

A 'Portuguese Garden' in Kensington

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It must be confessed that Portugal appears to great advantage when one enters it by this road leaving behind the dreary plains of Spanish Estremadura (...)¹

(Lord Holland, *Journal*, 1809)

Generally described as a Hispanophile, sometimes even as a Hispanist, the third Lord Holland's relation with Portugal is largely unknown to the majority of the Portuguese historians, and if known, usually disregarded.² Except for a few authors who referred vaguely to Holland in the 19th century

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1. British Library, Holland House Papers, MSS Add. 51861, Lord Holland's Travel Journals: 1809, f. 3^v (4 July 1809).
 2. Henry Richard Vassall-Fox (1773-1840), 3rd Baron of Holland of Holland and Holland of Foxley, English Whig politician, statesman and hispanist. He was the grandson son of Henry Fox, 1st Lord Holland, and his wife Lady Caroline Lennox, the eldest daughter of Charles Lennox, 2nd Duke of Richmond, a grandson of Charles II. Holland was the nephew of Charles James Fox, the famous Whig politician, who was responsible for his education. In 1797, Holland married Elizabeth Vassall (1771-1845), whose marriage to Sir Godfrey Webster had just been dissolved; Elizabeth was the daughter of Richard Vassall (1732-1795), who had extensive estates in Jamaica.

– mostly to his role in the reestablishment of Liberalism in Portugal in 1834 – historiography neglects the importance of his contribution to political developments in that country. Although this omission may be explained by a number of reasons, the main one seems related to the seemingly modest extent of Holland’s interest in Portugal, especially when compared to his obvious enthusiasm for Spain – “mi segunda patria” (Holland and Jovellanos 1: 166, Cádiz, 15 Mayo 1809).³ Yet Holland’s interest in Portugal was actually quite profound. Unlike his sudden, even violent passion for Spain, Holland’s affection for Portugal was relatively milder and longer lasting, growing in an unobtrusive way. Passions are usually meteoric and fickle, while true love is mild and often more enduring. While Holland’s relationship with Portugal began with apparent disdain, it developed into a true sentiment of ‘love’ and ‘affection’, to quote his own words in a speech to the House of Lords in July 1828. (*The Times* 17 July, 1828: 6)

Holland’s initial – and indirect – encounter with Portugal occurred during his first visit to Spain in 1793. Fascinated with the character and costumes of the Spaniards, who “(...) gave such a warm reception to a 19 years old boy⁴ (...)”, (BL, HHP, MSS Add. 51618, G. M. Jovellanos: 1808-1809, Lord Holland to Jovellanos, f. 3^r, 12 Sept. 1808) Holland dedicated himself to the study of the language, literature and history of their country. The dismissive tone in *Foreign Reminiscences* – “I know little of Portugal or Portuguese that would have the interest of novelty to English readers” – suggests contamination with a widely held Spanish prejudice. (161) Holland’s negative opinion also appears when, in a letter to Manuel Quintana, a Spanish Romantic author he met in Madrid in September 1803, he describes the Portuguese language as a ‘patois’ (Quintana to Holland, Madrid,

3. In another letter, Holland described himself as ‘Espanolado’ (Holland and Jovellanos 2: 371, 6 Sept. 1809); and again, ‘(...) medio español y espanolado(...)’. (*idem*, 2: 375, 8 Sept. 1809)

4. “ (...) con tanto agasajo a un muchacho de 19 años (...)” [our translation].

7 Feb. 1805' *apud* Alonso: 317).⁵ It was not until 1804, after his first direct contact with Portugal, that Holland began to revise his opinions, admitting in a letter to his sister, Lady Caroline Fox (1767-1845): "I am safe on Portuguese territory (which by the way is very pretty territory too)." (BL, HHP, MSS Add. 51737, Lord Holland to Caroline Fox, f. 133^r December 2.^d [1804]) Although Holland was to say unflattering things about Portugal in the future, this favourable first impression never completely left him.

Lord and Lady Holland, accompanied by their private secretary and physician, Dr John Allen (1771-1843), visited Portugal in 1804-1805 and again in 1808-1809. While there is little information about the first journey to Portugal, the final visit is reasonably well documented with their travel journals, of which a Portuguese translation was published recently as *Três Diários de Viagem em Portugal em 1808-1809*. Holland's apparent indifference is perceptible during his second visit to Portugal, contrasting with his wife's more emotional and unpredictable responses. Lady Holland, whom Clarke identifies as "(...) the most forthright among the diarists (...)", (10) is often contemplative, sometimes even poetical, yet at others caustic and ill-humoured, while Holland is more objective and pragmatic, keeping an almost philosophical distance from the object of his investigation. Yet, Holland's somewhat disdainful aloofness is occasionally punctured, not least when the intrusion of reality forces him to question the universal applicability of the Whig principles he had once supposed appropriate to all times and all places. Faced with overwhelming signs of backwardness, Holland finds it hard to decide whether Enlightened Despotism – exemplified in Pombal – is a solution or part of the problem. Holland seems distressed and alarmed by his own indecision.

