

The Restoration (1)

It was thought the monument was made up of sections of stone attached to a brick or rubble core, and the original plan was to carefully take it apart and remove the pieces to the various workshops for restoration. On investigation it was discovered that it was actually three huge slabs of stone with nothing holding them together except the heavy cap stone. In the architect's words "a fine example of Georgian jerry-building!" This meant apart from removing the railings and the badly eroded memorial plaques to Eleanor Butler and Sarah Ponsonby, the work had to be carried out in situ.

Even more worrying was the discovery that dilapidation was worse than at first thought. The corner pillars were loose and ready to fall out and the kerb stones holding the railings were badly cracked and had to be replaced at a cost of over £3,000. Although quite worn, one of the original kerb stones situated under the gate in the railings has been retained for historical reference, as it does not have to bear any weight. Some of the stone paving, which was broken or missing, was also replaced. The original stone is believed to be Cefn sandstone from a quarry in Cefn Mawr, a village 6 miles (9 kilometres) from Llangollen. This stone was probably also used to build the Ladies' home, Plas Newydd. As this quarry is no longer functioning the replacement stone is from Stanton Moor, which is a good geological match.

Restoration of the Monument to Mary Carryl and the Ladies of Llangollen in St Collen's Churchyard, Llangollen

Concern about the state of the monument was raised at a committee meeting of Hanes—Llangollen—History in October 2005. We decided to see what could be done and the Society has spent the last five years working on the project. This entailed dealing with a mound of paperwork, seeking permissions, applying for grant-funding and organising fundraising events. We were fortunate in securing the services of Graham Holland, architect to Bangor Cathedral, and after several setbacks, work eventually began in May 2010, in time for the monument's 200th anniversary.

Restoration work was expertly carried out by Stuart Mallett, stonemason and his assistant, Alexander Butler, Dyfed Wyn Jones, blacksmith, Steve Blackwell, monumental mason and John Rowe, stone cleaning expert. Apart from the money raised by the Society through events in members' homes, film shows, fairs and garden parties etc, funding has been received from CADW, Cadwyn Clwyd and The Leche Trust as well as local organisations and private individuals. Final cost will be in the region of £25,000.



The Restoration (2)

On removal it was revealed that Eleanor and Sarah's badly eroded plaques were of Carrara marble (as favoured by Michaelangelo). Exact replicas were cut and engraved by hand (brilliantly) by Steve Blackwell. The originals have been stored under cover to protect them from further damage and will be given a new home in the Llangollen Museum. Mary Carryl's plaque had been carved into the original stone and was in a reasonable condition, so it only required cleaning and the lettering repainting. Cleaning was carried out using a mixture of sand and water, and for areas needing a more gentle effect, marble dust and water.

The three sides of the monument were secured with stainless steel bracing bars and the corner pillars put back and pointed with mortar. Several railings were missing so new ones were made and prior to being replaced all the railings were fitted with stainless steel bases to prevent damage to the kerb stones, and the sockets filled with lead. While the blacksmith was working on refurbishing the railings he was surprised to discover that the finials were screwed separately to each one, in order to secure the band at the top. When the kerb stones were being replaced, the opportunity was taken to correct the level of the base, which has always dipped on one side. Although not perfect it is now much improved.

Notice

Hanes—Llangollen—History would like to stress that it was never our intention to re-create the monument as it would have been when new 200 years ago. Rather, our aim was simply to ensure the monument was restored, as found, to a sound condition so that it could continue fulfilling its purpose. Where possible the original fabric has been retained and only badly damaged parts have been renewed. We should also like to reassure people that the graves were not in any way disturbed.

We hope Mary Carryl, Eleanor Butler and Sarah Ponsonby are pleased with our efforts and that the monument will continue to stand for at least another two hundred years as a reminder of these three remarkable women, who achieved so much in their lifetime, not only for themselves but also for the town. Their decision to settle in Llangollen together with people's curiosity about them, helped to establish the thriving tourist industry the town benefits from today and for this we owe them a debt of gratitude.

The Society is grateful to everyone who has supported us through the last five years especially organisations and individuals from the local community.

Diolch yn fawr iawn!

Background History

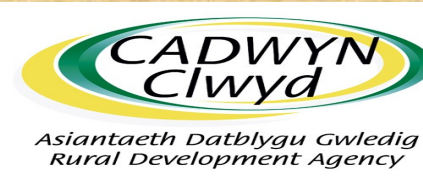
Designed by their friend Mr Thomas Netherton Parker of Sweeney Hall, Oswestry and with the epitaph composed by Dr Dealtry, the monument was erected by Lady Eleanor Butler and Sarah Ponsonby in 1810 in memory of their housekeeper and friend, Mary Carryl, who died in November 1809. On her death they decided that they would all be buried together. They came to Llangollen in 1778, lodging first at Blaen Bache farm and then with Mr Jones at the Post Office on Bridge Street (now an antique shop) next to the Hand Hotel. Having found themselves in difficult situations (Eleanor was about to be sent to a convent in France and Sarah was fending off the advances of her guardian's husband) they decided the only way out of an impossible situation was to leave their families in Ireland and look for a place where they could find peace.

