



# THE BULKELEY HOTEL

BEAUMARIS, ISLE OF ANGLESEY

## HISTORY OF THE BULKELEY HOTEL

In 1829, Sir Richard Bulkeley, a wealthy Anglesey landowner, commissioned The Bulkeley Hotel to be built for the purpose of a visit from the heir presumptive to the throne, the 13 year old Princess Victoria for The Royal Beaumaris Eisteddfod and Regatta in 1832.

Wanting to impress his royal guest with majestic views of the Menai Straits and Snowdonia Mountain Range, he set about demolishing 450 town dwellings on the Green to make way for the new hotel near to Beaumaris Castle where the Eisteddfod was to be performed, so that the Princess would enjoy uninterrupted views.

Joseph Hansom, a prolific English architect of the 19th Century, most renowned for his design of the Hansom Cab, a carriage which dominated the streets of Victorian Britain, created an elegant residence fit for royalty and the construction of the hotel was completed in 1832.

On 6th August that same year, the day of the Royal visit arrived and Princess Victoria, her mother, The Duchess of Kent and the carriages of their Royal suite crossed Menai bridge to the Isle of Anglesey greeted by a Royal artillery salute. Upon arriving in Beaumaris, crowds lined the streets to welcome the Royal visitors to the town which was decorated with ribands, flowers and garlands and the vessels in Beaumaris Bay displayed the Royal colours. Upon reaching The Bulkeley Hotel, The Duchess and Princess climbed the grand staircase onto the hotel's portico balcony overlooking Castle Street, where they were cheered and applauded by a huge crowd.

During the Princess' 10 day residency at the hotel, she visited the towns and castles of Caernarvon, Conway and Bangor, sailed on the Royal yacht *Emerald* and enjoyed steam-boat excursions along the Menai Straits. She amused herself drawing, painting and playing the piano and went horse-riding and walking along the coastline. In her daily journal, she described the castle ruins in the region as 'beautiful', the Menai bridge as 'handsome' and the horse-riding in the hotel's vicinity as 'delightful' and 'very pretty', recounting how the island of Anglesey commands 'a most extensive and magnificent view.' Her visit concluded in a presentation of medals to the winning poets of the Eisteddfod at Sir Richard Bulkeley's estate, Baron Hill, and her winning a race between the Royal Yacht, the *Emerald* and Mr William's yacht, the *Gazelle* at the Beaumaris' Regatta, before presenting Mr Watson, and his yacht the *Zephyr*, the Regatta's winning Gold Cup gifted by the Duchess.

Visitors today, still delight in some of pastimes enjoyed during the 19th Century. The unspoilt stunning scenery of the island's coastal path and waters still attract walkers, artists, horse riders and sailing enthusiasts as they did in Victorian times and the region's rich historical and cultural heritage offers interesting day excursions. This grade I listed building transports it's visitors back to the golden age of hospitality and exudes the elegant, old-world charm and grandeur of a bygone era, whilst affording it's visitors today's modern comforts and a relaxed, friendly welcome.

The Royal visit transformed Beaumaris into a fashionable resort. Today's guests can relax and enjoy a taste of grandeur from the Georgian era at The Bulkeley Hotel whilst enjoying the majestic panoramic views of the Menai Straits and Snowdonia Mountain Range. The historical interest of this Grade I listed building is further enhanced by the hotel's close proximity to Beaumaris Castle, a World Heritage site, constructed in the 13th Century, and visitors can retrace in royal footsteps with day excursions to the multitude of castles and stately homes on offer in the region.

## ELEGANT GEORGIAN ARCHITECTURE

**The Bulkeley Hotel is a grade I listed building and a fine example of the Neo-classical architecture of the Georgian era.**

The grandeur and simple geometric elegance of this design was a reaction to the 18th Century decorative excesses of the Rococo style. The hotel neither suffers from the overindulgence that typified so much of the architecture and builder's workmanship later in the 19th Century. Typical of Neo-classical design, the building is elegant in its proportions, and the shape and size of its rooms portrays the natural good taste of its architect, Joseph Hansom.