Although Holland's affection for Portugal is not immediately perceptible in his journals, it is already present below the surface.

5. Although the whereabouts of Lord Holland's letter are not known, Quintana's reply reproduces the expression 'patois' used by Holland: "No extraño que la lengua portuguesa le parezca a V. un *patois*."

Some of Holland's Portuguese entries give a powerful impression of the sufferings of the country during the years of war and foreign occupation; Holland's sympathy is deep and genuine. Indeed Holland's relationship with Portugal illustrates the adage that absence makes the heart grow fonder. He never returned to Portugal after 1809 yet it was precisely after this time that his unambiguous affection develops most strongly.

The first clear sign of a taste for things Portuguese comes in 1812 when the Italian poet Serafino Bonaiuti, factotum and librarian at Holland House, was commissioned to create a 'Portuguese Garden', in which some of the polychromatic landscapes of Portugal were recreated – contrasting with the monotony of most of the Spanish territory.⁶ Interestingly, despite their confessed admiration for Spain, it was only in 1821 that the Hollands created a 'Spanish' Alameda at Ampthill Park, Bedfordshire, an estate bequeathed to Lord Holland by his maternal uncle, Lord John Fitzpatrick (1745-1818), second Earl of Upper Ossory.⁷ The Alameda is a pleasant grove of linden trees entered by a stone gate with the arms of Castile and Aragon above it.⁸

For unknown reasons, however, the 'Portuguese' garden was later renamed the 'Dutch' garden. This change must have occurred before September 1834, when Sir Augustus Foster (1780-1848) referred to the 'Dutch Garden' in a letter to Henry Edward Fox,⁹ Holland's second son and the future fourth Lord Holland.¹⁰ The change, however, has been attributed to a deterioration in Anglo-Portuguese relations, but this cannot be proven. Apart from some disputes about the

6. Serafino Bonaiuti was the author of the libretto to the Italian comic opera *Li Due Svizzeri*, first performed at the Haymarket Theatre, London, on 14 May 1799. (Pugliaro: 278)

7. Cf. Ilchester, *The Home of the Hollands*: 329; *Penny Magazine* 12 January, 1839: 9.

8. Cf. Leigh: 35.

9. Henry Edward Fox (1802-1859), later 4th Lord Holland, the second son of Henry Richard Vassall Fox and his wife Elizabeth Vassall. He was born at Holland House on 7 March 1802 and died at Naples on 8 December 1859. Married 9 May 1833 Mary Augusta Coventry (1812-1889), daughter of George William Coventry, 8th Earl of Coventry, and Lady Mary Beauclerk. The couple had no issue and the barony became extinct.

10. Cf. Foster to Henry Fox *apud* Ilchester, *Chronicles* 11 Sep. 1834:183.

abolition of the Slave Trade from 1806 to 1842 – a matter in which Holland took a keen interest – it is hard to think of any obvious reason for the change. Knox suggests the change of name “(...) was probably on account of its similarity to the famous sunken garden of that name at Hampton Court Palace.” (44)¹¹ It is then possible that Foster may have thought the garden looked vaguely Dutch and then mistakenly referred to it in these terms when writing to Henry Fox. Yet, the most likely explanation, admitting the garden was officially renamed, lies in the Hollands’ increasing interest in the Low Countries after the French withdrawal and the establishment of the Kingdom of Netherlands in 1815. Whatever the reason for the change of name, the ‘Portuguese Garden’ represents an important landmark in Holland’s relations with Portugal and provides tangible evidence of his affection for the country.

At first sight, the notion exemplified in E. M. Forster’s *Howard’s End*, that physical objects such as houses and gardens can have personalities of their own, seems to belong more to literature than to history. Yet it must be conceded that, consciously or not, people are influenced by what they believe to be the traditions of the houses they live in and places where they have been happy. Even if they are not truly personalities, houses and gardens can acquire a ‘presence’ that stands for something and that can make them important factors in history. One such example is surely Holland House and its splendid gardens, animated by the spirits and memories of the many notable inhabitants, including Walter Cope, Henry Rich, Cromwell, Joseph Addison, Charles James Fox, Henry Richard Fox and Elizabeth Vassall. Above all it has been a place made famous by its guests – kings of England, literary figures and distinguished foreigners. Of these, some of the most interesting have been Portuguese.

