

AN ESSAY ON  
THE  
GLORIOUS PAST  
OF  
QUINTA DA BELLA VISTA

*“When we finally moved in, we realized we do not own this estate;  
rather, this estate owns us. We are merely its stewards,  
entrusted with its care for a time.”*

- The current owners



QUINTA DA BELLA VISTA

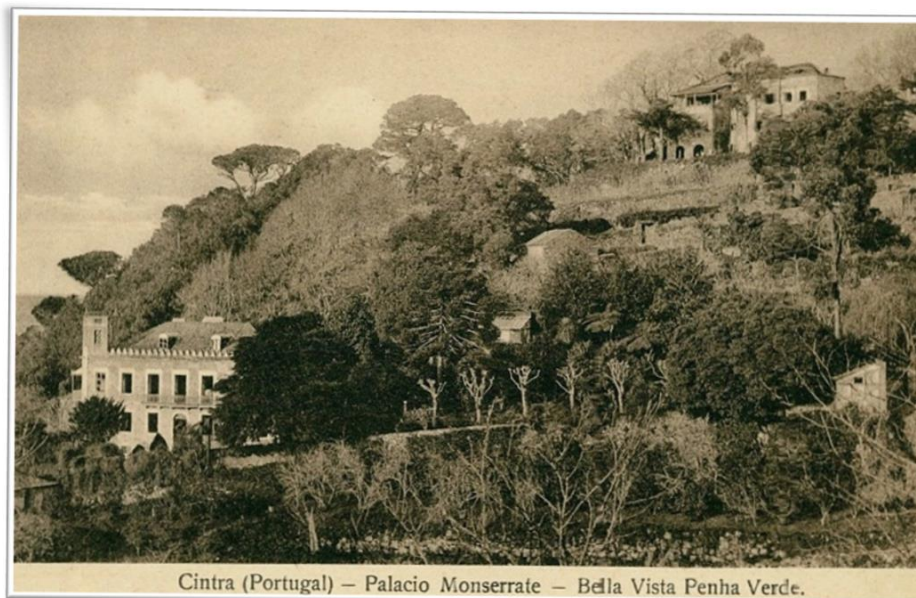
*Sintra*

# You have to be a little of a Sherlock Holmes...

to unearth the exciting history pertaining to Quinta da Bella Vista. The estate has a rich history with colorful personalities and in line with the atmosphere of Sintra, a lot of mystical angles. Two famous owners before ourselves have added a texture to this property that goes beyond the obvious: Sir Francis Cook, and Sir Conan Doyle.

The historic Quinta da Bella Vista on Rua Barbosa du Bocage (the road that links all Sintra's palaces) was formerly the property and personal residence of the famous British writer and father of "Sherlock Holmes," Sir Arthur Ignatius Conan Doyle (22 May 1859 – 7 July 1930), who lived with his family in Portugal as early as starting in 1890. The first record of the property officially registered under Sir Conan Doyle's name has been found in the cadastre (the land registry) of Sintra dated in 1924. Annette, the sister of Sir Arthur and his youngest son, Adrian, were almost permanent residents here in the early 1950s. Sir Conan Doyle was said to have enjoyed spending time in Sintra and was fascinated by the region's history and folklore. He even wrote a short story, "The Bully of Brocas Court," that was set in Sintra.

Adrian was a real playboy and a reputed hunter, and he continued authoring some Sherlock Holmes books after his father's death at Quinta da Bella Vista. He was also a painter and was often seen painting at the tower of the Palacio, which served as his studio because of the abundance of light from all directions.



Quinta da Bella Vista was a regular gathering spot for celebrities of the time such as Sir Francis Cook, the First Viscount of Monserrate (and former owner of Palacio Monserrate and of Quinta da Bella Vista), the South African poet Roy Campbell, the American actress Gloria Swanson, and Pierre Schlumberger, a French oil tycoon and heir to one of the world's greatest fortunes. Today, this tradition continues with many celebrities and international personalities having been entertained in our Quinta da Bella Vista.

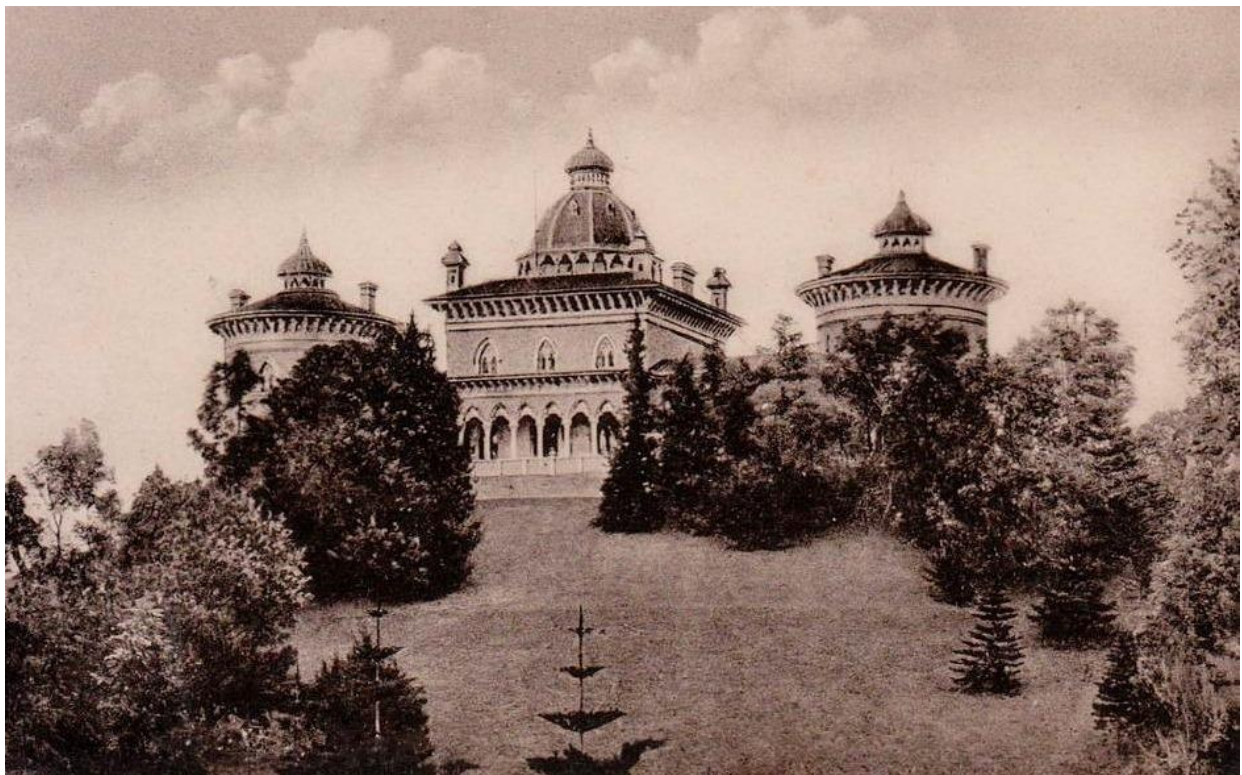
Set on Rua Barbosa du Bocage, the old magical road of Sintra that links most of the palaces, your guests will pass in front of some of the most noteworthy sites of Sintra, such as the Sintra National Palace, the Palace of Monserrate and the Quinta da Regaleira.

The Sintra Hills (Portuguese: Serra De Sintra), is a mountain range in western Portugal. Its highest point at 529 meters [1736 ft.] is near the enchanting UNESCO world-heritage village of Sintra. The

range covers about 16 km (10 miles) from the resort town of Sintra to the western-most point on continental Europe, Cabo da Roca (Cape Roca) on the Atlantic Ocean. It was known in the ancient world as *Lunae Mons* (mountains of the Moon) and was the legendary retreat of Diana the Huntress (known as Cynthia to the Romans, hence “Çintra”).

The history of Quinta da Bella Vista can be traced back to the **Palace of Monserrate**, within view towards the west, *then known... as Quinta da Bella Vista*:

## **The Palace of Monserrate,** *Then known as... Quinta da Bella Vista*



*The Palace of Monserrate* dates to an unknown distant date, but it is thought that the construction of a small chapel from the time of the Christian Reconquest marks its beginnings.

This assumption is based on the fact that Gaspar Preto, a monk born in Segura, in the municipality of Idanha-a-Nova, had a chapel reconstructed there, in 1540, after a pilgrimage to the sanctuary of Nossa Senhora de Monserrate, in Barcelona. This new temple received the invocation of Our Lady of Monserrate (Azevedo, 1982: 73)



*View from the Windows of Monserrate* Page 140

### Hermitage of Monserrate



*Monserrate* Page 137



**Palace of Monserrate in 1793 – drawings by W. Baker**

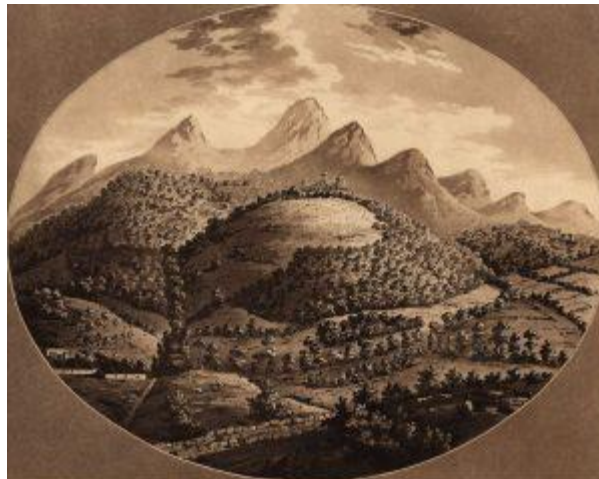
Probably, in the 16th century, the chapel became the property of the Hospital de Todos-os-Santos in Lisbon, since, in the 17th century, this same institution ceded it to “a gentleman of the Melo e Castro family, who later bought ownership directly from the property» (Costa, 1985: 9).

