

was let to a tenant farmer, whose wife used the large farmhouse to take in holiday visitors in the summer months. An extensive poultry farm was run, independently of the home farm, in a field adjacent to the newer of the kitchen gardens.

Henry Platt had married Eleanor, the daughter of Colonel Richard Sykes, of Edgeley House, Cheadle, in the January of 1868. Although the wedding had taken place at St. Thomas' Church, Edgeley, Stockport, on the day, great festivities had occurred in Llanfairfechan and Aber. A grand procession, headed by a band and the local school-children, proceeded from Llanfairfechan to Aber and back, collecting at Madryn Farm a roasted ox, which was taken on a waggon, manned by four butchers, to the two villages for the meat to be distributed to the poor. A party was held in Bryn-y-Neuadd Park, the highlight of which was to have been the ascent of a large balloon which, unfortunately failed to oblige and the day ended with huge bonfires on the hills behind each of the villages. After taking up residence at Gorddinog, Henry and Eleanor Platt entered, on their own account, the social and public life of the immediate district, Bangor and Caernarfonshire. A close connection was kept with Christ Church, Llanfairfechan, where, in due course all four of their children were christened and the two which were daughters were married. They entertained on a considerable scale and, before long, started to extend the House. A west wing was added, on the ground floor of which a large billiard room was placed, and a magnificent ballroom was built at the rear of the House. The House and ballroom were joined by a glass domed loggia where tropical plants were displayed and from which was gained a delightful view of a lily pond, with fountain, and a



Colonel Henry Platt  
1842-1914

steeply terraced rockery which led the eye to the rhododendron festooned hillside. The ballroom was acknowledged to be the best in North Wales, not only did it contain the normal minstrels' gallery but a large stage was positioned at one end where amateur dramatics could be performed. Beneath the stage, the floorboards of which could be lifted, was a swimming pool, complete with a series of changing rooms. Electricity was installed in the House, generated by a hydro-electric set supplied by J P Hall & Company of Oldham (The Halls were kinsmen of Henry Platt). For the outdoor recreation of the members of the family and their guests, in addition to the customary tennis court, a nine hole, golf links was made, on the undulating Llys-y-Gwynt land, for which a smart timber pavilion was provided.

John Platt had directed that his two eldest sons, Henry and Samuel, should, in their youth, spend time in the various departments of the Works at Oldham, a policy with which he did not persist for his younger sons when he changed his views on the education they were to receive. Henry Platt had found his time in the pattern making shop most rewarding and throughout his life derived immense pleasure from woodworking and carpentry activities. Frequently he participated in the work when alterations were being made in the House - appropriately dressed in his green baize apron - and, even, assisted the estate carpenter to lay carpet. He had an exquisite set of, treddle driven, miniature circular saws, lathes and drills which for many years, after his death, were preserved in the harness room at the stables or chauffeurs' room as it became later.

In the realm of public service, Henry Platt was appointed a Caernarfonshire county magistrate and Deputy Lieutenant. In 1877 he was High Sheriff of Caernarfonshire and held the equivalent office in Anglesey three years later. He took a great interest in the affairs of Bangor and became the first mayor of the city in 1883. In recognition of his public service he was made a Companion of the Most Honourable Order of the Bath. An enthusiastic freemason, he built, at his own expense, the Masonic Hall in Bangor and, for a time, bore personally, all its running expenses. In 1905 he was appointed Provincial Grand Master of North Wales. Always active in the military field, he held a commission in the Caernarfonshire Militia; he was a Captain at the time of his marriage. In 1884 he was raised to the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel when he took command of the 4th Battalion of the Royal Welsh Fusiliers. In politics, his views were not those which his father had held for at the General Election in 1900 he stood as the Conservative Candidate for Caernarfon Boroughs, but his opponent was the local demagogue and future Liberal prime minister, David Lloyd George, and he was unsuccessful in his attempt to enter Parliament.