They moved to Plas Newydd in 1780, embarking on a life of “sweet retirement” and became legends in their own lifetime. After living together for over fifty years, farming, gardening, collecting curiosities and oak carvings and receiving visits from many famous people, Eleanor died in 1829 and Sarah in 1831, thus bringing to an end a remarkable friendship and the era of the Ladies in Llangollen. However, their legacy lives on and each year thousands of people visit their home and gardens at Plas Newydd as well as the monument over their grave in St. Collen's churchyard.

Adnewyddiad o'r Gofadail i Mary Carryl a Boneddigesau Llangollen ym Mynwent Sant Collen, Llangollen

Ym mhwyllgor Hanes—Llangollen—History mis Hydref 2005, mynegwyd pryderon am gyflwr y gofadail. Penderfynwyd gwneud rhywbeth yn ei chylch ac mae'r Gymdeithas wedi bod yn gweithio ar y cynllun am y pum mlydedd ddiwethaf. Golygodd hyn bentwr o waith papur, ceisiadau caniatâd, ymgeisio am roddion a threfnu digwyddiadau i godi arian. Roeddem yn ffodus o gael gwasanaeth Graham Holland, Pensaer i'r Gadeirian ym Mangor, ac ar ôl llawer o rwystrau, dechreuwyd ar y gwaith ym mis Mai 2010, mewn pryd i ddathlu'i ddau can mlwyddiant.

Bu'r gwaith celfydd o gyweirio dan ofal Stuart Mallett, Saer Maen, a'i gynorthwywr Alexander Butler, Dyfed Wyn Jones, Gôf, Steve Blackwell, Saer Maen Coffaol a John Rowe, Glanhawr Meini profiadol. Ar wahân i'r arian a godwyd gan y Gymdeithas trwy wahanol achlysuron yn nhai rhai o'r aelodau, arddangos ffilmiau, Ffair a phartion gerddi ac ati, cafwyd arian gan CADW, Cadwyn Clwyd a'r Ymddiriedolaeth Leche yn ogysal â chymdeithasau lleol ac unigolion preifat. Bydd y gôst llawn oddeutu £25,000.



Yr Atgyweiriad (1)

Roeddem ar ddeall fod y gofadail wedi'i gwneud o ddarnau o garreg wedi'u glynu at fricsen neu rwbel, ac felly y cynllun gwreiddiol oedd i'w gwahanu'n ofalus a symud y darnau i wahanol weithdai i'w hatgyweirio. Wedi ymchwiliad mwy manwl cafwyd mai tri slab o garreg mawr yn unig oedd yno, gyda dim i'w dal at eu gilydd ond yr un garreg gapan drom. Yng ngeiriau'r Pensaer "Esiampl wych o adeiladwaith bregus Georgaidd"! Golygai hyn mai yn ogystal a symud y placiau côf i Eleanor Butler a Sarah Ponsonby, a oedd wedi dirywio'n fawr, a'r rheiliau, roedd yn rhaid gwneud y gwaith atgyweirio ar y man safle.

Bu darganfod fod y dirywiad yn waeth nag a ddychmygwyd yn wreiddiol yn achos o fwy o bryder. Roedd y pileri ar y corneli yn rhydd a bron yn barod i syrthio allan, a'r cerrig ymyl-y-pafin a oedd yn dal y rheiliau wedi cracio cymaint fel y bu rhaid eu hailosod am gôst o dros £3,000. Er fod un o'r cerrig ymyl-y-pafin gwreiddiol sydd tan y gât yn y rheiliau wedi dirywio'n helaeth, gan nad yw yn cario unrhyw bwysau, mae wedi ei chadw am gyfeiriad hanesyddol. Adnewyddwyd rhai o'r cerrig-pafin a oedd wedi torri neu ar goll. Credir fod y cerrig gwreiddiol yn dywodfaen Cefn o'r chwarel yng Nghefn Mawr, pentref 6 milltir (9 cilomedr) o Langollen. Mae'n debyg y defnyddiwyd yr un math o garreg i adeiladu Plas Newydd, cartef i'r Boneddigesau. Gan fod y chwarel bellach yn segur defnyddiwyd cerrig a oedd yn ddaearygol debyg o Stanton Moor.

Yr Atgyweiriad (2)

Wedi symud placiau Eleanor a Sarah, a oedd wedi dirywio'n fawr, sylweddolwyd eu bod o farmor Carrara (a hoffi Michaelangelo). Torrwyd copiau manwl ohonynt a cherfiwyd hwy â llaw (yn wych) gan Steve Blackwell. Mae'r rhai gwreiddiol wedi'u storio'n ofalus tan glawr i'w diogelu rhag mwy o ddifrod hyd nes iddynt gael cartref newydd yn Amgueddfa Llangollen. Roedd plac Mary Carryl, honno wedi'i cherfio yn y garreg wreiddiol, mewn cyflwr rhesymol, ac felly doedd ond angen ei glanhau ac ail-baentio'r llythrennau. Defnyddiwyd cymysgedd o dywod a dŵr i'r pwrpas, ac ar y manau mwyaf bregus defnyddiwyd llwch marmor a dŵr.