Holland House was built *circa* 1605 in Abbot’s Manor, a parcel of the old Manor of Kensington formerly owned by the Earls of Oxford. Originally known as Cope Castle after its founder Sir Walter Cope

11. See also Longstaffe-Gowan: 64-68, 194-96.

(1553?-1614), it became Holland House when Sir Henry Rich (c.1590-1649), a rising man at the Court of James I was ennobled as Earl of Holland in 1624. Rich had married Cope's only daughter and heir, Isabel (†1655), in 1612. The architecture was typical of the Jacobean style and combined classical and contemporary elements. Cope was not only responsible for building the house itself but also for beginning the social and cultural associations for which it became even more famous in the days of third Lord and Lady Holland. The arcades and lateral wings suggesting two open arms, added sometime between 1621 and 1640 by Henry Rich, seems to represent a welcome and invitation to visitors. This spirit of tolerance and openness, present from its very foundation, was to forge the personality or presence of Holland House.¹²

Like many other courtiers and the King himself, Henry Rich did not survive the Civil War. His vacillations during the Great Rebellion, attempting to please both the King and the Parliament, led him to the block on 9 March 1649 and his properties were confiscated. Holland House was occupied for some time by the leaders of the Commonwealth, including Oliver Cromwell,¹³ but was later restored to Holland's widow, Isabel, who was allowed to return to Holland House with her many children.¹⁴ Holland House remained with Rich's descendants and heirs till 1768, when Henry Fox (1705-1774), first Baron of Holland and an influential figure at the Court of George II, purchased the property, which he had tenanted since

12. Cf. Sousa: 74-75.

13. Cf. Loftie: 74.

14. According to Loftie, Henry Rich and Isabel had ten children, though only eight reached majority. Of these eight, there is biographic information available for the following: Susannah Rich (†1649) married James Howard, 3rd Earl of Suffolk in 1646; Mary Rich (†1666), married John Campbell of Glenorchy (c.1635-1717), 1st Earl of Breadalbane and Holland in 1657; Frances Rich (1617-1672), married William Paget (1609-1678), Lord of Beaudesert in 1632; Robert Rich (c.1620-1675), 2nd Earl of Holland and 5th Earl of Warwick, married Elizabeth Ingram (†1661), daughter of Sir Arthur Ingram of Temple Newsam in 1641; Cope Rich (c.1635-1676); and Isabella Rich, married to Sir James Thynne of Longleat. (Loftie 75) There was also Lady Diana Rich, who John Aubrey claimed to have died of the small-pox a month after having seen her own image during a walk in her father's gardens at Kensington. (Aubrey: 126)

1746.¹⁵

Henry Fox died at Holland House on 1 July 1774. He was followed by his wife, Lady Caroline Lennox, *née* Lennox (1723-1774), a descendant of Charles II, who died only twenty-three days later on 24 July. Their eldest son, Stephen Fox (1745-1774), second Lord Holland, survived his parents by only a few months and died on 16 December of the same year, leaving two children, Caroline and Henry Richard, who succeeded him in the titles and property. Because of Stephen's gambling debts, his widow, Lady Mary Fitzpatrick (c.1750-1778), was forced to lease the House, moving with her children to Ampthill Park, Bedfordshire.¹⁶ Holland House remained leased until 1796, when Henry Richard Fox, third Lord Holland, began restoration work, a major and expensive project designed by George Saunders (1762-1839). It was not until September 1797, a few months after Holland's marriage to Elizabeth Vassall, that the House was ready for occupation.¹⁷

Elizabeth and Henry Richard's arrival marked the beginning of the most brilliant period in the history of Holland House. They restored it both physically and intellectually, returning to it the brightness and glory of former days. Animated by a new cosmopolitan breath, (Liechtenstein 1: 142) it became, to borrow Greville's words, "(...) the house of all Europe (...)" whose loss would "(...) eclipse the gaiety of nations". (2: 332) Opening its doors and drawing-rooms to European Society for magnificent dinners and brilliant conversation, Holland House was soon reckoned as one of the great salons of the sort satirised by Byron in *English Bards*:

Blest be the banquets spread at Holland House,

15. Cf. Ilchester, *The Home of the Hollands*: 32; *Henry Fox*, 1: 141.

16. Cf. Ilchester, *The Home of the Hollands*: 92, 104.

17. Henry and Elizabeth Vassall, then Lady Webster, had met at Florence on 3 February 1794 and became lovers. They returned to England at the beginning of June 1796 as a couple, causing enormous scandal in London Society, especially when Elizabeth's pregnancy became obvious. They married at Rickmansworth Church, Hertfordshire, early in the morning of 6 July 1797, two days after Elizabeth's marriage to Godfrey Webster had been annulled by an Act of Parliament on the grounds of her adultery.

