

Editorial

"Generosity is the essence of friendship"

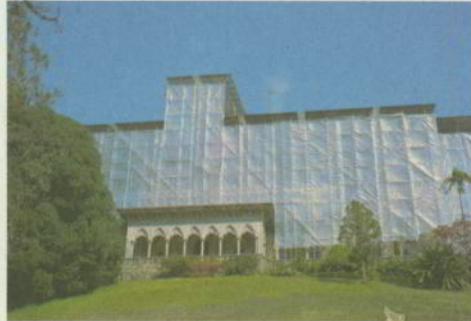
As Oscar Wilde so well put it, our Association has come to realise, over nearly four years of existence, that without the generosity and trust of our "Friends of Monserrate" we would not be here to tell the tale:- how finally, hopefully and sustainably, the gardens and palace are receiving the attention they deserve from the government departments concerned.

Restoration of the gardens has begun. Eight tons of ferns were imported from New Zealand in April 98 and planted by Landscape Architect Gerald Luckhurst and the lake below Beckford's Falls was cleaned. "Mexico" was cleared by "Viveiros Falcão" though the job was not completed. More plans are in store for restoring the lawn and the area around the main entrance. A temporary cover on the Palace was installed and will shortly be followed by the installation of a permanent lead roof to replace the original which was sold in the 40's.

One of the aims of our Association has been to inform of Monserrate's uniqueness and its dire needs. However, gardens and gardening have not been in this nation's list of priorities, so our work has been made doubly difficult.

This attitude is well illustrated in an article "Bilhetes de Colares" in "Visão" - June 96 - by A.B. Kotter, when, talking about the portuguese flora and fauna the English resident is told: "My dear chap, in matters referring to the countryside and greenery, up to the knees it is a weed, from the knees to eye-level it is a bush and anything taller is a tree - and that is enough for me."

The good news is that this mentality is changing at its grass roots. Garden centres flourish, new projects like Expo 98 dedicate a great deal of money and space to its green areas. At public and private



levels, interest in gardens and more specifically Monserrate, has grown. The amount of space and time dedicated by the Portuguese media to Monserrate is a good indication that a neglected garden is no longer acceptable.

The launch of our book "Trees of Monserrate" in the Autumn of 97, which included a list and description of the more important trees in the Garden as well as a map, a description of the garden and the story of Monserrate, was a great success.

So we soldier on inspired by your support!



Photos by Clive Gilbert

OUR THANKS TO THE FOLLOWING SPONSORS FOR THEIR SUPPORT

- Banco Comercial Português
- Bolachas Triunfo
- British Council
- Sintra Town Council
- Forestry Government Department
- Edições INAPA
- Hoteis Tivoli Sintra
- Sintra National Palace
- Tejo Energia
- Willis Corroon Correctores de Seguros Lda.

- Gerald Luckhurst
- Prof. Fernando Catarino
- João Freitas
- Raúl Constância

Our thanks to the national and international press for all their support in helping in the campaign to restore and maintain this Portuguese national heritage.

Friends of Monserrate
Amigos de Monserrate

For further information,

please call:
Lisboa 726 4360

or by Mail to:

Associação Amigos de Monserrate
Rua Augusto dos Santos, 2 - 4º
1000 Lisboa



The Palace by Carol Rankin

Curiosities

Photos by Clive Gilbert



Example of rustic gothic window, with cork frame, presently occupied by the Forestry Government Department



Plate and cutlery on a washing up sink outside the kitchen



Detail of marble fountain in the central hallway of the palace



Detail of bas-relief flower motifs.

Born in Lisbon, Carol Rankin knew Monserrate well as a child. Now as a Lecturer and Art Historian she takes a keen interest in the historical background and architecture of the Palace.



Interior view of corridor and hallway leading to the music room (photos ex Knight Frank & Rutley sale catalogue of the beginning of the century)

James Knowles Senior, son of a glazier, eventually became the family architect to the Cook family, owners of Monserrate between the 1860's and the 1940's, who had made their fortune in the textile trade. A self-made architect suited the self-made family admirably, understanding their needs and tastes, so when Francis Cook decided to build a house at Monserrate he naturally chose Knowles to design it.

