



Plas Newydd (National Trust Photo Library/Nick Meers)



Conwy Castle



Welsh Highland Railway, "The Bodysgallen Pullman"



Laburnum Arch at Bodnant Garden



Penrhyn Castle (National Trust Photo Library/Matt Antibus)



Caernarfon Castle

26 **Llanystumdwy.** Nr Criccieth (*45 minutes s.w 1 1/2 hour's drive*). David Lloyd George, British Prime Minister 1916-22 was brought up in a cottage which is now open to the public. Nearby is the Lloyd George Memorial designed by Clough Williams-Ellis and the Lloyd George Museum.

27 **Penmon**, Anglesey (*24 miles w. 1 hour's drive*). A Norman priory church with, nearby, an impressive 1000-nest dovecot built c.1600. From Penmon Point a good view can be had of Puffin Island.

28 **Penrhyn** (*16 miles w. 1/2 hour's drive*). The castle (National Trust) which was built in 1827-40 by the architect Thomas Hopper, is probably the most spectacular example of the Norman Revival anywhere in Britain. It was built for the owner of the nearby slate quarries.

29 **Plas Cadnant Hidden Gardens** (*Menai Bridge w. 30 mtnutes' drive*). A remarkable recent restoration of a dramatic 19th century garden.

20 **Plas Newydd** (Anglesey, National Trust) (*21 miles w. 50 mtnutes' drive*). The most attractive feature of this early 19th-century Gothic mansion designed by James Wyatt is the celebrated mural by Rex Whistler in the dining room.

31 **Pontcysyllte Aqueduct** (*44 mtles s.e. 1 1/4 hour's drive*). Built by Telford in 1815 at Froncysllte to carry the Shropshire Canal across the Dee Valley. Probably the most impressive monument of canal engineering in the country.

32 **Portmeirion** (*40 miles s. w. 1 hour's drive*). An astonishing holiday village built by Sir Clough Williams-Ellis from 1926 on a wooded coastal peninsula; it resembles an Italian fishing village improbably blended with traditional English buildings. Fine walks from the village.

33 **Rhuddlan Castle** (*14 miles e. 1/2 hour's drive*). Begun in 1277 under King Edward I.

34 **Ruthin Castle** (*29 miles s.e. 50 minutes' drive*). Picturesque mediaeval castle now run as an hotel.

35 **St. Asaph** (*16 miles e. 1/2 hour's drive*). A tiny city with the smallest cathedral in England and Wales.

36 **Sea Zoo - Anglesey**
Cross to Anglesey by Britannia Bridge (A5) bear left at end of Bridge on to A4080. Just past Marquis of Anglesey column turn left on to A4080 sign posted Plas Newydd, Newborough. Brynsiencyn, follow brown Sea Zoo signs from Brynsiencyn village.

37 **Trefriw** (*11 miles s. 1/2 hour's drive*). A small spa mostly visited today for the fascinating Woollen Mill in the centre of the village. Nearby are the lovely lakes of Crafnant and Geirionydd, good places for picnics and fishing.

38 **Welsh Highland Railway**
One of the most remarkable railway journeys in Britain through Snowdonia from Porthmadog to Caernarfon.

