

## A Garden to Visit

## NORTH WALES: Plas yn Rhiw

**Plas yn Rhiw ('the manor house on the slope') is a curate's egg of a garden. Despite its breath-taking position, halfway up the south-facing slope of Mynydd Rhiw, and commanding fine, open views across Hell's Mouth Bay below, it has a charming modesty, a certain diffidence and a puzzling understatedness.**

Plas yn Rhiw's charm lies in its purity of expression, its easy and unfussy layout and its anchoredness. It is a Lley garden through and through: comfortable in its surroundings, though not beholden to them, modest in its display, and proud but unfazed by its history.

In some ways, the garden's relationship to the bay below is problematic, taciturn even. Hedge heights are a little too high to frame the view, the planting is cheerfully unruly and informal in places. It's as though the view is for the house to enjoy but not the garden.

This subtle interruption (of expectation, curiosity, of sight) is pure Zen, reminding us that we have more than just this superior sense – we can experience what lies beyond and within the space with our other senses too.

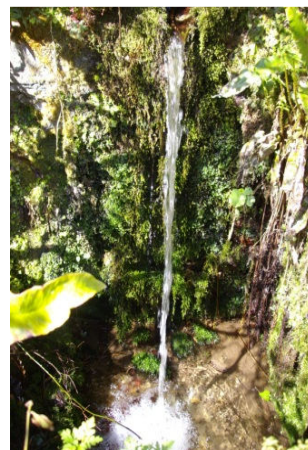
To put this into practice, if you find yourself in the garden, find a seat and experience the now unglimped ocean. You can hear it (and probably smell it). The ceaseless roar, rush and retreat of this hugely elemental presence a few hundred feet below you is very much present in the garden – you don't have to see it to know it. The garden is surrounded by a wall of sound!



But Plas yn Rhiw is much more than its garden. Its history goes back at least 450 years. The story of the house's rescue and long renovation, starting in 1938 by the three indomitable Keating sisters, is fascinating, too.

This far end of the peninsula is well worth at least a day out in itself so take time to fully explore the house, outbuildings and wider area, too.

Now under the stewardship of the National Trust, a team of friendly, approachable and very able volunteers are on hand to point out key features, historical and horticultural. Enjoy the journey along the mysterious and other-worldly Lley peninsula, too. You'll quickly notice that it has its own microclimate and feels and looks very similar to parts of Cornwall and Ireland.



### *Directions:*

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