Knowles was an adaptable architect, willing to design any building in any style and he usually tried to incorporate the latest architectural trends and influences. In the 1850's the Gothic revival movement was in full swing in Britain and there was much interest in oriental architecture, fuelled by the Indian Pavilion at the Great Exhibition of 1851 and by the opening of Brighton Pavilion to the public.

Doubt exists as to whether Knowles ever accompanied Cook to Monserrate in 1857-8, but in 1858 initial project drawings were produced. The reason for the delay in construction, which only started in 1863, might have been due to difficulties in purchasing the land, or because turnover in the family business was down (the firm was to pay for the building) or perhaps because Knowles was very busy with his project for the Grosvenor Hotel in London.

There are Gothic, Indian and Moorish influences on the building's exterior as well as ideas Knowles had incorporated in his earlier designs for the Grosvenor Hotel such as "eyelid" windows. It is known that Knowles referred to books by James Fergusson on Oriental architecture and "The Alhambra" by Owen Jones.

The profusion of ornamentation was very much one of Knowles' hallmarks and the floral and foliate ornamentation provide an obvious link between house and garden.

The interior of the house had been decorated with a mixture of Classical and Oriental pieces. It was designed to provide space for displaying the overflow from Cook's sculpture collection in its bays, niches and open spaces mainly in the corridor and music room. Its walls provided spaces for hanging his paintings and tapestries, even though Cook's main collection was at his home in England and Monserrate was never intended to be his principal residence.

Music Room



With so many houses and palaces being built in Sintra in such a variety of architectural styles, Monserrate did not look out of place in these hills. Knowles never came to see the finished building, but Francis Cook and his family were delighted with the results - Knowles stated aim had been "to catch the spirit of an exotic semi-tropical villa". I leave this to each of you to decide whether he achieved this.

Library



Activities

As has been our aim since the very beginning, in January 1995, we have planned our activities towards making Monserrate and its uniqueness better known. A well-known garden is a cherished garden!

The two most important occasions in this last year were the launch of our book "Trees of Monserrate" in October 97 and the special visit to our "Hands-on" in May 98 by the President of the Portuguese Republic, Mr. Jorge Sampaio.

The book, written by João Freitas and with photographs by Raúl Constâncio, includes a brief history of Monserrate by Andrew Bull and a watercoloured map of the Gardens by John O'Connor. It is published in English and Portuguese editions, both in hard and soft back covers. We are specially proud of this work which we hope will give visitors a better insight into Monserrate's unique collection of trees and which will also provide a tangible record for future generations.

Mr. Sampaio, (a regular member of our Association), his son André, Mr. José Vera Jardim, Justice Minister, Ms Edite Estrela Mayor of Sintra, Mr. Roger Westbrook the British Ambassador and many others came to give the "Friends" a helping hand in their usual first Sunday of the month gardening activity. The volunteers planted tree ferns, cut down weed trees (mainly acacias), pruned and labelled, swept and hoed. It was a much publicised event and the President himself said "this, I like to do...!"

Many guided tours of the Gardens were organised by the Executive Committee. The groups included visitors from a from Boston, USA; landscape architects from the Sorbonne in Paris; Iberlant staff; members of the Clube dos Bons Jardins from the Algarve; the European Council of International Schools; students from two local English schools, NADFAS - members of an antique and fine arts dealers association from Britain, and local and foreign journalists including Belgian National Television, British and American landscape architects and British Historical Society members.



Two friends of Monserrate help the visiting Lord Mayor of London (right) plant a Lime next to the Palace



Dr. Jorge Sampaio, President of Portugal, plants a New Zealand tree fern in the newly restored fern valley

In April 96, under blue skies and with warm spring weather, over 80 men, women and children, joined in a walk following William Beckford's steps as described in his diary, written in 1787. Prof. Fernando Catarino, Director of Lisbon's Botanical Gardens led this walk, from Praia da Adraga to Praia da Ursa, close to Cabo da Roca, adding colour to the event with his descriptions of the the very specific flora of the area.