WELSH TO ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

<i>abaty:</i>	abbey	<i>llannerch:</i>	clearing
<i>aber:</i>	confluence of river	<i>llechwedd:</i>	wooded hillside, slope
<i>afon:</i>	river	<i>llwyd:</i>	grey
<i>allt:</i>	hill, slope	<i>llyn:</i>	lake
<i>bach, bychan:</i>	small	<i>llys:</i>	court, manor
<i>ban, pl, bannau:</i>	peak(s)	<i>maes:</i>	field, square
<i>banc:</i>	mound, bank	<i>maen:</i>	rock, stone
<i>bedd:</i>	grave	<i>mawr:</i>	big, large
<i>betws.</i>	church, oratory	<i>melin:</i>	mill
<i>blaen, pl, blaenau.</i>	top(s), summit(s)	<i>melyn:</i>	yellow
<i>bod:</i>	abode, place	<i>merthyr:</i>	martyr
<i>bro:</i>	vale	<i>mor:</i>	sea
<i>bryn, pl, bryniau:</i>	hill(s)	<i>morfa:</i>	sea marsh
<i>bwch:</i>	opening, mountain pass	<i>mynydd:</i>	mountain
<i>cae:</i>	field	<i>neuadd:</i>	hall
<i>caer:</i>	fortress	<i>newydd:</i>	new
<i>capel:</i>	chapel	<i>oer:</i>	cold
<i>carreg:</i>	stone, rock	<i>ogof:</i>	cave
<i>carnedd:</i>	cairn, mound, heap	<i>pandy:</i>	fulling mill
<i>cefn:</i>	ridge, back	<i>pant:</i>	hollow, valley
<i>cei:</i>	quay, harbour	<i>pegwyn:</i>	peak
<i>ceiliog:</i>	cockerel	<i>pen:</i>	top, ridge, end
<i>celli, gelli:</i>	grove	<i>penrhyn:</i>	promontory,
<i>coch:</i>	red		peninsula
<i>coeden, pl, coed:</i>	tree(s)	<i>pentref:</i>	village
<i>cors:</i>	bog, fen	<i>plas:</i>	manor
<i>craig:</i>	rock	<i>pont:</i>	bridge
<i>croes:</i>	cross	<i>porth:</i>	entrance port, harbour
<i>crug:</i>	cairn, mound, heap		pool
<i>cwm:</i>	valley	<i>puwl:</i>	waterfall
<i>cwrt:</i>	court, manor	<i>rhaeddr:</i>	hill, slope
<i>dau(m), dwyff):</i>	two	<i>rhiw:</i>	moor, plain
<i>derwen, pl derw:</i>	oak(s)	<i>rhyd:</i>	ford
<i>dinas:</i>	fort, city	<i>sain, sant, pl, saint:</i>	saint(s)
<i>dol:</i>	meadow	<i>tafarn:</i>	inn, tavern
<i>du:</i>	black	<i>tal:</i>	end, top, front
<i>dwr:</i>	water	<i>tan:</i>	beneath, below
<i>dyffryn:</i>	valley	<i>tomen:</i>	mound, cairn
<i>eglwys:</i>	church	<i>ton:</i>	town
<i>felin:</i>	see melin	<i>traeth:</i>	beach
<i>ffordd:</i>	road, way	<i>tref:</i>	town
<i>ffnvd:</i>	stream	<i>tri:</i>	three
<i>ffynnon:</i>	well	<i>trum:</i>	ridge, summit
<i>garth:</i>	hill, ridge, enclosure	<i>twr:</i>	tower
<i>glan:</i>	shore, bank of river	<i>twyn:</i>	hill, knoll, dune
<i>glas:</i>	blue, green	<i>ty:</i>	house
<i>glyn:</i>	valley, glen	<i>tyddyn:</i>	smallholding
<i>gwaun:</i>	moor	<i>tywyn:</i>	sea-shore, sand dune
<i>gwyn:</i>	white	<i>uchaf:</i>	upper
<i>hafod:</i>	summer residence	<i>uwch:</i>	higher, above
<i>haul:</i>	sun	<i>y, yr:</i>	the (article) or the relative particle
<i>hen:</i>	old		in
<i>hendre:</i>	winter residence	<i>yn:</i>	island
<i>heol:</i>	street, road	<i>ymys:</i>	hospice, hospital
<i>is:</i>	lower	<i>ysbyty:</i>	valley
<i>isaf:</i>	lowest	<i>ystrad:</i>	
<i>lan:</i>	see glan		
<i>llan:</i>	church, enclosure		

Photography by Tony Bentley and David Toase



BODYSGALLEN HALL

THE PROPERTY OF



A SHORT HISTORY, MAPS

AND
A GUIDE TO LOCAL PLACES
OF INTEREST

LLANDUDNO
NORTH WALES
TELEPHONE 01492 584466



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.

