



## THE BULKELEY HOTEL

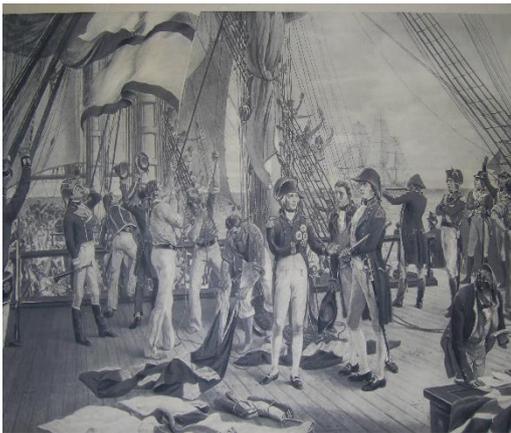
BEAUMARIS, ISLE OF ANGLESEY



The Bulkeley Hotel is a grade 1 listed building and a very fine example of the Victorian house-builders art. It bears the evidence of the pride these people took in their craft, but does not suffer from the overindulgence that typified so much of the architecture and builder's workmanship in the middle of the nineteenth century. The building is elegant in its proportions, the shape and size of the rooms betraying the natural good taste of its architect, Mr Hansom.

The story of the hotel starts with the predecessor of the present Sir Richard Bulkeley, you can tell that he was a very rich man as he has a woodbine in his hand, which was a very popular cigarette of that time. Over his left-hand shoulder you can see Beaumaris castle. He is stood on the patio of the stately home which is now in ruins, located across the road from the hotel, on red hill. It is now derelict as The Bulkeley family refused to pay the debt duty, so instead of paying the duty they let it go to ruin.

Sir Richard Bulkeley is responsible for the building of the hotel, although his first claim to fame is back in Nelson times. At the age of 14 he was called Midshipman Richard Bulkeley and he is famous for being the very last person to speak to Lord Nelson on HMS Victory. He said "Sir, the ship has been struck" and Nelson replied "and who are you sir?" Sir Richard Bulkeley replied, "I am midshipman Richard Bulkeley" Nelson replied "kismet hardy" or "kiss me hardy" two different versions, at which point he died.



The significance of the other picture is that it is the death scene of Lord Nelson upon the HMS Victory and that means that Sir Richard Bulkeley is somewhere on that picture which is why they face each other in the hotel.

In 1829 Sir Richard Bulkeley got a request from Buckingham Palace asking if he could accommodate a future Queen of England on a state visit to Beaumaris. He said that he would be delighted to accommodate a future Queen, and asked "when is she coming?" And as you can imagine the Royal Family would plan a visit like this years in advance and so the reply was "she is actually coming to visit in 1832", again Sir Richard Bulkeley replied "I would be delighted to accommodate her and for that visit I will build a house especially for the occasion, a beach villa in affect", so that is what he did.





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The reason for the visit was for the opening of Britannia Bridge, which was linking London to Dublin.

He was a very rich landowner and he built the hotel that still stands now. He knocked down 450 houses on the Beaumaris green, which he did happen to own, although it didn't make him very popular with the local residents. However, he still chose to demolish all 450 houses so that you could see the view of the straights from the house that he was to build. He commissioned a famous architect of the time, Hansom, who designed the Hackney carriage; to build the house.

The stone for the building came from just along the coastline at Penmon; the same stone became fashionable for many buildings in England, including Birmingham Town Hall. It's also interesting to note that stone was used from old town walls. The foundation stone was laid by Sir Richard Bulkeley in 1830 and the building opened in 1831.

To make sure the Royal Family felt at home he asked Hansom to develop offices next door to the hotel, which are now flats. If you stand on the green outside the hotel and look at the flats they look exactly the same as Buckingham Palace but smaller.

They were also used as offices when the castle moat was connected to the Menai Straits, this is the kind of power that Sir Richard Bulkeley had.

In 1832 the town hosted the Beaumaris Royal Eisteddfod and saw the visit of Princess Victoria. The evening of August 8<sup>th</sup> 1832, was a memorable one in the history of the hotel. The itinerary was that the Royal Family would arrive by train in Caernarfon, then alight off the train, jump on the coach and four and arrive in Beaumaris where they would travel down the high street and stop outside our entrance on Castle Street, which is a formal entrance with the coat of arms above the steps. The Royal Family would come in and head up the grand staircase and would stay in what is now Room 104 above the revolving doors.



Within the hotel we have very wide corridors; this was so that the ladies could walk through in their crinoline dresses without damaging the wallpaper.

Room 104 has three windows with panoramic views from Llandudno through to Bangor with a backdrop of Snowdonia Mountains. It also used to have an ante room for luggage and ladies in waiting. It is probably one of the biggest rooms within the hotel.

The Royal Family would stay there the night and then the following morning the plan was that they would come out of 104; have breakfast, walk across the corridor under the archway into what was then the ballroom. There they would meet all the local dignities.

At the end of the day they would come back down the grand staircase, onto the coach and four, back to Caernarfon, onto the train back to London.