In 1718, Monserrate was incorporated into the majoradio established by D. Caetano de Melo e Castro (deceased in the same year), State Councilor, Captain-General of Naus da Índia. Governor and Captain General of Mozambique, Governor of Pernambuco and Viceroy of India.

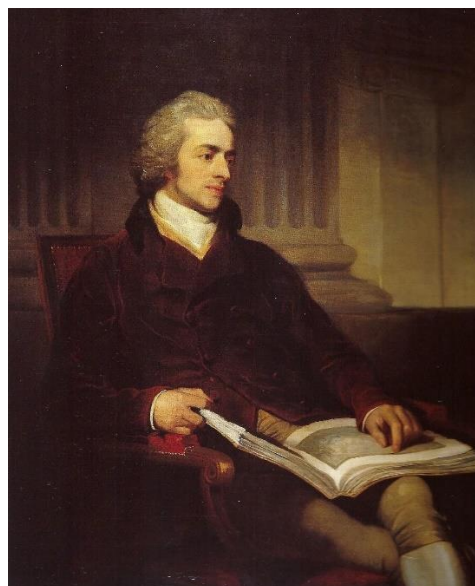
The Melo e Castro family, established in Goa, managed the Sintra property through attorneys who were in charge of finding tenants to ensure the agricultural exploitation and maintenance of the buildings that made up the property.

## The First Palace and The Devastating Lisbon Earthquake

Monserrate eventually became a Quinta (country estate) in 1601, when the wealthy Mello e Castro family leased the property. Then, in 1755, the Great Lisbon earthquake almost ruined the palace. The earthquake caused fires and a tsunami, nearly destroying the entire city and affecting nearby Sintra. The 1755 earthquake caused extensive damage to the property and its condition progressively deteriorated until the end of the century. Of the houses then existing, it is only known that the earthquake made them uninhabitable. Many years later, in 1790, and with the aim of «(...) *usefully renting the same Quinta, but also promoting the usefulness, conservation and enhancement of this Building (...)* » (as revealed in a contract signed at the time), D. Francisca Xavier Mariana de Faro Melo e Castro leases the property to Gerard DeVisme. He constructed the very first palace of Monserrate, along with a landscaped garden.



**Palace of Monserrate in 1793 – drawing by W. Baker**

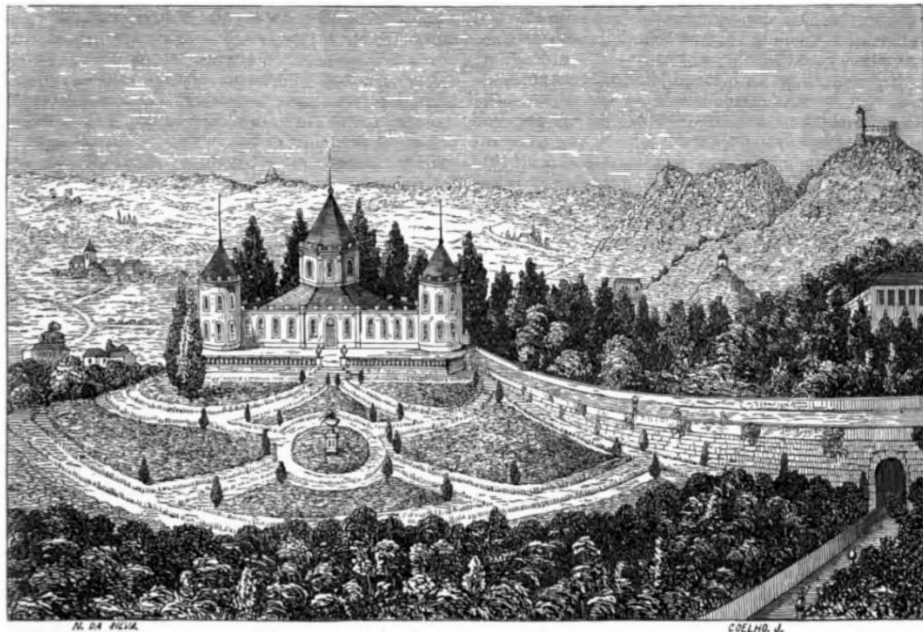


**William Thomas Beckfort (1760 – 1864)**

## Scandalous Romance in the Literary World

Already after the first palace was built, Monserrate began turning heads in the literary world. In 1793, William Beckford subleased the property from Gerard de Visme and added new features to the gardens. He was a British aristocrat, novelist, and travel writer who enjoyed exploring southern Europe. His reasons for moving to Portugal, however, were not ideal. Beckford had married a Lady in 1783, but his affair with young William Courtenay became a great scandal in 1784. His sexuality was frowned upon in British society. This is what led Beckford to move abroad and go into self-exile.

*“Beckford’s reasons for moving to Portugal, however, were not quite ideal. He had married a Lady in 1783, but his affair with young William Courtenay became a great scandal.”*



Palacio antigo de Monserrate, em Cintra, segundo um desenho de 1808



## Eternalised in Classic British Poetry

Gerard de Visme passed away in 1797 and Beckford continued living at Monserrate until 1808. Then, the estate became abandoned. A year later, Lord Byron visited Monserrate and became fascinated with its desolate, yet romantic character. The young writer was able to recognise the estate's former glory. He decided to write about Monserrate in what later became a classic work of poetry: Childe Harold's Pilgrimage.

From Byron's visit to the estate, in 1809, there is an echo of the poem Childe Harold's Pilgrimage (XXII-XXIII), the romantic feeling that the old and harmonious palace had awakened in him:

*«On sloping mounds, or in the valley beneath,  
Are domes where whilome kings did make repair:  
But now the wild flowers reound them only breath;  
Yet ruin'd splendor still is lingering there,  
And yonder towers the Prince's palace fair:  
There thou, too, Vathek! England's wealthiest son.*

*Once form'd thy Paradise, as not aware  
When wanton Wealth her mightiest deeds hath done,  
Meek Peace volutions lures was ever wont to shun.»  
«Here didst thou dwell, here scenes of pleasure plan,  
Beneath yon mountain's ever beauteous brow;*

*But now, as if a thing unblest by Man,  
Thy fairy dwelling is as lone as thou!  
Here giant weeds a passage scarce allow  
To halls deserted, portals gaping wide;  
Fresh lessons to the thinking bosom, how  
Vain are the wrecks anon by Time's ungent tide.»*

The poet, referring to the palace, regrets that “an enormous thicket” barely allowed him to reach “the rooms without anyone with their portals open” and considers, in a letter written on June 16 of that year, 1809, that Quinta de Monserrate “the first and most beautiful place in this Kingdom.” Had this poem been written in modern day spoken English it would read like this:

*On hills that slope, or in the valley low,  
Are grand buildings where ancient kings did go:  
Now only wild flowers bloom and gently grow,  
But still, the ruined grandeur seems to glow,  
And towers stand tall, from the Prince's palace, oh!*

*You too, Vathek, England's wealthiest son,  
Once made this place your Paradise, so fun!  
Unknowing how wealth's deeds could be undone,  
But Peace and calm were things that Wealth would shun.*

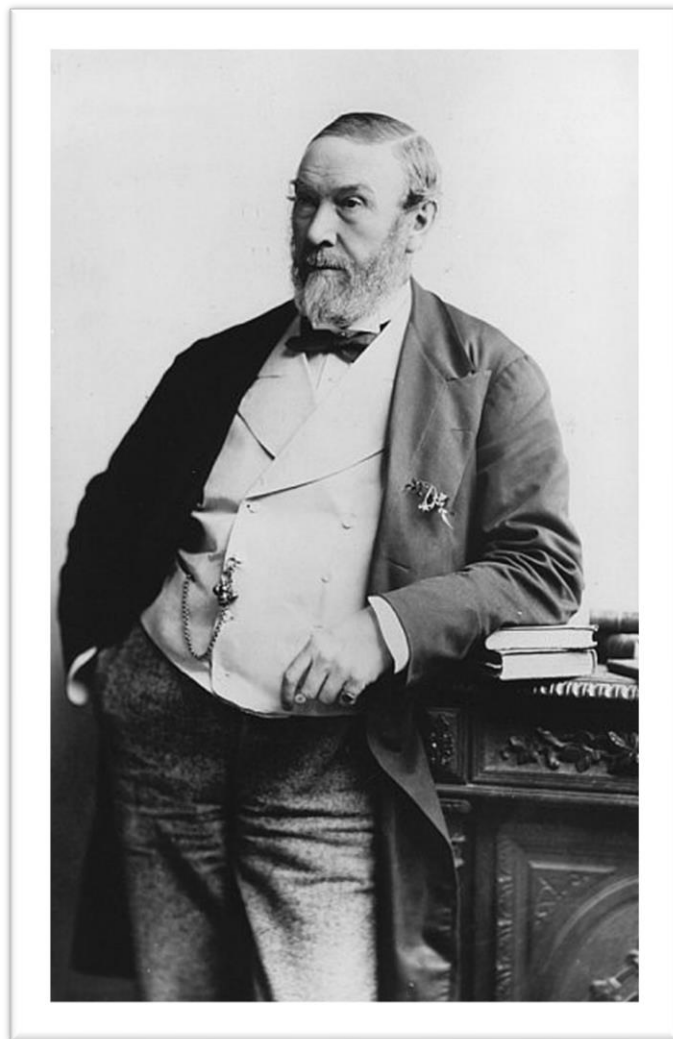
*Here you once lived and planned pleasures galore,  
Beneath that mountain's beauty to adore;  
But now, abandoned like a thing impure,  
Your fairy dwelling's lonely, with no lure.*

*Giant weeds make it hard to pass or see,  
To halls deserted, portals left wide free;  
They teach us how Time's ungentle waves decree,  
That wrecks are vain, and that's a lesson key.*

In 1855, the property met a new destination: D. Maria de Castro e Almeida Pimentel de Siqueira e Abreu, owner of the Monserrate estate, returned from Goa and faced with the impossibility of staying in the palace that her family owned in Lisbon, in the neighborhood from Alto de Santa Catarina, destroyed by the earthquake, he sells Monserrate in order to obtain funds that will allow him to build a new residence in the Lisbon neighborhood of Lapa.



