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Dublin Core

Title

Ellin's Tower | Twr Elin

Subject

Art & Architecture

Holy Island

Churches

Creator

Martin Crampin

Publisher

Ports, Past and Present Project

Date

2023

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Relation

https://perma.cc/LG7Y-ANH2

Format

Curatescape story

Language

English

Welsh

Coverage

53.30223268931252, -4.701812413774479

Curatescape Story Item Type Metadata

Lede

The castellated whitewashed tower on the cliffs near South Stack is known as Ellin’s Tower or Twr Elin.

Lede (Welsh)

Mae'r tŵr gwyngalchog castellog ar y clogwyni ger Ynys Lawd yn cael ei adnabod fel Tŵr Elin.

Story

The two-storey folly was erected in 1868 for Ellin or Ellen Stanley. Ellen came from the Williams family of Bodelwyddan near St Asaph in north Wales and married William Owen Stanley of Penrhos in 1832. They lived at Penrhos mansion near Holyhead, once the centre of a large estate, but demolished in the mid-twentieth century having fallen derelict after the Second World War.

William Owen Stanley was a Liberal MP for Anglesey from 1837 until 1847, and subsequently an MP for Chester and then Beaumaris. He was Lord Lieutenant of Anglesey from 1869 until his death in 1884. He was well-known as an antiquary and led excavations at various sites in Anglesey, publishing in the journal *Archaeologia Cambrensis*. Some of his archaeological finds, including those found at the hut circles on Holyhead Mountain, were kept in Ellin’s Tower, before they were given to the British Museum. His collection included a variety of prehistoric and Romano-British vessels, Stone Age or Bronze Age axe heads, Romano-British tankard handles, and an early medieval penannular brooch.

W.O. Stanley was an important patron of Holyhead, contributing £4000 towards the restoration of St Cybi’s church in the late 1870s. He had also been responsible for the building of the Market Hall in 1855, now home to the town library. Ellin predeceased her husband in 1876, but set aside funds in her will for a chapel and a remarkable memorial to William Owen Stanley in St Cybi’s. The memorial was not completed until long after his death in 1884. Stanley’s effigy was carved with large angels at his head and his feet by the London sculptor Hamo Thornycroft in 1897 and a window above the memorial was made by the firm of Morris & Co., also in 1897. It is an unusual window for its date, with foliage and fruits but without any figures. By contrast, friends of Ellin Stanley provided stained glass in her memory that was added to a window in the chapel, which has figures of three female saints, Dorothy, Theresa and Agnes. The window was also the work of Morris & Co, using figures designed by Edward Burne-Jones.

Family tradition remembers Ellin as ‘a saintly woman and much given to good works’, in contrast to the violent temper of her husband William. He was the younger twin brother of Edward John, who inherited the title of second baron Stanley of Alderley. His nephew Henry, the third baron, converted to Islam and became the first Muslim member of the House of Lords in 1869. This didn’t prevent him from paying for the restoration of churches at

Llanbadrig and Bodewryd in northern Anglesey, which were furnished with decorative glass in an Islamic style. He may have influenced the avoidance of figures in the east window of the Stanley Chapel at St Cybi's with fruits and flowers by Morris & Co. The connection with Morris & Co. may have been made through W.O. Stanley's sister Rosalind, who married George James Howard, ninth earl of Carlisle. They were both close friends of William Morris and Edward Burne-Jones, although Morris died in 1896 and Burne-Jones probably had little to do with either commission.

Ellin's Tower is now an information centre for the RSPB.

Story (Welsh)

Codwyd y ffoledd deulawr hwn ym 1868 ar gyfer Ellin neu Ellen Stanley. Roedd Ellen yn hanu o deulu Williams Bodelwyddan ger Llanelwy a phriododd â William Owen Stanley o Benrhos ym 1832. Roedden nhw'n byw ym mhlas Penrhos ger Caergybi, oedd ar un adeg yn ganolbwynt i ystâd fawr, ond a gafodd ei ddymchwel yng nghanol yr ugeinfed ganrif ar ôl mynd â'i ben iddo wedi'r Ail Ryfel Byd.

William Owen Stanley oedd AS Rhyddfrydol Ynys Môn o 1837 hyd 1847, ac wedyn bu'n AS Caer ac wedyn bwrdesitrefi Môn. Bu'n Arglwydd Raglaw Ynys Môn o 1869 hyd ei farwolaeth ym 1884. Roedd yn adnabyddus fel hynafiaethydd ac arweiniodd gloddiadau mewn amryw o safleoedd yn Ynys Môn, gan gyhoeddi yn y cylchgrawn Archaeologia Cambrensis. Cafodd rhai o'i ddarganfyddiadau archaeolegol, gan gynnwys y rhai a ganfuwyd yng nghylchoedd cytiau Mynydd Twr, eu cadw yn Nhŵr Elin, cyn cael eu rhoi i'r Amgueddfa Brydeinig. Roedd ei gasgliad yn cynnwys amrywiaeth o lestri cynhanesyddol a Rhufeinig-Frythonig, pennau bwyeill o Oes y Cerrig neu'r Oes Efydd, clustiau mygiau cwrw Rhufeinig-Frythonig, a broets bylchgrwn canoloesol cynnar.