Beckford's walk was followed by a three day excursion to the Gardens of northern Portugal in May. The year's activities culminated with a viewing of the Channel 4 TV film on Portuguese Gardens sponsored by the British Council and the English Speaking Union.

During the Spring of 97 a visit to the "Golden Valley" in Monserrate was attended by our more adventurous members since the paths that lead to this beautiful area of the garden are greatly overgrown. The tour was guided by Landscape Architect Gerald Luckhurst. Palace doors were specially opened for the Friends for Dr. Sérgio Rau Silva's (of the IPPAR-Portuguese Institute for Architectural Heritage) lecture on its historical background.

The Spring of 98 was a busy one. The Lord Mayor of London, Sir Richard Nichols, planted a Lime tree in Monserrate to replace the one which fell in the Winter of 97, just by the Palace. The well attended Open Day, in June, started with a Treasure Hunt and was followed by a cold lunch. The Friends also inaugurated the small theatre belonging to the Forestry Government Department with the showing of a video on an English Arboretum, so the "Friends" could see how a garden was run in England. That same month, the Friends of Monserrate were awarded a silver medal by the Sintra Town Council for their contribution in promoting the cultural image of this World Heritage site.



A duet

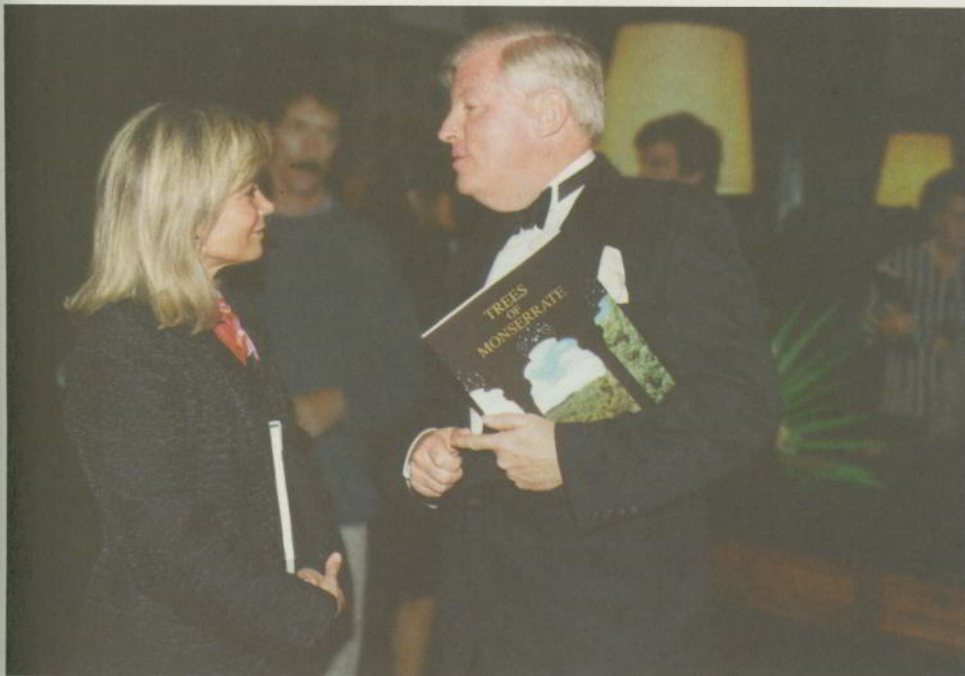
By *Maria Filomena Mónica on the Trees of Monserrate*

Ex. **O Independente** (Newspaper) **7.11.97**

Baudelaire, feeling melancholic, meditates on the possibility of one day moving to Lisbon: "Cette ville est au bord de l'eau; on dit qu'elle est bâtie em marbre, et que le peuple y a une tell haine du végétal, qu'il arrache tous les arbres". This fact (that the Lisbon inhabitants cut down trees anywhere they dare to sprout) did not frighten him. It horrifies me. The story of the planting and later abandonment of Monserrate is an example of the Portuguese nation's incapacity to appreciate trees. The Association of the Friends of Monserrate, which include many foreign members, has been calling the government's attention to the abandoned state in which both Palace - the neo-moorish building designed by Knowles - and the magnificent romantic gardens presently find themselves.

