

## 12 Bangor and District: Short Introduction



That area of the City of Bangor representing its former industrial importance, the slate quays of Port Penrhyn, has already been described (section 10). There remains to catalogue a variety of miscellaneous industrial relics in what is nowadays primarily an university town and a local government and commercial centre of the County of Gwynedd.....



....The formerly isolated Victorian suburb of Hirael emphasizes the marine connections of the city..... The enlightened Corporation housing at Maes Isalaw, overlooking the bay and fronted by neat gardens, replaced extensive slum housing in 1933. ....

Going up the High Street, Messrs. Humphrey Williams' yard to the right was formerly the Penlôn school slate manufactory, and has most of the original buildings. A reminder that this was once the main Holyhead road is given by the Telford Milestone set in the wall of the large house named Bron Castell ....

..... Bangor Corporation's grand promenade pier, one third of a mile in length, was declared open by Lord Penrhyn on the 14th of May 1896, replacing a stone jetty built in 1858 and considerably shortening the Garth ferry service which had plied hereabouts across to Anglesey since circa 1350..... it is the last surviving largely unaltered Victorian pier around British shores.....

.....Bangor's mainly Georgian and Victorian High Street is noted for its preponderance of commercial properties – probably a larger number of banks, building societies and estate agents per head of population than any other town of comparable size. Of their architecture, two of the banks are notable.....towards the station, the Victorian “Rowlands Commercial Temperance Hotel” still proclaims respectable lodgings for rail travellers.....

.....A good overall view of the layout of the station area, very unusually situated and cramped between two tunnels, may be had from the footpath rising above the eastern tunnel portal behind the “Plaza” Cinema. The earliest buildings, now the upside waiting rooms and buffet with offices above, date from 1848; note the “C & H” monograms (Chester and Holyhead Railway) and the solid stone name panels once so characteristic of the line.....behind the engine sheds and signal works, a large Victorian red-brick railway community survives intact bearing such evocative street names as Euston Road and West End, patently uninfluenced by any local culture. The L&NWR Railway Institute (1898 extended 1905) houses an interesting contemporary model of how the Britannia Bridge over the Menai Straits might have looked, had the Admiralty not objected to the obstruction of headroom for shipping in 1846.....

....now focal point of the “Normal College” teacher training school, the old “George” Hotel is surrounded by modern buildings. This was the last mainland hostelry on the Irish Road, where winter travellers might have had to wait several days to cross the straits by ferry before completion of the suspension bridge in 1826. The bridge designer, Thomas Telford, himself stayed at the

hotel during construction work, and his initials, carefully inscribed onto the glass of his window, may still be seen. The ferry landing stage below the hotel is still accessible (560715).....



.....The last milestone on the mainland section of Telford's Road (562715) gives the distances to Holyhead, Mona (a once-important staging post on Anglesey) and Bangor.....the railway station reputedly serving the town of Menai Bridge was in fact necessarily situated on the Caernarfonshire side of the Menai Straits, which inconvenience contributed to its demise in 1966.....

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