

14 Beaumaris and Penmon: Short Introduction



The coastal road to Beaumaris, built originally by Lord Bulkeley for access to his estate and becoming turnpiked in 1829, is flanked by expensively and sometimes frivolously - ornamented "Gentlemen's Residences"; the stretch between Plas Rhianfa, the best surviving example and the Gazelle Hotel has been dubbed "Millionaires Mile"..... just beyond, on the inland side of the road will be noted the magnificent wrought-iron main gates to Bulkeley's estate, Baron Hill (581743). Despite the imposing entrance, the vast mansion itself some two miles further on is unfortunately in ruins.....

Despite various plans, no railway was ever built to serve the prosperous commercial and administrative community of Beaumaris, which thus retains a strange air of self-contained isolation to this day: its solid blocks of Georgian sea-front residences stand out prominentlyBeaumaris Gaol, open to visitors in the summer months (as a museum!) was built by William Thomas of Holyhead in 1828-9 to the designs of Messrs Hansom (of Hansom Cab fame) and Welch, architects of York. Despite its dark and forbidding interior, it is said to have represented a marked advance in prison construction and management for those times. The installations include a unique treadmill.....another grim reminder of the nineteenth century judicial system is the gallows doorway leading out above the street, which was used for public executions....

....Still in its original use, however, is the Assize Court (607762), the oldest of its kind in the United Kingdom. Dating from 1614, it has been finely restored, and is also open to the public during the summer.....

....Adjacent to the Court premises is an interesting pair of whitewashed cottages occupied by ferrymen in the days when a service operated across the Straits from here over the Lavan sands to Aber. This was the official route to Holyhead prior to 1719....the sea came right up to the Castle Walls and these houses are provided with slotted uprights at the bottom of the doorways, into which planks could be inserted and reinforced with clay, to prevent the ingress of floodwater.....

....The original premises of the David Hughes Grammar School, founded in Beaumaris in 1603 are situated near the Castle entrance; fully renovated, they are used for community purposes. Two massive cast-iron water pumps from the town have been moved to the school grounds for preservation.....

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.....at the nearby village of Llanfaes, an interesting old forge (dated 1811) lies in a quiet backwater in the shadow of the old parish church.....

.....At several points around the tip of the Penmon promontory are the remains of various limestone quarries of very early origins, which supplied the high quality building stone generally referred to as Mona Marble..... On the right-hand side of the road leading to the Priory, an archway inscribed "Penmon Marble Quarries 1877" leads down to the stone quayside buildings..... traces of the tramway incline from the quay to the quarry workings and the bridge by which it passed under the main road will be noted.....perhaps the most interesting and accessible remains of the older methods of working are to be seen in the disused Flagstaff Quarry



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