*The Palacio*



## Sir Francis Cook

**This is where it gets really interesting for Quinta da Bella Vista.**

In 1856, the Monserrate estate was bought from the Mello e Castro family by Francis Cook, an English millionaire, textile merchant, and art collector, who had the palace rebuilt, now in neo-Moorish style, and who created a remarkable landscaped garden, inspired by English romanticism.

In 1833, he entered his father's firm Cook, Son & Co. based in the City of London, which traded finished wool, cotton, linen and silk, after travels in Europe and the Near East. From 1869, he was its head, rising to be one of Britain's *three* richest men.

He was created 1st Visconde de Monserrate, Sintra, Portugal, and on 10 March 1886, he was created 1st Baronet Cook, of Doughty House, Richmond, Surrey. He began to collect classical sculpture in the late 1850s. He collected his first major paintings in 1868, at which date Sir John Charles Robinson (1824–1913), former Victoria and Albert Museum curator, became his advisor. He had 510 major works by 1876.

In 2017 a painting attributed to Leonardo da Vinci entitled **Salvator Mundi** was sold for \$450 million by the auction house Christie's to Saudi Prince Badr bin Abdullah bin Mohammed Al Farhan. This painting, bought by Francis Cook in 1900, was sold in June 1958 by Sotheby's for only £45 since the family was of the belief that the artist was Giovanni Antonio Boltraffio, a contemporary and studio mate of Leonardo.

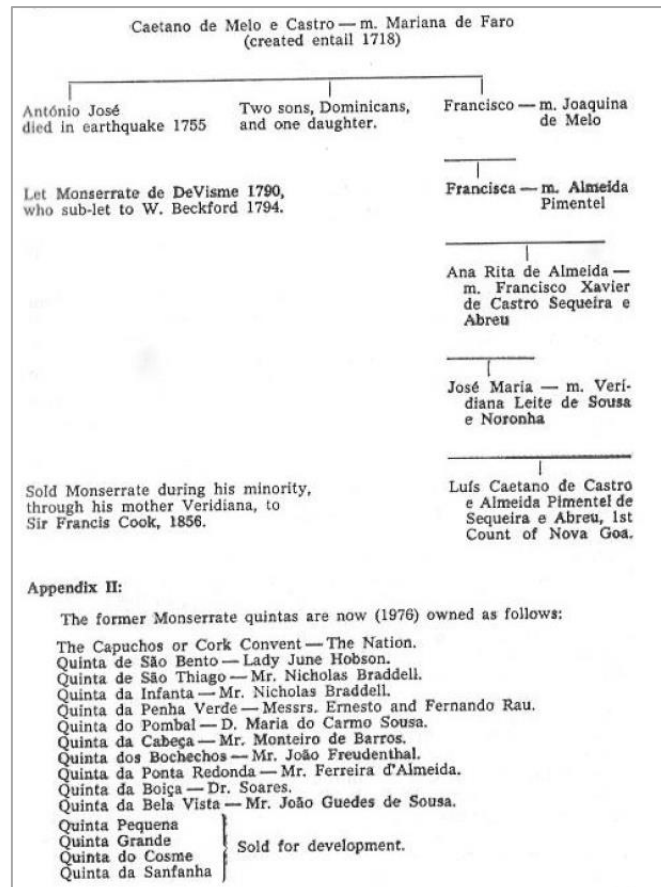
The Monserrate estate deteriorated for many years, until Sir Francis Cook, 1st Baronet, 1st Viscount Montserrat (23 January 1817 – 17 February 1901), who married Emily Martha, daughter of Robert Lucas, in 1841, decided to buy the quinta in 1863. The millionaire owned the hugely successful Cook, Son & Co. textile company. This allowed him to invest in the renovation of both the palace and the gardens: an enormous project. He hired James T. Knowles as his architect and collected exotic plants of various botanical species from all over the world. He also added fantastical ornamental features, like an artificial waterfall and a false chapel ruin. To this day, following the paths will make you feel like a video game character, completely immersed in a historical adventure.

*“Sir Francis Cook added fantastical elements to the massive gardens, including an artificial waterfall and false ruin. Following the paths will make you feel like a video game character, completely immersed in a historical adventure.”*

The ensemble was transformed into a unique example of 19th century revivalism and eclecticism, predominantly marked by oriental exoticism and where the delicately lacy plant motifs in the interior of the palace harmoniously extend into the garden.

The design was influenced by Romanticism and Mudéjar Moorish Revival architecture with neo-Gothic elements. The eclecticism is a fine example of the Sintra Romanticism, along with other nearby palácios, such as the Pena Palace and the Quinta do Relógio. The Islamic architectural influence is in reference to when the region was a part of the wider Muslim Gharb Al-Andalus until the 13th century.

In the late 1870s Sir Francis began to buy the surrounding land on a large scale and the property finally included fifteen Quintas, including Quinta da Bella Vista. He would have liked to have bought his neighbors entirely but he met an unexpected check. The land to the westward belonged to the ducal family of Cadaval, impoverished and in exile for their Miguelist sympathies. The story goes that Francis offered a tempting price to be stricken grantees from whom the haughty reply came back: “The Dukes of Cadaval, Mr. Cook, buy but never sell.”



**Extract from the archives of the British Historical Society of Portugal  
with the fifteen adjacent Quintas under the control of Sir Cook.  
Our Quinta da Bella Vista was one of them.**

**Local legend has it that our Quinta da Bella Vista was originally  
built to house Sir Francis Cook's secret mistress.**

He placed the original farm house (which preceded the Palacio) at a point where he could maintain line of sight connection to it through his bedroom in Monserrate. In fact, local legend goes a step beyond, calling for secret tunnels and passages between Palacio Monserrate and us. To this day we have not discovered them! But our dogs keep trying to find them...!

Emily Cook, Sir Cook's wife, genteel and well-bred, died on 12 August 1884. It was only shortly after that Sir Cook (still Mr. Cook) emerged from his surprisingly short mourning period at the side of a woman who defies description in a short article, so diverse were the reasons for her notoriety, On October 1<sup>st</sup>, 1885, he married for the second time to the American feminist stockbroker, and former clairvoyant, **Lady Tennessee Celeste Claflin, Viscountess of Montserrat (October 26, 1844 – January 18, 1923)**. She was the daughter of Reuben-Buckman Claflin and had set up her own firm with help from Cornelius Vanderbilt. She was the mistress who was hiding in plain view at our Quinta da Bella Vista!



**Tennessee Celeste Claflin**

By 1860, Tennessee was advertised as a precocious fortune teller with the ability to cure diseases "from cold sores to cancer." Consultations cost \$1 and Tennessee worked 13-hour days in small towns across the Midwest. Buck sold "Miss Tennessee's Magneto Elixir" (a worthless concoction) for \$2.

In 1863, Buck rented an entire hotel in Ottawa, Illinois. He called himself "The King of Cancer" and advertised Tennessee's healing abilities. As part of their practice, the Claflins used lye which burned their patient's skin. In June 1864, the police raided the Claflins' hotel clinic and the family fled. Authorities charged the family with nine crimes including disorderly conduct and medical fraud (quackery). Tennessee faced the most serious charge as she was blamed for the death of a patient named Rebecca Howe. The family never went to court for their fake cancer cure.

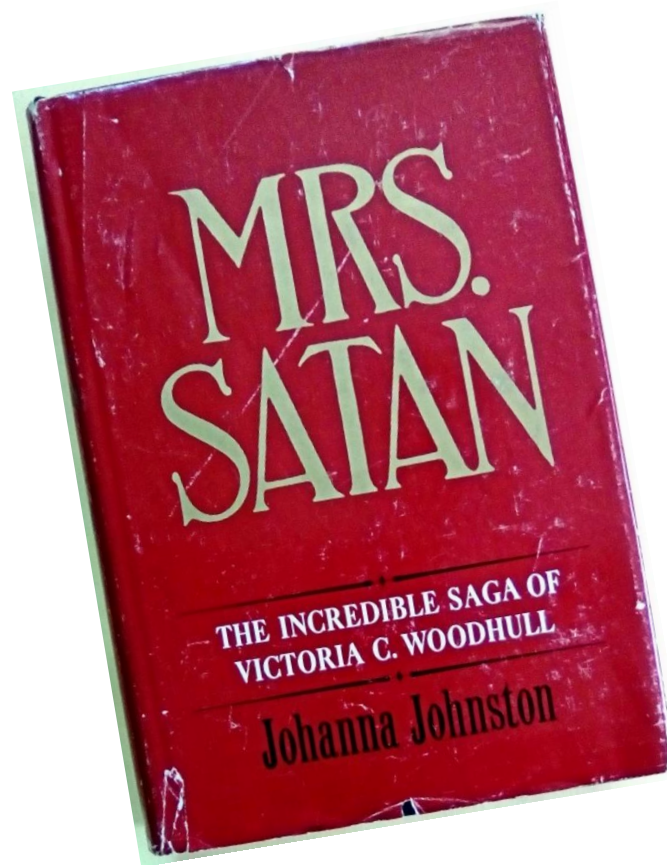
In the Fall of 1868, Buck visited business magnate Cornelius Vanderbilt who Buck had heard was interested in massage and magnetic healing. Buck pitched Victoria as a spiritualist and Tennessee as a healer. Tennessee and Cornelius began to spend a lot of time together and an affair was strongly rumored.

