



**CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT:**

British American writer, reporter and cartoonist Anthony Haden-Guest with sticker on his head; young Florence with Anthony; gilder – the Hon Rupert Coke; an example of Rupert's amazing work at Holkham Hall.

► Situated adjacent to Attingham Park, Longner Hall is another Nash design. Built in 1803 on the site of the previous manor house it has been the Burton family seat since the 14th century.

Nash blithely offered to work 'in any style, Grecian, Swiss or any kind of Gothic.' The Burtons chose the last and the result is his most bravura work in the Gothic manner.

The park and grounds were landscaped by Humphry Repton around 1804. Repton had sought to dissuade the Burtons from rebuilding their manor house.

He told them people associated 'new money with gauche houses'. He advised them to stick with the old presumably so as he could spend more money on the landscape.

Today, Gill Burton explains 'Longner's attraction lies in its Repton landscape surrounding the Nash designed Hall. We have also recently put the Walled Garden back into production with the help of Tom Donnelly, a professional gardener'.

Longner Hall's Open Garden is 2pm – 5pm, Sunday, May 6. It is part of the National Garden Scheme with funds raised being donated to Macmillan Cancer.

Teas will be served from the Garden Studio with proceeds going to St Eata's Church, Atcham.

## GOLDEN MOMENTS

In London recently I visited Rupert Coke at work gilding in the Brompton Oratory, Knightsbridge. Rupert was brought up at Holkham Hall, Norfolk, a masterpiece of Palladian revival designed by William Kent and Thomas Coke, a dilettante and enthusiast. Rupert's father, the present Earl of Leicester, is a champion of the survival of great houses and I hosted him to lunch at Cronhill with other members of the Society of Dilettanti not long ago.

Lord Leicester's younger son is no less passionate about conservation. Rupert was inspired to develop his vocation as a gilder by his girlfriend Karen Pecenkus who is god mother to my daughter. Karen is a highly regarded and established London-based gilder and conservator and she inspired Rupert to take up the same vocation and complete his formal training.

Rupert has gone on to become a successful gilder in his own right undertaking restoration work in some of England's finest architectural gems and most fascinating private homes. He has also worked extensively for his brother, Viscount Coke, at Holkham Hall.

I have seen some of his meticulous work at Holkham transforming faded 18th century gilding into shining gold. Rupert says: "I am the first family member to physically work on the structure of the house and my projects have included the Green State Bedroom,

doorways, window shutters and picture frames. It can be back-breaking work but the results are worth it." The Coke family motto is Prudens Qui Patiens (The prudent man is the patient one). email [rupert@rupertcoke.co.uk](mailto:rupert@rupertcoke.co.uk) / mobile 07980 214 520 / [www.rupertcoke.com](http://www.rupertcoke.com)

## I'M STUCK ON YOU

At Upton Cressett Hall, near Bridgnorth, I recently heard Bill Cash MP present an erudite talk on the history of the Hall, now home to his son William. The following day my six-year-old daughter also joined me at William's weekend party where she met Anthony Haden-Guest.

The British American writer, reporter and cartoonist was born in Paris and lives in New York and London. He has written for the Financial Times, New York Observer and Vanity Fair among others.

In 1979, Anthony was awarded a New York Emmy for writing and narrating the documentary *The Affluent Immigrants*.

The softly spoken Anthony is considered to be a champion party-goer while his work often features social commentary – he turns regularly to Manhattan society for his subject matter. Anthony helped Florence with her sketching by adding a cartoon to her colouring book. Florence returned in kind by giving Anthony a sticker – which she put on his forehead.

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