

8. The Town

Barmouth town over the years

Since early mentions of Barmouth as a settlement, in the 1500s the town has grown in both size and population. Many of the older buildings still stand but some have been demolished and newer ones built in their place.

The Square and Beach Road



Northfield Hall, Belle View and Glan y Werydd 1865

The picture above shows Northfield Hall (far left), Belle View (covered in ivy) and Glan y Werydd (right) in 1865. The picture is taken from a spot which would now be somewhere on Beach Road. The tree seen on the right is where the Tal y Don stands today. The shops and homes on Beach Road have yet to be constructed.

The next picture is taken from a similar location circa 1870. By this time the Richmond Hotel had been constructed (left) and the Tal y Don stands to the right of Glan y Werydd.



'The Square' circa 1870 with Richmond Hotel (left), Bell View, Glan y Werydd and the Tal y Don Hotel.

By 1898 Beach Road had changed dramatically and more resembles how it looks today. It now has a road surface and pavements. You can see Glan y Werydd at the end of the street. By this time Siloam Chapel had been reconstructed and is visible on the left about half way up the road. Christchurch had also been constructed and can be found on the right at the far end of the street.



Beach Road looking towards The Square 1898 and R. Powell and Son, Beach Road 1922



R. Powell and Son, Beach Road 1922

The R. Powell and Son shop selling fruit vegetables and flowers. Coincidentally this shop is selling flowers today.



'Hamer Butchers', Plynlimon House, Beach Road

This is a branch of the family butchers of Llanidloes. Hamer established a wide ranging reputation for his Plynlimon mutton. He became, by Royal appointment, purveyor of meat to the Prince of Wales, Queen Victoria and subsequent members of the Royal Family. The late Terry Jones, co-founder of Monty Python's Flying Circus, who was born in Colwyn Bay and later lived in Llanidloes, was a big fan of Hamer's Butchers. He once stated in an interview with the Western Mail, Wales' national newspaper, that he wanted to be buried in a Hamer's pork pie!

The High Street

The Cors y Gedol

The Cors y Gedol Hotel built in the mid 18th Century stands in the centre of the town. It was opened as an inn in 1775 and the first innkeeper was a Mrs Lowry Lewis.



Cors y Gedol Hotel 1859

In 1869 the proprietor of the Cors y Gedol was a John Robert Davies. He had the hotel rebuilt and extended as can be seen in the next picture.



Cors y Gedol Hotel 1872

Today it is a Grade 2 listed building, housing retail premises on the ground floor and private residential accommodation on the upper floors.

The Mews

The Mews (on the left of this picture) was constructed circa 1872 and stood across the high street from the Cors y Gedol Hotel and next door to Christ Church. This was a large commercial building which was demolished in 1973. It was replaced by a single storey brick built commercial building which would house Woolworth until they went into liquidation in 2008. Today the Factory Shop stands on the site.



The Mews 1885



Compton Stores, The Mews 1913



Demolishing the Mews 1973



Woolworth under construction 1973

Pen y Grisiau

One of the earliest buildings on the high street is Pen y Grisiau. Pen y Grisiau is a Grade 2 listed building and was constructed in the late 1700s. It is thought to have originally consisted of 3 independent dwellings, one above the other. Today it is split into a commercial property at street level with a private residence above.



Pen y Grisiau 1890



Pen y Grisiau 1957

To the left of Pen y Grisiau in the grand building Glanglasfor. The building housed the Cambrian Establishment, a grocers and drapers run by Morris and Son.



Cambrian Establishment advertisement 1904



Cambrian Establishment and staff 1910

Verdun House

The property at the end of the high street, known as Verdun House used to house a branch of the South, North Wales and Westminster Bank Ltd together with the town post office and telephone exchange.

