



## 13 Menai Bridge – Oldest gateway to Anglesey: Short Introduction



The sole road route into the Isle of Anglesey for over 150 years was by means of Telford's Menai Suspension Bridge, 250 miles out from London by the Holyhead Road. To appreciate fully the elegance of this structure however, it is necessary not merely to drive or even walk across it, but to descend through the streets of Menai

Bridge town to the shores of the Straits, and so pass beneath it.....even in the age of such modern technological wonders as the Severn and Humber Bridges, the structure as seen from here today is most impressive: as you gaze upwards try to visualize the somewhat more startling impact it would have made on the traveller of our primitive roads in the year 1826, shortly after its completion.....Translating this into hard engineering facts, the main span is 580 feet in length and the complete bridge 1000 feet; the road deck stands 100 feet clear of high water.....

.....Apart from the towers, other original features are the latticework parapet fencing at each end of the bridge, and two of Telford's "rising sun" tollgates at the mainland end. The tower from which the suspension chains are tensioned is at this end, and still contains the wooden block and tackle used for hauling the chains both during the original construction work and the rebuilding. The bridge master's house is also incorporated into the tower.....

.....Along the shore two interesting survivals from the days of the ferry service will be seen; the "Cambria Inn", by the landing place opposite the George Hotel on the mainland side is now a private dwelling but is prominent as much of its previous character remains; it dates from the seventeenth century. Nearby are the lowlier cottages of the ferrymen, also still in domestic use.....

.....To the east of the town, the pretty but quite inaccessible Cadnant Dingle was once a hive of industrial activity, making use of the abundant supply of water which has cut a deep gorge in descending from the upland plateaus of Llandegfan and Llansadwrn.....the two large buildings on either side of the old bridge, now in residential use, comprised a flannel and tweed factory.....another interesting old building is at the head of the inlet; originally a water-powered woollen mill but for forty years up to 1975 operating as a smithy.....

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.....Higher up the same valley are derelict remains of a corn mill (Melin Cadnant) and the fulling-mill, Pandy Cadnant. The corn mill buildings are situated beside a deeply scoured gorge with an impressive waterfall from the mill dam after heavy rain. The waterwheel was thirty foot in diameter, but has been removed since operation ceased before the last war. A hundred yards or so downstream and almost obscured by the luxuriant vegetation, stands the derelict shell of the Pandy, a tiny building which included living accommodation as well as the machinery under the one roof.....

.....Llandegfan windmill is the first of many to be seen, mostly unfortunately in this somewhat attenuated condition, during a circular tour of the island. Anglesey windmills were almost without exception of the old "tower" variety since the timber construction of the more modern derivatives, post- and smock-mills, would have been incapable of withstanding the severe winter gales..... the white painted miller's cottage still stands in front of the old ivy-clad tower, adjacent to the roadway.

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