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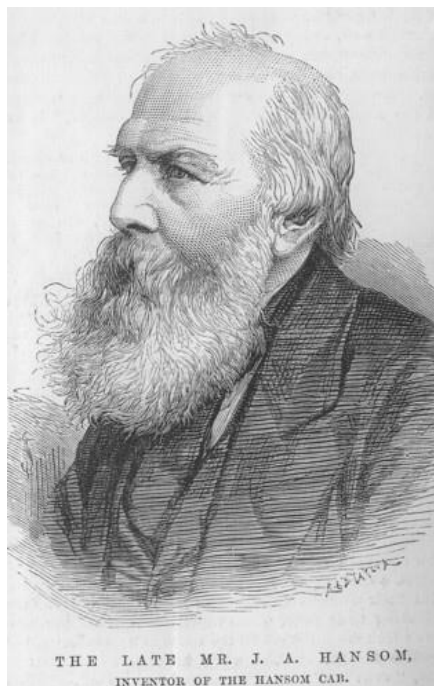
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*William-Bulkeley Arms Hotel 1832*

## Joseph Hansom (1803 - 1882)

Joseph Hansom was a prolific 19th Century architect who designed around 200 buildings across Britain, but is most renowned for his invention the Hansom Cab, a safety carriage which once dominated the cobbled streets of Victorian Britain.



THE LATE MR. J. A. HANSOM,  
INVENTOR OF THE HANSOM CAB.



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Born in York in 1803, Hansom initially followed in his father's footsteps and became an apprentice joiner, yet showed great talent for design and construction, and left his father's joinery to become an architect's apprentice.

He was married in 1825, and set up an architect's firm in partnership with Edward Welch in 1828. Together they won numerous commissions throughout Britain including several churches in Yorkshire and Liverpool, the renovation of Bodelwyddan Castle (Denbighshire) and King William's College, (Isle of Man). Their commissions in Beaumaris comprised, Beaumaris Gaol (1829), The William-Bulkeley Arms Hotel (1832) and Victoria Terrace (1833) thus significantly contributing to the architectural integrity of Castle Street and the Beaumaris sea-front.

The Bulkeley Hotel was commissioned to house royalty on a visit to Beaumaris and the residential dwellings of Victoria Terrace adjacent to the hotel, for the corporation of Beaumaris, as the centrepiece of a plan to regenerate the declining port of Beaumaris by creating a fashionable resort. The terrace bears resemblance to Buckingham Palace having been inspired by the Royal visit to Beaumaris and incorporated 10 houses let to middle class professionals and seasonal visitors.



