

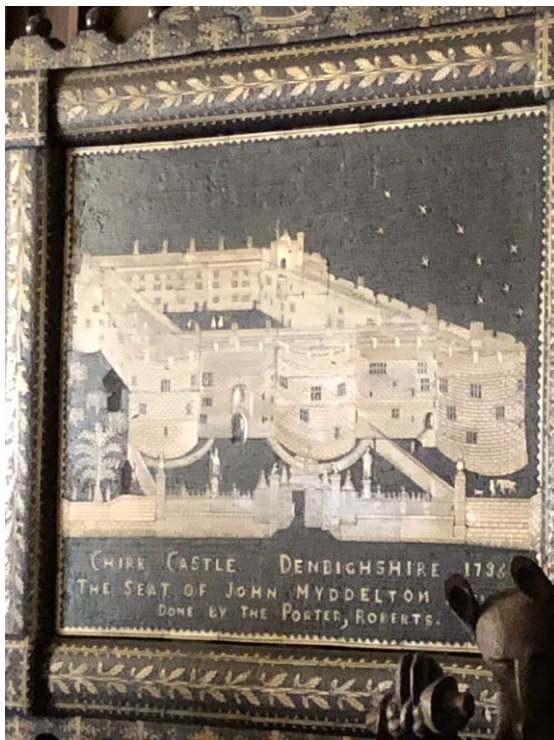
North Wales Weekend – centred on Llangollen

30th September to 2nd October 2022

This weekend started with our Court meeting and an Admissions Ceremony at which Roger Harper one of our newest Liverymen was clothed. Unfortunately, traffic meant that some of us did not make this ceremony but arrived for the drinks afterward!



Many of us were staying at the venue, the Wild Pheasant Hotel and Spa in Llangollen and some enjoyed dinner there whilst others went into central Llangollen for their food, but we all met after breakfast the next morning for our trip to Chirk Castle.



On arrival at the Castle we were bused up to the entrance (although some walked) and then taken round the Castle in two groups. Our guides were very knowledgeable and brought the Castle to life as they described the purpose of the Castle from its beginnings in late 13th century (to keep the Welsh at bay ... not succeeding in that any more), when it was built by Sir Roger Mortimer.



Apparently we even crossed Offa's Dyke when we arrived into the car park, but there is much discussion about this as a border with England, although our guide suggested we had moved into England a few times. The tour was very interesting but we cannot include everything here. Hopefully the photographs below give you a sense of the splendor.



The great staircase with its wooden, but looked like marble, pillars led us into the state dining room with two sets of chairs from previous coronations.



The Long Gallery looking towards the Saloon and Drawing Rooms (not pictured). Here we are looking into the bedroom of Charles I, but those historians amongst you will know, as was pointed out to us, that he could not have stayed there as this section was not built when he lived, although he did visit the castle.



We left the long gallery to walk down the stairs to the Chapel, which was turned into a music room by later tenants, Lord and Lady Howard de Walden. We were locked in for a while for the exit door had not been unlocked and the second group joined us.



It is still possible to see evidence of the Chapel in the windows but it was much more of a comfortable music room now.

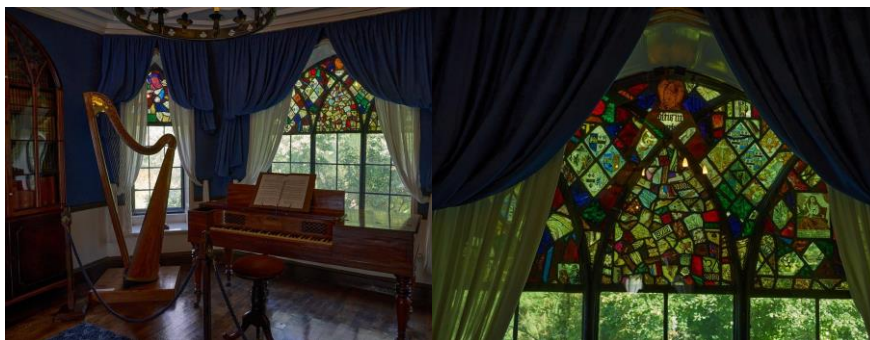


After tea in Chirk Castle courtyard many walked back down to the shop (much easier going downhill) and then travelled to lunch at Plas Newydd.



The beautiful house at Plas Newydd gained notoriety as it was rented by two Irish ladies, who had fled Ireland possibly because of their relationship with each other. Sarah Ponsonby and Lady Eleanor Charlotte Butler (16 years her senior) rented the cottage Pen-y-Maes renaming it Plas Newydd (New Hall) and were visited by many attracted by their friendship. The Tudor style black and white outside was not part of the cottage until after the ladies'

deaths, when it was bought by General Yorke. But the porch was the delight of the ladies! The volunteer told us that they invited people to bring furniture and goods for recycling (so up-cycling is not a new concept) and they used as much as they could in the furnishings of the house. The porch has two mid 17th century bed posts supporting the roof and the Duke of Wellington presented them with two lions which can just be seen on the bench. The ladies even held a 'porch warming' because they were so proud of the effect.