Published by INAPA, this book not only tells the story of the Cook family, the English textile merchants who fell in love with Sintra, but also gives practical advice on how to identify the trees in this Garden.

João Sande Freitas, writer, Emma Gilbert, Chairman of the Friends of Monserrate, and Raúl Constância, photographer, at the "Trees of Monserrate" book launch at the Sintra Vila Palace



Edite Estrela, Mayoress of Sintra talking to British Ambassador Roger Westbrook

The property was bought in 1718 by D. Caetano de Melo e Castro, 36th Vice-Roy of India, and was sold by his heirs to Francis Cook in 1863. In the meantime, Monserrate was rented to Gerard DeVisme and the famous William Beckford who made some improvements on the Palace and Gardens.

The most enchanting feature however, is the garden designed and planted by the gardener Francis Burt, who came to Portugal with Cook and remained

here for the rest of his life. They worked as a team - a duet. Riding on a donkey, wearing a panama hat and with a cigar in his mouth, Cook checked everything: the fern growth, the colour of the Persimmon trees, how the *Metrosideros* were adapting to their new environment..

If only to help this group of friends who against all odds have maintained the interest for Monserrate alive, I highly recommend you buy this book.



by Courtesy of The Tree Register of the British Isles

With the coming of winter, chores in the garden are coming to the fore. A perfect timing for the aftercare of trees. Evidence of this lack of care is mostly noticed in newly planted trees in parks and alongside roads but some private gardens also suffer from this.

Below are some helpful guidelines:

1. When buying plants be sure to choose vigorous, young and healthy plants. In the case of trees "the smaller the better", rather than a larger tree which will take longer to establish and is more expensive: a false economy.
 2. Before planting, clear a 1.5m diameter planting area, ideally pre-sprayed with herbicide. This will give the tree a good start without the competition of grass and weeds.
 3. A large and wide planting hole should be dug to a depth of the rootball, or a full spade depth. Wider holes rather than deep help the plant to establish better.
 4. Thorough preparation to the soil should be given before planting, rather than adding organic matter or commercial additives when planting.
 5. After planting, a mulching-mat (cut to size) should be fitted around the base of the young tree to prevent invasive weeds from stifling the tree's growth. On this layer place some coarse bark chips to form an extra layer of mulch and to mask the mulching mat.
 6. Ideas on staking have changed dramatically. Use stakes only where absolutely necessary and stub-staking is the best technique as this allows the tree to move in the wind and build up "muscle".
 7. In case of rabbit infestation fit rabbit guards.
 8. Feed young trees every year for at least the first five years with a good general slow-release fertilizer.
 9. When double stems or several leading shoots appear, formative pruning should be undertaken so a well proportioned tree with one fine strong leading shoot is ensured.
 10. Never attach a label to a leading shoot which can cause strangulation and ruin the young tree.
 11. Galvanised wire (2mm plastic coated) is ideal for attaching labels, although on larger trunks a Hilti nail and spring can be used.
 12. Place a small stake adjacent to the newly planted tree in areas of high bracken growth. This will make for easy location in summer.
- N.B.** Keep weed growth away from the base of young trees for a period of at least five years.

Flora

WELLINGTONIA

Sequoiadendron giganteum (Lindl.) Bucholz

"THE YOUNG CENTENNIAL TREE"

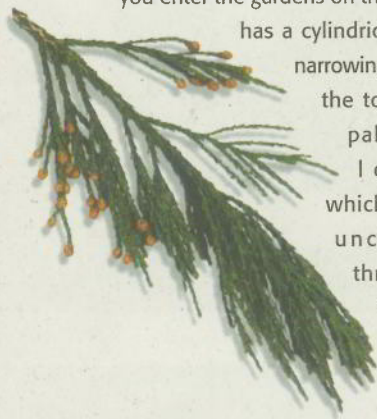
by João Sande Freitas

Family: Taxodiaceae

Other common names: Big tree, giant redwood

Portuguese name: 'Sequóia-gigante'

How to recognize it: This is the tallest tree as you enter the gardens on the left and has a cylindrical crown narrowing towards the top. It has pale green leaves which remain unchanged throughout the year.



