



Nash Manor

Here, in the breeziest of situations, stands Nash Manor, the old ancestral home of the Carne family. It is well protected on its western side by this belt of trees and the growth of the vegetation, for all the branches point eastward, indicative of the fierceness of the wind when the westerly gales of the Severn Sea roar across from Wick and the Dunraven cliffs.

Nash Manor, the home of the Carne family, is one of the most interesting examples of ancient domestic architecture in the Vale of Glamorgan today. There were Carnes at Nash Manor in the fifteenth century, and Carnes are the possessors of the picturesque old Manor House and its surrounding lands today. It is not a very large house, but what it may lack in respect of size, it more than makes up in the matter of comfort, in which modern ideas of cosiness and comfort have been very skilfully introduced into a Tudor environment. Nash Manor was formerly known as "Little Nash," "Osmans' Ashe," and sometimes the name was "Latinized" as Parva Fraxina." It was a grange or farm within the lordship of Llanilltyd or Llantwit Major, pertaining to the Bishopric of Llandaff. The early Celtic inscribed stones at Nash Manor may be taken as direct evidence of a pre-Norman religious foundation. At a later period also a religious community was seated there, and the chapel remains to this day. About three miles away in a south-westerly direction, at Monk Nash, was a monastic establishment, and traditionally Nash Manor was a sister-hood in connection with Monk Nash. The precise or exact period at which Nash Manor ceased to be occupied as a religious house is unknown, but during the 14th century it was leased under the Bishops of Llandaff by a younger branch of the Giles family, who were for centuries Lords of the Manor of Gileston, and who gave to the village the name which it still bears today.

The Carne Family

According to the old genealogists, the family of Carne sprang from that Ynyr Fechan, who tradition says succeeded his slain brother Ithel as Prince of Gwent, and whose descendants, though conquered by the Norman invaders, still retained a highly influential social position and also considerable valuable landed property. It is generally believed that the surname of Carne was given to one of Ynyr Fechan's descendants from Pen-Carne, which may probably have been either his residence or birthplace. The eighth in descent from Ynyr Fechan was Sir Thomas Carne, Knight of the Holy Sepulchre of Nether Gwent, and three generations later, in the early party of the 15th century,

Howel Carne, of Cowbridge, married a daughter of John Giles, of Nash Manor. Howel Carne obtained a further lease of the Manor of Nash from Bishop John Wells, in the year 1432, and his grandson, who bore the same name, purchased Nash Manor in perpetuity from Bishop George Athequa in 1521. The second Howel Carne married a Miss Kemeys, of Newport, Mon.

Leland (temp. Henry VIII.), who passed this way a decade later. 1530-36, refers to a place "caullid the Assche, and there is a park of falow deere."

Sir Edward Stradling, of St. Donats Castle, and his kinsman, Sir Edward Carne, of Nash Manor, took a vigorous part in the great battle of St. Fagans on the 8th May, 1648, which ended most disastrously for the Royalist forces to which they were attached. In an old record find the following interesting paragraph, referring to this event: "Subsequent to the great battle of St. Fagans, the following incident occurred, significant as showing the kindly feeling entertained by the Welsh towards their English kinsmen: Sir Edward Stradling, Bart., St. Donats Castle, and his kinsman, Sir Edward Carne, of Osmans' Ash, alias Little Nash, took vigorous parte in this fighte, commanding atwixt them about 4,000 men, fed and clothed by themselves at their own proper cost. The latter was well-nigh falling a sacrifice to the hatred of his country-men to the Saxon tongue, for returning towards his home after ye close of ye battel, fatigued and sore wounded, the bridge over Taffe River been broken down, he demanded a Welshman (speaking in the English tongue) where most safely he could forde across the stream. The latter directly replied, Keep straight on, for that is the shortest and best way to thy home.' Sir Edward Carne, not suspecting any artifice, went ahead to the river bank, but before entering the stream addressed a few words of direction and advice to his soldiers in the Welsh language. His former guide, seeing that he was not an English Knight, directly called out to him not to enter the river in that place, as there was a most dangerous whirlpool in that locality, and disclosed that he had purposely advised him there to crosse in ye hope that he might there lose his life; but, finding that he was a true Cambrian, he hastened to prevent his fulfilling his first direction. Thus there did he escape certain death."

Let us digress for a few moments to take a peep at the Carnes" in the Tudor period, utilising as our authority some sidelights from the Star Chamber cases. It is recorded that on one occasion Sir Rice Mansell sent three of his servants to Cowbridge to the house of Davyth Thomas Lloyd to wait for William Carne of Nash, and they cowardly assaulted him and beat him grievously. This William Carne, though of Nash Manor, is supposed to have also had a house in .or near the Market Place at Cowbridge. A year later George Herbert, of Abergavenny, Monmouthshire, and Swansea, approached Cowbridge with his retinue of eight servants, when he turned aside at the village of St. Hilary to pay a short visit to Mr. Rice Mansell, who resided there, and sent on his eight servants into Cowbridge. Roger Carne, of Nash Manor, with some of his friends, ap- near to have been in the public room of a hostelry there, probably the Bear Hotel, when the Herbert servants arrived as a boastful swaggering crowd and evidently intent in causing a disturbance, which ultimately ended in a free fight. Evidence given afterwards by Roger Carne was to the effect that the Herbert retainers or servants first insulted and then assaulted them, Roger Carne, with the grit and pluck of his race, soon roused his townsmen, and the Herbert servants were badly beaten and made prisoners. George Herbert afterwards expressed his entire ignorance of the affair, but Roger Carne roundly declared and protested that it was all pre-arranged and that Geo. Herbert had only remained behind at St. Hilary to save being personally implicated in the melee.

