

Porthaethwy – Mynedfa Ynys Môn
Menai Bridge – Gateway to Anglesey

NEWSLETTER

Cymdeithas Ddinesig Bro Porthaethwy

Menai Bridge and District Civic Society

CYLC HLYTHYR

Spring/Gwanwyn 2021 Page/Tudalen 1

Dates for your diary: More details on page 3.

19th January A walk round the **St Tysilio headstones with Military Associations.** A virtual walk round Church Island with Bridget Geoghegan.

16th February Warren Kovach "The Building and Rebuilding of the Menai Suspension Bridge"

You will be sent a link to the above talks about a week beforehand, by email.

Details for later talks will be issued in due course.

Annual General Meeting has previously been in April/May. It is proposed to hold this later in the year. You will be sent full details in plenty of time.

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Photo: Norman Kneale. Menai Bridge mid 1960s.

Happy New Year

The last year, 2020, seems to have flown by. Masks, or should I say facial coverings, queuing outside shops, when shops are open, home hair-cuts, zoom get togethers, zoom doctor's appointments now seem quite ordinary. I expected the covid virus would change our lives but not how quickly, how basically, for how long and how much I would miss the simple things like pottering round Menai Bridge and District (sampling coffee and cakes!). Let's hope that 2021 sees a return to something more normal.

People have been pottering round Menai Bridge for years drawn initially by the excitement of the 'new' Bridge, opening in 1826 and then fuelled by the improvements in travel facilities such as the steamers from Liverpool which started running in 1828.

In the Trade Directories of the time (1828/9) there is very little mention of Menai Bridge but much about Bangor.

'The scenery about Bangor is bold and extensive, formed of every variety which constitutes the sublime and interesting, interspersed with many gentlemen's seats.' Bangor, 'the town enjoys the advantages of a

market-house, over which are the Assembly Rooms..." If you're wondering where the Market House/Assembly Rooms were in Bangor I presume it was what was known more recently as the Market Hall, which is now WH Smiths bookshop in the middle of the High Street. If anyone has further information it would be welcome.

Menai Bridge is mentioned as the "Borth Fairs (the largest marts for cattle in the principality are held at Menai Bridge on the 26th August, 26th of September, 24th of October and 14th of November" (didn't realise they were that big).

Observations by John Wood in his survey of Bangor mentions, "The trade of this place consists entirely in the export of slates raised in the quarries of Llandegai, seven miles from the town, and conveyed on a railway to Port Penrhyn, where there is an excellent and convenient quay. A castle is now in progress of erection within the demesne of Mr Pennant adjacent to the city, on the site of the palace of Roderic, Prince of Wales in 720, on a scale of great extent and magnificence. It is built in the pure Saxon style of architecture, at an expense (continued on page 2)



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CIVIC TRUSTS and NATIONAL NEWS

The development of the UK town and country planning system emerge as a response to major change; be it through the aftermath of war or disease or indeed both. Concerns were expressed through the work of thinkers such as Ebenezer Howard and the philanthropic actions of industrialists such as the Lever Brothers and the Cadbury family, and architects such as Raymond Unwin, PRIBA, and Patrick Abercrombie. Sir Patrick, as he became, developed the Greater London Plan for the reconstruction of London after WW2. It did, amongst other things envisage moving 1.5 million people from London to new and expanded towns. (see the New Towns Act 1946 and the Town and Country Planning Act 1947.

Sir Patrick was born in Cheshire and became a lecturer

and Research Fellow in Civic Design at Liverpool University. What may not be so well known is that he sharpened his planning skills in North Wales; in 1918, following a lecture in Llangefni he wrote, 'Mona Nova(sic): the future development of Anglesey, with special reference to Housing after the war' (for the Welsh Housing and Development Association). He was a consultant for Caernarfon County Council and worked with Sir Clough Williams-Ellis., establishing the forerunner to CPRW. He addressed the National Eisteddfod in Mold in 1923, The Cymmrodorion Section on 'Wales: a study in the contrast of country and town'. He maintained close links with Anglesey and is buried in St Gwenfaen's churchyard in Rhoscolyn. He will be the subject of a fuller presentation but please does anyone have a copy of 'Mona Nova'!

Liz Moyle

RECENT PROGRAMME NOTES

(continued from page 1) perhaps exceeding £100,000" (quote with thanks to Bangor Civic Society). From 1828 until the mid 1960s pleasure and business shipping called at Menai Bridge. One of the favourite ships was La Maguerite, from Liverpool carrying up to 1000 passengers, and later the Tudno and Trillo. Our Zoom Meeting in December looked at the impact of these sailings on the Town and on the growth



Photos — black and white by Norman Kneale, Menai Bridge Pier in the 1960s.

Sepia photo — probably from a postcard, date not known but the La Maguerite finished sailing in 1903. Details of copyright would be welcome.

Drawing below taken from a Trade Directory thought to be about 1890? Many local Trade Directories can be found on the Leicester University website and we are grateful to them for this resource

of hotels, lodging houses and hostleries to accommodate visitors. Four of the major purpose built hotels built in the town in the early and mid nineteenth century were the Anglesey, the Victoria, the Liverpool Arms and the Bulkeley. Still with us today and all listed buildings. They were essentially 'coaching and shipping inns', linking up with the new railway and coastal shipping network. Many other taverns and inns catered for local customers. The present Britannia Garage, for instance, was the Britannia Inn. Whether it was built because of the trade coming to the flour mill nearby or was built alongside the embankment for the A5 we're not sure. Any ideas?