Origin: West-facing slopes of California's Sierra Nevada at between 1,500 m and 2,000 above sea level.

Origin of the scientific name: Sequoia comes from Sequoyah, the son of an English trader and a Cherokee Indian woman, who lived between 1770 and 1843. He invented the alphabet for the Indian language of his people. Dendron is the Greek for tree. The Latin giganteum means giant.

Though a hundred years old and the tallest tree in the Entrance Garden, it is a young specimen and still growing. This apparent contradiction is due to the fact that wellingtonias can live for about 3,000 to 4,000 years and can grow to a height of about 100 m, with a diameter close to ground level of 27 m. These figures refer to a tree now dead, for the largest known living specimen stands 83 m

high and its trunk diameter measure 24 m. This makes it the largest living being with an estimated weight of 1,380 tons. This is far greater than the weight of the largest land animal, the elephant, which reaches a weight of just 8 tons, and the largest sea animal, the blue whale, the greatest of which weighed about 190 tons. Our young specimen weighs about 10.5 tons. A curious fact is that 25 of its seeds only weigh one gram*; this is an advantage for a tree that relies on the winds to scatter its seed abroad.



Imagine this tree in, say, 500 years' time and think of our responsibility for keeping it safe for future generations. The death of such trees through negligence is a crime that would require hundreds of years to repair.

*From little acorns mighty oak trees grow!





Schreiber's green lizard being born

Photo by Isabel Galvão

THE ENDANGERED GREEN LIZARD FINDS A HOME IN MONSERRATE by Maria João Marques (biologist)

Schreiber's green lizard (*Lacerta schreiberi*) is an endemic species of the Iberian Peninsula. It is included in the Bern Convention and in the EU Habitat Directive, with a Non Threatened status of conservation in Portugal. This lizard lives in humid areas, preferably near streams with vegetation, where it can find insects and berries to eat.

With a robust appearance, this lizard measures about 12 cm (excluding its tail), which makes it the second largest lizard in Portugal. Males have their back coloured in a green-yellow with black spots. During reproduction their heads become more blue. Females are more discreetly coloured - their backs are brownish with black spots.



Schreiber's green lizard - young eating

Photo by Isabel Galvão

Schreiber's green lizards' population of Sintra belongs to a populational group established continuously throughout the Portuguese coastal areas, probably from the valley of the river Mondego to the Monchique hills. These were fragmented and extinct since the last glaciation, due to climatic changes and, more recently, to anthropogenic actions on the coastal areas. Presently the distribution of this species is found in the southern and central coastal areas and is characterised by isolated and fragmented groups like in the Sintra and Cercal hills.

According to several studies, Schreiber's green lizard in the Sintra hills is currently very depleted. Moreover, the habitats occupied by this species are potentially threatened due to man's influence, so it is under environmental stress and risks extinction.



Schreiber's green lizard - one year old male

Photo by Isabel Galvão

L. schreiberi's recovery plan began in 1996. Techniques and proceedings were studied until September 1997 to verify the project's viability. The recovery of this population will occur during the next three years and it relies on reintroduction sessions, implementation of a captive stock population and the recovery and protection of the habitats.

The first reintroduction session occurred in September 1997 when six young lizards, raised in captivity, were released. Monserrate is the best location for this type of action, for the following three main reasons: it is in Monserrate that the largest nucleus of Schreiber's green lizard population in Sintra is found; Monserrate habitats still have enough area and quality and can be recovered; finally, it is in a specially protected area within the Sintra-Cascais Natural Park and therefore the species will be less disturbed.