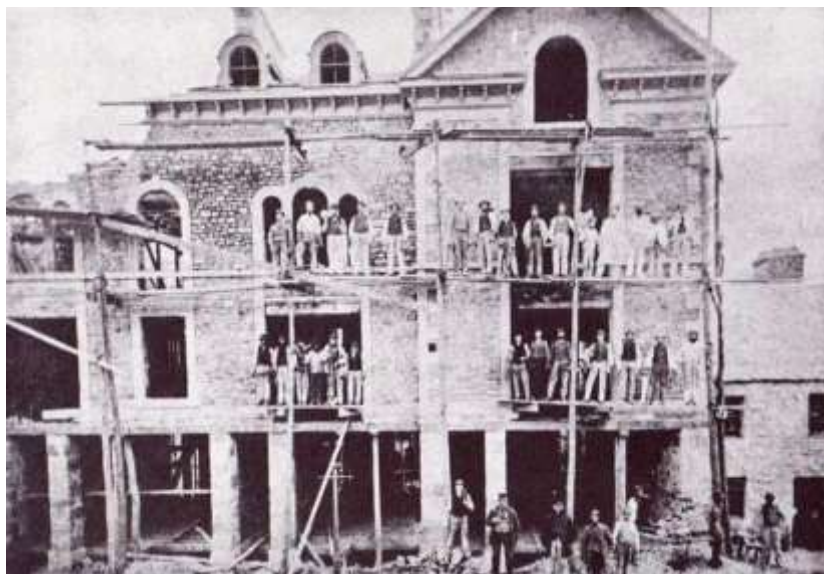


Verdun House 1914

Church Street

Ael y Don

The Ael y Don is a large prominent building on Church Street. It was constructed in 1871 for commercial use. It is a grand symmetrical terrace. Today it houses a mixture of private residences, shops and what is today known as the Tilman Hotel. The Tilman Hotel is named after Major Harold William "Bill" Tilman, an English mountaineer and explorer who lived in Barmouth in the 60s and 70s.



Ael y Don 1871



Church Street with Ael y Don on the right 1872



Crown Stores 2 & 3 Ael y Don 1900



Church Street looking north 1881



Church Street looking north 1914

The Last Inn dates back to the 15th Century and used to be a shoemaker's home before becoming an inn. Today the Tŷ Coch Boarding House and the Last Inn have now been combined to become the pub it is today. The bare rock of the hills form part of the interior rear wall of the Last Inn. Fresh spring water runs down this rock and forms a pool inside the inn.



The Last Inn 1903



Tŷ Coch Boarding House, next to the Last Inn

Turnpike Road

Turnpike Road heads north out of Barmouth towards Llanaber. This picture shows the Toll House with Handlith Terrace behind.



Turnpike Road 1874

The Toll House stands where Kings Crescent and St Tudwals are situated today. Nearly all towns and villages had a Toll House. They would collect tolls for the purpose of repairing and maintaining the length of the road on which they stood.



Turnpike Road with Kings Crescent partially completed and the Toll House still in place
1894

The Highways Act of 1862 put an end to paying tolls on the majority of roads. The Toll House on Turnpike Road was closed in 1888.



Turnpike Road 1913

The Toll House was eventually demolished and made way for Kings Crescent and St Tudwal's, the latter being completed in 1905.

Marine Parade

As tourism boomed in the late 1800s and early 1900s the need for more accommodation increased. One such development was Marine Parade. This was one of Barmouth's most ambitiously scaled projects and was of symmetrical construction.



Advertisement 1889



Marine Hotel 1896



Marine Parade under construction 1878. Taken from the beach prior to the promenade being constructed.



A completed Marine Parade taken from the beach circa 1910

Another development on Marine Parade was the Pavilion Building. This was constructed in 1904 and housed retail premises, including a shoe shop, a news agent, a restaurant and a cinema. It was eventually demolished in the 1970s after being deemed unsafe and was replaced soon after with a more modern brick building housing an amusement arcade.



Construction of the Pavilion 1904



The Pavilion 1906

Although Barmouth Town has grown and changed over the years since it was first mentioned as a settlement, many of the older buildings still exist, even if their uses have changed they are still recognisable today. If you want to get a feel for how Barmouth was a couple of centuries ago, just take a walk around the lanes and steps of old Barmouth, known locally as The Rock, and let your imagination wander.