

Bridgend Notes

Bridgend Cottage Hospital

The Cottage Hospital first opened in 1896. It originally contained two small wings for patients and was largely paid for by the Eisteddfod Committee and the Earl of Dunraven. After the First World War there was a need for additional space and in the late 1920's the hospital was moved to a large house named Fitzhamon Court in Merthyr Mawr Road, near to the Tythe Barn. The original building then became a Tuberculosis Clinic.

The building, located on the corner of Nolton Street and Court Road, just behind the Randall Memorial Drinking Fountain (9) is designed in Edwardian Queen Anne style. The main part of the building is two stories tall and flanked on either side by a single floor annex. The property's front elevation is built from pale sandstone with red and dark coloured brick decorative detailing on the band above the windows. The building has a distinctive 'jerkinhead roof' – this describes a roof which combines both gable and hipped roof designs, providing an aesthetically interesting appearance – together with red brown eaves. The building is now used as a business premises.



Randall Memorial Drinking Fountain

The drinking fountain was constructed in 1860 by J. W. Hugall of London and is Victorian French Gothic style in design. It is set within a small garden area enclosed with railings and is Grade II Listed. The fountain was constructed out of freestone with marble dressings and a pyramid style top. The term 'freestone' refers to a fine grained stone (usually sandstone or limestone) which can be cut easily in any direction without splitting, thus enabling intricate carving of the nature shown here. The front elevation

of the drinking fountain contains the coat of arms of the Wyndham family. Below the pyramidal top is an open section which contains ornate tracery on each of the four sides. The four simply carved stone basins around the lower section of the fountain would originally have held water. Below these are ornate stone bases carved with simplified floral motifs.

To the front of the fountain, a carved marble commemorative plaque reads:

‘Erected by Caroline, Countess of Dunraven, in memory of her friend John Randall Esq. who for thirty-three years managed her estates AD 1860’.

John Randall managed the Dunraven Estate. He was noted for his efficient supervision and tending of the estate such that it became profitable both for the landlord and tenants.

The fountain was the first piped drinking fountain within Bridgend, commissioned by Dowager Countess of Dunraven, Caroline Wyndham. The water was clean, free and available for everyone. As a mark of gratitude to the Countess, Eastgate Street in Bridgend was renamed Caroline Street.



Caroline, Countess of Dunraven (Anna-Maria Hajba et al., A taste of Adare Manor (Mallow, 2014), p. 7) Courtesy of the Countess of Dunraven

Caroline was born Caroline Wyndham at Clearwell court, she married Henry Windhan Quin of Adare; eventually becoming the Wyndham-Quin family. Benefactor of Clearwell in the Forest of Dean, she inherited the Clearwell Estate in 1810.



Drawing from the Leonard Collection of the 19th-century view of Adare Manor, Co. Limerick

Old Courthouse and Police Station

The Old Courthouse/Police Station is located opposite the Randall Memorial Drinking Fountain (9) and was built in 1880 by Architect John Pritchard, the restorer of Llandaff Cathedral. Later extensions were added in 1922. It is built in a 'High Victorian Gothic' architectural style and incorporated a Police Station, Superintendent's house and a Magistrate's Court. The building's interior contains many details that were characteristic of Pritchard's style including an open timber roof to the hall of Justice with cusped wind braces and quatrefoil panels and several heavily quatrefoil punched doors. The Grade II Listed building became redundant in the 1970's and fell into disrepair.

It was restored by the late Simon Hegarty in 1996 and won a Civic Trust Award in 1997. Notable features include door mullions at its north end. It is currently a restaurant/cocktail bar.

Bridgend Old Bridge

This Scheduled Monument and Grade II* Listed structure was built in 1425 to allow people and small carts to cross the River Ogmore (prior to this the river was crossed by a ford at this point). One of the reasons why the Normans built their castle (Newcastle Castle) on top of the nearby hill (Newcastle Hill) was to control this important river crossing and the route to and from the west. The original bridge had four arches but a flood in August 1775 destroyed the two western arches. These were replaced by a single, wider arch. The easternmost arch was absorbed in the surrounding buildings of nos. 12 and 14 Dunraven Place. The bridge was built out of course rubble with a small rampart. It now carries a cobbled and flag stone pathway and leads into the historical core of Bridgend town centre.

The present name of the town is authentically derived from the name 'Bryggen Eynde' and is mentioned in a document dated 1447 – soon after the first bridge was erected. The name evolved over many years until its present-day version of Bridgend and its Welsh equivalent of Penybont ar Ogwr.

Newcastle Castle

There were thought to be two castles within Bridgend, one (known as Old Castle) was possibly located within the Merthyr Mawr Road area (although no remains have been found here) and the second (Newcastle) was located on top of a high piece of land overlooking the River Ogmore.

Newcastle was believed to have been founded by Robert Fitzhamon, Baron of Gloucester. Little remains of the earth and timber ringwork that was the original castle fortification. This was replaced in the 1180s when a stone keep was constructed. This was attributed to William FitzRobert, Earl of Gloucester. The large curtain wall and the polygonal shell that can still be seen today was built soon after. Given that the later structures are of a higher standard and built out of ashlar it is believed that King Henry II was responsible for their construction. The king had taken control of the castle following the Welsh rebellion of Morgan ap Caradog in 1183-4. Two later towers were added to the castle. The castle swapped from royal hands to local lords throughout the next couple of centuries until the 16th Century when the castle was converted to a Tudor home.

The castle today is in a ruined state, but its faded grandeur can still be seen. It is one of the best examples of a 12th century castle in Wales. A rare survivor is the Romanesque round head arch with attached crude Ionic column which frames the doorway into the castle. No other decoration of this type is known within Glamorgan.