



Bryniau Clwyd a  
Dyffryn Dyfrdwy  
Tirwedd  
Cenedlaethol

Clwydian Range  
and Dee Valley  
National  
Landscape



Pontcysyllte  
Sallu Trefodfaeth Y Byd  
World Heritage Site

# Visiting Plas Newydd Historic House and Gardens, Llangollen

## Self-Guided visit to Plas Newydd grounds

### Visiting Information

**Arrange a free visit**

Email: [plasnewydd@denbighshire.gov.uk](mailto:plasnewydd@denbighshire.gov.uk)

**Website and information**

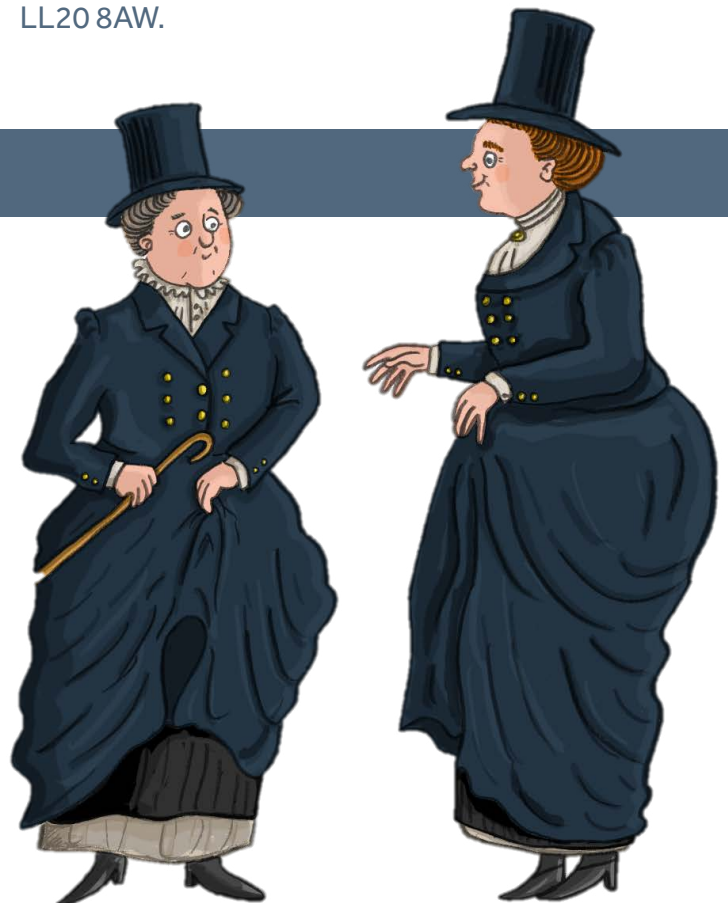
[www.denbighshire.gov.uk/en/leisure-and-tourism/museums-and-historic-houses/plas-newydd-llangollen.aspx](http://www.denbighshire.gov.uk/en/leisure-and-tourism/museums-and-historic-houses/plas-newydd-llangollen.aspx)

**Location**

Plas Newydd Historic House and Gardens,  
Hill Street, Llangollen,  
LL20 8AW.

### Brief for Teacher

- Use the map to explore around the grounds.
- Locate the features and then read out the information at each point to discover more.
- At some points there are optional activities to do, so please ensure you have the equipment required.



# Map of Plas Newydd





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## 1. The Tearoom

This building was originally a coach house and was built in 1778 just before the Ladies arrived at Plas Newydd. It was undecorated at first and the black and white timbers were added much later.

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## 2. Bard's Memorial

Built in 1958, in memory of three famous Llangollen bards (poets).

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## 3. The Stone Circle

This was used for the Gorsedd ceremonies at the Llangollen Eisteddfod in 1908. There are 12 equally spaced stones in a circle around a central Maen Llog (altar stone) with two outlying stones on the north-east side, supposedly marking the direction of the rising sun on mid-summer's and midwinter's days (the solstices).