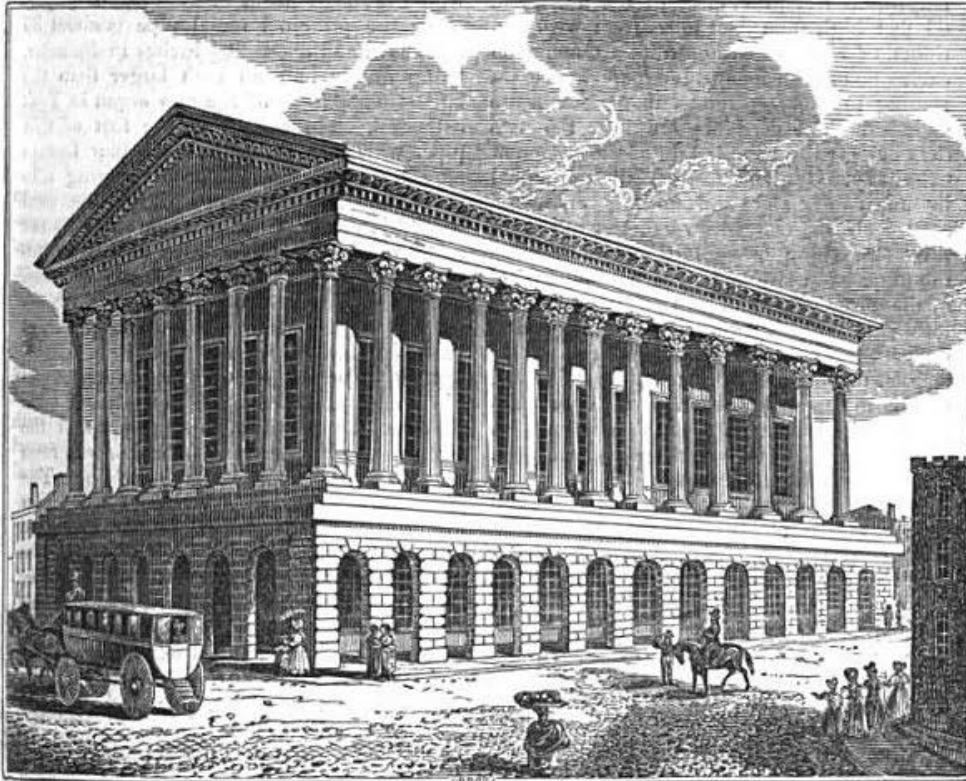
*Victoria Terrace, Beaumaris*

In 1831 the architects also won the commission to build Birmingham Town Hall but this project led to the company's downfall. Whilst constructing a beautiful and striking Roman-style building with tall pillars, overspending on the project bankrupted Hansom's firm and led to the dissolution of the partnership.



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*Birmingham Town Hall*

Whilst in Birmingham, Hansom met Dempster Hemming and subsequently moved to Hinckley in Leicestershire to manage Hemming's estate at Caldecote Hall, near Nuneaton. Hemmings encouraged Hansom to register his design for a safety cab on December 23rd 1834. Hansom's invention conquered the market reaching European cities such as Paris and Berlin and as far as the United States. He sold the patent for £10,000, but the company which bought it had financial difficulties so Joseph was never paid and his financial misfortune remained.



*Hansom's cab*

Hansom's innovative cab design included distinctive safety features with a suspended axle, while the larger wheels and lower position of the cab led to less wear and tear and fewer accidents. The cab could hold two passengers, three at a push, and the driver was seated at the back of the vehicle where he could communicate with his passengers through a trapdoor in the roof. The front of the cabin was open allowing for a better view and a leather curtain could be drawn across for privacy or shelter from the elements (a later development from Hansom's original design). The first Hansom cab travelled down Coventry Road in Hinckley in 1835.

Originally known as 'Hansom Safety Cab' in the name lies the reason for its success. Other cabs of the time had stability problems which made them prone to overturning. Hansom resolved the issue of safety without compromising on speed. This



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led it to become the carriage used by the fictional detective Sherlock Homes. Its speed and manoeuvrability made it the ideal vehicle for Arthur Conan Doyle's famous detective to arrive at crime scenes quickly.

When mechanical taximeters were introduced, Hansom's cab was cheaper than a four-wheel carriage being light enough to be pulled by a single horse. Consequently it replaced the Hackney carriage as the preferred vehicle for hire, and prospered until cheap motorised transport and the construction of transport systems saw more people using cars, when the cab fell into decline. By 1927 there were just 12 cabs still licensed in London. However the impact on society of Hansom's invention is still celebrated today as an essential part of Victorian life.

Throughout his life, Hansom practised in a succession of architectural partnerships;(1847-1852) with Augustus Welby Northmore Pugin in Preston, (1854 -1859) with his brother Charles Francis Hansom in London, (1862 - 1863) with Edward Welby Pugin and finally in 1869, with his son Joseph Stanislaus Hansom. He designed around 200 buildings, including Plymouth Cathedral, Georges Roman Catholic Church in York, Mount St. Mary's College near Sheffield and St Beuno's College near St Asaph in North Wales.