By Elizabethan times Richard Mostyn was the owner of Bodysgallen whilst his elder brother William owned nearby Gloddaeth. Richard had learned Latin and Greek, and collected manuscripts of Welsh literature, and one must assume structures appropriate to his status as a High Sheriff of Caernarvonshire.

With the marriage of his daughter Margaret to Hugh Wynn of Berthdu the house came into the Wynn family, who dominated the Conwy valley. It is the son of this marriage, Robert Wynn, whose initials with that of his wife Katherine appear on the datestone with the year 1620 on the south-west gable.

This early-17th-century block has five storeys, including attics and cellar, and its austere detailing and mullioned windows set the pattern for all future work at the house. Its two main storeys comprise a large low hall entered at terrace level from the west, and an equally large chamber above, which became the drawing room. Both rooms open in one corner into a curious little bay, with windows on two sides and a fireplace on the third; and both have heraldic overmantels. The hall is carved, with the arms of Gruffydd ap Cynan, Wynn and Collwyn. In the drawing room the chimney-breast has the shouldered form which occurs in Plas Mawr, the magnificent Elizabethan town house built in Conwy by another branch of the Wynns. On it is the Mostyns' motto "Auxilium Meum a Domino," and above, painted on plaster, are the arms of Wynn and of the Vaughans of Corsygedol.

These shields date from the 17th century Colonel Hugh Wynn, born in 1620, was like his young cousin Colonel Roger Mostyn an ardent Royalist, and like him "at his own expense raised a regiment of Foot for the service of King Charles the First." He held Flint castle for his cousin, the Governor, played a prominent part in defending Chester against Parliamentary siege, and was one of two hostages specified in the Articles of Surrender on February 3, 1646. He also deserves notice for his protest at Lord Conway's despoliation of Conwy castle,

an operation entailing the removal of the lead and timber from the roofs, so bringing on its ruin.

Colonel Hugh's son Robert seems to have added the north-west wing to a design, familiar in Merioneth, of windows either side of a chimney on a gable wall. He, or his son the Rev. Dr. Hugh, also built a similar northeast wing which is dated 1730; and there is evidence of further repairs. But the chief work of this period is the gardens. The remarkable Dutch garden formerly had at its centre a sundial dated 1678, four years after Robert inherited. This rare layout is sunk in a deeply-walled rectangle measuring 28yds by 21yds below the southeast side of the house. The large walled rose garden is characteristic of the 18th century in Gwynedd in its attempt to keep plants from the wind. Above it are a complex of terraces, and on one is the lily pond.

On the death of Hugh Wynn, Prebendary of Salisbury, in 1761, his wealth passed mostly to his daughter Margaret. Already the heiress of Berthdu and Plas Mawr, and ultimately of Corsygedol, this second Margaret brought Bodysgallen back to the Mostyns by her marriage in 1776 to Sir Roger Mostyn the fifth baronet, and so joined her four estates to his seven.

Bodysgallen has, because of its remoteness, an atmosphere of old-fashioned endurance, and it is interesting to follow its relationship with modern life since the early 19th century. There was the gift to the Government, for example, by the Mostyns of the rocky islet on the near side of the strait next to the castle, which Telford used in 1822 for the footings of his suspension bridge over the Conwy. In return the family and their servants were to cross toll-free for ever. The year after they took advice from one John W. Williams in St Asaph on installing a water-closet. It was to be on the first floor, above the back porch on the east, so as to use the existing drains from the kitchens. "Respecting the Water Closet," he wrote on 1st August, "I would recommend you to Mr Warner, Brass founder, Lewin Street, London, as they are the best."

