

## **Dunraven Castle**

The interior apartments of Dunraven Castle, like the exterior with its charming environment, are full of interesting features, with numerous trophies, paintings, works of art & other old relics of the past. From the large conservatory, with its magnificent & exquisite display of pretty fern & plants & choice flowers, you ascend some stone steps which lead to the spacious saloon or entrance hall. This apartment is panelled half-way up the walls, & all around are hung many notable portraits of several members of the Wyndham family. Among the interesting trophies are some fine horned heads of moose & various other animals which have fallen to the Earl of Dunraven's gun in past days, for he has been an enthusiastic hunter & sportsman. The interior apartments have been considerably altered from time to time, & the open space formerly occupied by the staircase is now the morning room, which really forms an adjunct to the saloon. The morning room is well panelled from the floor to the ceiling, and a pretty balustrading at one end adds considerably to the beauty of the room. Above the mantelpiece are some trophies of ancient pistols, & to the right-hand is an old mirror of French design, & a suit of ancient armour occupies a corner of this apartment.

### **The Dining Room & Drawing Room.**

Occupying the western side of the Castle are the spacious dining room & drawing room. Both these apartments have some large windows looking across the adjacent sea bay towards Newton Nottage & Porthcawl. In the dining room are several interesting old portraits of members of the Wyndham family in by-gone days.

The drawing room – which adjoins the dining room – is considered one of the most beautiful apartments in the Castle, very nobly proportioned. It contains some fine rural decorations of a bluish-grey tint, which are well set off & matched by a finely moulded frieze. Many notable portraits & pictures adorn the walls, among them being portraits of Caroline of Dunraven, also of Thomas Wyndham who lived at the Castle from 1762 to 1814, & a member of the Wyndham family who was killed in the hunting field when quite a young man. The valuable furniture of the drawing room includes some chaste & exquisite examples in the Louis Quinze and ancient Queen Anne styles.

### **The Oak Staircase & Artistic Old Tapestry.**

The grand old oak staircase occupies a space on the southern side of the Castle and along the walls which form the gallery at the top are some artistic & interesting pieces of ancient tapestry, which were brought some years ago from Llanmihangel Place, an old Tudor mansion situated mid-way between Cowbridge & Llantwit Major, which was in the old days a seat of the Wyndham family. They are in all three large pieces of tapestry, & they are all stated to be of Welsh origin & design. Both the subjects for the tapestries are taken from the Book of Esther in the Old Testament, one being of King Ahasuerus & Queen Esther, and the other represents Haman & Mordecai the Jew. The long corridor on the first floor at the top of the staircase, though of somewhat narrow dimensions, is very effective-looking with the groined roof; when viewed from the ends being particularly graceful & pleasing to the observant eye which admires artistic handiwork.

### **Relic of a Famous Shipwreck.**

An interesting & memorable relic of the past occupies a place on the floor at the extremity of the corridor just referred to, which has a short story attached to it. It is a big ship's bell of that famous ill-fated, full-rigged ship, 'The Ben-y-Gloe' of Glasgow, a fine boat of her time, for she was over 2000 tons burthen. This famous ship was totally wrecked & driven to her doom on the rocky shore below the lofty rugged cliffs to the west of the Nash lighthouses in a terrible gale on October 15<sup>th</sup> 1886.

Happily the captain & crew, save one young man, the ship' carpenter named Johnson, were rescued from their perilous position, & in their pitiable plight some members of the crew found shelter & kindly hospitality at the hands of the Earl of Dunraven, who still treasures & preserves the famous ship's bell as a fitting memorial of the event, which is probably well remembered by numerous inhabitants in the Vale of Glamorgan today.

