

PRESS RELEASE ISSUED BY THE MUSEUM OF NORTH CRAVEN LIFE, SETTLE

**Folly re-opening for 2003: "Reginald Farrer: the Father of Rock Gardening"**

5 April 2003

The Museum of North Craven Life, based in Settle's historic Folly, reopens at Easter for the 2003 season. Among many new attractions, visitors will be able to see a major exhibition entitled "Reginald Farrer: the Father of Rock Gardening". Farrer, whose home was Ingleborough Hall, Clapham, some five miles from Settle, was born in 1880. His chief claim to fame is the way in which he revolutionised gardening and in particular the rock garden. As a child he developed a passionate interest in plants, nurtured through his exploration of the limestone hills around his home. These early enthusiasms led to his later journeys in the mountains of Europe and Asia, his experiences vividly described in his writings. His two major expeditions were to Kansu in China and to Upper Burma. He introduced many new species of plants to this country and brought back others that had been lost to cultivation. He died in Burma in 1920.

Reginald Farrer was in every way a remarkable man. Possessed of amazing stamina, he was tireless in the pursuit of his beloved plants. He also wrote ceaselessly - books on plant collecting and gardening, novels, plays, letters and articles - and painted exquisite water colours of his plant specimens.

The Folly exhibition, rich in colour and interest, traces Farrer's life through his letters, books, photographs and paintings, together with examples of some of the fascinating objects he brought back from the Far East. Among these are fine embroideries, including a Japanese Noh robe, worn by actors in the Noh plays, a traditional ceremonial drama peculiar to Japan. The Museum is greatly indebted to Dr and Mrs John Farrer and the Trustees of the Rachel Kay-Shuttleworth Collections at Gawthorpe Hall for the loan of items for the exhibition.

The Folly is open from April 18<sup>th</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup> inclusive and thereafter at the May and Spring Bank Holiday weekends and from July 1<sup>st</sup>-September 30<sup>th</sup> on Tuesdays, Saturdays and Sundays. Visiting times are 10.30am-4.30pm. Group visits may be made at other times by appointment. For further details, please contact (015242) 51388 or (01729) 822 361.

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