

Mr and Mrs Wisker made several changes to the hotel, including the addition of 14 Courtyard bedrooms and the Vineyard.

Since the vineyard was planted with 187 Vines in February 1993 it has been a much loved project. Initially for Head Gardener James Roberts who tended to the vines when they were first planted. He saw the first harvest in 1995 and shared a glass of the first bottle to arrive at Pengethley in May 1996. In more recent years the hotel's gardeners have tended to the vines with the assistance of experts from Three Choirs Vineyard in Newent and with their help we have added a Rosé and a Sparkling Rosé to our Wine List.



The hotel was then purchased in December 2007 by Dr John Hagmann, an emergency physician and family practitioner from the United States. Since purchasing the hotel Dr Hagmann has made several improvements to the hotel, the most noticeable being the re-decoration of the public areas in January 2009.



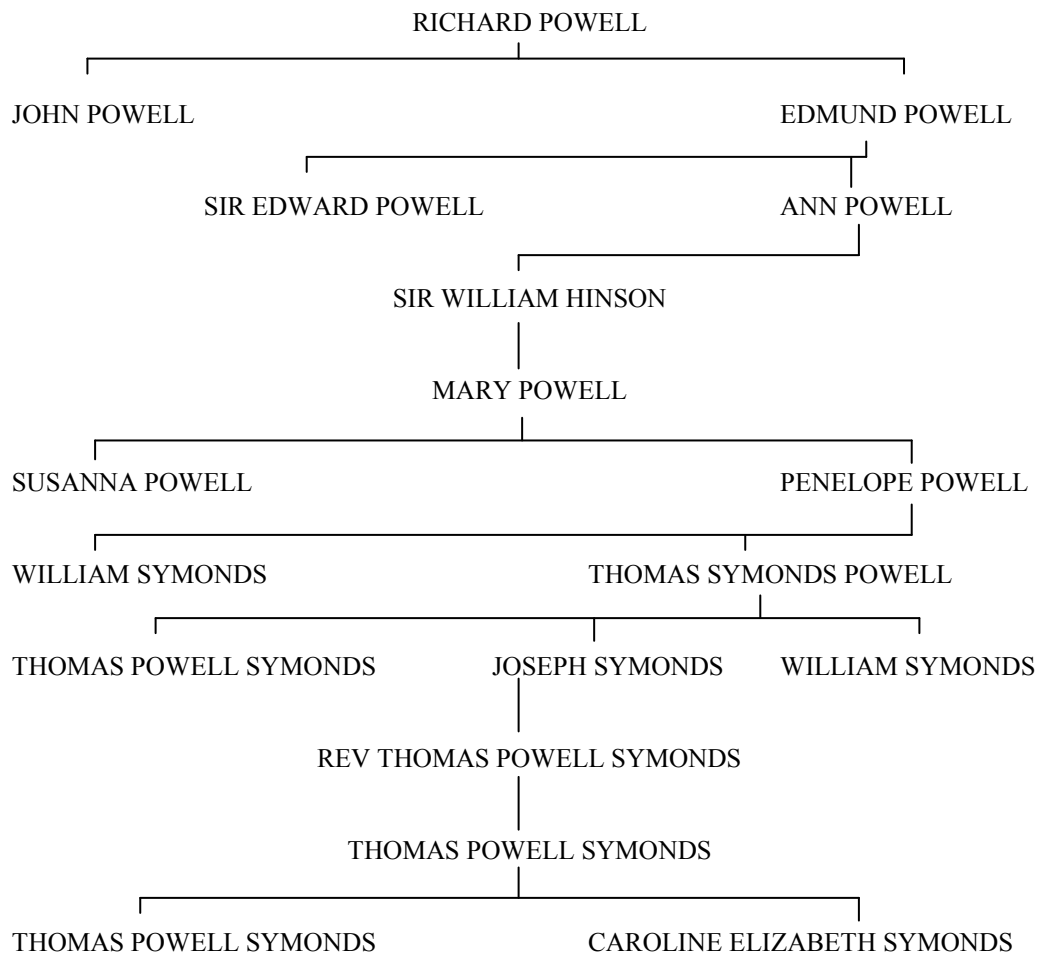
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Pengethley Manor



THE HISTORY OF PENGETHLEY MANOR HOTEL

THE PEDIGREE OF THE OWNERS OF THE PENGETHLEY ESTATE



The full pedigree can be viewed in the main entrance to Pengethley Manor



The reference to Sir Thomas Symonds is worthwhile continuing now in view of the ancient records of the trees recorded at Pengethley and in the county.