Where Scotchmen feed, and Critics may carouse!
 Long, long beneath that hospitality roof,
 Shall Grub-street dine, while duns are kept aloof. (Byron: 43)

Lady Holland turned out to be a perfect hostess whose skills were only rivalled by Madame de Stäel (1766-1817), presiding over her salon with charm, brilliance and great style. The range of visitors during the Hollands' lifetime is so wide and impressive that it would be impossible – and if possible, monotonous – to mention them all. The Prince of Wales, the future George IV, Wellington, George Canning, Palmerston, Charles Grey and John Russell, Byron and Southey, Walter Scott, Caroline Norton and Charles Dickens, were only a few of the celebrated persons who attended the salon. Holland House was also visited by many foreign diplomats and became something of a place of refuge for “floating continental exiles”, (Kriegel: xv) including leading Portuguese figures such as the Morgado de Mateus and his wife, Madame de Sousa, Funchal, Palmela and, possibly, Almeida Garrett, the reputed founder of Portuguese Romanticism.

Following her husband's death on 22 October 1840, Lady Holland never again lived at Kensington, except for a few months in the spring and summer of 1842, when she made a few minor changes to the house.¹⁸ Henry Edward Fox, fourth and last Baron Holland, and his wife Mary Augusta Coventry, lived at Holland House for only a few months each year, usually in the early summer. When Lady Elizabeth Holland died, Henry Edward and his wife Mary Augusta Coventry lived abroad, mostly in Florence and Naples.¹⁹ Although demolition was considered and often advertised, the new Lord Holland decided to invest once more in improvements, first commissioning Clutton but later deciding on J. H. Browne.²⁰

Lord Holland died at Naples on 18 December 1859, leaving an

18. Cf. Keppel: 365.

19. While in Italy, the Hollands lived in Florence, at Palazzo Amerighi, and in Naples at Palazzo Rocella. The Palazzo Rocella was owned by Don Vincenzo Maria Carafa Cantelmo Stuart, Prince of Rocella, whose brother, Don Gerardo, was guest at the Holland House during the summer of 1852. (Ilchester, *Chronicles*: 393)

20. Cf. (“Holland House, and its inhabitants”: 148; *apud* Ilchester, *Chronicles*: 368)

adopted child only, Marie Fox (1850-1878), the author of *Holland House*.²¹ Marie Fox married Prince Aloise von Liechtenstein (1840-1920) in 1872 and died in Austria in 1878, childless. After Lady Mary Augusta's death on 20 September 1889, Holland House and what was left of the original property – much reduced by the Baroness in an attempt to pay her husband's debts – was inherited by Henry Edward Fox-Strangways (1847-1905), fifth Earl of Ilchester, a descendant of Stephen Fox (1704-1776), first Earl of Ilchester, brother of the first Baron Holland.

When Lord Ilchester took possession of Holland House in 1890, the mansion was once more in decay and requiring urgent restoration. The task was entrusted to the architect Robert Edis who, among many other changes, replaced the entire drainage system and roofs and installed electric lightning.²² Mary Eleanor Anne (1852-1935), Lady Ilchester, remained at Holland House long after her husband's death on 6 December 1905, devoting herself to the preservation of the mansion and its gardens, a task she performed with zeal and ability, resisting the strong pressure of urban expansion during the first quarter of the twentieth century. Henry Edward was succeeded in the title and property by his son, Giles Stephen Holland Fox-Strangways (1874-1959), sixth Earl of Ilchester, the distinguished official historian and biographer of the Fox family and Holland House. His many valuable works are quoted extensively throughout this article. He was also responsible for the transfer of the colossal family archive to the British Museum. This archive is now kept at the Department of Manuscripts of the British Library where it is known as 'The Holland House Papers'.²³

21. Dr Séguin, a family friend who presented the baby to the Hollands in 1851, had discovered her in Paris. Although her paternity was never revealed, the adoption raised suspicions, especially in Lady Holland, that Marie could be Holland's illegitimate child, a theory strengthened by the fact that relations between Marie and her adoptive mother were far from cordial. (Ilchester, *Chronicles*: 400-402)

22. Cf. Ilchester, *Chronicles*: 450.

23. Lord Ilchester stipulated in his will that the Fox family's papers should be donated to the British Museum, so that it can be available for students and investigators. The archive was formally delivered by his son Edward Henry in 1960. (Keppel: xii; Sousa: 73)