### THE BULKELEY HOTEL'S FOUNDER

The hotel's origins begin with Sir Richard Bulkeley Williams-Bulkeley. Born as Richard Bulkeley Williams, son of Sir Robert Williams and Ann Bulkeley, as the 10th descendant of the Williams Baronetcy of Penrhyn in the County of Caernarvon, a title created in 1661 for Griffith Williams. In 1827 Richard Bulkeley Williams, as nephew to the 7th Viscount Bulkeley, became successor to the Baron Hill estates in Beaumaris and the Bulkeley family seat upon the death of his uncle, and by Royal licence was granted the additional surname of Bulkeley to become Sir Richard Bulkeley Williams-Bulkeley.



*Sir Richard Bulkeley Williams Bulkeley (1841). This print today hangs in The Bulkeley Hotel's reception.*





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*The Williams-Bulkeley Coat of Arms combining the heritage of the Williams's and Bulkeley families. This crest is displayed in the hotel's Llewellyn Suite and on the portico balcony.*

## **BARON HILL : THE BULKELEY ANCESTRAL ESTATE**

Baron Hill Park, north of Beaumaris was part of the land-holding and family seat established in 1618 of the influential Bulkeley family containing the ancestral home, Baron Hill.



*Baron Hill Mansion House*



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*This photograph today hangs in The Bulkeley Hotel's reception of Sir Richard Bulkeley welcoming King Edward VII in 1907 at the ancestral home six years after Queen Victoria's reign. The reason for the Royal visit was to lay the foundation stone of the New University College in Bangor which had been founded in 1884 during Queen Victoria's reign.*



However, today the house lies in ruins. During the First World War, death duties depleted the Bulkeley family fortune making it impossible to maintain the house. During the war, Royal Engineers were stationed there. At the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939, the mansion was requisitioned by the government and used to temporarily house Polish soldiers who found the home too cold and intentionally started a fire within the mansion so they would be rehoused in alternative accommodation. The fire largely destroyed the interior and the soldiers were removed but only to tents on the Baron Hill Estate. The abandoned mansion has not been restored to this day.





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In the 1880s a golf course was established on the parkland and today visitors can still however enjoy a 9-hole round of golf at the Baron Hill Golf Club amidst the historic parkland.



*Baron Hill Golf Course*

## **A ROYAL REQUEST**

In 1829 Sir Richard Bulkeley received a request from Buckingham Palace to accommodate Princess Victoria, the future Queen of England and her mother, The Duchess of Kent on a state visit to Anglesey in 3 years time. Sir Richard, who was delighted to be bestowed such an honour from the Royal household, decided to build a beach villa specially for the occasion on Beaumaris' seafront. The talented architect, Joseph Hansom in 1829 was at that time nearing the completion of the construction of Beaumaris Gaol and so Sir Richard approached and commissioned Hansom to also build a hotel residence in Beaumaris fit for royalty.

Sir Richard was a wealthy landowner and wished to impress his royal guests by offering them spectacular views of the Snowdonia mountain range and Menai Straits from their Royal accommodation suites, and the bay-front of The Bulkeley Hotel and the Victoria and Regency Suites were designed for this purpose. Each of these two suites still offer hotel guests panoramic views from 3 bay windows today. However, in order to afford such views, Sir Richard had to first demolish around 450 dwellings on the Beaumaris Green which would otherwise obstruct the view, causing much disruption amongst the town's residents.





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## SOURCING STONE FOR THE HOTEL'S CONSTRUCTION

The stone for the building of the hotel came from the nearby Penmon Limestone and Granite Quarries, just along the coastline of Anglesey. The Flagstaff and Dinmoor quarries have been worked since the 16th century and the quarried rock shipped out from the dock of Porth Penmon.