Notwithstanding modern farming methods, we at Pengethley have always been conscious of our history and the beauty of the county. Hence we have tried to restore and preserve both buildings and grounds, as well as the trees, re-planting wherever possible, when age, disease and winds have created losses. Reference to Grove and Seymour Woods, as well as Pengethley Park, luckily still have substance today. Sadly the Beeches and Elms have been affected by the aforementioned problems and we know that many of our Oaks went to the Navy and Lord Nelson also, with Pengethley's associations, had half his fleet made from the Oaks of the Royal Forest of Dean.



The Royal Forest of Dean

Colonel, later Sir Thomas Symonds, in sustaining his long period in Parliament from 1796 to his death in 1819 (including a very tough fight for his fifth re-election in 1818) had to curry favour in the times by the best means available, mainly by giving away his finest and soundest trees. We know from excellent accounts in 1766, when Colonel Symonds was then Honorary Secretary of Woolhope Club, that there were five groves of Oaks in excess of 17ft girths. In addition, there were some fine Elms of the small-leaved English variety, including a Wych Elm of over 17ft in circumference, some good ash, a large collection of Beech trees and beautiful Conifers – these probably would have been located in what is now known as Pengethley Nurseries. There was also a Lime tree in that area with a North/South foliage diameter of 75ft (although by coincidence this has no connection with Lime House which is located next to us at Pengethley Farm).

Spruce fir trees were reported as being found by the main farm (Upper Pengethley) and down the drive to the road – a Mr McIntosh, whose later superintended a lot of the garden layout 40 years on, noted that the spruce firs were some of the finest specimens he had ever seen in the land.

Around 1800 (when there were all those males around) there was a lovely silver fir in the kitchen garden, although for a few years this became the pleasure garden.

It might be worth noting that at around this time, timber prices, based per square foot, were as follows:-

Oak 1s.6d to 2s.3d; Elm 10d to 1s.1d; Ash 1s; Sycamore 1s. to 2s – old pennies of course!

The more recent history of the hotel has been kindly provided by Mrs Nicholas who married into the family who originally converted the Manor into a hotel in 1948. Gwynne and Blanch Nicholas (who looked into purchasing the Harewood Estate which is now owned by the Duchy of Cornwall, before deciding upon Pengethley) and their late son Geoffrey converted the manor in approximately 1948. As well as running the hotel they also looked after a small holding of Jersey and Guernsey Cattle. Mrs Nicholas herself produced butter and milk for the hotel's guests from the herd. It is believed the Nicholas' sold Pengethley sometime around 1965 to Mr and Mrs Michael Garner. We are currently researching the history from then, until the purchase of the hotel by Mr and Mrs Wisker in 1986.

(if there was one) does not seem to have had any connection with Pengethley and Lord Chandos' house and lands were left to his sister.

It was then a half-sister of Lord Chandos that married Sid Edmund Powell in 1583 which is shown on the family tree.

To conclude this brief historical report, it is worth noting that there is an interesting development with Penelope, the fourth daughter of Sir John Williams Powell (nephew of the original Sir William Powell who actually then married Sir William's grand-daughter in 1680) who married Dr Thomas Symonds in 1723 as shown. Dr Symonds was the son of Robert Symonds of Sugwas and Evesfield - the High Sheriff in Herefordshire in 1685 - and was the great-grandson of Lord Chandos' half-sister as mentioned in the above paragraph. It is this branch of the Symonds family whose forebears gave their name to the well-known attraction of Symonds Yat when they owned vast stretches of land down to that border area of Herefordshire.



Referring back to Ann Powell, her brother, Sir Edward, who also died without issue and had Pengethley before Ann in the time of Charles I.

