



## A SHORT HISTORY

Bodysgallen is situated 1½ miles south of the town of Llandudno up on the west of Pydew mountain, the second ridge south of the Great Orme, yet always invisible except for its chimneys which overtop the trees. Fenton noticed in 1810 that it is "embosomed in Woods of Noble growth, which are suffered to luxuriate their own way, without any fear of the axe."

The whole house shares a uniform vernacular despite a building history of 600 years. In the gradual addition of one wing and then another, and in their sturdy and conservative style, it is typical of the evolution of the old family houses of Gwynedd.

The word "bod-ysgallen" has been interpreted as "house among the thistles"; but Thomas Pennant in his *Tour in Wales* (1781) wrote "Bodscallan," as a corruption of "the house of Caswallon." The tradition that this was the dwelling-place of Caswallon Law-hir, Cadwallon of the Long Hand, is an ancient one - for Cadwallon is said to have died in AD 517.

The key to the origin of the present house at Bodysgallen is the construction of Conwy castle. This famous fortress was designed to master the wild mountain areas of Snowdonia. It seems beyond doubt that the tower at Bodysgallen was built as a watchtower for Conwy castle to command the slopes south-west of the low-lying castle against surprise attack. The place is first mentioned in the mid-14th century *Record of Caernarvon*, as Bodscathlan. While the tower could hardly be claimed as a work of Conwy's master engineer James of St George, the evidence of the masonry of the spiral staircase is that this is indeed a late-13th-century tower. It has five storeys, consisting originally of a single room on each floor, with the stair turret on the west angle, against the later chimney from the hall and drawing room. Another link with the castle is that the only known source for the pinkish stone in its window mullions is the quarry in a nearby field. Pink sandstone was used for all the house.