*Penmon Quarries (c1910)*

The quarries had also provided the stone for the construction of Telford's Menai Suspension bridge, across the Menai Straits just a few years earlier.

## THOMAS TELFORD'S MENAI SUSPENSION BRIDGE

**Completed on 30 January 1826, The Menai Bridge was a triumph of civil engineering as the biggest suspension bridge in the world at that time bringing Thomas Telford's career to prominence.**



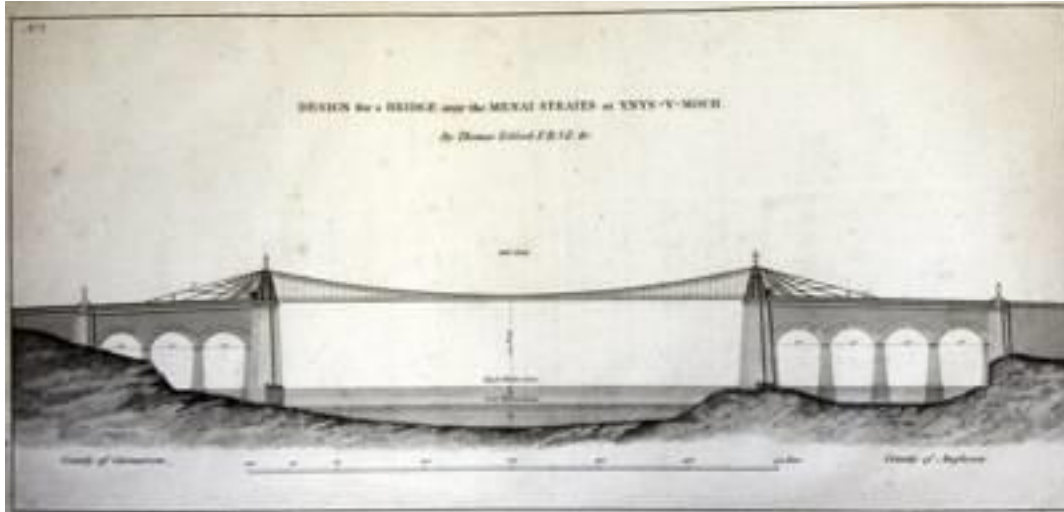
For centuries, travel to Anglesey from the mainland had been hazardous as ferries capsized or ran aground, often with loss of life whilst traversing the tricky currents and often treacherous waters of the Menai Straits at various launching places. In 1800, Ireland joined the UK through the Act of Union leading to more travellers commuting to and from Ireland to parliament in London.



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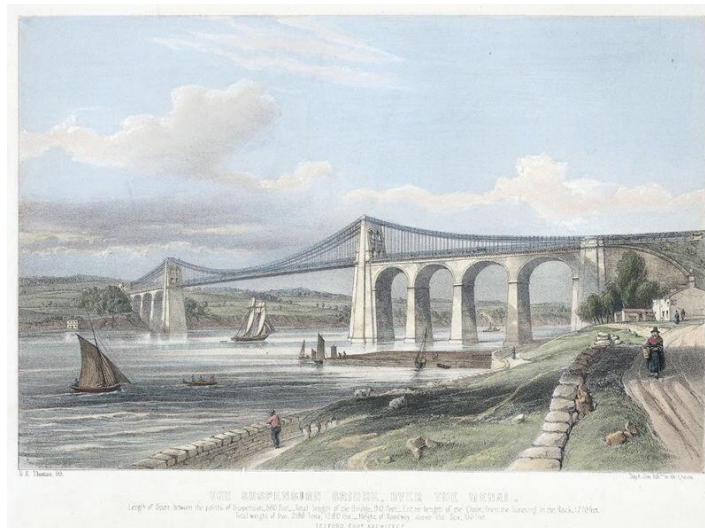
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In 1819, Thomas Telford began working on ambitious improvements to the journey between London and the port of Holyhead.