In September 1940, during a raid by the Luftwaffe, three high explosive bombs fell near Holland House, causing little damage. A few days later, however, on the night of 27-28 September, Kensington suffered a further attack. This time the damage was far greater; a total of twenty-two incendiary bombs fell on the grounds of Holland House and, despite the efforts of the firemen who fought the flames for more than twelve hours, the building was practically destroyed. Only the eastern wing and a few sections of the western wing survived. When Giles Stephen arrived early in the morning, Holland House was still burning, and he watched, helpless, as more than three centuries of history were destroyed. On 16 June 1952, after seven years of intense negotiations, the London County Council purchased the property from Lord Ilchester, for two hundred and fifty thousand pounds. In the following year, demolition was considered as the ruined building appeared to be beyond repair. Fortunately demolition was averted largely due to strong opposition by the Kensington Society and Lord Ilchester himself. An agreed solution was reached in March 1954. Most of the House would be demolished – and this was done in 1957 – but the eastern wing would be retained. The Wing was restored with financial support from the King George VI Memorial Fund and a modern adjacent building was added. The new building, by the architects Hugh Casson (1910-1999) and Neville Conder (1922-2003), was highly controversial.²⁴ When the work was completed in 1959, what was left of the Holland House was put under the administration of the Youth Hostels Association. A Youth Hostel was inaugurated by Queen Elizabeth II on 25 May 1959,²⁵ and is still operating. In 1996, the ‘Opera Holland Park’, a summer opera company producing annual season performances under a temporary canopy in Holland Park, was established. More recently, The Belvedere, a smart and expensive Anglo-French style restaurant was inaugurated at the Summer Ballroom.

24. Cf. Hudson: 130-131.

25. Cf. *The Times* 26 May 1959: 12.

The gardens of Holland House, currently known as Holland Park, were created in the early 17th century, when Walter Cope built his 'Cope Castle' and continued by his son in law, Henry Rich. Despite the austerity of the Commonwealth, Isabel Cope made several improvements to the mansion and outbuildings, as an inscription on a stone found near the old stables in 1806 seems to reveal. Although this stone is now lost, Faulkner transcribed the epigraph in 1820: "This side done by y^e La. Holland, A.D. 1654". (Faulkner: 68) The stone was possibly used later for the construction of an arcade in the garden, but its location is not known. A curious account of Lady Diana Rich by John Aubrey is also worth mentioning here. A month after seeing her own image while walking in her father's garden at Kensington to get fresh air before dinner she died of small-pox. According to the same author, her sister Isabella had the same experience shortly before her own death. (126) Diana was one of Isabel and Henry Rich's ten children, one who did not survive childhood; her name was not recorded in any book of peerage or genealogy.

Of course the surroundings of Holland House in the Riches' times were quite different from those we observe today. Although in the early years of Queen Anne's reign, at the beginning of the 18th century, the region had already become "(...) a Handsome Populous Place (...)", (Bowack 1: 15) Kensington was still a bucolic and pleasant site in Middlesex, where "(...) milkmaids and sportsmen wandered, between green hedges and over fields bright with daisies (...)". (Macaulay: 253) In a mid-18th century drawing by J. Vardy, Holland House is pictured in the middle of an almost empty ground, with a few huge trees around and a wood in the distance. The gardens and pleasure grounds, which completed the feature of Holland House as we know it, were added sometime after Lord Henry and Lady Georgiana Fox moved to the House in 1746, by Peter Collinson (1694-1768) and Charles Hamilton (1704-1786), two well-known arboriculturists.²⁶ In the 1748 edition of *A Tour Through the Whole Island of*

26. Cf. Ilchester, *Henry Fox* 1: 175.

Great Britain, the author congratulated the new tenants of "(...) the famous old Edifice, which has been long decaying (...)", for the "(...) prodigious Improvement, as well to the Estate as to the Town, and all its neighbourhood". (Dafoe 2: 162)²⁷

The following substantial improvements in the gardens were made by Bonaiuti after 1802, on the third Lord and Lady Holland's instructions, including the creation of a 'Portuguese Garden' in the western side of the House, portrayed by Liechtenstein as "(...) a gigantic bouquet of the gayest flowers". (1: 175) In 1820, Faulkner described it as a 'French garden', probably owing to its symmetry and geometrical shape, "(...) the nursery bed of the most fashionable plant of the present day, the genus Dahlia". (124) By the mid-19th century, Leigh Hunt referred to the garden as the "(...) way our grandmothers and great-grandmothers, the Chloes and Delias of the 18th century, enjoyed their flower-beds". (125) As Gloag saw it in 1906:

This Dutch Garden is delightfully set out, the geometrical Parterres of black earth, edged with closely-clipped Box, are intersected by narrow Gravel Paths converging diagonally towards two Fountains and an Armillary Sphere, which are placed in a line, some distance apart, in the centre of the Garden. (237)

In November 1812, Lord Holland himself explained: "There is a fountain, with old marble columns in the middle, and black borders and green figures, and all sorts of gimcracks". (*apud* Ilchester, *Chronicles*: 491) Alongside the geraniums, calceolarias and other summer flowers, there were also dahlias, reintroduced to England by Lady Holland, who had sent the seeds over from Spain in 1804 and 1814. After her husband's death, during one of her stays at Holland House, Lady Holland wrote: "The gardens are as perfect as ever, the flowers never more brilliant; the dahlias *he* so admired shine in every colour.

