

FOREWORD
'TRAGEDY TO TRIUMPH'
Courtesy of Mrs Elaine Boxhall nee Southern
PE Teacher 1950 – 55
Clarendon school for Girls
KINMEL HALL
1946 – 1975
By the Marquess of Anglesey,
DL, FSA, FR Hist S, Hon FRIBA, FRSL.

When I first heard that a Mr Vince was going to restore Kinmel Hall, I thought that he must be a madman. Soon though, I realised, particularly after first meeting him, that he was not only very sane indeed but that he was also well named. The dictionary definition of invincible is "incapable of being conquered, overcome, or subdued; insuperable". This sums up a vital part of the character of my friend Eddy. I soon discovered that the sure foundation of his invincibility is his unshakeable belief in the Christian God and the efficacy

of prayer.

The Historic Buildings Council for Wales, of which I have the honour to be chairman, has the statutory duty, amongst others, of advising the Secretary of State on the giving of grants, for the structural repairs, to owners of outstanding historic buildings. After the awful fire at Kinmel we were all in despair. Here was one of Britain's (not just Wales') greatest and largest Victorian country houses ~ a veritable palace and an architectural gem ~in real danger of decay and demolition. The lack of an owner with a potential use in mind, and, just as vital, the means to effect the extensive and expensive repairs which were essential, seemed as inevitable as anything in this world.

I recollect that before the fire, Clarendon School had applied for grant aid towards the repairs necessary to just some of William Eden Nesfield's splendid chimneys. The sums required for these alone were enormous

How much vaster, then, was to be the cost of the post-fire structural costs! On top of these, of course, was the expense of interior decoration and all the large variety of works which, under the Historic Buildings Act of 1953, would not qualify for grant. The amount of taxpayers' money available for assistance to all the eligible historic buildings in the Principality is, naturally, limited.

Nevertheless, the tremendous importance of Kinmel architecturally and the wonderful enthusiasm and competence of its new owner, ensured that something approaching 40% of all structural repairs would be made available over the years. Not only is a very important part of Britain's heritage saved from extinction, but its new users are eminently excellent both from a spiritual and a social point of view.

In my thirty years of service on the Historic Buildings Council for Wales, I can honestly say that none of our numerous tasks of rescue and revival, repair and restitution has given me such profound satisfaction and joy.

Working in dose partnership with Eddy Vince, on his great project, has been a prodigious privilege for all the Council's members and for the Welsh Office staff, especially the architectural assessor, Douglas Hogg. To have been participants in a miracle of this nature makes one at once humble and proud.

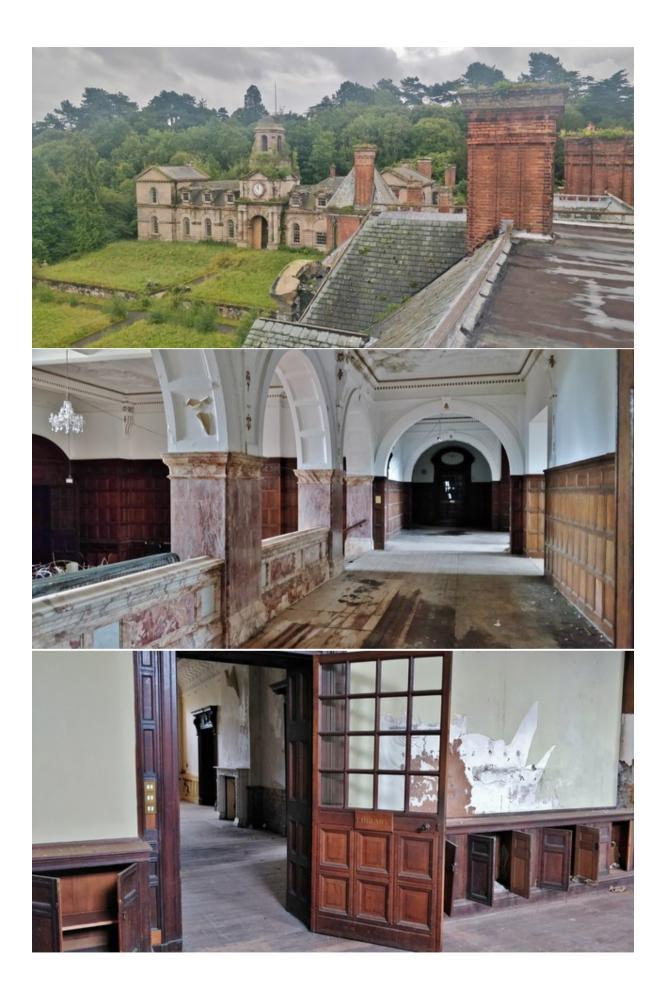
Mrs. Boxhall's excellent and telling account of the way in which things proceeded is indeed worthy of the subject. Higher praise cannot be given.