So in 1832 the house was built ready for the occasion and as planned the Royal Family arrived in Caernarfon, enlightened onto the coach and four and set off on their way to Beaumaris.

There had been one party on Anglesey that had not been permitted, which was Lord Anglesey, his statue can be seen as you come across the Britannia Bridge; His claim to fame was that he was at the Battle of Waterloo sat on horseback alongside the Duke of Wellington, a cannon fired and he turned to the Duke and



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said “Sir, I believe I’ve lost my leg”. The Duke of Wellington turned to him and replied “I believe you have sir, fight on”.

The first ever artificial limb ever made of black leather is now on display at Plas Newydd.

He hadn’t been included with any of the arrangements and as the Royal Family progressed over the Britannia Bridge he rode upon horseback and said “Madame you must not take a step further there has been an outbreak of smallpox in Beaumaris”. Which of course was a lie, the Royal Family weren’t to know that and so she replied, “Good God man, what are we going to do now?” and he said “well Madame instead of continuing to Beaumaris if you would like to follow me to my humble abode I can accommodate you for the evening” and she said “lead on my man” and of course they went to Plas Newydd and stayed the night there and all the dignitaries from Beaumaris went to Plas Newydd. To this day Lord Anglesey doesn’t speak to Sir Richard Bulkeley.

Four years on from the originally planned visit, Princess Victoria became the most powerful Queen ever known, Queen Victoria. The Queen then found out about the lie that had been told to her by Lord Anglesey, the Anglesey family were then officered. In 1851 as Queen Victoria she re-traced her footsteps and actually did stay here in Room 104.

So where The Bulkeley Hotel had Queen Victoria to stay Lord Anglesey only had Princess Victoria.

This all confirms why the hotel was built – for the future Queen of England. However, it seems strange to think that this building came into being purely to accommodate the visit of one person and it says much about those times and the status of its builders, the Bulkeley Family. They considered such an expense to be well worth the effort for the increase to their social standing.

The hotel is also reputed to have ghosts. One is called George and seems to frequent the area around room 23. What the attraction could be is uncertain but seems to relate to unrequited love as he is heard to call out a ladies name with great sadness. While George appears a sad ghost, he is also most amiable.

Another ghost frequents the cellars of the hotel; A young girl of humble origin, who must have been one of the multitudes of downstairs servants who laboured unsung and unthought-of so many years ago. This young lady also seems to have a love affair on her mind; she can be heard laughing in a flirtatious manner – always on a Saturday evening. Maybe it is the prospect of a day off from her labours on the morrow, the Lord’s Day. I hope she enjoyed her day off, it is also nice to think that the day goes on occurring for her.



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### Beaumaris History



A picturesque town whose mixture of Medieval, Georgian, Victorian and Edwardian architecture is enhanced by breath-taking views of the Menai Strait and the mountains of Snowdonia. Beaumaris was established by Edward I as the site for the last of his 'iron ring' of castles and other historic buildings including the Courthouse, the Victorian Gaol and the Church of St Mary and St Nicholas.

Beaumaris became a halfway house for goods brought in from around the world and then shipped on to England. During the reign of Queen Elizabeth 1, the Bulkeley Family became what might be described as "Elizabethan entrepreneurs". It seems that they financed privateers running from Beaumaris to create havoc among the world's shipping and trading nations in waters from the Indian Ocean to the Caribbean.

Beaumaris and the region has long been a gateway to Anglesey's rich history and culture. After establishing one of his finest and most effective Castles at Beaumaris, Edward 1st made the new town of Beaumaris - beautiful marsh'. Open throughout the year the Castle has now been designated by the United Nations as a World Heritage Site.

This was the largest and the last of King Edward I fortresses in North Wales, only begun in 1295 in the aftermath of a revolt by Llewelyn ap Gruffudd. Its location was chosen strategically to control and important ferry crossing from the mainland to Anglesey as well as northern approaches to the Menai Strait.

Beaumaris was the greatest achievement of Master James of St George and is probably the most sophisticated example of medieval military architecture in Britain.

This concentric castle has an inner ward that is rectangular with a round tower at each corner, D-shaped towers in the middle of two walls and double gatehouses. The octagonal outer ward has drum towers and there is a dock and the Gunner's Walk.



Many features of Beaumaris' time as an administrative and legal center remain. The Courthouse of 1614 stands opposite the Castle. It is open to the public in summer and with its polished wood railing and flagstones it remains much as it would have looked in the last century.

Less sentimental memories of Victorian Beaumaris may be evoked by a visit to Beaumaris Gaol in Steeple Lane. Built by Hansom in 1829 it was designed as a model prison. Many Criminals and poorer people suffered hardship here. The last man to hang was Richard Rowlands ('Dic Rolant') who cursed the Church clock opposite as he climbed the scaffold in 1862.

Beaumaris has the air of an historic town that has welcomed travellers from all over the world. It has not been spoilt by the passage of time, but has embraced all the different trends and influences, this vibrant mix of the old and new, local and exotic gives the town its unique cosmopolitan flavour.