Other wood and leather can be seen inside the rooms adorning the walls. The stained-glass windows are beautiful and the library housed examples of their art works and embroidery.



Not many pictures of the ladies survive, partly because they did not like being painted. They are depicted in one lithograph in riding gear with men's hats and cravats on. The production of BBC One's *Gentleman Jack* about Anne Lister who ran her father's estate in Yorkshire in the 1830's used some of the ideas for costumes based on the Ladies of Llangollen.

We all returned to the Wild Pheasant Hotel to gather again for the formal dinner of the weekend. The evening started with a reception at 7.30, so some of us managed to visit Llangollen and the famous Llangollen canal and aqua duct beforehand.



Table 1

Table 2



Table 3



Table 4

Dinner was excellent started with grace, and an informal welcome by the Master who introduced our guest from RAF Valley, Group Captain Matt Hoare, accompanied by his wife TJ, and Ms Zoe Henderson, High Sheriff of Clwyd. Many pictures were taken during the evening,

Once coffee was served, we were able to enjoy Liveryman Noel Hulmston's introduction of the Group Captain. He embellished his talk with lots of his own vignette which all enjoyed.

The Group Captain responded and the Master closed the formal dinner by thanking everyone, but especially the North Wales committee, led by Liveryman Andrew Richards, who had provided such an interesting weekend.

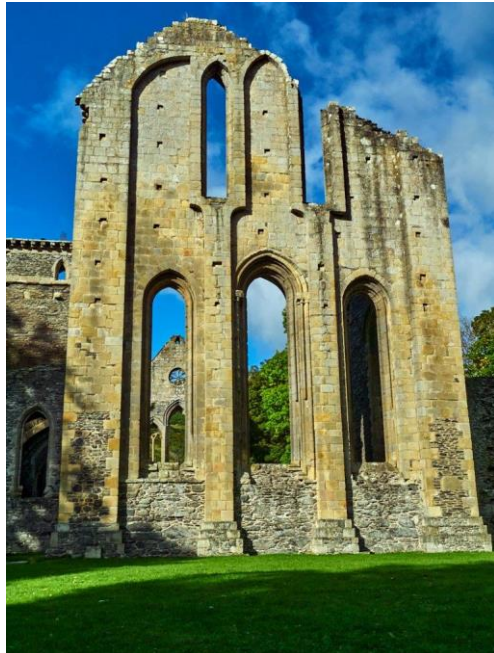
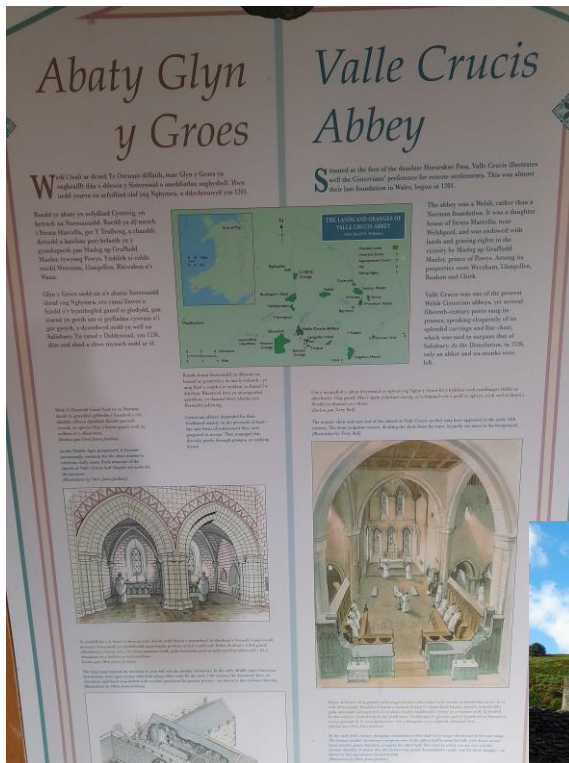


The evening ended with our guests being presented with WLCOW Aprons, because as the Master noted, the Group Captain already had an excellent cummerbund!



Farewells were made as Liverymen and their guests left for home or hotel accommodation.

The next morning many Liverymen had to begin journeys home through Wales or beyond, so it was a small group who attended the last visit of the weekend: Valle Crucis Abbey, at the foot of the Horseshoe Pass. As can be seen from the photographs, the sky was blue and the blustery winds of Saturday had died down.



The weekend closed with lunch at Abbey Farm Bistro ... Thank you North Wales Committee: an excellent weekend.