Roedd W.O. Stanley yn noddwr pwysig i Gaergybi, gan gyfrannu £4000 at adfer eglwys Cybi Sant ar ddiwedd y 1870au. Ef hefyd oedd yn gyfrifol am godi Neuadd y Farchnad ym 1855, sydd bellach yn gartref i lyfrgell y dref. Bu farw Elin cyn ei gŵr ym 1876, ond rhoddodd arian o'r neilltu yn ei hewyllys ar gyfer capel a chofeb ryfeddol i William Owen Stanley yn Eglwys Cybi Sant. Ni chwblhawyd y gofeb tan ymhell ar ôl ei farwolaeth ym 1884. Cerfiwyd delw Stanley gydag angylion mawr wrth ei ben a'i draed gan y cerflunydd Hamo Thornycroft yn Llundain ym 1897 a gwnaed ffenestr uwchben y gofeb gan gwmni Morris & Co., hefyd ym 1897. Mae'n ffenestr anarferol ar gyfer ei chyfnod, gyda dail a ffrwythau ond heb unrhyw ffigurau. Ar y llaw arall, darparodd cyfeillion Ellin Stanley wydr lliw er cof amdani hi a ychwanegwyd at ffenestr yn y capel, sydd â ffigyrau o dair santes, Dorothy, Theresa ac Agnes. Gwaith Morris & Co oedd y ffenestr hon hefyd, gan ddefnyddio ffigurau a ddyluniwyd gan Edward Burne-Jones.

Yn ôl traddodiad y teulu roedd Ellin yn 'ddynes sanctaidd oedd yn ymroi'n fawr i wneud gwaith da', mewn cyferbyniad â thymer dreisgar ei gŵr William. Ef oedd gefell iau Edward John, a etifeddodd deitl yr ail farwn Stanley o Alderley. Trodd ei nai Henry, y trydydd barwn, at Islam a daeth yn aelod Mwslimaidd cyntaf Tŷ'r Arglwyddi ym 1869. Ni wnaeth hyn ei atal rhag talu am adfer eglwysi yn Llanbadrig a Bodewryd yng ngogledd Môn, a gafodd eu dodrefnu â gwydr addurnol mewn arddull Islamaidd. Efallai mai ei ddylanwad ef sy'n gyfrifol am y diffyg ffigurau yn ffenestr ddwyreiniol Capel Stanley yn Eglwys Cybi Sant gyda ffrwythau a blodau gan Morris & Co. Mae'n bosibl bod y cysylltiad â Morris & Co. wedi'i wneud drwy Rosalind, chwaer W.O. Stanley, a briododd â George James Howard, nawfed iarll Caerliwelydd. Roedd y ddau yn ffrindiau agos i William Morris ac Edward Burne-Jones, er i Morris farw ym 1896 ac er ei bod yn debyg nad oedd gan Burne-Jones lawer i'w wneud â'r naill gomisiwn na'r llall.

Mae Tŵr Elin bellach yn ganolfan wybodaeth i'r RSPB.

Related Resources

Adelaide Lubbock, ‘The Owens and the Stanleys of Penrhos: An account of its owners from 1513 to 1948’ revsd Lyulph Avebury (1972), https://www.academia.edu/41751197/The_Owens_and_the_Stanleys_of_Penrhos, archived at https://perma.cc/8LVA-XQH9

J.K. Roberts, *Hanes Eglwys Cybi Sant/The History of St Cybi’s Church* (Holyhead, 2008).

Martin Crampin (ed.), Stained Glass in Wales Catalogue, University of Wales Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies, Aberystwyth, 2011, http://stainedglass.llgc.org.uk/site/6, archived at https://perma.cc/DQ34-TES3

Martin Crampin, *Stained Glass on Holy Island, Anglesey* (Aberystwyth, 2023), pp. 6–7.

Ellen’s Tower; Twr Ellin, Gorferydd, https://coflein.gov.uk/en/site/22993, archived at https://web.archive.org/web/20230530091418/https://coflein.gov.uk/en/site/22993/

Antiquities donated to the British Museum by William Owen Stanley, https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/search?agent=William%20Owen%20Stanley, archived at https://perma.cc/E6TR-MNEN

Official Website

RSPB Ellin's Tower Seabird Centre