

HEAN CASTLE

Hean Castle is an anglicised form of the original Welsh name, Hen Gastell or Old Castle. It is not known what the original name refers to. It is possible that an unrecognised Iron Age hill fort existed in the vicinity of the present mansion and gave rise to the name originally. It is known that Hean Castle was at one time a property owned by the powerful Wogan family, but the present mansion was built by Thomas Stokes, who had married into the Wogan family and inherited the property by the early 19th century. It appears that an earlier Georgian style mansion was taken down and replaced by a Victorian house. His son sold the property to his brother-in-law Edward Wilson in 1861, and two years later it was bought by the influential London solicitor and industrialist Charles Ranken Vickerman, who was to become the main driving force behind the industries of the Saundersfoot district during the last half of the 19th century.

During Vickerman's time, the house was largely rebuilt again and much of the present building, internally and externally, reflects the changes he made to the property. Vickerman died in 1897 and his son sold the mansion and estate to Sir William Thomas Lewis, Lord Merthyr. The Lewis family added a northwest wing to the house, in keeping with the architecture used in Vickerman's day.

The Lewis family still resides here and the house, gardens, parkland and estate retain much of the character of a Victorian country estate. Estate outbuildings such as the lodges, stable block and home farm are all intact. Many of the local farms and cottages are owned by the estate and identifiable by their colour scheme, as estate properties are generally painted in cream and green and are immediately recognisable in the landscape. The mansion is now a listed building, as is the Gate Lodge and a monument erected in the grounds in memory of Lady Anne Lewis, wife of the Sir William Thomas Lewis, who died in 1902.