Diogelwyd tair ochr i'r gofadaill gyda boltau o ddur di-staen a rhoddwyd y pileri cornel yn ôl a'u pwyntio â mortar. Gan fod nifer o'r rheiliau ar goll, gwnaed rhai newydd, a chyn eu rhoi yn ôl rhoddwyd bonion dur di-staen iddynt i arbed niwed i'r cerrig ymyl-y-pafin, yna llanwyd y tyllau â phlwm. Tra roedd y Gôf yn gweithio ar y rheiliau synnodd weld fod pob ffinial wedi'i sgriwio ar wahân i'w gilydd er mwyn diogelu'r rhwymyn ar y pen. Pan yn rhoi'r cerrig ymyl-y-pafin yn ôl, manteisiwyd ar y cyfle i gywiro lefel y sylfaen oedd wedi gwyro ar un ochr. Er nad eto'n berffaith, mae'n llawer gwell.

Cefndir Hanesyddol

Wedi'i chynllunio gan eu ffrind Mr. Thomas Netherton Parker o Neuadd Sweeney, Croesoswallt, a chyda beddargraff gan Dr. Dealtry, codwyd y gofadail gan y Fonesig Eleanor Butler a Sarah Ponsonby yn 1810 er côf am eu ffrind a'u morwyn tŷ, Mary Carryl, a hunodd ym mis Tachwedd 1809. Wedi ei marwolaeth, penderfynasant y byddent oll yn cael eu claddu gyda'u gilydd. Daethant i Langollen yn 1778, yn aros yn gyntaf ar fferm Blaen Bache yna gyda Mr Jones yn y Swyddfa Bost, Heol y Bont (mawr yn siop hen gelfi) nesa at Westy'r Hand. Wedi cael eu hunain mewn amgylchiadau digon anodd (Eleanor am gael ei hanfon i Leiandy yn Ffrainc a Sarah yn derbyn sylw annerbyniol gan ŵr ei gwarchgeidwraig) penderfynasant mai'r unig ffordd allan o'r sefyllfa amhosib yma oedd i adael eu teuluoedd yn yr Iwerddon ac adrych am le arall i fyw er mwyn cael heddwch.

Bu iddynt symud i Blas Newydd yn 1780, gan dderchrau ar fywyd o 'ymddeoliad melus' a daethnant yn chwedl ofewn eu hoes eu hunain. Wedi byw gyda'u gilydd am dros 50 mlynedd, yn ffermio, garddio, casglu cywreinbethau a derw wedi'i gerfio, hefyd yn derbyn ymweliadau lu gan bobl enwog, bu i Eleanor farw yn 1829 a Sarah yn 1831. Fodd bynnag, mae eu hewyllys yn byw ymlaen, a phob blwyddyn mae miloedd o bobl yn ymweld â'u cartref a'r gerddi ym Mhlas Newydd yn ogystal â'r gofadail dros eu bedd ym mynwent Sant Collen.

At Sylw

Fe hoffai Hanes –Llangollen—History bwysleisio nad ein hamcan oedd ail-greu y gofadaill fel ag yr oedd pan yn newydd 200 mlynedd yn ôl. Yn hytrach, yr unig fwriad oedd gwneud yn siwr fod y gofadaill yn cael ei hadnewyddu i'r un cyflwr â phan y darganfyddwyd hi, fel y gallai barhau i lanw ei phwrpas. Lle'n bosib, fe gadwyd y defnydd gwreiddiol, a dim ond y darnau wedi eu difrodi a adnewyddwyd. Hoffem bwysleisio na amharwyd ar y beddau mewn unrhyw fodd.

Gobeithiwn fod Mary Carryl, Eleanor Butler a Sarah Ponsonby yn filch o'n hymdrechion, ac y bydd i'r gofadaill sefyll am o leiaf ddau gan mlynedd eto fel coffadwriaeth am dair merch nodedig a gyflawnodd gymaint yn ystod eu bywyd, nid yn unig yn bersonol ond i'r dref hefyd. Bu i'w penderfyniad i ymgartrefu yn Llangollen, ynghyd â chwilfrydedd y pobl amdanynt, fod yn hwb a chynhorthwy i sefydlu diwydiant ymwelwyr lewyrchus yn y dref sydd yn dal hyd heddyw, ac am hyn rydym yn ddyledus ac yn ddiolchgar iddynt.

Mae'r Gymdeithas yn ddiolchgar i bawb sydd wedi ein cefnogi yn ystod y pum mlynedd ddiwethaf, yn enwedig cymdeithasau a phobl o fewn y gymuned leol.

Diolch yn fawr iawn!