27. As Dafoe died in 1731, this edition must have been updated by another hand.

It is quite heart breaking". (*apud* Ilchester, *Chronicles*: 294) During these moments of melancholy, Lady Holland must have recalled the lines her husband had written for her many years earlier:

The Dahlia you brought to our isle,
Your praises for ever shall speak,
'Mid gardens as sweet as your smile,
And in colours as bright as your cheek.
(Holland *apud* Ilchester, *Chronicles*: 491)

According to Marie Fox, who lived at Holland House until her marriage to Prince von Liechtenstein in 1872,

(...) the Dutch (*quondam* Portuguese) Garden, laid out in that good old-fashioned way so rarely met with now. Flowers, surrounded with a framework of box-edging, form fitful patterns through which, turning from the House, we walk in zigzags. But there is a straight path for those who prefer it, which runs parallel with a high wall making an espalier. Towards the end of this garden is a kind of evergreen curtain formed by an arcade covered with ivy. Through this arcade we notice another flower garden (also Dutch), in which the Dahlia stands the monarch of all it survey. (1: 175)

Dahlias had first been introduced into England in 1789 by Lady Bute, whose husband, John Stuart (1744-1814), the future Marquess of Bute, was Minister at Madrid in 1783, but these failed. In 1803, the Dahlia coccinea was introduced in England by the Scottish traveller John Fraser (1750-1811), who established a nursery in Chelsea, but he was no more successful than his predecessor. In the Autumn 1804, Bonaiuti had managed to bring at least three varieties of dahlias to flower, whose seeds had been sent from Spain – though it seems these flowers did not survive for long.²⁸ According to Faulkner, while in Spain in 1803, the Hollands met the Spanish botanist Antonio

28. Cf. Hogg: 4-5.

José de Cavanilles (1745-1804), who procured exotic seeds for them. Although the seeds arrived at Holland House in May 1804, about the time Cavanilles died in Madrid, it was not until mid-September that the first flowers appeared. (124-25) One such dahlia, a purple one, the dwarf winged-leaved dahlia, was illustrated in the *Botanist's Repository*.²⁹ Lady Holland tried the experiment again in 1814, with seeds sent from Spain, this time more successfully, as when Jessie Macgregor published her *Gardens of Celebrities* in 1918, the dahlias "(...) still grows abundantly near 'Rogers' Seat', the famous alcove where the poet Rogers was wont to sit, which faces that bust of Napoleon, by Canova, that, ten years after Waterloo, Lord Holland put up on a pedestal in the 'Dutch' or 'West Garden.'" (224)

As earlier suggested, it was probably the polychromatic landscapes of Portugal that induced the Hollands to create a 'Portuguese Garden' at Holland House. Lady Holland's journals are filled with descriptions of flora, trees and shrubs as well as agricultural practices, an interest John Clarke describes as "(...) a very British fashion of the time". (10-11) On 16 December 1808, after crossing the Minho and entering Portugal, Lady Holland observed:

For the first league the road lay through cultivated cheerful country, some olives, alcornoques, and woods of oaks. League 3 quarters begun ascending a terrible Cuesta or M.¹ view back upon the valley very pretty, diversified by white houses churches, very woody. At the summit one loses sight of the Miño. Bay trees, myrtles fragrant, box hedges. (...) Sierra de Bruxas or the M.¹ of Witches is well covered with wood. (BL, HHP, MSS Add. 51934, Lady Holland's Journals: 1808-1809, ff. 59^r-59^v, 16 December 1808)

Two days later, she wrote: "the approach to Oporto very handsome the Country houses are substantial & ornamented with gardens and pleasure houses." (BL, HHP, MSS Add. 51934, Lady Holland's

29. 'Plate CCCCLXXXIII: Dahlia pinnara nana. Dwarf winged-leaved Dahlia.' *Botanist's Repository: Comprising Colour'd Engravings of New and Rare Plants* 7: [n. p.]