*Telford's original design for a bridge across the Menai Strait.*

Recognising the danger to travellers crossing the Straits, Telford designed a groundbreaking piece of civil engineering. Sixteen huge chains held up 579 feet of deck, with 100 feet of clear space beneath, allowing tall ships to pass underneath, whilst the bridge spanned the Straits at its narrowest point. The Menai Bridge not only made Thomas Telford's reputation as a civil engineer, but also dramatically reduced the time and danger it took to travel from London to Holyhead cutting the journey time from 36 to 27 hours.



*Menai Suspension Bridge c1840*

## **CONSTRUCTION OF THE HOTEL BEGINS**

The construction of The Bulkeley Hotel began in 1829, 3 years after the bridge's completion, with the foundation stone being laid by Sir Richard Bulkeley. It was said by Samuel Lewis that in addition, to stone being used from the nearby quarry, a section of medieval town wall on the sea front was demolished in 1831 to make way for the building and the stone re-used in the building of the hotel.



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Despite the disruption to the town during the hotel's construction, Sir Richard's popularity in Beaumaris did not suffer, and at the 1831 General election, Williams-Bulkeley was elected Member of Parliament for Beaumaris and in the reformed parliament, MP for Anglesey in 1832.

By the beginning of 1832 Sir Richard had realised his ambitious plans and the construction of The Bulkeley Hotel was complete. Mrs. Bicknall, landlady of the Penrhyn Arms Hotel in Bangor, was engaged to manage the establishment and make the necessary preparations for the Royal visit the forthcoming summer. Mr & Mrs Bicknall had great experience of managing The Penrhyn Arms which had been converted from a modest 30 bed inn into a large spacious 100 bed hotel throughout the late 1820s.

The Bulkeley Hotel had therefore solely come into existence for a visit from the future Queen of England and it is incredible to consider that this grand building was created to accommodate one person and it is testimony to wealth of the land owners of that time and the status of its builders and the Bulkeley Family. Such expense was considered to be well worthwhile for the increase to the Bulkeley family's social standing that the Royal visit would provide.

### PENRHYN ARMS HOTEL, BANGOR

**Today the portico is all that remains of the Penrhyn Arms Hotel, where Mrs Bicknall gained her experience as a hotel manager and the University College of North Wales was founded in 1884.**

The Penrhyn Arms was built as a coaching inn in 1799 and developed into a 100 bed spacious hotel in the 1820s managed by Mr & Mrs Bicknall. The busy hotel in Bangor for travellers on route to Ireland, overlooked Port Penrhyn, the Menai Straits and Beaumaris Bay from the mainland and had extensive gardens and pleasure grounds which by 1808 included a bowling green. By 1833 the hotel had grown to employ 80 servants including post boys, waiters and maids and Mrs Bicknall gained valuable experience which would be later utilised at The Bulkeley Hotel. Queen Victoria returned to North Wales with Prince Albert, the Prince of Wales, to stay at the Penrhyn Arms in 1852 and The King of Portugal, the Duke of Oporto, in the summer of 1854.

In the 1880s many towns vied to become the home of the University College of North Wales with Bangor being chosen. The Penrhyn Estate agreed to lease the hotel to the new university college for £200 per year.



*The Official Opening of Bangor University 1884*

On 18 October 1884, a large crowd gathered for the official opening of Bangor University. The motto "Knowledge is Power" was displayed above the portico and 58 students were enrolled into the university during its first year. The former hotel kitchens and scullery had been converted into a library, and the stables into a smoking room. Science buildings were later added and in 1911 a grand new university building opened which is still the focalpoint of Bangor University today. Until 1926, the college continued to use the Penrhyn Arms, which was demolished when the main A5 road to Ireland was diverted to run across land occupied by the hotel.