A further example of the way in which in those olden days men carried their lives in their hands was furnished on occasion at nine o'clock one morning. John Carne, of Nash Manor, and Jenkin Turberville were standing chatting in adjacent fields watching some ploughing, when six or more armed men from Cardiff Castle suddenly appeared and cruelly attacked John Carne. Having killed him they galloped off in hot haste back to Cardiff.

The Carne family during the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries produced men who took a leading and foremost part in many stirring events, not only within, but far beyond the confines of Morgannwg or the county of Glamorgan. Several members of the Carne family were sheriffs, of Glamorgan County in 1543, 1555, 1561, 1572, 1581, 1584, 1588, 1601, 1621, 1629, 1645, 1690, 1708 and 1731.

Sir Edward Carne, Nash Manor, who was the second son of Howell Carne, was a Member of Parliament and one of the appointed Commissioners for the Crown for the suppression of the monasteries. He was Special Ambassador to Rome in the matter of Queen Catherine in the reign of King Henry VIII., on the eve of the severance between the Anglican Church and the Pope of Rome. He died in Rome in the year 1561, and there is in the Atrium of the Church of San Gregario in Monte Celi, Italy, a magnificent monument erected to his memory. Sir Edward Carne purchased Ewenny Priory, and from his marriage with Ann, daughter of Sir William Denis, sprang the Carnes of Ewenny Priory.

Richard Carne, of Nash Manor, the eldest brother of Sir Edward Carne, married an heiress of the Daldens of Penarth and Wenvoe, and thereby augmented the family estates. His son, John Carne, who was living in 1561 probably, rebuilt and enlarged the older portion of the old Manor House at Nash. He had a family of seven daughters, and was succeeded by his brother William, whose eldest son, Sir Edward Carne, was the Receiver General for South Wales and a Teller of the Exchequer. He married a daughter of Sir Edward Mansell, of Margam, and it was this Sir Edward who erected the fine elaborate memorial to his parents which still occupies a prominent position on the south Wall of St. Mary's Church at Cowbridge. Sir Edward's grandson, Thomas Carne, of Nash Manor, married the daughter of Sir Edward Stradling, Bart., M.P., of St. Donats Castle. Sir Edward Stradling, Bart., was M.P. for Cardiff from 1698 to 1727, in which year he died. John Carne, of Nash Manor, who represented the 13th generation of the family to reside at Nash, died in the year 1798 leaving an only daughter, the wife of Thomas Markham, Esq., who died childless in 1842. Nash Manor and the estate then passed to her first cousin, Elizabeth, the daughter of Captain Charles Loder Carne, who, in the year 1800, had married the Rev. Robert Nicholl, of Dimlands, Llantwit Major, the youngest son of Whitlocke Nicholl, Esq., of The Ham. Llantwit Major. The Rev. Robert Nicholl, his wife and issue assumed by special Royal license the surname of Carne in 1842. They left two sons, Robert Charles Nicholl Carne, of Nash Manor, who married but died without issue in the year 1869; and John Whitlock Nicholl Carne, afterwards Stradling Carne, D.C.L., of Dimlands and St. Donats Castle, whose younger son, Mansel Carne, inherited the Nash Estate and Manor House. The latter died abroad without issue, and is buried in the picturesque little church-yard at St. Donats. The Estate then passed to his elder brother, the late John Devereux Vann Loder Nicholl Carne, of Nash Manor, the father of the present representative of the family, Mr. Gilbert Stradling Carne Nicholl Carne who resides with his mother, Mrs. Nicholl Carne, at Nash Manor.

The picturesque and charming environment



Having reviewed the past history of the Carne family, and their picturesque old Manor House with its ancient family associations, in my previous article, a few points now regarding Nash Manor today with its charming environment will be of interest.

Nash Manor lies seven miles S.E. from Bridgend on the G.W.R., about 2 1/2 miles west from Cowbridge, T.V.R., and 2 1/2 north from Llantwit Major on the Vale of Glamorgan Railway. The Manor House itself stands but a few yards from the main county road, but the numerous trees and shrubs and thick banks of evergreens screen it very effectively. A short drive from the roadway leads to the main front of the old Manor House, on the way to which you pass by the motor house, covered in leafy foliage, which is especially picturesque in its garb of autumn foliage, for the big-leafed ampelopsis, which covers it is gorgeous and magnificent in every shade, from pale green and yellow to blood-red during the golden autumn