On October 15, 1885, at St Mary Abbots, Kensington, Claflin married Francis Cook. Within months of their marriage, Queen Victoria created a Cook Baronetcy. As the wife of an English Baronet, Claflin was thereafter correctly styled "Lady Cook", and in Portugal was also Viscountess of Monserrate. The couple lived at Doughty House in Richmond Hill, Surrey, now part of Greater London, and at Monserrate Palace.

Shortly after Cook's death in 1901, Claflin founded a short-lived bank in the City of London called Lady Cook & Co.

Although she never abandoned her radical viewpoints, Claflin lived the remainder of her life out of the public eye. She died in England on January 18, 1923.

Tennessee Celeste Claflin was a queen of scandal in her own country, America, and brought color of a most scintillating kind as well as a blast of revolutionary thought to the bewildered population of Sintra, becoming in the process the uncrowned queen of Monserrate. Sober history condensed into a few lines can hardly do justice to her extraordinary story which, side by side with that of her sister has been told in a full-length modern biography called "*Mrs. Satan*" by Johanna Johnston (MacMillan, 1967). The truth about her was not fully realized by her contemporaries either in England or in Portugal for although they were startled by her continuing activities, her real background was discreetly hidden in Portugal... in plain sight, at our Quinta da Bella Vista!



Her sister, Victoria Woodhull, was the first woman to run for the American presidency. **Victoria Claflin Woodhull, America's most outrageous suffragette.**



**Victoria Claflin Woodhull**

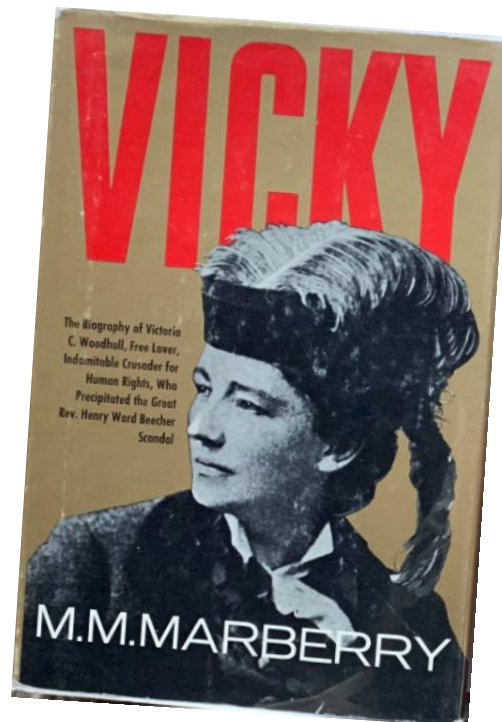
Victoria Claflin Woodhull was a prominent American suffragist, feminist, and activist who lived in the 19th century. She was born in 1838 in Ohio and, along with her sister, Tennessee, became the first female stockbrokers in the United States. Woodhull is perhaps best known for her outspoken activism and advocacy for women's rights, including the right to vote, which was not granted until several decades later with the passage of the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

In addition to her activism, Woodhull was also known for her controversial personal life, which included multiple marriages and relationships, as well as allegations of fraud and scandal. She was a proponent of free love, which was a controversial concept at the time, and advocated for women's sexual freedom and the abolition of marriage as an institution.



In 1871, the sisters tried to vote in a municipal election and were rebuffed. On August 11, 1871, **Tennessee Claflin** announced her candidacy for New York's Eighth Congressional District. At that time, the Eighth Congressional District was largely German-American. Claflin announced her

candidacy at Irving Plaza surrounded by German and American flags. She delivered her speech in German.



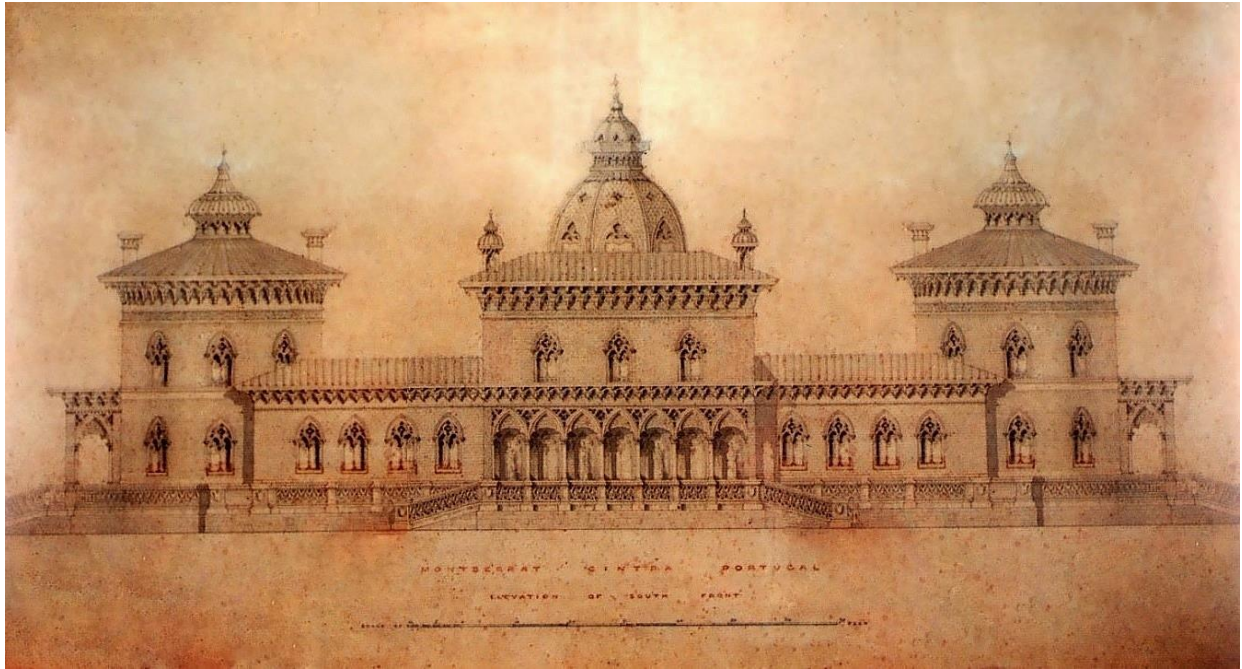
Victoria Woodhull was the leader of the women's suffrage movement who ran for President of the United States in the 1872 election. While many historians and authors agree that Woodhull was the first woman to run for the presidency, some disagree with classifying it as a true candidacy because she was younger than the constitutionally mandated age of 35. (Woodhull's 35th birthday was in September 1873, six months after the March inauguration.)

An activist for women's rights and labor reforms, Woodhull was also an advocate of "free love", by which she meant the freedom to marry, divorce and bear children without social restriction or government interference. "They cannot roll back the rising tide of reform," she often said. "The world moves."

Woodhull twice went from rags to riches, her first fortune being made on the road as a magnetic healer before she joined the spiritualist movement in the 1870s. Authorship of many of her articles is disputed (many of her speeches on these topics were collaborations between Woodhull, her backers, and her second husband, Colonel James Blood. Together with her sister, Tennessee Claflin, she was the first woman to operate a brokerage firm on Wall Street, making a second, and more reputable fortune. They were among the first women to found a newspaper in the United States, Woodhull & Claflin's Weekly, which began publication in 1870. They printed scandalous articles promoting the idea of "free love." In a letter Victoria sent to the New York Times in 1871, she claimed that free love was the "only cure for immorality, the deep damnation by which men corrupt and disfigure God's most holy institution of sexual relations." She continued, "It is not marriage but sexual intercourse, then, that is God's most holy institution." Victoria and Tennessee's progressive views on sex and the brazen printing of those ideals appalled citizens not only in the United States but also in other countries like Germany and Russia, as well. They "threaten to destroy the morals nations so desperately needed to cling to," was the opinion voiced in the New York Times on November 23, 1871.

Woodhull was politically active in the early 1870s when she was nominated as the first woman candidate for the United States presidency. Woodhull was the candidate in 1872 from the Equal Rights Party, supporting women's suffrage and equal rights; her running mate (unbeknownst to him)

was abolitionist leader Frederick Douglass. Her campaign inspired at least one other woman – apart from her sister – to run for Congress. A check on her activities occurred when she was arrested on obscenity charges a few days before the election. Her paper had published an account of the alleged adulterous affair between the prominent minister Henry Ward Beecher and Elizabeth Richards Tilton which had rather more detail than was considered proper at the time. However, it all added to the sensational coverage of her candidacy.