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## THE ROYAL ARRIVAL IN BEAUMARIS

On 6th August 1832 the years of preparation and great expense were over and the long awaited day of the Royal visit to Beaumaris had arrived with Princess Victoria aged just 13, and her mother The Duchess of Kent passing through Bangor with their royal suite and carriages on their journey to Beaumaris. The North Wales Chronicle reported of the Princess' arrival in Beaumaris:

### *THE DUCHESS OF KENT AND THE PRINCESS VICTORIA*

*'On Monday, the 6th August at about 5 in the afternoon. Soon after crossing the Menai Bridge, the guns of the Craig y don Yachts fired a royal salute, and upon the cavalcade entering Beaumaris, the Royal Ladies were most enthusiastically greeted by the loud acclamation of the whole population. The Royal Standard was hoisted upon the battlements of the Castle, and in front of The Bulkeley Arms Hotel the vessels in the bay displayed their colours, and festoons of ribands, flowers and evergreens were hung across the main street leading to the Hotel.*

*The cavalcade consisted of four carriages, in the first of which rode Sir John Conroy, the Duchess's Secretary in the second the Duchess and Princess, and in the other two the ladies belonging to the suite of their Royal Highnesses.*

*On reaching the Hotel the Royal party were waited upon by the landlady Mrs. Bicknell who had been indefatigable in making every requisite preparation for the suitable reception of her illustrious guests.*

*Within a few minutes after their arrival, the Duchess appeared on the portico, leading by the hand the youthful Princess. They were received with a loud and universal shout of applause and admiration from the immense multitude which fill the spacious street in front of the Hotel. We are happy to be able to state that both of the illustrious ladies appeared to enjoy the most perfect health. The young Princess at once displayed all the buoyancy of spirit so beautifully characteristic of her time of life, and the bloom of healthful beauty.'*

## THE BULKELEY'S PORTICO BALCONY

Since the hotel's construction in 1832, The Portico balcony which can be accessed through Room 116, has played a central role in the town's Christmas traditions.

Every year at the first Anglesey Harrier's first hunting meet of the season, the hunt members would ride on horseback through the town and after the hunt, excitable crowds would jostle in the street outside the Bulkeley Hotel, attempting to catch hot pennies tossed from the Portico balcony by the Lady Patroness. It's unclear how this curious tradition started, but it seems the local gentry found it entertaining to scatter the hot coppers to the chilly townspeople below.





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*The gentry gather on the Portico balcony to toss Hot Pennies to the waiting crowd (1930s)*

The Beaumaris tradition still takes place today, and every year at midday on Boxing Day the Beaumaris town Mayor and the Head Chef of The Bulkeley Hotel still toss hot pennies to the crowd below and the children scramble to gather as many as they can wearing thick gloves so as not to scold their hands. Then they rush into the hotel out of the cold to enjoy hot chocolate and gingerbread from The Bulkeley's Coffee House with their gathered pennies whilst their parents enjoy mulled wine and mince pies.

### **ROYAL RESIDENCY IN BEAUMARIS**

Princess Victoria recorded her daily activities in her private journal and recounts her stay at The Bulkeley Hotel for 10 days until 25th August 1832 when she then departed to then stay at the Marquess of Anglesey's ancestral home, Plas Newydd.

During their temporary residency at The Bulkeley Hotel, the Princess and her mother stayed in the hotel's Victoria and Regency Suites which both offer panoramic views spanning from Llandudno to Bangor over the Snowdonia mountains. These rooms still offer unrivalled magnificent views today to the discerning visitor and are furnished as Luxury Rooms for a small taste of the indulgence which was once enjoyed by the Royal visitors, but with a more modern style. The corridors leading to the sea-view rooms are particularly wide and spacious as their design was to ensure that the ladies' wide Crinoline dresses at the time would not be creased as they made their way through the hotel.

