross and a Hamilton cinquefoil. Two panels below were for the names of the visitors on the left and Harry Phillips' signature on the right. 'Visitors' appears in a much small panel between them. At the bottom of the ticket were two detachable tokens bearing in 2 cm roundels the initials 'HP' and 'FA'. These would normally have been handed over on the first and second admissions.

For single visitors a smaller ticket depicted the oval in a plain field with the legend changed to: 'This ticket will admit one visitor on any two days during the view and is not transferable'. It measured 12.9 × 8.3 cm inside the border, and cost 10/6d. To prevent re-use, a corner was clipped.

SALE CATALOGUES

CHRISTIE. *MAGNIFICENT EFFECTS AT FONTHILL ABBEY, WILTS*. London, 1822.

95 pp. 8vo (22 cm), price 1 guinea.

There are three issues, with the starting date of the sale being given as 17 September, 1 or 8 October on the title page. A note at the foot of this page for September 1 reads: 'The Abbey and Grounds may be Viewed after the 1st of July, by Cards, which, with Catalogues, may be had (at One Guinea each) of Mr. Clark, Bookseller, Bind Street, London…' In the 1820s Christie's generally charged from 1/- to 2/6d for their catalogues, so I guinea was a very high price, but then this was Fonthill Abbey, which the public had never previously been allowed to see. Beckford probably helped to compile this catalogue.

PHILLIPS. THE VALUABLE LIBRARY OF BOOKS IN FONTHILL ABBEY… THE UNIQUE AND SPLENDID EFFECTS… THE PICTURES AND MINIATURES. London, 1823. Frontispiece, [xii], 391 pp. 8vo (24 cm), price 12/-.

The frontispiece has the same design as the larger entrance ticket, but with altered wording. The legend round the oval centre now reads: 'A Catalogue of the Costly and Interesting Effects at Fonthill Abbey'. There are at least four different versions of the wording in the left-hand and small centre panels beneath: 'Price 12s' and

blank; ‘Books’ and ‘Part 1’; ‘Furniture and Articles of Virtu’ and ‘Part 2’; and ‘Pictures’ and Part 3’. In all four cases the right-hand panel bears the printed signature ‘H Phillips’. The parts were also sold separately at 5/- each for The First Part of Part 1, The Second Part of Part 1 and Part 2, and 2/6d for Part 3. Originally Phillips intended to issue a fourth catalogue listing the wines and useful furniture to be sold on the 38th and 39th days, but it never appeared and the sale ended on the 37th day.

GUIDE BOOKS

JAMES STORER. *A DESCRIPTION OF FONTHILL ABBEY, WILTSHIRE*.

London: W. Clarke, etc., 1812. [ii], 24 pp. 7 pl. 8vo (24 cm), price 16/-. Also 4to (*c*.29 cm), price 25/- and proofs, folio (35 cm), price 42/-. Reissued with a cancel title page dated 1817 and bound with the catalogue of Beckford’s library extracted from *Repertorium Bibliographicum* (1819), London: William Clarke, 1817. 25½ cm.

JOHN RUTTER. *A DESCRIPTION OF FONTHILL ABBEY AND DEMESNE*.

Shaftesbury: J. Rutter, 1822. 8vo (20 cm), price 3/6d. 1st ed. Frontis., v, 66 pp. Completely revised 2nd–6th editions with different order of touring the Abbey, frontis., xii, 74 pp. Partly culled from Storer’s *Description of Fonthill Abbey* (1812).

WHITTAKER, PUBLISHER. *A NEW GUIDE TO FONTHILL ABBEY*.

London: G. & W. B. Whittaker, 1822. xii, 60 pp. Frontis., west view of Abbey. 19½ cm. Chiefly culled from *The Times*, Rutter’s *Description* (1822), *Literary Gazette* and Christie’s sale catalogue, *Magnificent Effects* (1822).

JAMES STORER. *DESCRIPTION OF FONTHILL ABBEY*.

Salisbury: Brodie, 1823. 14 pp. 8 pl. small 8vo (17 cm), price 2/6d. Also large paper, 22 cm, with proofs of the plates, price 4s. Largely reprinted from Storer (1812). Offprint from No. 1 (Oct 1822) of *The Port-Folio*. 4 vols. London: Nornaville & Fell, 1823–1824.

JOHN RUTTER. *A NEW DESCRIPTIVE GUIDE TO FONTHILL ABBEY AND DEMESNE*.

Shaftesbury: J. Rutter, 1823. Frontis., engraved title page, viii, 98 pp. 8vo (19½ cm), price 4/-. A total revision of his *A Description of Fonthill Abbey* (1822).

JOHN BRITTON. *GRAPHICAL AND LITERARY ILLUSTRATIONS OF FONTHILL ABBEY, WILTSHIRE*.

London: The Author, 1823. viii, 68, 4 pp. 11 pl. Small paper, 4to (29 cm), price 1 guinea, limited to 500 copies. Also large paper, (34 cm), price 2 guineas, limited to 270 copies and a further 30 copies with 'Proofs and Etchings'.

JOHN RUTTER. *DELINEATIONS OF FONTHILL AND ITS ABBEY*.

Shaftesbury: The Author, 1823. xxiv or xxvi, 127 pp. 14 pl. Folding map of Domain. 4to (29½ cm), price 25/-. Also large paper, (37 cm), price 50/- and the same size with 'Proofs & Etchings on India Paper', price 3½ guineas to non subscribers. Dedicated to the Duchess of Hamilton. A beautifully printed and extremely comprehensive guide based on his *A New Descriptive Guide to Fonthill Abbey* (1823).

JOHN PRESTON NEALE. *GRAPHICAL ILLUSTRATIONS OF FONTHILL ABBEY, THE SEAT OF JOHN FARQUHAR, ESQ*.

London: Sherwood, Jones, etc., 1824. iv, 16 pp. 5 pl. 8vo (25 cm), price 6/-. Also large paper, 4to (31½ cm), price 12/-. Dedicated to John Farquhar. An offprint from vol. 1 of Neale's *Views of the Seats of Noblemen and Gentlemen*, 2nd series. London: Sherwood, Jones, 1824.

JOHN BOWYER NICHOLS, ED. *HISTORICAL NOTICES OF FONTHILL ABBEY, WILTSHIRE*.

London: Nichols & Son, 1836. 52 pp. 11 pl., including 10 from Rutter's *Delineations* (1823). 4to (29 cm), price 15/-. Also large paper (38 cm), 30/-. Culled from previous guide books, Colt Hoare's *Modern Wiltshire* (1829), *The Gentleman's Magazine* and Christie's sale catalogue, *Magnificent Effects* (1822). A late guide showing that there was still interest in Fonthill in the 1830s.

Fonthill Abbey

from Whittaker's *A New Guide to Fonthill Abbey*, 1822