A view from Symonds Yat Rock

and before his knighthood (when he was also 'of Fulham in Kent') made a permanent gift of 1 guinea to the poor each Christmas in 1605 when he was 'the Squire of the White House of Pengethley', which is noted in Hentland Church's belfry on the edge of Pengethley Park. Further information can be found on Hentland Church as, following the creation of the Friends of Hentland Church Association to preserve the church and grounds, there is literature now available. It was this church that was the location of the first Christian church in Herefordshire in 569AD and, therefore, it has great historical and social importance. Sir Edward was ultimately created a Baronet by James I after being Master of the Court of Requests, to Elizabeth I.

Sir William Powell, (ex Hinson and mentioned above) married Sir Edward's sister and was also created a Baronet when he ultimately took over Pengethley in 1653 and took up the Powell arms and changed his name accordingly. Therefore we have the Powell/Symonds connection effectively going from Lord Chandos right through to the 19th century.

Turning to the 20th century, in a Kelly's directory of 1926, when Miss Caroline Symonds was still in residence at Pengethley, she was listed as being one of the principle three landowners of South Herefordshire. Reference should be made to the named fields of 1840, which is hanging in the hotel foyer, when in the early 20th century the estate was over 1,000 acres as recorded, but in the early 18th century was considerably larger. Unfortunately, with the periphery of daughters by the owners of Pengethley in Penelope's time, the estate had to be split up four ways with Sir John Powell's other three daughters. Dr Symonds (Penelope's husband) being the wealthiest husband, paid off the mortgage and took over the larger house of the estate, being the main one, as we know it, and became the base of Pengethley Estate. The only time there appears to have been an excess of male heirs has already been noted in this brief history, when Sir Thomas Symonds was the father of seven sons as well as being the M.P. for Herefordshire for 23 years and also the High Sheriff of the county in 1798.

Pengethley (the Head of the Grove) in Welsh is surrounded by sites of great antiquity. On the summit of the low hill, just across the A49, is the Iron Age Camp of Gaercop. Across the hill behind Dason Farm, immediately to the front of the hotel, ran a Roman road to the ford over the Wye at Red Rail.

The church seen down the valley from the hotel and virtually in its Parkland, is that of Hentland, but it is not actually Pengethley's parish church. Hentland (The Old Church) in Welsh is a very ancient site. It has connections with and is dedicated to St. Dyfrig or Dubricius, an early 6th century Celtic Bishop of Erging who is reputed to have founded a college of 1,000 monks on the Wye at Hentland. This area can be said, and this is rare, to have a continuous Christian tradition over 1,500 years because it was never taken over by heathen Anglo-Saxons. St Dubricius has in fact been associated with Hentland since 569 A.D.

Pengethley's parish church is actually Sellack, an attractive church near the Wye, two miles to the North East, which can still be reached by footpath.



Sellack Church

century. In the Domesday Book, the various hamlets supplied 96 men who had the honour of forming the vanguard in advances into Wales and the rearguard on the return.

Most of these hamlets are not recorded by name until after the conquest of Wales, and 'Penketli' is first mentioned as one of the Archenfield hamlets in the Lay Subsidy of 1334. In the same year 'Penketli' is named as one of the five hamlets making up the parish of Sellack, which was not a single village of the English type.

The history of Pengethley's ownership is largely unknown until a John Pychard of Paunton seems to have held it in 1546. The remains of the cellar in the gardens date from this period, and indeed the house seems to have been partially fortified with a tower at some date. There is very strong evidence that Lord Chandos built Pengethley Estates in 1544. He was sent down to Wilton Castle at Ross by Queen Mary (prior to when she became Queen in 1533) to keep company with the De Gray family who owned the castle in view of its strategic position over the ford where the bridge was later built. There is some slight confusion over dates as there is other conflicting evidence that Lord Chandos was not created a Lord until 1544, prior to which he was Sir John Brydges and was originally Lieutenant of the Tower of London.

The remains of the cellar can be seen in the garden at Pengethley Manor



The Tudor house at Pengethley and the appropriate grounds, was nevertheless established as a country retreat – often referred to as the Squire’s House at that time – where the immediate farms were let to tenants, with the exception of the close link with Upper Pengethley Farm which was built as the Dower House. Lord Chandos certainly enjoyed hunting in the area and reference to this can be found on the ‘Tobacco Recipe’, which is framed and hung in the hotel’s bar and dates back to 1546.