The house has been a dower-house, as evidently it was in 1859 when an inventory was taken. As well as furniture (dispersed in 1969), some fabrics are described. The Great Hall had “five moreen curtains”; the dining room had “crimson damask window hangings on four poles” and “four roller blinds”, the drawing room had “four sets of chintz curtains with Guilt (sic) Cornices” and the sofas were also covered in chintz. In Lady Vaughan’s bedroom there was “a four-post bed of birchwood with chintz hangings,” while in her dressing room there were “dimitty curtains on a black japanned pole.”

Four centuries after Bodysgallen was given to Richard Mostyn, Lady Augusta Mostyn enlarged it in 1894 for her second son Henry. The main work consisted of the new drawing room, with its big twice-mullioned window, and the taller dining room wing on the south. The stair was modelled on the late-17th-century stair at nearby Gloddaeth Hall, and replaced an 18th-century one in the same position. The stepped gables there and on the drawing room and the little oriel facing south are reminiscent of Plas Mawr; the architect just might have been John Douglas, whom Lady Augusta had employed at Gloddaeth. The porch is contemporary; the tall south wing is a remodelling in 1905 of an 18th-century block; and a further addition is of 1914.

These accretions disguise the central tower which is memorable because the higher you climb, the older are the steps. It is possible to pass the Victorian stairs, then some flights of re-used 18th-century balusters, next a landing-rail of Jacobean ones, and eventually after second-floor level to find you are climbing in a 13th-century spiral towards that wonderful view.

★ ★ ★ ★

From 1980 the house and estate were rescued for restoration and conversion by Historic House Hotels, and given to the National Trust in 2008.

THREE TOURS FROM BODYSGALLEN HALL

1

Proceed to Llandudno, drive over the Great Orme for glorious views. Follow the A470 to Bodnant Gardens which are world famous for their rhododendrons, azaleas, magnolias, cypresses and laburnum. Drive south through Llanrwst to Betws-y-Coed which is a beautiful village. Going west along the A5 stop at the Swallow Falls. Continuing on the A5 you approach Capel Curig which is the gateway to Snowdonia National Park. Take A498 towards Beddgelert then A4086, Llanberis Pass, to Llanberis at the foot of Snowdon. Here you can visit the Snowdon Mountain Railway, Lake Padarn and Railway with visitor centre and museum. Continue on A4086 to Caernarfon and see the world famous Castle where H.R.H. Prince Charles was invested on 1st July 1969 as the Prince of Wales. Take A487 and cross the water on to Anglesey, turn right and proceed to Beaumaris where you can visit the moated castle built by Edward I, the Court House, Tudor Rose, the Old Gaol and the Museum of Childhood. Return towards the village of Menai Bridge and proceed to **Llanfairpwllgwyngyllgogerychwyrndrobwlllantysiliogogoch** and visit the James Pringle woollen mill. Here also visit Plas Newydd the home of the Marquess of Anglesey. Heading for home through Bangor situated two miles beyond, visit Penrhyn Castle, the home of Lord Penrhyn, now a National Trust property. Follow A55 and return to Llandudno.

Approx 7 hours.

2

Proceed to Conwy where the 13th century Castle and walled town is one of the best in Europe, also visit the Aberconwy House, Plas Mawr and St Mary's Parish Church. Head out of Conwy on B5106 towards Trefriw where you can visit the Roman Spa and woollen mill. Drive towards Betws-y-Coed and follow A470 to Blaenau Ffestiniog with the Gloddfa Ganol and Llechwedd slate caverns. Follow A487 towards Portmeirion with its Italian style fishing village and fine walks. Take A498 to Tremadog to see the house where Lawrence of Arabia was born. Continue along A498 to Beddgelert and visit Sygun Copper Mine. Following A498 through Nantgwynant Pass onto A4086, A5 then B5106 towards Llanrwst, visit Gwydir Castle. Stop off for afternoon tea at Tu Hwnt i'r Bont an original customs house now an olde worlde cafe serving excellent teas. Continue home on A470.