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## 4. Plas Newydd House

- One of the features which makes Plas Newydd almost unique in Britain is the decoration of the inside and outside of the cottage with carved oak. When the Ladies first moved in, the house was a small white washed cottage. They made it their own by adding the carvings and a small extension and cellar. Much grander extensions and more carvings were added and removed by later owners.
- The Ladies were keen collectors of carvings which were gathered from bed posts, church pews, panels from chests, boxes, beds, chair backs and cupboard doors. They are mostly from the 1600s and are mainly made from oak.
- In 1814 they held a 'Porch Warming' to celebrate the completion of the carving decorations in the porch.
- Among the carvings inside and outside the house you will find trees of life, tulips and other plants, birds, animals and mythical beasts; male and female caryatids; green men and some geometric patterns.

Which carvings can you spot on the outside of the house?

**Task:** Draw or take a photo of your favourite carving. Why is it your favourite?

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## 5. The Dairy

The dairy was built in 1785 and allowed the Ladies to produce milk, cream and butter products.

Can you find the circular stone dairy? What do you think it was used for?



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## 6. The Gardens

- The parterre formal garden in front of the house was created after the Ladies of Llangollen lived here. When they lived at Plas Newydd this area was the fields where their cows grazed.
- Among the box hedges in front of the house you will find Chester's ancient market cross (gifted to the Ladies in 1827) and stone fountains from Valle Crucis Abbey and Llangollen Parish Church. Here is a photograph taken in 1875 that shows the fountains in front of the house.



- The garden design was very important to the Ladies. They created a picturesque garden with romantic vistas, gravel paths, rustic seats and a summerhouse. Today the Georgian Shrubbery at the back of the house has been created in a style similar to how they were when the Ladies lived here. Lady Eleanor's diaries tell us about the flower species they planted. As well as their flower garden and shrubbery, the Ladies also had a vegetable garden and an orchard in an attempt to grow their own produce and be self-sufficient.

**Task:** Can you find **Lady Eleanor's bower** at the back of the house which overlooks the Dell?

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## 7. Water Tower

It is thought that this water tower with a dove cote on top was built in the 1890s. The tower provided a gravity powered water supply to the house. Water towers were a common sight in Victorian Britain and were often elaborate in their design.

How did the water get inside the tower, are there any clues on the panel?

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## 8. Ram Pump Building

This small circular stone building near to the Cyflymen Stream used to contain the Ram Pump that pumped the water from the stream up to the water tower. Local stone masons restored the Ram Pump Building in 2024.

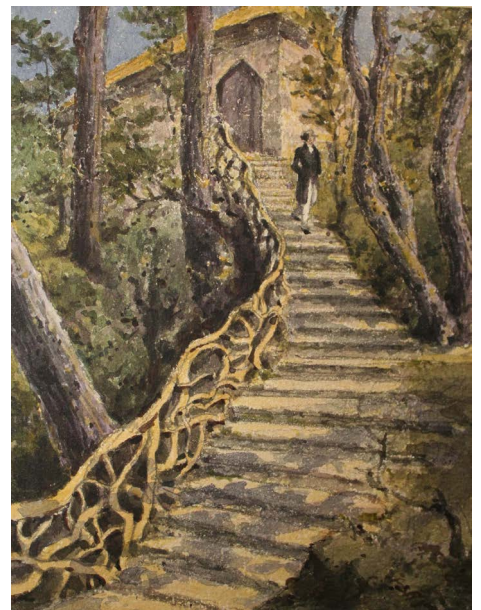
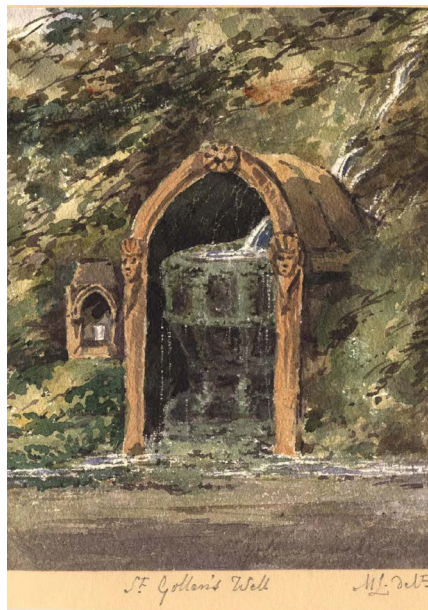
What is quoted on the bench near to the Ram Pump Building?  
Look out for other carved benches as you explore.