**Palace of Monserrate – project**



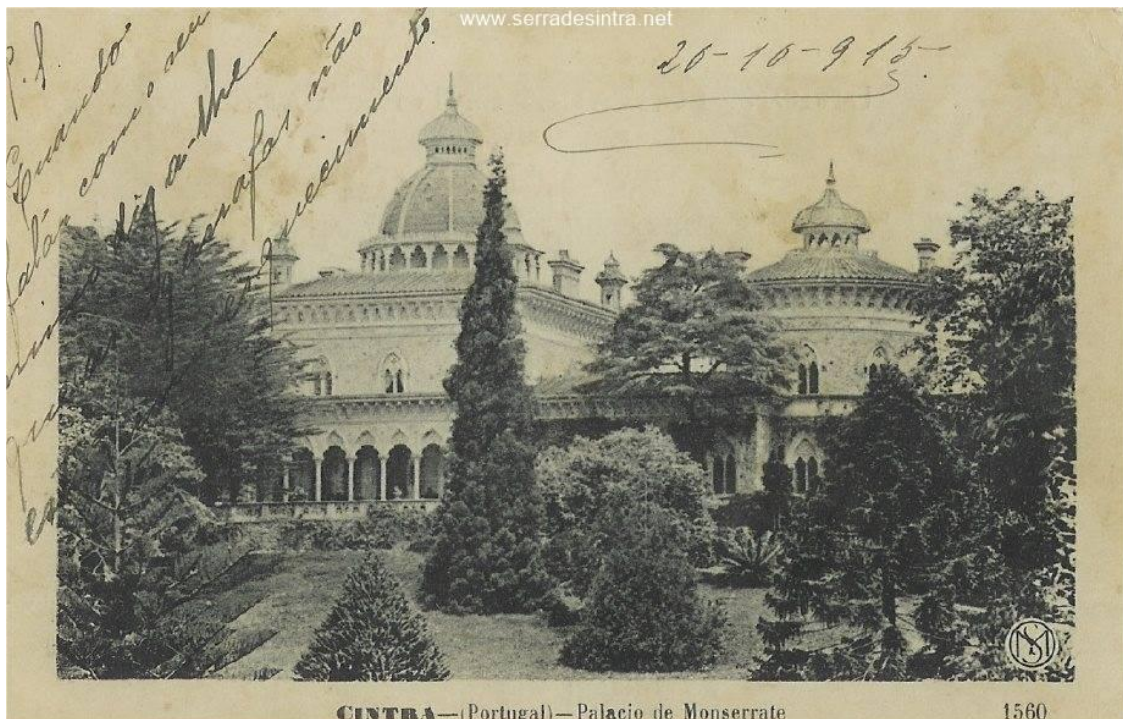
**Palace of Monserrate under construction**



**Palace of Monserrate – the Living Room**



**Monserrate Palace Library**



## The Gardens of Monserrate

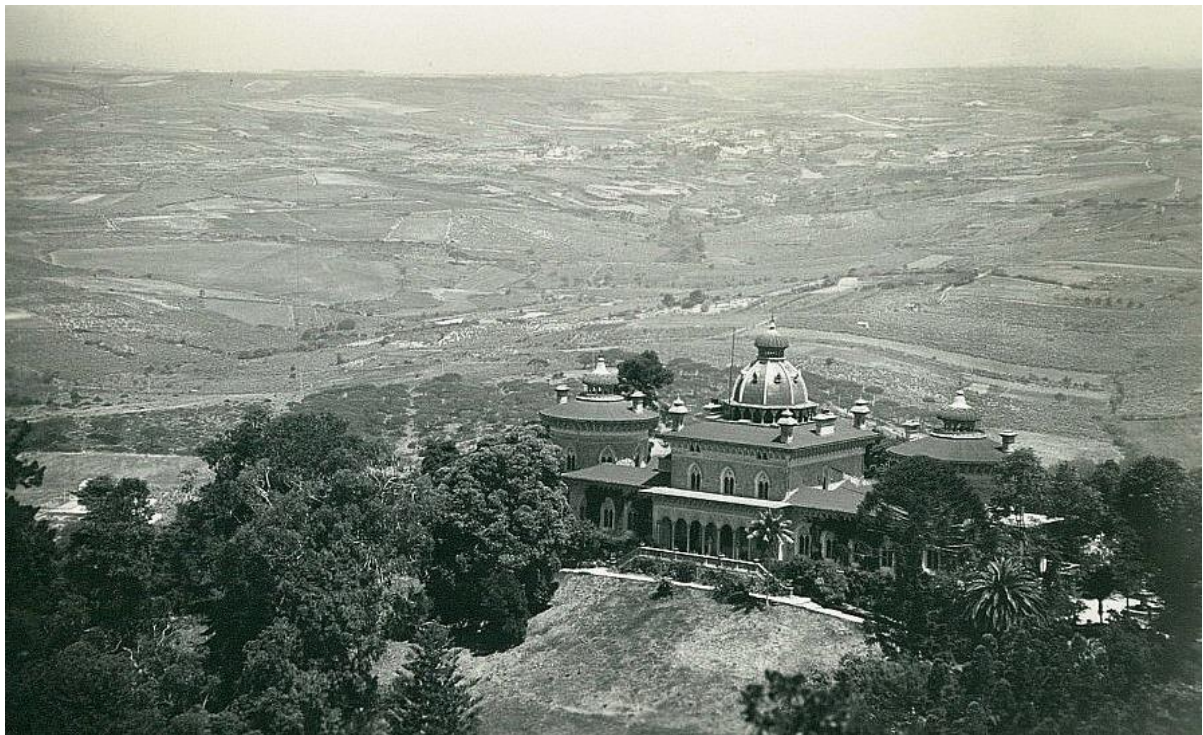
The gardens were transformed into a magnificent exotic paradise planted by Englishman James Burt (who died in 1887) and later, in the time of Francis Cook's son, by Walter Oates, author of a description published in 1929: *“The Park of Monserrate, nestled in the middle from the mountains, in the slope that unfolds towards the sea, it does not have the majestic vastness of the Parque da Pena, with which it would like to rival.”* The fertile ground, the fine waters, the proximity of sea mists, so favor the vegetation chosen by the planter, that the dominant impression is that of an enchanted garden, where the rarest things are hidden.

The arguable intention of gathering the greatest number of exotic species there gradually took precedence over not only the strength of the large trees, but also the vitality of the primitive forests. The natural beauty is completely dominated the collection of rarities. In the middle of this almost windless paradise, there is a *“stream that flows, from stones to stones, until it calms down at the bottom, among very green grasses, forming a motionless mirror, where white swans and aquatic plants float”* (Costa, 1985)

It is thanks to the romantic spirit of Francis Cook, the programmatic intervention of the landscaper William Stockdale, the botanist William Nevill and the master gardener James Burt that today we can find contrasting scenarios in the Park of Monserrate.

Along winding paths, among ruins, nooks, lakes and waterfalls allow us to come into contact with ancestral tree ferns and Araucaria from New Zealand and Australia, Agaves and Palm trees that recreate a scenario from Mexico, camellias, azaleas, rhododendrons and bamboos, resembling a garden in Japan.

In this apparent disorder, specimens of spontaneous species of the region, such as the surprising Arboreal trees, the now very rare Holly and the imposing Cork Oaks punctuate and complement the magnificent landscape.



Herbert Cook, son of Francis Cook (to whom King D. Luís granted the title of Viscount of Monserrate), continued the work on improving the garden that the family kept open to the public.

The gardens took a long time to complete (1863 to 1929). Monserrate remained in the possession of the Cook family until 1947.

## Two World Wars and a Financial Crisis

Monserrate became the stunning estate it is today after the renovation, but the palace's problems were far from over. After enduring two World Wars, as well as the financial crisis of 1929, the Cook family lost a lot of their fortune.

In 1946 the family tried to sell Monserrate to the Portuguese State, which delayed the offer in such a way that it was the antique dealer Saúl Sáragga who in turn tried, without success, to divide the immense property. Finally, Sáragga sold all the palace's furniture, art and other assets at auction.

This ultimately forced Francis Ferdinand Cook, Sir Francis' great grandson, attempted to sell the estate in 1947. Only in 1949, the State was able to acquire the farm and the farm, in a set of 143 hectares, together with the palace, although this was practically destitute. The Portuguese state then became responsible for the estate, but extensive repairs delayed the heritage site's triumphant reopening until 2010.

Monserrate offers us today the possibility of enjoying an environment characteristic of a romantic English garden, in addition to contemplating a reference architectural heritage and the knowledge of countless botanical species of great notoriety.



**“Garden Party” in the gardens of Monserrate in July 1940**

Vale dos Fetos is precisely one of those places, mirroring the taste of the 1950s for collecting tree ferns, here present in a valley between the waterfall and the chapel, the area of the park with better conditions of humidity and shading. With the environment conditions thus selected, the proliferation of these exotic Ferns, originating in New Zealand and Australia, was thus made possible.



**Interior of the Palace of Monserrate**

The path towards the faux chapel serves as a border between the Vale dos Fetos and a forest of oaks, chestnut trees and arbutus trees. The chapel, a replica of the original existing on the site of the palace, was modified by Sir Francis Cook, with the intention of resembling a romantic ruin integrated into the gardens, as was then usual in English gardens.

The Valley of Mexico presents us with exotic flora from warm climates, from Mexico to the archipelagos of Madeira and Cape Verde, where the Yuccas, Nolinas, palm trees, Montezuma Pines, Taxodium and Dragon Trees stand out.

Next to the ornamental lakes, we can find a magnificent Mexican Taxodium and a Norfolk Araucaria, the largest tree in the park, over 45 meters high.

The magnificent lawn of Monserrate was landscaped in the second half of the 19th century and is the first in Portugal to have an irrigation system that allowed it to remain green all year round.

There we find a Metrosidero tree originally from New Zealand, one of the most remarkable trees in the park. In late spring and early summer it produces scarlet flowers and has the ability to develop aerial roots that capture moisture.

After leaving the Palace, the Perfumed Path awaits us, created with the intention of enjoying the aromas coming from a pergola, covered with Wisteria, which together with Laurel and Cinamomos fill the air with pleasant aromas.