Approx 7 hours.

3

Head out on A55 towards St. Asaph and stop off at Bodelwyddan to visit the Marble Church, over the road is Bodelwyddan Castle which houses a magnificent collection of 19th century portraits and photography. Drive to St. Asaph and visit the lovely Cathedral in the smallest city in Wales. Proceed to the market town of Denbigh and visit the Castle. Head out on B4501 to Llyn Brenig an ideal spot for beautiful walks and picnics; a variety of water sports also available here. Continue on B4501 to Cerrigydrudion where you join A5 to Llangollen, take A483 towards Wrexham and stop at Erddig Castle before you reach Wrexham. Take A525 to Ruthin visit the Court House dating back to 1401 and Craft Centre. Continue on A525 to join A55 at Bodelwyddan and head for Llandudno.

Approx 7 hours.

GUIDED SIGHTSEEING TOURS

Escorted tours using drivers with an excellent knowledge of local history may be arranged through reception. Please ask for details.

Or, if you prefer, a driver will act as a guide in your self-drive car.

PLACES OF INTEREST TO VISIT FROM BODYSGALLEN HALL

This leaflet is a brief guide to the majority of the attractions in the old County of Gwynedd in which Bodysgallen Hall is situated and in the adjoining county of Clwyd. It does not include those attractions which are seldom opened to the public, nor does it give details of opening hours about which the visitor should seek further information. The distances given are approximate mileages from Bodysgallen.

The name of the place indicated after the name of the attraction is that of the nearest town, and does not necessarily mean that the property is located in the town. The area hatched green on the map indicates the Snowdonia National Park.

- 1 Aber Falls** (14 miles w. 1/2 hour's drive).
Off the A55 near Llanfairfechan. Spectacular waterfalls and good picnic area.
- 2 Bangor** (17 miles w. 3/4 hour's drive).
The Menai Suspension Bridge built by Telford in 1826 connects Bangor with Isle of Anglesey.
- 3 Beaumaris** (21 miles w. One hour's drive).
Anglesey Castle: the last and most symmetrical of Edward I's castles, begun 1295. Attractively placed in a well-filled moat. The Old Gaol, Steeple Lane, built in 1829 and preserved as a fascinatingly gruesome museum of 19th-century prison life.

- 4 **Beddgelert** (36 miles s.w. *An hour's drive*).
Amidst splendid mountain scenery can be found the supposed tomb of the dog mistakenly killed by Prince Llewelyn after it had rescued a baby prince from a wolf.
- 5 **Betws-y-Coed** (18 miles s. *1/2 hour's drive*).
The village is a good centre for exploring Snowdonia and is well known for the famous Swallow Falls, and outdoor pursuit shops.
- 6 **Blaenau Ffestiniog & Ffestiniog Railway**
(26 miles s.w. *50 minutes' drive*).
A Slate town at the head of the Vale of Ffestiniog which contains fascinating slate quarries now open to the public the Llechwedd Slate Caverns. Steam trains still run on the narrow gauge Ffestiniog railway, now extended to Caernarfon by the rebuilding of the Welsh Highland Railway.
- 7 **Bodelwyddan Castle**
A neo Norman house, then a girls school, now a well restored offshoot of the National Portrait Gallery containing a permanent collection and changing exhibitions.
- 8 **Bodnant Garden** (National Trust) (5 miles s. *15 minutes' drive*).
One of the finest gardens in Britain. Bodnant was laid out from 1875 and is celebrated for its rhododendrons, azaleas, magnolias and cypresses. A new winter garden was created in 2012.
- 9 **Bodrhyddan Hall** (22 miles e. *40 minutes' drive*).
Seat of Lord Langford and regularly open to the public. A late 17th century house brilliantly extended in the 'Queen Anne' style in the 1860's by W. E. Nesfield.
- 10 **Caernarfon Castle** (27 miles w. *One hour's drive*).
This 13th century castle, one of the most beautiful in Europe, was the scene of the Investiture of H.R.H. Prince Charles as Prince of Wales on 1st July 1969. Nearby the Welsh Highland Railway station is the starting point for the rebuilt railway line which will eventually join the Ffestiniog Railway (see no.6) at Porthmadog.
- 11 **Chirk Castle** (National Trust, open to the public)
(50 miles s.e. *1 1/2 hour's drive*).
Built 1310 by one of Edward I's marcher lords and continuously inhabited to the present day. The fine gardens are celebrated for their superb wrought-iron gates.
- 12 **Conwy** (2 miles w. *10 minutes' drive*).
One of the most attractive small mediaeval towns in Europe. Conwy has preserved not only its magnificent 13th-century castle but also its town walls. It is dramatically approached by no less than three bridges over the estuary of the river Conwy, of which the most beautiful is Telford's Suspension Bridge of 1826. Other buildings to visit include Plas Mawr (1577), Aberconwy (National Trust) and the Smallest House in Britain.
- 13 **Copper Mine** (36 miles s.w. *1 hour's drive*).
Sygun Copper Mine is a unique modern-day reminder of 19th century methods of ore extraction and processing.