### **The New Wing – Its Interesting Features**

The new wing, which was added to Dunraven Castle by the present Earl about a quarter of a century ago, consists of suites of apartments generally occupied by the Earl & Countess during their residence there. In one of the bedroom apartments on the top floor are several interesting portraits. Occupying a space over the mantelpiece in one of the Countess's apartments hang two excellent photographs of Lord Dunraven's famous yachts, the 'Valkyries', and also a portrait of his Lordship. In another of this suite of rooms, which is artistically & beautifully decorated in cream, a striking feature is the fine arcading over the mantelpiece, & in each recess there are some exquisite pictures portraying a pretty scene at Adare Manor in the county of Limerick, Ireland. It is interesting to note that each of these pictures is lit by incandescent electric lamp, which is hidden from sight by the arcading, & among several other mural decorations in this picturesque apartment are photographs of some hunting scenes in Texas, in each of which the Earl of Dunraven K.P. is portrayed & is a prominent & striking figure.

### **The Earl's Apartments.**

Occupying the ground floor of the new wing of the Castle are the suite of rooms occupied by Lord Dunraven when residing at the Castle. The greater portion of the walls of the cosy sitting-room is beautifully panelled in oak, but the deep frieze is a large & somewhat bold, though remarkably effective, scheme of colour & design. A very ancient oak chest stands in one corner of the sitting-room, which has inscribed upon it the name of Thady Quin, Adare Manor, Ireland, a notable & famous ancestor of the Dunraven family who was a well-known Justice of the Peace in the reign of the Stuarts, & the writer of the interesting letter referred to in the preceding article. By some strange means or other this oak chest got out of the possession of the Dunraven family some years ago, but was subsequently sent to Lord Dunraven by some unknown person near Fellbrig, who stated that by some strange coincidence they happened to come into possession of it while they resided in the county of Norfolk, England.

In a conspicuous position on the wall of the sitting-room hangs a notable illuminated address which was presented to Lord Dunraven in the year 1895 by the citizens of Cardiff city, in appreciation of his enthusiastic & energetic efforts to bring back the America Cup to Old England. Here, as in most of the other apartments of the stately Castle, may be seen many very magnificent engravings of various eminent artists, including some of famous scenes taken from Shakespeare's works. Other interesting pictures include several portraits indicating the Earl's passionate delight for yachting & the sporting world with all its varied interests.

### **Distinguished Notabilities at Dunraven Castle.**

It is interesting to note that Dunraven Castle has been visited by several distinguished notabilities at different periods, including our present Queen Mary & her father & mother, the late Duke & Duchess of Teck, who were the guests of the Earl & Countess of Dunraven in the summer of 1888 when they visited many historic places of interest in the Vale of Glamorgan, including Llanmihangel Place, Flemingstone Court, and the ancient Roman villa at Caermead near Llantwit Major.

In conclusion, it is safe to say that Dunraven Castle, with its charming & delightful surrounding grounds & magnificent interior is an ideal mansion & home for one who loves & admires the wondrous.....in all its mysterious varying moods. Beneath the great rock walls on which the romantic Castle is perched there is a magnificent swell of sea, where the breakers break relentlessly on the rocks that line the shore, while only about half a mile away across the intervening blue the angry billows are churned to snow-white foam, where the rolling tide boils round the grim Tuskar Rock, & beyond this to the luxuriant & romantic sea cliffs of Devonshire stretches the wide Severn sea, with its argosy of collier tramps, barques, merchant vessels & world-end steamers representing British trade & commerce, which is the pride & glory of Old England & her vast dominions.

Glancing back into the past, what remarkable changes the centuries have brought. The false deceptive lights of old Walter Vaughan of Dunraven no longer lure & mislead the storm-tossed mariners to their doom. But now, in our more kindlier & less romantic age, the powerful & brilliant twin lights that flash from the lofty Nash lighthouses nearby direct & safely guide the brave toilers of the sea between the rocks & ghouls give them a safe passage to their desired haven or harbour of refuge.

*Mr T.M Price, late of Boverton - Glamorgan Gazette, 19<sup>th</sup> February 1915*