

A house rebuilt by 'one of the three great fools of Glamorgan' and a ghostly gatehouse, are visited by JOHN I HOWELLS

THERE ARE two Llandoughs in the Vale of Glamorgan, both of which are reputed to have had a Celtic monastic settlement, dedicated to St Dochdwy, from the sixth century. The one near Cowbridge is the elder of the two, and is pronounced Llandoff to distinguish it from the one near Cardiff.

We are on surer ground by the middle of the 13th century for by then Llandough-by-Cowbridge was described as a knight's fee and had the classic combination of church and castle. Adam le Walsche held the fee and is generally held to have built a castle, although it is doubted if any of that building exists in the present stonework.

The Welsh family held the manor for 300 years though the only undisputed memorial in the church is a rare brass to Wenllian Walsche who died in 1427. Richard Walsh is mentioned as holding Llandough in the Liber Niger of 1165.

In 1444 the estate was sold to Sir William Thomas of Raglan, and thus the Herbert Earls of Worcester, being a tiny part of their estates, as it was of the Carnes of Ewenny who bought Llandough in 1536, and the Mansels of Margam to whom it passed by marriage in 1677.

Some stonework of the 15th to 17th centuries remain to remind us of the original square form of the castle: one whole wall of the hall block and the gatehouse. A rectangular tower at one corner was used as part of the newer, present house, which was built against the outside of the walls of the original square enclosure.

This house, of the late 18th century was a rebuilding by John Price, who was called 'one of the three great fools

LLANDOUGH

Where a little brown animal runs through a closed door



of Glamorgan' for spending his fortune improving another man's property — I would like to know who the other two were. The estate still belonged to the Mansel-Talbots. Colonel Price lived previously at Llandaff Court and his sister married into the Lewises of New-house.

John Price was a Deputy Lieutenant of the county, and pops in and out of the delightful edition of *John Bird's Diaries*, by Hilary Thomas, who lives at Llandough.

Perhaps it was the quiet and ancient character of Llandough that caused John Price to build there rather than on his own estates. A succession of tenants parade through the 19th century, all probably relishing being lords of the manor, some with their memorials in the church: Cerjat, Lynch Blosse, Morgan, Bishop Copleston of Llandaff when he wasn't being Dean of St Paul's six months of the year, Ebsworth and Campbell-Swinton, when Faure is said to have stayed there and composed his seventh nocturne.

Sir Sydney Hutchinson Byass, of the sherry family, bought the castle in 1914. He died in 1929 but his wife

Eveline lived until 1951. The house was requisitioned during World War II and after a fire about 1945, the central block was removed by the new owner Russell Shepherd, whose son still lives in one of three flats in the lesser parts.

The main house, with its wide staircase, well proportioned rooms, square tower and seemingly spaces everywhere, has been owned for many years by Nigel and Anne Anderson. Mr Anderson was brought up in India, where his father was Director General of the Hyderabad Police, and also went to Lancing College. He has engineering qualifications but went into the tobacco industry, being managing director for J R Freeman for 11 years from 1970-81. He also became joint manager of Gallaghers in London when they acquired Freeman.

Mrs Anderson is a professional artist. There are examples of her work all over the house and there is a studio on the first floor opposite the large bedroom, with a four-poster, that used to be the drawing room. Mrs Anderson teaches occasionally at Cowbridge and at one time ran an oriental rugs and antiques shop there.



with the place, even though it was only a corner of the 34,000 acres of the Talbot family's estates. The Llandough estate is split up now of course, but at its historic heart, the Castle still holds its attraction.

THE GATEHOUSE of Llandough Castle, now a separate residence, was originally built as a corner tower of the square castle of the Herberts, probably in the 15th century, though I believe it was earlier.

In the 16th century when the Carnes owned it, the tower was adapted as a gatehouse and the ground floor still has that arrangement.

Entering the secluded garden through a door in the crenellated castle wall, the solidity of the three-storey stone tower immediately impresses. There are some arrow slit openings so the mullioned windows and Tudor arched door look like relative newcomers.

There is a wonderful stone staircase climbing steeply through the three storeys, curved at the bottom and looking vaguely monastic.