The sensations that it allows you to experience and the richness of the heritage that is made known to us, make the Park and Palace of Monserrate a fundamental part of the discovery of the Sintra of Romanticism.

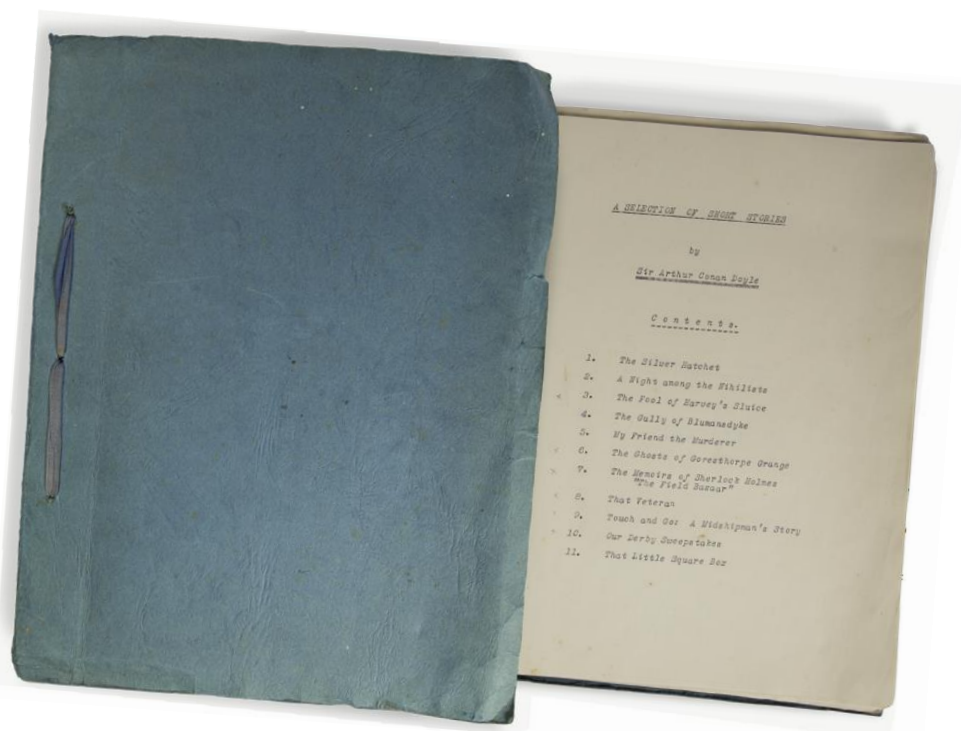


## Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Portugal, and Quinta da Bella Vista, Sintra

Arthur Conan Doyle, Scottish writer and doctor, world famous for his 60 stories with the detective Sherlock Holmes as the central figure, studied medicine at the University of Edinburgh, having published his first work before turning 20 in Chambers's *Edinburgh Journal* .

While still a student, he had his first naval experience as a doctor on a whaleboat, spending seven months in the Arctic. After his training in 1881, he served as a doctor aboard the ship "*Mayumba*", on a voyage to the west coast of Africa.

In 1882 he joined George Budd, opening a practice in Plymouth, but the relationship between them was difficult, and Conan Doyle went on to practice on his own. Arriving in Portsmouth in June of that year, he returned to writing his stories. His first work was *A Study in Scarlet* , published in *Beeton's Christmas Annual* of 1887, and was the first in which the character Sherlock Holmes appears, based, according to him, on the figure of his teacher, Joseph Bell. The second book, *The Sign of Four*, appeared in 1890. They did not create much stir, but in 1891 and '92 the first Sherlock Holmes short stories appeared in the then-new *Strand Magazine* and became an enormous transatlantic sensation. This soon made him one of the best-known and highest-paid writers in the world. In the end, over a forty-year period, he wrote four novels and fifty-six short stories about Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson.



In 1885 he married Louise Hawkins, who suffered from tuberculosis, and died in 1906. In 1907 he married Jean Elizabeth Leckie, with whom he had fallen in love in 1897, already maintaining a relationship while his first wife was still alive, who died in 1940, in London. He had five children, two by his first wife (Mary Louise and Arthur) and three by his second (Denis, Adrian, and Jean Lena).

There are several aspects that link him to Portugal, one of them his connection to Spiritualism.

In 1887, he had his first contact with *Spiritualism*, starting that same year with his friend Ball, an architect from Portsmouth, mediumistic sessions and this involvement led him to write about the subject, becoming one of its greatest promoters and defenders. In 1918 he published “A Nova Revelação”, a work in which he expressed his conviction in the spiritist explanation for paranormal manifestations, giving lectures on the subject.

In “A Chegada das Fadas”, from 1921, he reproduced in his work theories about the nature and existence of fairies and spirits. In “The History of Spiritualism”, from 1926, he addressed the history of the Anglo-Saxon spiritualist movement and Spiritism. The subject was also approached in his book “The Land of Mist”, from 1926, of a fictional nature, through the character “Professor Challenger”.

In the last years of his life, Conan Doyle maintained connections with the Portuguese Spiritist Federation. In this context, it should be noted the exchange of correspondence maintained with the Revista de Espiritismo, whose issue 3, May-June 1928, published a letter of his translated into Portuguese, in response to another received by him on the value of spiritism in the search truth, by obtaining facts conducive to a better understanding of the unknown and the occult:

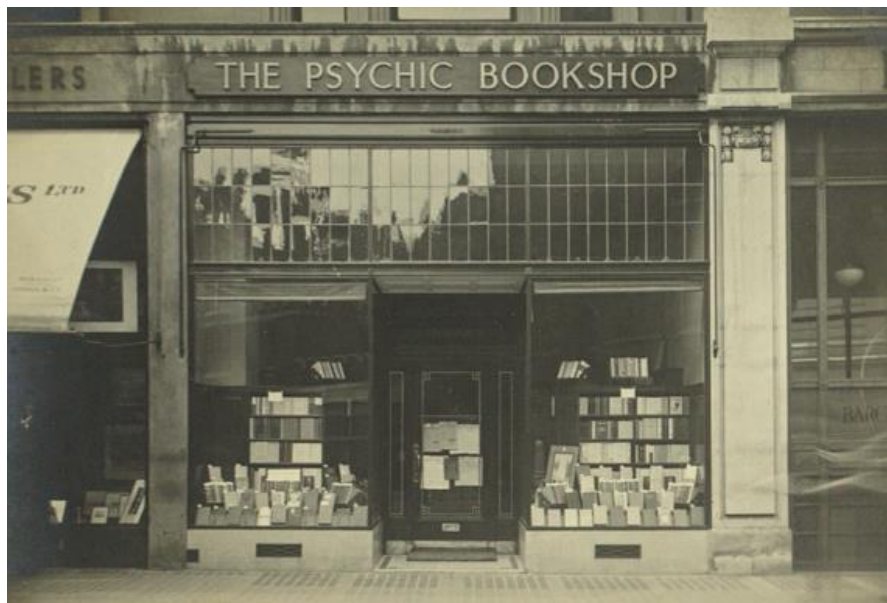
*Dear Sir:*

*It would take a book to properly answer your questions. In fact, I wrote a book A Nova Revelação, which was, I believe, translated into Portuguese and which responds to all the points you mention. (...) I don't think that the messages of those we love and lose are the purpose of Spiritism. The true revelation comes when we come into contact with elevated spirits who explain to us those religious truths that have been mutilated and misunderstood by*

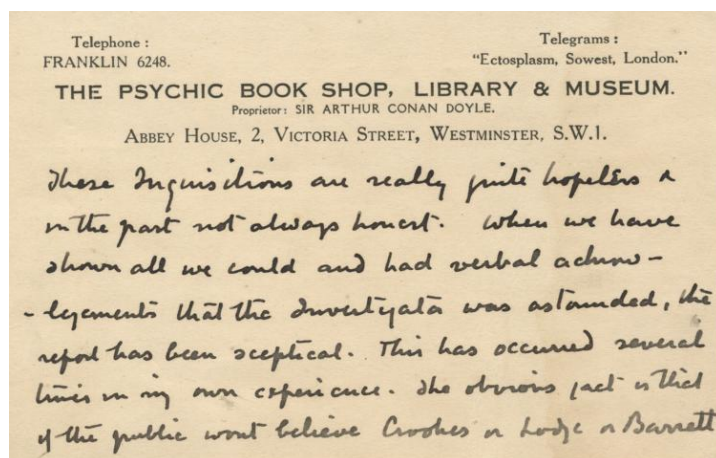
*the human race, only distorted and adulterated by the foolishness of the world, solving our difficulties. (...) Sincerely yours, Arthur Conan Doyle.*

Among the magazine's team of editors, Maria O'Neill deserves special attention, author of *Um Imitador de Sherlock Holmes*, from 1909, the first collection of detective stories written by a Portuguese writer and published, at the time, in the illustrated monthly magazine *Serões*. The influence of Conan Doyle on O'Neill can be seen not only in the title of the work, but also in the construction of the main character, Viscount Silvestre, a lawyer by profession, who decides to become a detective, certainly inspired by the figure of Sherlock Holmes.

In the July-August 1930 issue, the same magazine reported the death of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, which occurred on July 7 of that year. The obituary confirms that Doyle maintained a particular interest in the Portuguese Spiritist Federation and suggests a link between the writer and Severiano Ivens Ferraz, with Doyle giving the Portuguese Spiritist Federation his autograph in prompt response to the inquiry initiated by the *Revista de Espiritismo* among the most eminent figures of the World Spiritism.