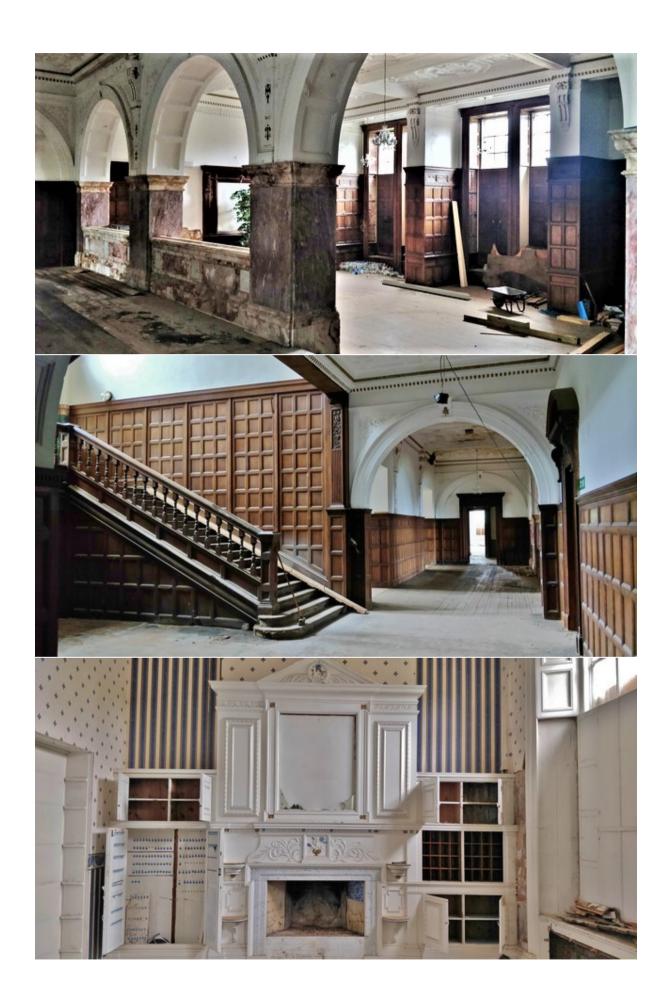


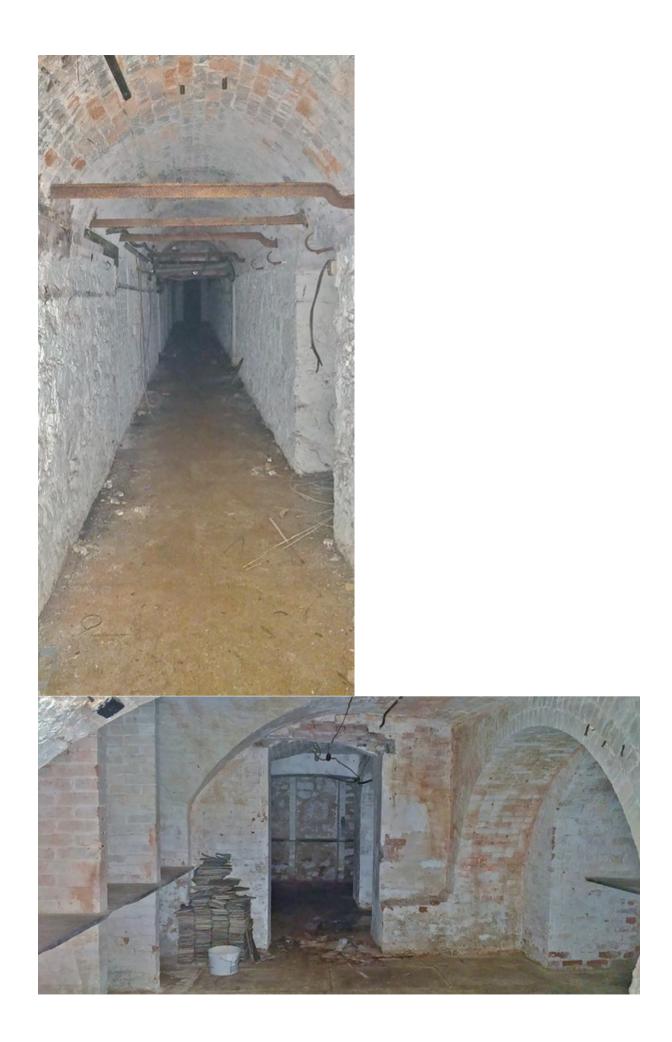


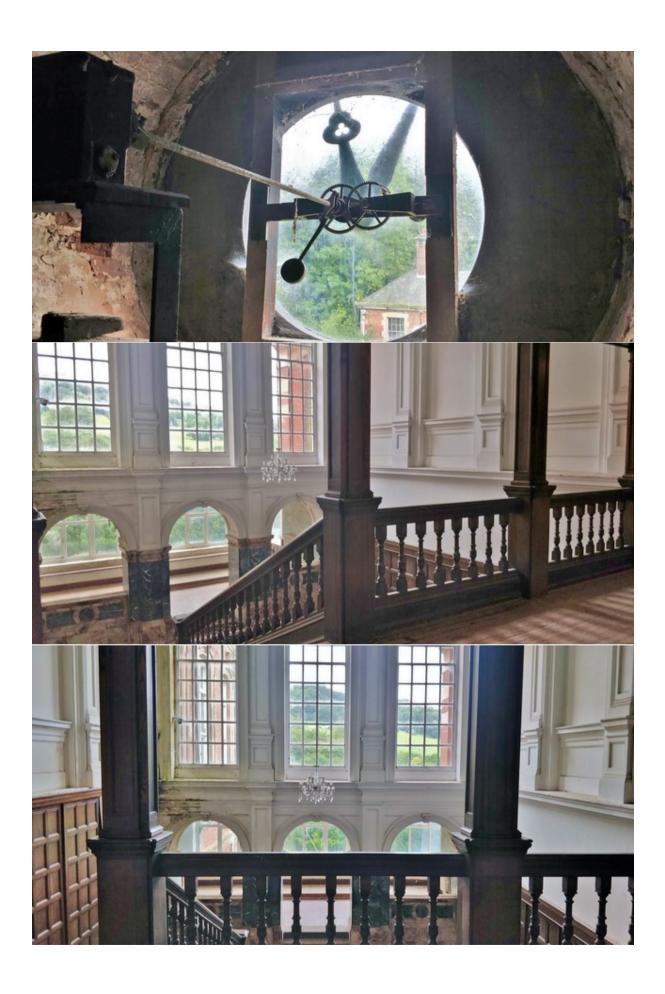














The photos in the preceding pages were taken by a team of 'Urban Explorers who were given a 'guided tour' of Kinmel Hall by the 'Security' in September 2020!

The photos in the following pages are, we understand, of the work carried out by the head of the 'security' on the instructions of the absentee owners between April 2019 and September 2020 and the resultant damage to the Hall's interior!