Off the staircase are two rooms, a first-floor sitting room, beamed and with an arched chimney surround; and above that a bedroom with A-frame roof trusses, tapestries and a mummified owl. The *en suite* bathroom has a sunken bath — otherwise you could not get in! A dovecote is next to it in the roof space and there is some authentic graffiti of 1761.

Surprisingly, the tower was converted to a residence only about 20 or so years ago by Roger Capps who was given it as a 21st birthday present by his parents, who then owned Llandough Castle.

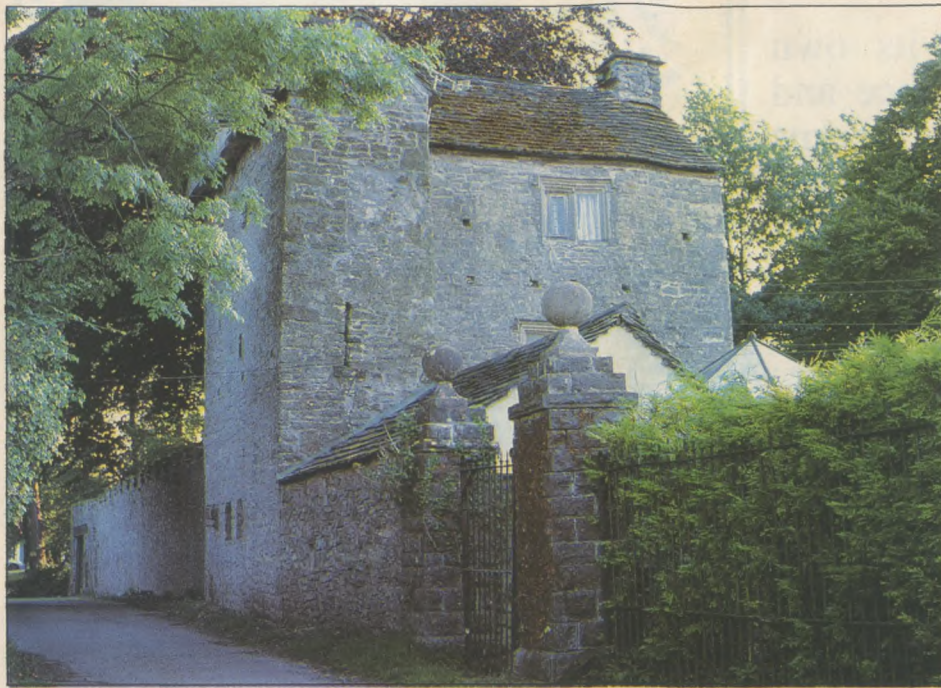
The Webbs came next and were responsible for the attractive concession to modern living, an octagonal extension with glass roof, and gothic arched windows all around, added to the back of the tower this decade and not seen from outside.

The most recent owners to have fallen in love with the Gatehouse are Grahame and Arleen Tanner, who value its haven-like qualities. Mr Tanner teaches photography and media studies at Pontypool College, and Mrs Tanner teaches home economics at Newbridge Comprehensive School.

The Tanner's daughter, Darien has recently married, but while at the Gatehouse she slept at the top of the tower in true medieval style, with occasional footsteps from the past on the stairs for company.

Mr Tanner has also experienced an unexplained happening; while firmly disbelieving in ghosts, he is convinced that he saw three times a little brown animal run through a closed door, and it was not their little brown dog.

Ghosts or no, the Gatehouse is a unique property, idiosyncratic and in a highly desirable situation. □



THE ENTRANCE to the secluded garden of The Gatehouse of Llandough Castle. The house even has some authentic 1761 graffiti.

Mr Anderson has part ownership of three race horses and lists racing is one of his hobbies. When restoring the house, they found a Cowbridge race card of 1770 under the floorboards, an early example of work from a Cowbridge printer, D Thomas. Of particular interest was the name of one of the horses listed, Gimcrack, owned by John Edmondson of Cowbridge. This was the horse, I was told, after which

the famous Gimcrack Stakes run at York in August was named. The Gimcrack Club was formed in 1767.

Llandough Castle had a previous close association with hunting too, and in 1863, Theodore Mansel-Talbot established the Glamorgan Hunt Kennels in the village, which are still there. I wonder was it while hunting here that he was killed in a fall from his horse in 1876? Presumably he had an affinity