SUSAN TIMOTHY,
(LATE HENRY HUMPHREYS.)
"BULKELEY ARMS INN,"
MENAI BRIDGE, ANGLESEY.

Respectfully informs Families, Tourists and others honouring the above Inn with their support and patronage, that they will find every comfort and attention, accompanied with very moderate charges.

An Omnibus meets the Express Trains at Bangor Twice Daily, Summer and Winter, and Four Times Daily during the Summer.

Phetons, Waggonettes, Dog Carts, Close and Open Carriages, and Posting in all its Branches.

Ales, Wines and Spirits of the choicest quality.
HORSES AND CARRIAGES TO HIRE. GOOD STABLING.

FUTURE EVENTS

Lectures are held monthly by Zoom and we hope before too long we will meet again in the lounge of the War Memorial Community Centre, Water Street, Menai Bridge! January and February 2021 meetings begin at 2.30 p.m.

The Society reserves the right to make reasonably necessary alterations to arrangements, if for example the Speaker or the Centre is suddenly not available. Where possible we will notify members by e-mail and offer an alternative programme. If you don't already receive our 'Latest News' and e-mails, and would like to, please let Jane Cherrett have your e-mail address.

Zoom Meetings are, unfortunately, becoming far more necessary. If you're uncertain about how to join them please let us know and we'll arrange for someone to

give you a hand. When you join a Zoom Meeting you can just listen in and view the slide presentation of the speaker; you don't need to show your own picture if you don't want to. Our talks so far have grown in numbers with about fifteen joining in. The next talks are:

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16th February Warren Kovach "The Building and Rebuilding of the Menai Suspension Bridge"

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Jane Cherrett



Photo taken in the 1960's of the approach onto Anglesey across the Menai Suspension Bridge. Straight ahead, you can see the old **Rock Vaults, with Rock House** attached. The Vaults (supposedly opened for the use of the labourers engaged on the building of the bridge) was demolished in the course of road improvements and the construction of the traffic roundabout on the Anglesey side of the Bridge. Photo courtesy of the Archives and Special Collections, Bangor University who retain the copyright.



Photo above (thanks to Rachel Everett) - Demolishing the Rock and the Rock Vaults.



Photo aside (thanks to Norman Kneale) - Stage coach drive believed to be celebrating 150th Anniversary of the opening of the Bridge in 1976?



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See our Website at
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HOW MENAI BRIDGE HAS CHANGED.

To say that Menai Bridge has changed over the past 100 or so years is rather stating the obvious but looking at how it's changed makes for more interesting reading. Dramatic physical changes, such as making way for a new roundabout at the entrance to the Suspension Bridge are well known, if you've lived here a while, but how do you know otherwise? Other small changes are more insidious but just as important in their long term impact. Compare the

photo below with that on the front page. Both show an area that used to be known as the 'West End', with the Cambria Inn and the Foundry dominating this photo and far harder to see amongst the development in the front page photo. The photos in the Newsletter are a few of those used in our Zoom Meeting in December when we looked at the pubs and Inns in Menai Bridge and what they've brought and still bring to our community. We miss them!

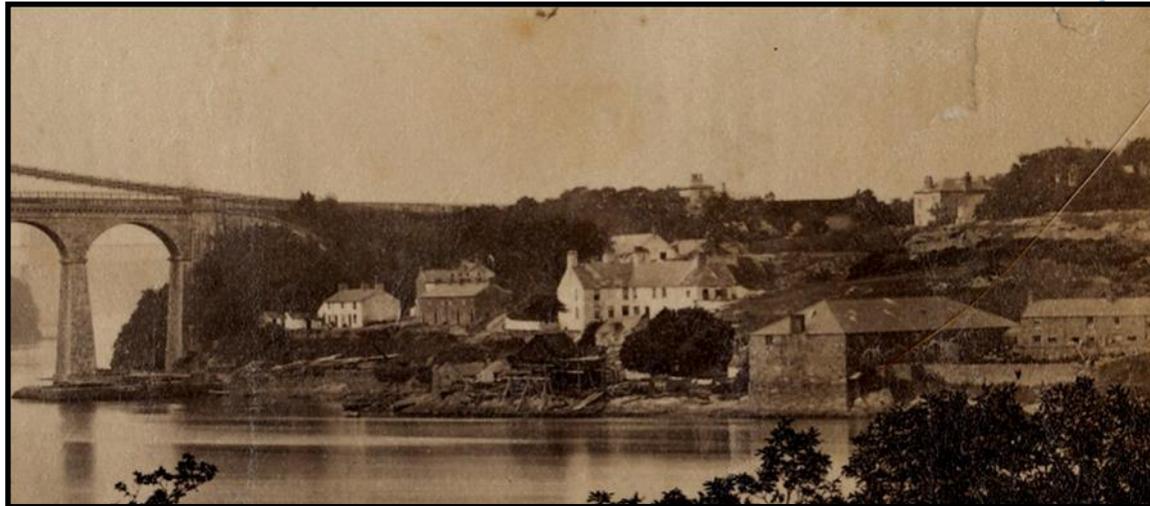


Photo above— use kindly granted by Maureen Parry-Williams. Enlargement from a general scene with the Cambria Inn in the centre —date probably 1880/90. Note no houses on Beach Road.



Photo above courtesy of Marian Hirst. Postmaster William Henry Dibben (Marian's grandfather), with post bag and box outside the Anglesey Arms, then a coaching inn. Date about the turn of the century.

Menai Bridge and District Civic Society Cymdeithas Ddinesig Bro Porthaethwy

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