**Sir Arthur and his second wife Jean Conan Doyle opened The Psychic Bookshop  
In Victoria Street SW London, in 1925**



**A postcard from the shop, "thoughts about psychic inquiries," 1930**

Between 1913 and 1914, Doyle was one of the spokespersons for political prisoners in Portugal, having campaigned in British newspapers, as can be seen, for example, in his letter published in The

Times, on May 13, 1913, under the title “ *Political Prisoners in Portugal* ”. In this missive, addressed to the director of the newspaper, Conan Doyle writes: “Portugal is our ancient ally, and we have given each other many mutual proofs of friendship in peace and in war. We cannot believe, however, that the present Government truly represents Portugal (...).”

Conan Doyle’s protest had repercussions in Portugal, as, on June 4, 1913, the newspaper *A Capital* published a response, also in the form of a missive, sent by the writer André Brun entitled “ *Letter to Conan Doyle – Our political prisoners they haven’t eaten for two years* ”, where the latter spares no criticism of Doyle, underlining that he thought “ *a good conjecture to make you feel, Sir Arthur, that it does not correspond with the recognition due to the consideration that in our Country is given to your work .* ”

By that time, detective novels starring Sherlock Holmes were already being publicized and appreciated in Portugal. It should also be noted that *A Capital* published daily, between June 3 and July 21, 1913, in feuilleton, short stories by Conan Doyle translated into Portuguese by an anonymous person.

Arthur Conan Doyle’s personal connection to Portugal was evident from an early age, as, in 1868, one of his sisters, Annette, came to work as a housekeeper in a house located at Rua do Sacramento à Lapa, n.º 24, in Lisbon. Two other sisters, Connie and Lottie, followed with the aim of performing the same task in the capital.

Doyle refers to as a consequence of the family’s financial situation, helping everyone in the education of the younger brother, Innes Doyle.

Annette’s death on January 13, 1890, in Lisbon, a victim of flu and pneumonia, was a hard blow for the writer. Doyle tried to travel to Lisbon at that time, but his mother convinced him to stay in England.

As far as it has been possible to ascertain so far, the British writer has visited mainland Portugal and the Atlantic archipelagos three times.

The first, on October 29, 1881, on a trip to the west coast of Africa, aboard the SS Mayumba, as an on-board doctor. On this trip, Doyle passed through the island of Madeira, more specifically through Funchal.

In “*On the Slave Coast with a Camera*”, published in *The British Journal of Photography*, on March 31, 1882, Doyle, referring to his trip aboard the SS Mayumba, describes the community of Porto Santo, stating that it was “ *inhabited by a few scattered fishermen and collectors of seaweed .*” The next morning, taking into account the maritime calm, Doyle ventured into the city, although he was only able to photograph the island properly, at the end of the day, with twilight luminosity, due to the reflective effect produced by sunlight on the whitewashed houses.

After Conan Doyle’s last trip across the African continent, the author published his memoirs under the title *Our African Winter*, from 1929, a work that, curiously, includes several descriptions of the island of Madeira. Thus, Doyle considered the magnificent landscape of Madeira only comparable to that of the Tibidabo mountain, in Barcelona, or that of the bay of San Francisco. When recalling the trip to Madeira, Doyle describes the typical trip in basket cars, asserting that, although it is fun at first, after half a dozen kilometers traveled it becomes tiring. With regard to the island’s inhabitants, he pointed out the somewhat annoying insistence of the souvenir street vendors. These less complimentary details notwithstanding, Conan Doyle found the small island a pleasant place. To underline the relationship he established between the island of Madeira and the myth of Atlantis, when he visited Cabo Girão.

The second took place in September 1909, aboard the *RMS Dunottar Castle*, for leisure purposes. This time, she visited Lisbon, Sintra and Cascais. *The Century* of September 19, 1909 describes the visit.

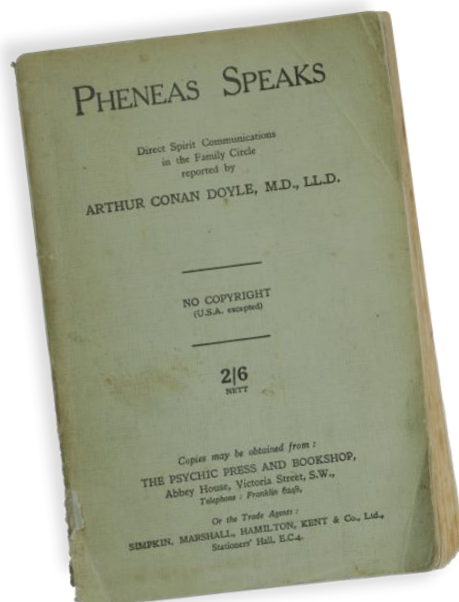
In this piece of news, the writer's popularity in Portugal can be seen, and it is even possible to reconstruct part of the route relating to Conan Doyle's brief stay among us.

Thus, on September 17, the writer would have arrived in Lisbon, where he stayed for two days, continuing his journey towards Spain, on the 19<sup>th</sup>. In fact, on September 17, 1909, the front page of the *Diário de Notícias* notes of the ship's arrival, although Doyle's name is not expressly mentioned:

*"From Southampton, Vigo and Porto, the English steamer "Dunottar Castle" arrived yesterday at the Tagus, with 180 English excursionists. The excursion will last 19 days and was organized by "Cooperative Cruising", with the respective secretary Mr. FG Harman. The steamer is 6:000 tons and commanded by Lieutenant of the Reserve of the English Navy, Mr. JK Gandy. The crew consists of 143 men. The steamer goes from here to Cadiz (from where the excursionists will go to Seville and Granada), Tangiers, Gibraltar, Algiers, Palmas, Marseilles, and Barcelona, returning to England by land, via Paris, on the 28<sup>th</sup> of this month. The steamer leaves the Tagus at dawn today. These excursionists went to Cintra yesterday, in number of 150, and on a special train, a train that left the central station at 11-12 in the morning, returning in the afternoon, aboard the steamer that takes them.*

The third and last trip was made with the family, at the end of October 1928, aboard the *SS Windsor Castle*.

In articles by Conan Doyle there are several descriptions of Portugal and the Atlantic islands. Within the scope of Conan Doyle's fictional works, there are also references to Portugal, inspired by the writer's passage through Madeira and the Desertas, as a ship's doctor, as can be seen in "De Profundis", a short story published in 1892, in the almanac literary illustrated *The Idler*. In this narrative, Conan Doyle immediately evokes his belief in spiritism, through the account of an apparition on the high seas:



*"( ...) Doubtless he died at this hour," she whispered. "In hospital at Madeira. I have read of such things. His thoughts of him were with me. His vision of him came to me. Oh, my John, my dear, dear, lost John!" She broke out suddenly into a storm of weeping, and I led her down into her cabin, where I left her with her sorrow. That night a brisk breeze blew up from the east, and in the evening of the next day we passed the two islets of Los Desertos, and dropped anchor at sundown in the Bay of*

*Funchal. The Eastern Star lay no great distance from us, with the quarantine flag flying from her main her, and her Jack her halfway up her peak.*

In this short story, the writer's knowledge of cartography should also be noted, associable to his experience traveling the Portuguese seas, as the geographical coordinates mentioned in the following excerpt ("2lat. 35 N. and long. 15 W") confirm the location exact place where the body of John Vansittart was thrown into the sea – in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean, between Funchal and Ponta Delgada:

In the short story "The Confession", published in the British newspaper *The Star*, on January 17, 1898, the action takes place in Lisbon, at the Convent of São Pedro de Alcântara, located "at the corner of the Rua de St. Pedro". (356) Conan Doyle describes in detail the interior of the building and reports some religious practices and festivities and refers to the curious offerings left there, demonstrating that he had visited the place.



*Adrian and Arthur Conan Doyle*

Other than Sir Conan Doyle himself, it is known that his son, Adrian Conan Doyle (1910-1970), also lived in Sintra between 1955 and 1965, at Quinta da Bella Vista, which was then briefly named *Quinta da Barracurra* (also known as *Quinta da Boa Vista*), where part of Conan Doyle's estate was located. Adrian lived in Zanzibar from 1945 to 1946, then moved to Tangier, until 1955, then to Portugal, and in 1965 he went to Switzerland, where he would die in 1970, taking his father's estate with him. Meanwhile, the Quinta de Sintra was completely remodeled, becoming the current *Quinta da Bella Vista*.



On the centenary of his birth, in 1959, several tributes were paid to the creator of Sherlock Holmes in Portugal.

Editora Bertrand published the book *Sir Arthur Conan Doyle – Centenary, 1859-1959*, by Adrian Conan Doyle, in an edition of just one hundred copies. On May 1, 1959, RTP1 aired a short television documentary filmed at **Quinta da Barracurra (Quinta da Bella Vista)** with production and text by criminologist Artur Varatojo, with the permission of Adrian Conan Doyle.