The front of the old Stables, as well as the re-faced Hentland House and part of Chandos House, was certainly built with Hereford stone of around the mid 16th century. The Grove House at the side of the Stables is dated around 1769 and is built in similar stone to one of the principle barns at Upper Pengethley Farm.

The know history of ownership begins with the purchase of the estate in 1583 by John Powell and this began a continuous family ownership for over 360 years until the death of Caroline Symonds in 1947. He is listed in the belfry at Hentland Church as having donated 20 shillings to the poor on All Saints Day by a will of 1605.

Pengethley was involved in the Civil War of the 17th century. There is a legend that there was an escape tunnel to neighbouring Gillow Manor along which two cavaliers could ride abreast. Perhaps this is a vague memory of actual events. The Royalist garrison of Goodrich Castle did indeed plunder the estate for articles they needed until the owner’s steward bought them off. The estate was considered fair game because its then owner, Sir Edward Powell, seems to have had Parliamentarian sympathies. He had appeared in Star Chamber for having used ‘hasty expressions’ against Archbishop Laud and lived in Dean’s Yard, Westminster, under the authority of Parliament. Die-hard Royalists held Goodrich Castle until 1646 when it was the penultimate Royal fortress to fall by siege and there is a letter from Pengethley’s steward saying that of all the goods taken “Only the rack and the marmant iron pot is had again”.

After this, Pengethley tended to be one of those estates said to ‘jilt their owners’ because it descended through heiresses with their husbands assuming the Powell name. This sequence was ended by Thomas Symonds Powell who had eight sons and one daughter. The sons were active sportsmen but idle and their father was compelled to put down the deer which roamed the parkland before the house. It is said that when he was asked what had become of the deer, he replied “There are too many ‘bucks’ in the house to allow of any outside”.



**The original hall at Pengethley Manor
Which was destroyed by fire in 1820’s.**

The old house was substantially damaged by fire in the 1820s and the building was rebuilt largely as it is now by the then owner, The Reverend Thomas Powell Symonds and he seems to have been responsible for the design – particularly the Library and its shelving – after sacking the architect. The original Tudor building was built largely of wood and reference can be found in the standard reference ‘Mansions and Manor Houses of Hereford’.

By this time the Symonds family had married into the Powell family and the ‘big house’ at Pengethley was rebuilt as a ‘manor house’. It was still used as a country house, almost a holiday home, and therefore whilst built on the lines of a traditional manor, it was scaled down accordingly for the living and use therein.

Pengethley was then a substantial estate including Dason Farm and the Grove, but it gradually became broken up and was finally sold in 1951 following the death of Caroline Symonds. She had left it in 1927 and during the Second World War it became a guest house and after the war a hotel run by Mr and Mrs Nicholas up to 1965. There were then six subsequent changes until its present owner, Dr John Hagmann, purchased the hotel in 2007.

There have been major improvements, and the naming of the rooms were undertaken to incorporate the importance of Pengethley’s past and the beauty of the surrounding countryside.

The Old Stables were originally three stables, with a cow milking parlour. The original sloping tiled floor is still in existence but currently covered up by a wooden floor. What was once the Snooker Room at the side (part of Grove House) has now been made into a connecting building and it was this room that originally had the cider press up to 1965 which was used to make cider for the workers and its wheel has been donated to Bulmers Cider Trust. Upstairs was originally the servants quarters leading up to an old dovecote set into the roof. These are now converted to interesting guest bedrooms sporting the original beams.



Room 43



Room 44

Hentland House was formerly the old coach house and the adjoining ground floor rooms and laundry were at one time the tack rooms – again the original floors and walls are still in evidence and merely covered by new wooden floors and wall coverings.

The trout lake, which was re-acquired by the hotel and excavated in the early 1980s, was originally named the Bathe Pool (literally ‘pool’ pool) from Victorian times – reference is again shown on the map of the named fields of 1840 hanging in the hotel. Up to 1964 this provided all the water via the pumping station for Pengethley House and Farm. In addition, either supplies of water came from a 60ft deep and 8ft wide man-made well which was by the foundations of Chandos House but was filled during the summer of 1979 in the interest of safety. The genealogy of the direct descendants is shown on the family tree. Lord Chandos is not directly mentioned although he is, of course, linked back to the main buildings, as after he was created a Duke and was a Minister of the Court of Henry VIII, the only direct male issue