## 9. The Dell

- Lady Eleanor's diaries often refer to taking a stroll around the home circuit, perhaps this was along some of the paths you can walk today.
- As you walk through the Dell, look out for evidence of their picturesque garden design ideas; bridges over the stream; large rocks strategically placed to tumble and froth the water in the stream; grotesque and twisted roots among ferns.
- You can see some evidence of large elm trees that would have been growing here in the time of the Ladies, unfortunately they have been cut down due to Dutch Elm Disease making them unsafe, but the wood was used for the carved benches and other rustic tables.
- The Ladies planted many trees, perhaps some of the larger ones you can see here!

## 10. The Summerhouse and Font

The ladies designed the well house in 1782 at the start of their garden project. The stone and font came from the ruins of Valle Crucis Abbey in Llangollen.





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The inscription on the stone tablets at the side of the well read:

*Drink Gentle Pilgrim from the well  
thus sacred in this hollow dell.*

*Drink deep yet ere the yearning lip  
touches the draught it longs to sip.*

*Pray for the souls of those who gave,  
this font that holds the limpid wave.*

*This Holy font which lay o'er thrown  
mid Valle Crucis' shadows brown*

*and which the hand of Holy men  
have blest but ne'er can bless again.*

*Drink happily pilgrim daily and pray  
At morning dawn or twilight grey.*

*Pray for the souls those who gave*

*This font that holds the limpid wave.*

*E.B. (Eleanor Butler) 1782*

The summerhouse was a favourite spot of the Ladies and once housed a small library of books. The structure before you is a reconstruction and is only half the size of the Ladies' original summerhouse!

What do you think about the use of historic artefacts like this font and the ones in the formal garden as garden ornaments, do you think it is right or wrong?

What might have happened to them if they hadn't been used in this way?

Do you think people can still use historic artefacts like this today?

**Task:** Many visitors sketched the gardens at Plas Newydd and still do today, take a few minutes to sketch the bridge, well house and summerhouse in the background.

## 11. Birch Avenue

The diaries and accounts between 1785 and 1821 record that the Ladies planted a lot of trees. They wrote about their avenue of birch trees, this one was recreated here in 2019. The Ladies often thought carefully about how they planted the trees and created interesting views and vistas. They planted trees to hide themselves from the gaze of strangers as well as many fruit trees for their produce. They also created an 'Infini' which is an avenue of trees planted from dark to light to make the avenue seem longer than it was.

A journal from November 1785 records a list of trees being transplanted into the garden. It included oak, horse chestnut, purple beech, double flowering cherry, sumach and lime. In the garden near to the Bard's Memorial you will find purple beech also known as copper beech and some lime trees, could these be the ones that the Ladies were planting in 1785? How can we find out?

**Task:** Find out the types and ages of the trees between the Bard's Memorial and Plas Newydd House (excluding the orchard).

- Use the **Leaf Identification Guide** to help you find out the different types of trees.
- Use the **Tree Measuring Guide** to help determine how old the trees are.  
[www.naturalresources.wales/media/688308/activities-tree-measuring.pdf](http://www.naturalresources.wales/media/688308/activities-tree-measuring.pdf)
- Can you find out if any of these trees were planted in the time of the Ladies of Llangollen (1780-1831)?



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## Reflection:

- Imagine you are one of the oldest trees you have found today. Think about all the changes you would have seen since you were a seedling, make a list of what has changed around you.
  - There are some new trees planted near the Gorsedd stone circle; these are Llangollen Whitebeam - a very rare tree which only exists at two locations in the world (Llangollen and Shropshire). They were planted as part of a project to save this tree species from extinction.
  - Imagine you are one of these trees, what do you think you would see changing in the area around where you are planted in the next 200 years?
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Looking for more learning resources and information?  
[www.clwydianrangeanddeevalleyaonb.org.uk](http://www.clwydianrangeanddeevalleyaonb.org.uk)

# Leaf Identification Guide