Nash Manor faces north and south, the main front being to the north, while the garden front a southern aspect. The house is built in the form or shape of the letter "H," the cross fence and upper strokes of which form three sides of the fore court, which is completed by two walls of rather low dimension, connecting the east and west wings of the building, with a picturesque little gateway. A good stone-paved footpath, flanked here and there by large pots of agapanthus, traverses the gravelled forecourt from the entrance gate to the front door. The eastern wing and the centre are the oldest portions of the mansion, the west wing having been built and added by the late Mr. J. D. V. L. Nicholl Carne nearly a quarter of a century ago. Along the eastern side of the old wing of building there is an irregularity of outline and a picturesque succession of massive chimneys which are thoroughly Tudor in character. To the south, east, and north the old Manor House is bounded by charming gardens, and a delightful environment. From the windows of the drawing room and dining room on the south front there is a broad stretch of well-trimmed turf extending on the right-hand to a pretty shrubbery, while to the east it is flanked by massive yew hedges and a fair, fragrant garden of roses. On the eastern side of the house, set upright against one of the numerous massive old walls, of which there are several, and which are absolutely necessary as a shelter from the wind and storm and tempest-are two or three very ancient Celtic inscribed stones, interesting evidence of

occupation in the pre-Norman days. A few decades ago these ancient relics of olden times had been allowed to suffer from neglect, and regardless of any value; and one of them had actually been doing duty as a stepping-stone across an old ditch. Beyond the spacious and well-cared picturesque gardens are undulating fields with verdant pastures and groups of fine venerable old trees, which mark the site of the former deer park in the palmy days of yore.

THE CHARM OF THE INTERIOR



Interior of Nash Manor

Leaving this picturesque Arcadian environment, we retrace our steps to the fore-coast gateway, above which hangs a bell. An old beam in this gateway has the date inscribed upon it 1789, probably the date of its erection. Passing along the stone-paved footpath to the front doorway may be seen above the latter the Pelican, which is the ancient coat of arms of the Carne family. The fine entrance hall, with its low pitched roof, massive old coiling beams, and superb oak panelling, at once strike the key-note of the interesting interior.

During the last 25 or 30 years some extensive alterations and renovations have taken place at Nash Manor. What is now the western portion of the entrance hall was formerly the kitchen. About a century ago, the present drawing room was the principal living room, and the former old drawing room, which is situate above the present one, is now used as a bedroom apartment, but of these and other alterations more anon.

At the western end of the entrance hall, which in the general formed plan of the manor house is represented by the cross of the letter "H," is an open stone fireplace, over which is carved the motto, "Duw a digon," (i.e., "God and enough.") Some very old oak furniture, much of it beautifully carved, surrounds the entrance hall, and on the walls are a few very old paintings of St. Donats Castle. At the south western corner of the entrance hall a doorway leads to the new western wing, a notable apartment in which is the dining room, which has been elaborately and exquisitely decorated in the Tudor style. The wall panels have the linen pattern ornamentation, and the fireplace is elegantly carved. To the left of the latter stands a magnificent old oak cupboard which, to judge by its fine massive character and the limitation manifest in its decoration probably dates from early Jacobean days.

The Drawing-room

The drawing-room is a large, oblong, low pitched apartment which opens out of the entrance hall, and which is of course, in the older wing of the mansion. It is certainly the most interesting and charming room at Nash Manor. Its appearance cannot have altered very much within the past three centuries. The original and ancient massive ceiling beams still remain. These old beams extend both ways across the room forming panels which are about 7ft. by 8ft. square. The wall panelling of the late 16th or 17th century date still remains in an excellent state of preservation.

In the late 18th century it is unfortunate that the then owners of Nash Manor thought fit and expedient to follow the debased style or tastes of that age by covering the antique oak beams with a yellowish drab colour.

An interesting note referring to this may be seen in an old manuscript book still in the possession of the Nicholl family, which contains the following entry made in the early part of the last century to the effect that "We have been to Nash Manor to tea. They have painted their dining-room a beautiful light oak colour." In the greater portion of the apartment the paint remains to this day.

Another interesting feature of the dining-room is the original Tudor stone fireplace and the grand oak carving above that is especially worthy of observation and notice. Fluted pilasters with Tonic capitals rise on either side, and there is a pretty design of atoning with quaint figures. The beautiful light oak paint was removed by the late Mr. Carne, who restored the glorious oak panelling to its pre-eighteenth century state. One of the most interesting and picturesque corners of Nash Manor is the fine old oak staircase, which, though somewhat small in size, is a beautiful piece of workmanship which is rarely seen in many similar manor houses today. There is a small landing at the top of the staircase, a landing made especially picturesque by reason of the old Tudor-headed doorways, some of which still retain their iron studded doors with very ancient latches, which give access to the bedroom apartments. The library is another interesting apartment occupying the northern end of the west wing of the mansion, and this contains; among other interests the original Tudor fireplace, which had been for many generations bricked un and which was re-discovered by the late Mr. J. D. V. N. Carne.

Two or three decades ago this room now so full of interest was utilised as a sort of store-room or outhouse, but since then, it has been thoroughly and judiciously restored to the position which its antiquarian interests, so richly deserve, and is now worthy of inspection and admiration.