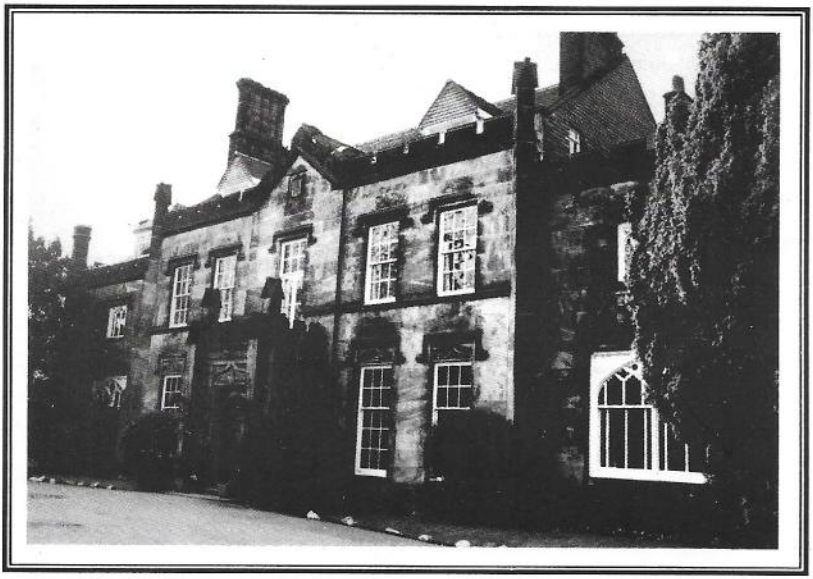
POWNALL HALL

and its Chapel of St Olaf

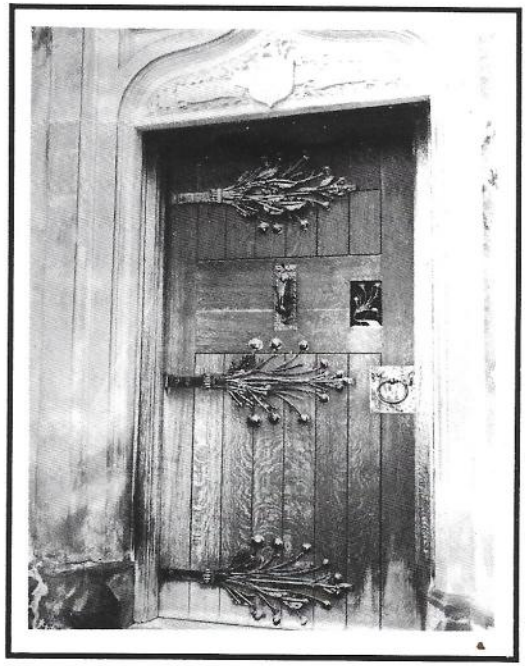


Patricia Hodson

POWNALL HALL AND ITS CHAPEL OF ST OLAF

Pownall Hall, Wilmslow, is situated about one mile from the town at the west end of Carrwood Road in a suburban area known as Pownall Park. Henry Boddington bought the Pownall Hall estate on his return from a trip to India in 1886.

Boddington had an interest in art and architecture and he engaged the best craftsmen and designers of the day to install stained glass, carved woodwork and panelling, furniture and fabrics, some designed by William Morris. The architects were the Manchester firm, Ball and Elce which extended and vastly altered the existing house. Boddington was at this time in his thirties and Pownall Hall reveals that his tastes were as advanced as his social ideas. Behind the house he had a barn converted into his private picture gallery to house his choice collection of paintings and curious old musical instruments and to provide a space for family theatricals. He also commissioned the building of a private chapel and employed the Century Guild to furnish his two principal reception rooms, the dining and drawing rooms, and to supply other special fittings and features: these include the now famous metal facings and additions to the front door, i.e. large wrought iron hinges, knocker, handles, keyhole and peephole grill, all in swirling, organic forms of great vitality expressive of the material's malleability. A curling stem comprises the grill. Each hinge bursts into a stiff spray of thistles and the knocker is in the shape of a winged dragon. Elsewhere in the house chandeliers, sconces and other metalwork display those motifs which have come to be regarded as a hallmark of the Guild's work. Metal - whether cast, wrought, raised or fretted - lends itself to such natural forms.



The Front Door of Pownall Hall

The importance of the Century Guild and the variety of its known commissions gave

Pownall Hall a special position in the history of the decorative arts in the nineteenth century. It has a curious aspect, too, in that the Guild's connection with Manchester occurred not simply as a response to the possibility of wealthy patronage, but appears to have stemmed from the convergence of those who were seeking through arts and social reform to alleviate the conditions of industrial life upon which so much of Manchester's wealth was based.

The first Henry Boddington (1813-1886) was the founder of the Boddington Brewing Company. The second was born in 1849 and died in 1925, coming into his inheritance on the death of his father in 1886 (date uncertain). Until then he had lived 'over the shop' at the family brewery in Strangeways, Manchester, and it was from there that he moved to Pownall Hall, then in mainly rural Cheshire. The Hall was an unpretentious Georgian house, gothicised in the 1830s. The third Henry Boddington was born in 1881 and died in 1964 aged 83 having been a director of the family brewing company for 55 years.