Dutch Garden, c.1874. *Liechtenstein* 1: 175

Journals: 1808-1809, f. 65^v, 18 December 1808) While at Oporto, she described "(...) the Quintas with Orange & Lemon Trees are charmingly situated – one very handsome belongs to the Secretary of the Regency at Lisbon, a Fidalgo & man of parts." On the opposite bank of the Douro, she admired the Augustinian Monastery of Serra do Pilar: "Their Quinta is extensive & ornamented with a Mirador or Summer house, and gardens hanging down the steep declivity of the m.^t to the River." (BL, HHP, MSS Add. 51934, Lady Holland's Journals: 1808-1809, f. 67^r, 20 December 1808) On their way to Lisbon, on 22 December, the Hollands stopped at the Monastery of Grijó, where Lady Holland was delighted with the cloisters and the 'très riant' environs, "the Quinta is filled with large orange & lemon trees & has good gravel walks – a large Cenador³⁰ a pretty building in one part, & another ornamental building with a billiard table." (BL, HHP, MSS Add. 51934, Lady Holland's Journals: 1808-1809, ff. 71^r-71^v, 23 December 1808) At Coimbra, Lady and Lord Holland visited the charming *Quinta das Lágrimas* where they could observe "(...) three large spreading beautiful red Cedars (...)" and "(...) a spring which runs through a small channel into a fountain just in that spot tradition says poor Ignez was murdered." (BL, HHP, MSS Add. 51934, Lady Holland's Journals: 1808-1809, f. 78^v, 27 December 1808)

While at Lisbon, on 6 January 1809, Lady Holland and Mr Allen visited the Royal Botanical Garden of Ajuda, (BL, HHP, MSS Add. 51935, Lady Holland's Journals: 1809, f. 3^v, 6 January 1809) established in the early years of the reign of Dona Maria I and placed under the direction of the Italian naturalist Domenico Vandelli.³¹ The original project, probably by Vandelli, appears to have been conceived under Pombal, but the Minister was dismissed before he could see it finished.³² On 17 January, Lady Holland wrote: "I walked

30. *Cenador* (Sp., Port.: *caramanchão*), space commonly round in the gardens, made of wood or iron stacks, covered with plants; summer-house made of lattice-work.

31. Domenico Agostino Vandelli (1735-1816), Italian naturalist, the son of Jeronymo Vandelli, he made most of his career in Portugal, where he came about 1765 at Pombal's invitation to teach philosophy at the University of Coimbra.

32. Cf. Barbosa: 220-222; *A Handbook for Travellers in Portugal* 1: 397.

the other morning in Debisme's gardens at Bemfica." (BL, HHP, MSS Add. 51935, Lady Holland's Journals: 1809, f. 11^r, 17 January 1809) Gerard de Visme (1726-1797) was a wealthy French businessman established at Lisbon for forty years where he made a large fortune. He was the son of a French Huguenot exiled in Britain and a younger brother of the diplomat Louis de Visme (1720-1796). Gerard was the owner of a fine property and mansion at São Domingos de Benfica, now in the outskirts of Lisbon, near the Palace of the Marquês de Fronteira and worth £30,000 in 1790.³³ According to William Beckford, who travelled in Portugal in 1787, the gardens as "(...) eclipses our Clapham and Islington villas in all the attractions of leaden statues, Chinese temples, serpentine rivers, and dusty hermitages". (2: 98)

On 21 January, the Hollands crossed the Tagus to Aldeia Galega on their way to Seville. Although it was winter, Lady Holland was delighted at the sight of the "(...) many varieties of the Erica, the cists, & innumerable bulbous plants, Myrtles, Junipers the dwarf or creeping oak, Spanish broom & a shrub which seemed to me not unlike azaleas (...)", though admitting "(...) I have no knowledge whatever upon the subject, many of these were in flower & the colors were very pleasing." (BL, HHP, MSS Add. 51935, Lady Holland's Journals: 1809, f. 17^r, 22 January 1809) On 5 July 1809, the Hollands were back to Portugal on their way to Lisbon to embark for England. Lady Holland praised "The country just about Elvas (...)", which she described as "(...) exceedingly beautiful & cheerful; the fresh green mixed with olives, the vines, Quintas, aqueducts, fountains. Large tanks for watering altogether remarkably pleasing." (BL, HHP, MSS Add. 51937, Lady Holland's Journals: 1809, f. 51^r, 6 July 1809) A few miles ahead, she admired "(...) the foliage of the trees this season is very luxuriant – flowers of every sort & variety in great abundance,

33. De Visme's property at Benfica was later acquired by D. Pedro de Lencastre da Silveira Castelo Branco Sá e Menezes (1771-1828), 3rd Marquês de Abrantes, whose heir sold it to the Infanta D. Isabel Maria in 1834. The Palace, situated at the Largo de São Domingos de Benfica, was built under the direction of the Architect Inácio de Oliveira Bernardes (1697-1781). (Proença 1: 435-44; Ferreira 103)

shrubs in flower very beautiful." (BL, HHP, MSS Add. 51937, Lady Holland's Journals: 1809, f. 54^r, 8 July 1809) At *Quinta da Bacalhoa*, the Renaissance village at Azeitão where they spent the night of 12 July, Lady Holland described:

(...) the garden is very much ornamented, in the center opposite the back front of the House, there is a large Pantano³⁴ with a Pavilion in the Center to which we go by a causeway, the water is clear & has a number of gold & silver fish in it, the remainder of the garden consists of ornamented platforms, terraces, statues &c – & below a large orange ground. (BL, HHP, MSS Add. 51937, Lady Holland's Journals: 1809, f. 66^r, 12 July 1809)

Although the first reference to a 'Portuguese Garden' dates from 1812, Bonaiuti had already been working in the gardens for the last ten years.³⁵ He was in charge of the House and gardens during the Hollands' absence in the Peninsula from 8 July 1802 to 6 May 1805, and again between 9 October 1808 and 10 August 1809.³⁶ While his employers were abroad, Bonaiuti took his instructions from Lady Caroline Fox, who may well have suggested the name 'Portuguese' for the garden. Although there is no evidence that Caroline Fox ever spoke or wrote in Portuguese, she maintained a regular correspondence with her 'Little Brother', as she used to call Lord Holland, while he was in Spain and Portugal. A few years later, in the mid-1830s, Caroline Fox formed a literary society at Little Holland House, a group of women of literary and historical interests, including Maria Callcott (1785-1842), tutor to the Infanta D. Maria da Glória for a short time in 1824, Mary Russell Mitford (1787-1855), Caroline Norton (1808-1847) and her sister Helen Blackwood (1807-1867). They had in common a keen interest in Portuguese culture and literature and, except for Caroline Fox, who never published, and Helen

34. *Pântano* (Port.), swamp, probably she meant the tank in the garden.

35. Cf. Ilchester, *The Home of the Hollands*: 190.

36. Cf. BL, HHP, MSS Add. 51950, Dinner Books: 1799-1806, f. 97^r, Thursday, 8 July 1802; E. Holland, *The Spanish Journal*: 187, 202, 371.



Tile panels in Holland Park / Fotog. Tim Knox

Blackwood, all members of this lusophile circle of women published works related to Portugal.

The freehold of the farm premises known as Little Holland House, in Kensington, had been purchased by Stephen Fox, second Lord Holland, from a Mr. Bowles in 1774, and subsequently became the home of Caroline Fox.³⁷ A century later, in 1875, when Lord Ilchester took possession of the property, Little Holland House was sold and then demolished to allow the construction of Melbury Road. The first house to be built in the grounds was that of George Frederic Watts, the famous English Victorian painter and sculptor who had been tenant of Little Holland House for many years. The place was described by Sir Sidney Colvin as "(...) the joint home of the painter George Frederic Watts and the old friends, the Thoby Prinseps, with whom he was domesticated". (90)

Another aspect worth mentioning here, is the several panel tiles in Holland Park and their possible Portuguese influence – if not origin. As earlier noted, the fact that the 'Portuguese Garden' was renamed 'Dutch' at some point, may have been due to the Hollands' increasing interest for the new Kingdom of Netherlands from 1815. This theory gains plausibility from the tiled floors Lord Holland introduced on the East side of the House, converted into a new Entrance Hall by the fourth Lord Holland in 1848 and described by Liechtenstein as Italian.³⁸ It is possible, however, that the tiles were really Dutch, not least because a picture of a chained black dog and inscription in the East front of the House, based on a well-known mosaic at Pompeii, was reproduced on a Dutch tile installed at Little Holland House in 1828.³⁹ Unfortunately, while Little Holland House was demolished, Holland House was destroyed by German bombs in 1941, and these panels may not have survived.

When asked whether the colourful ceramic tiles, which still survive in the niches in the outer terraces at Holland House Park and

37. Cf. Ilchester, *The Home of the Hollands*: 92.

38. Cf. Liechtenstein 1: 205.

39. Cf. Ilchester, *Chronicles*: 453.

restored at the end of the 1980's by Clare Spicer, could have been made in Portugal, Dr João Pedro Monteiro of the Portuguese *Museu Nacional do Azulejo* ('National Museum of Tiles') is adamant that the sizes and colours indicate that they were probably made in Holland – certainly not in Portugal.⁴⁰ It is possible, however, that some of the original drawings for these panels, prepared under the Hollands' instructions, reflected their memories of their time in Portugal many years earlier. They had certainly been impressed and, after visiting the cloister of Oporto Cathedral, Lady Holland had described it as "(...) very beautiful & quite in the Moorish style of architecture, the walls are covered with glazed coloured tiles, the first I have seen in the north of Portugal." (BL, HHP, MSS Add. 51934, Lady Holland's Journals: 1808-1809, f. 68^v, 21 Dec. 1808) Although Lady Holland did not mention it, she certainly noticed the fine tile panels at the *Quinta da Bacalhoa*.

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40. We are indebted to Timothy Knox, Director of The Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, for kindly supplying us with a few fine photos of the panels of his authorship, and to Architect Ernesto Martins, who kindly contacted Dr João Pedro Monteiro on our behalf.

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