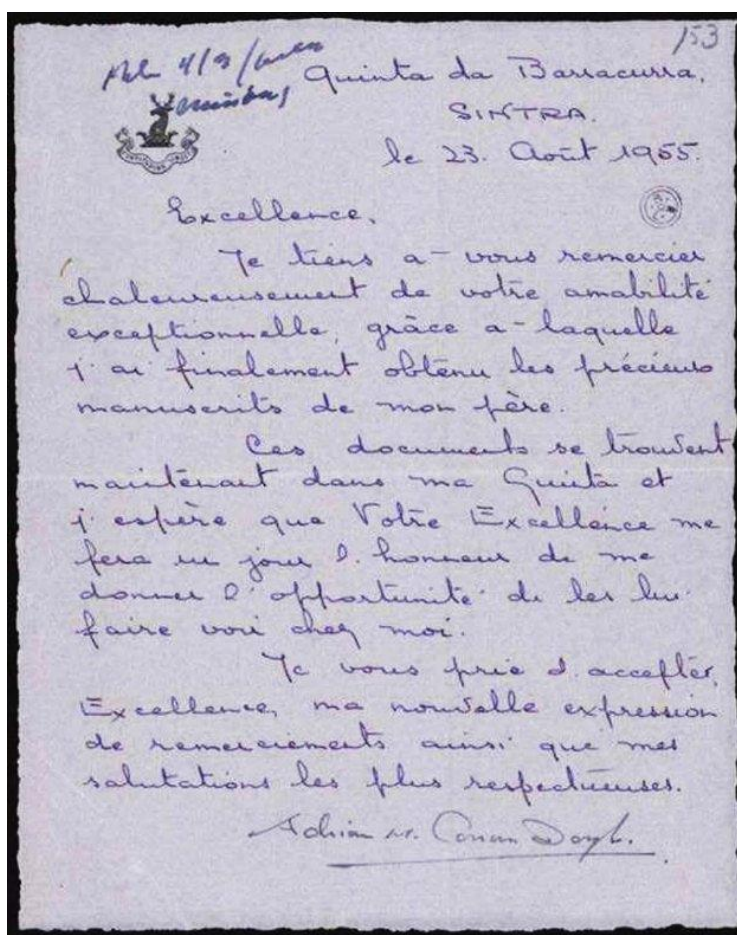
Still in the scope of the centenary, the work of Francisco Osório Calheiros entitled *Sir Arthur Conan Doyle* (1960), publication of two hundred copies, of the Portuguese Academy of Ex-Libris, containing reproductions of documents ceded by Adrian Conan Doyle, who, according to Osório Calheiros, he was “*linked to Portugal, as he spends long periods of time at his farm in Sintra, where the library, documents and objects that belonged to his father are kept with precious care*”.



In a letter dated December 15, 1953, addressed to Salazar, Adrian Conan Doyle expressed his recognition for the importance given to his father's work, something he experienced through the prestige that the nickname Conan Doyle had achieved in Portugal. On January 1, 1961, RTP broadcast an interview with Adrian Conan Doyle, in which the writer's son shows great respect and admiration for Portugal, valuing the action of Portuguese troops in the "overseas provinces", at a time when the

international community, including the United Kingdom, were critical of the Regime's attitude towards colonies in Africa. In this context, Adrian, showing himself to be clearly in tune with the ideology of the Estado Novo, criticized the attitude of the British government, for, according to him, ignoring the secular Luso-British alliance.

Conan Doyle's influence in Portugal continued beyond his death. From what has been ascertained so far, it is known that his son, Adrian Conan Doyle (1910-1970), lived in Sintra between 1955 and 1965, more specifically at Quinta da Barracurra (known also as *Quinta da Bella Vista*), where he was part of the estate of Conan Doyle. Although it has not yet been possible to determine the reasons that led Adrian living in Portugal, from his correspondence it is clear that he lived on a schooner, in Zanzibar, from 1945 to 1946, then moved to Tangier (1945 to 1955), then to Portugal, and in 1965 headed to Castelo de Lucens, in Switzerland, where he would die (in 1970), taking his father's estate with him. Meanwhile, the Sintra farm was completely refurbished, becoming the current *Quinta da Bella Vista*.



Letter from Adrian Conan Doyle from **Quinta da Bella Vista**. August 23, 1955

On the centenary of his birth, in 1959, several tributes were paid to the creator of Sherlock Holmes in Portugal. Editor Bertrand published the book *Sir Arthur Conan Doyle – Centenary, 1859-1959*, by Adrian Conan Doyle, in an edition of just one hundred copies. On May 1, 1959, RTP1 aired a short television documentary filmed at *Quinta da Barracurra (Quinta da Bella Vista)*, with production and text by the writer, lawyer and criminologist Artur Varatojo (1926-2008) and with the authorization of Adrian Conan Doyle.

Em comemoração do Centenário do Nascimento de Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, apresenta o Dr. Artur Varatojo na Rádio-televisão Portuguesa no dia 22 de Maio, um filme curto, inteiramente realizado na Quinta de Sintra, onde está guardado o mais interessante espólio do grande escritor inglês, reunido pacientemente por seu filho, Adrian.

Só por amável deferência de Adrian Conan Doyle foi possível realizar este filme, em que se mostra algumas reliquias famosas do criador de Sherlock Holmes.

No "Quinto Programa" a conhecida rubrica do "Inspector Varatojo" no Programa da Manhã de 5ª. feira da Emissora Nacional, será igualmente incluído um número especial, inteiramente dedicado à memória de Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.

O dia desta transmissão é 21, véspera da data do centenário, por ser o mais próximo e a hora cerca das 9.35 da manhã.

### **From the archives of RTP1, the then state-owned TV station of Portugal**

Still in the context of the centenary, the work of Francisco Osório Calheiros entitled Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (1960) stands out. It is a publication of only two hundred copies, by the Academia Portuguesa de Ex-Libris, with the aim of paying "homage to the memory of such an illustrious and admirable writer." (Calheiros 7) Along with the biography of Sir Arthur, the volume features reproductions of documents provided by Adrian Conan Doyle, who, according to Osório Calheiros, was "linked to Portugal, as he spent long periods of time on his farm Sintra, where the library, documents and objects that belonged to his father Figure 8 – Library of Adrian Conan Doyle in Sintra. (Francisco Osório Calheiro, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, 1960)



**The library of Adrian Conan Doyle in Quinta da Bella Vista, Sintra.  
(Francisco Osório Calheiro, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, 1960)**

In a letter dated December 15, 1953, addressed to António de Oliveira Salazar (1889-1970), at the time President of the Council of Ministers, Adrian Doyle expressed his recognition of the importance given to his father's work, something he experienced through the prestige that the nickname Conan Doyle had achieved in Portugal:

*“J'ai particulièrement apprécié le fait que Les fonctionnaires portugais présente aient immédiatement reconnu le nom que je porte et Rendant ainsi hommage à la mémoire de mon père, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, dont les oeuvres sont aussi connues au Portugal qu'en Angleterre”.*

On January 1, 1961, RTP1's “Noticiário Nacional” featured an interview with Adrian Conan Doyle, in which the writer's son showed great respect and admiration for Portugal, valuing the action of Portuguese troops in the “overseas provinces”, at a time in which the international community, including the United Kingdom, criticized the Regime's attitude towards the colonies in Africa. In this context, Adrian, showing himself to be clearly in tune with the ideology of the Estado Novo, criticized the attitude of the Government of his country, that seemed to ignore the secular relationship.

In summary, it can be said that Portugal marked Sir Arthur Conan Doyle not only from a family point of view, but also (and above all) from his travel, journalistic, memorialistic and even fictional writing. On the other hand, Portugal's interest in the creator of Sherlock Holmes was manifested in the translation and publication of spiritual works and, above all, the adventures of the famous detective.

The latter were published both in volume and in fascicles, making them more accessible to all readers. The Portuguese public accompanied the adventures of Holmes, as well as the travels of his creator, as seen in the publication of news relating to passages through Portugal. It should also be noted the author's connection with the spiritualist cause, whose correlation was also evident in Portuguese territory, through the publication of news and articles, as well as his influence on figures linked to the Portuguese, Portugal is clearly present in the life, work and causes of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, making him the subject of a more in-depth analysis within the scope of Anglo-Portuguese Studies.

## Quinta da Bella Vista, Today and the Last 13 Years, since 2010

Its new owners, a Greek-Italian shipping entrepreneur and his German wife, acquired this magnificent property on Wednesday, April 28, 2010 from the widow of Mr. Joao Guedes de Sousa, who bought the estate from the heirs of Sir Conan Doyle.

Works commenced first on “the perimeter” surrounding the Palacio. The estate needed serious intervention. Roofs had to be replaced as they were crumbling and no longer rainproof, the humidity had entered the walls of the buildings, all electrical installations and plumbing had to be replaced, including central heating. All carpentry had to be renewed. Essentially, the buildings surrounding the Palacio, five of them, essentially had to be rebuilt from the inside.

Additionally, the roads were paved with cobblestones, the traditional Portuguese calçada, and under the roads, a new system with tubes was created, in total exceeding two kilometers of high-capacity piping for water, sewage treatment, fiber optic cables, electricity, etc.

The couple moved in at the Villas on the 28<sup>th</sup> November, 2013 in the middle of the winter, without heating “just to press the contractor to finish.”

Works in the Palacio only started a year and a half later, as the couple needed some time off from all the noise and disturbance with workers for that year, and to prepare the “bigger project” coming up.

The Estate really opened its doors with a celebration party with 150 guests on 5<sup>th</sup> September 2021, as the pandemic was showing signs of retreat. The guest list of the “Swelllegant Party” included world renowned personalities such as HRH Sheikh Fahad Al-Thani, HRH Infanta Doña Margarita of Spain, Prince Aynn Aga Khan, HRH Crown Prince and Princess of Serbia, Dot. Manfredi Lefebvre D'Ovidio, HE Abdul Aziz Al-Ghurair. The opening coincided with the celebration of the new owner's 55<sup>th</sup> birthday and that of his closest Portuguese friend's 70<sup>th</sup>.



## **The State of the Property in 2010.**



**Casa Comporta as we found it.**



**Villa Monserrate, where the kitchen is today. There was a garage for the tractor and a storage space for other farm equipment. The lower floor was used to store potatoes in absolute darkness.**



**The entrance door of Casa Comporta. And to imagine this one was one of the good ones.**



**The Safari Suite, at Villa Camelia. Pictured here, the Caseiro of Mrs. Guedes de Souza, the only employee she had to maintain this property.**

# QUINTA DA BELLA VISTA

*Sintra*