The small chapel built towards the end of the 19th century, situated in what is now part of The Carrs, Wilmslow, was erected for Henry Boddington and embodied interesting, old sculptured stones taken from various churches in the district, including St. Bartholomew's which was being altered at the time. It was an ornate building, sculpted by Mr J. Millson and dedicated to St Olaf, the first Christian king of Norway, whose life story clearly inspired Boddington. Olaf 1 (969-1000) was originally a typical Viking chieftain, harrying the coasts of Britain and Northern France until he was converted to Christianity, when his piratical expeditions ceased. He returned to Norway, was crowned King, and began Christianising his country. An unwise marriage with a pagan Danish



Chapel of St Olaf drawn by Sydney Wheeler



The Damaged Inscription, "Chapelle of St Ola(f)"

princess provoked enmity on the part of the still pagan Danes and Swedes, and finally Olaf was slain in a great sea battle. In his person he represented the best qualities of the ideal warrior - brave, open handed, caring for his people - and after his death he became Norway's national hero.

The frieze surrounding the chapel depicted scenes from his life, his battles and his death. Above the chancel arch a procession of birds and animals was carved with medallion heads of cherubim, and the inscription TE DEUM LAUDAMUS. On the outside walls were several projecting rough stones carved into quaint figures and devices. The chapel was complete in every detail with pulpit and chancel and a spiral stone staircase leading up to a tower admitting fine views over the Bollin valley.

Sadly little now remains, though a search among the original stones now scattered among the trees at the bottom of the slope reveal some evocative evidence: a sculptured woman's head and arms and an almost complete lintel with the inscription CHAPELLE OF ST OLA[F], the final letter having broken away.

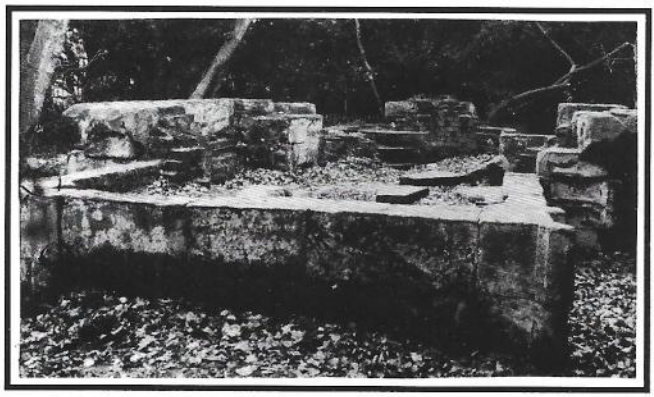
Close by the chapel remains is a large boulder with the inscription 'The Oak Tree near this stone was grown by Henry Boddington, J.P. of Pownall Hall, an ardent and original Director of Manchester Ship Canal 1885-1892 who carried home the first sod cut by Lord Egerton at Eastham in 1889 and planted an acorn in it'. Boddington writes in his will, '...I desire that they cause my corpse to be cremated and the ashes to be deposited about the roots of the Ship Canal oak which I planted as an acorn in the ceremonial sod cut by Wilbraham, Lord Egerton, the then chairman of the Manchester Ship Canal Board. The ceremony took place at Eastham and



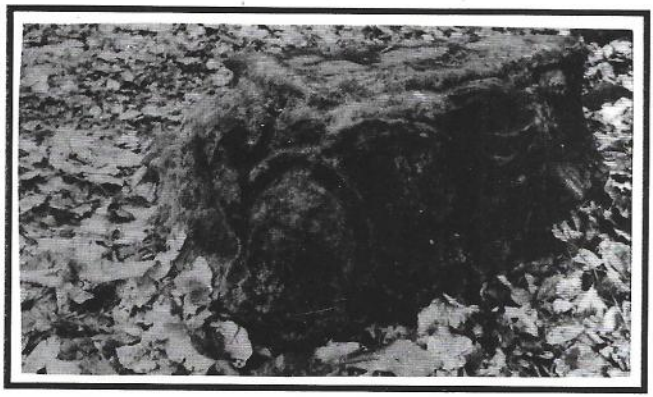
The Boddington Boulder

was simple. The party moved away after the first sod was cut, the sod being left on the ground when I bethought myself to take possession of it. I turned back, picked up the sod, put it in my top coat pocket and took it home to Pownall Hall where it was nurtured in the conservatory and eventually planted outside, on the edge of the Carr Wood nineteen paces west of the chapel in Pownall Park.'

1891 was the year of misfortune for the Boddington family. The account at the Manchester and Liverpool Bank was overdrawn and therefore stopped, but Boddington was still worth £130,000 after all death duties were paid. Pownall Hall was too expensive to maintain and the family removed to lodgings in Guernsey with the help of Miss Cooper, the children's governess. Earlier she had been just one of the large staff employed at the Hall.



The Remains of the Chapel of St Olaf in 1993



The Sculptured Woman's Head

STAFF EMPLOYED

Indoors

Sarah Moss	Cook	£20 per annum
Martha Burgess	Kitchen Maid	£14 per annum
Emma Roberts	Housemaid	£25 per annum
Elizabeth Holland	Housemaid	£19 per annum
Margaret Dayton	Housemaid	£12 per annum
Elizabeth Jones	Nurse	£16 per annum
Joseph Catacono Borges	Goanese manservant/butler	£20 per annum
Miss Cooper	Governess	

Outdoors

William Richards	Gardener	30/- per week
Robert Cross	Poultry	21/-
Harry Ross	Gardener, cow and grass lawn	
William Massey	Woodsman	
William King	Conservation	14/-
Robert Waine	Coachman	14/-
Charles Pennystone	Groom	
Roland Butterworth	Steward	

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