- 14 **Criccieth** (*45 miles s.w. 1 1/2 hour's drive*).
Small seaside resort dominated by the remains of a 13th-century castle.
- 15 **Denbigh** (*24 miles s.e. 3/4 hour's drive*).
Walled market town with important 13th-century castle.
- 16 **Dolwyddelan Castle** (*22 miles s. 3/4 drive*).
12th-century birthplace of Prince Llewelyn, first Prince of Wales.
- 17 **Erddig. Nr Wrexham** (National Trust; open to the public)
(*50 miles s.e. 1 1/2 hour's drive*).
A fine country house built in 1684 and extended in 1723. Scarcely altered since and preserved intact with its original contents. Also known for its apple varieties of which there are over 300 each September.
- 18 **Ewloe Castle** (*37 miles e. 50 minutes' drive*).
Attractive 13th-century castle in a wooded rural setting.
- 19 **Gwydyr Castle, Llanrwst** (*12 miles s. 1/2 hours drive*).
Not a castle but a pictureque 16th-century mansion privately inhabited but open to the public.
- 20 **Harlech** (*48 miles s.w. 1 1/2 hour's drive*).
The castle, built in 1283, is perhaps the most celebrated in Wales. The town also contains the 18 hole course of the Royal St. David's Golf Club.
- 21 **Holywell** (*27 miles e. 45 minutes' drive*).
In mediaeval times Holywell was the Lourdes of Wales. A remarkable survival from this period is the 15th-century chapel with the holy well of St. Winefride in its crypt.
- 22 **Llanberis** (*30 miles s.w. 50 minutes' drive*).
The centre for exploring the rugged Llanberis Pass and for ascending to the summit of Snowdon either on foot (3 1/2 miles) or by the Snowdon Mountain Railway. Snowdonia National Park is 840 square miles of mountains, forests, lakes, estuaries and 25 miles of coastline. Lake Padarn Country Park.
- 23 **Llandudno** (*2 miles n. 5 minutes' drive*).
A perfectly preserved Victorian seaside resort enclosed by its headlands of Great Orme and Little Orme. The Great Orme can be ascended by cable railway or cabin lift. Elegant pier of 1876. All facilities for sport and entertainment with a Ski-slope on the Great Orme.
- 24 **Llanfairpwllgwyngyllgogerychwyrndrobwlllantysiliogogogoch**
James Pringle Woollen Mill and railway station with longest name in Great Britain.
- 25 **Llangollen** (*43 miles s.e. 1 1/4 hour's drive*).
Home of the International Eisteddfod held each July since 1947. Plas Newydd, home from 1779 of the two 'Ladies of Llangollen'. Two miles away in a fine setting is Valle Crucis the impressive ruins of a Cistercian Abbey founded in 1202.