During Princess Victoria's stay in Beaumaris she accompanied her mother, The Duchess, on a number of official visits to Carnarvon, Conway and Bangor and in between amused herself with a number of pastimes within the hotel and around the Beaumaris area. She recounts in her journal:

*'I went out into the garden' (August 9th)....After breakfast I drew and at about 1/4 past 11 we went to church. After luncheon I wrote a letter and at 4 I went out to ride.' (August 12th).....we went out on horseback and walked over the Menai bridge, which going and coming back made 10 miles. We cantered a good deal going, and almost the whole way back (August 14th)....after luncheon I played on the piano (August 15th)....We went out to ride at 1/2 past 3 and rode over a very high hill, commanding a most extensive and magnificent view. (August 16th)....Lehzen finished for me that evening a lovely doll representing "La Sylphide" which I saw in town (August 18th).....I painted and played about (Sunday August 19th)....I then played on the piano until a 1/4 to 4 when I went out walking till 1/2 past 4 (Tuesday August 21st) 'We breakfasted at 1/2 past 8. I then wrote my accounts down and then I worked and afterwards I did my lessons.' (Thursday August 23rd)*

Today, the scenic Isle of Anglesey still offers a gentler pace of life to that of the cities, and many of the pastimes enjoyed by the Princess during her visit to the island are enjoyed by visitors today. The island's stunning coastal scenery and 126 mile coastal path has attracted artists, walkers and nature lovers for hundreds of years and the island enjoys a large network of bridleways and cycle ways. Hansom's Restaurant at The Bulkeley transports customers to the traditional service standards and ambience of a dining experience of yesteryear as customers enjoy creative local cuisine to the relaxing music of the hotel's resident pianist amidst the Georgian grandeur of chandeliers, panelled walls, and oil paintings. Hansom's therefore still offers a small taste of opulence and grandeur enjoyed in the 19th Century by the hotel's distinguished visitors but at today's more affordable value where everyone is welcomed.

### **AN EXCURSION AROUND PUFFIN ISLAND**

Whilst in Beaumaris Princess Victoria undertook boat excursions around Beaumaris Bay to Puffin Island and along the Menai Straits, sailing in the Royal yacht 'Emerald' and in a smaller steamer:

*'Mr & Mrs Ashton Smith came to see Mama and to propose for us to go on board their beautiful steam vessel.....It is indeed beautiful and the machinery is quite wonderful, (Princess Victoria's Journal - August 1832)*



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*'The Departure of Princess Victoria' by Joseph Butler 1832*

Joseph Butler depicted one such excursion in his painting 'The Departure of Princess Victoria' (1832) where the Princess and Duchess are waiting to board the Royal barge to convoy them to the steamer owned by Mr Ashton of the Vaynol Estate, Bangor.

The North Wales Chronicle reported about the Princess' first outing on the waters of the Menai Strait on the second day of her visit in Beaumaris:

*'On Tuesday afternoon (7th August) the Royal Ladies walked across the Green to the landing place where a ten oar barge belonging to the Royal yacht waited for them. The barge crew received them with the appropriate naval honours, and with the royal Standard displayed at the stern. They were rowed alongside the royal yacht, and immediately on their coming on board the royal standard was hoisted at the main, and the yacht getting under weigh stood down as far as Puffin Island, and returned to her anchorage at half past three o'clock, when the barge was manned and the royal party were rowed to shore with the same ceremonies which had attended their embarkation. A great number of the respectable inhabitants and visitors of Beaumaris were assembled on the green, whose respectful salutations were returned by the Duchess and Princess with the most amiable condescension and affability.'*

Today's visitors can still enjoy boat trips to Puffin Island which largely remains unchanged, with a number of companies offering boat excursions from Beaumaris Pier opposite the hotel to witness the grey seals, puffins and other bird colonies which inhabit this small island. Today the Trwyn Du lighthouse at Penmon, adds to the enjoyment of these trips, but it's construction was not until 7 years after Princess Victoria's visit when she had become Queen of England.

### **TRWYN DU LIGHTHOUSE & PUFFIN ISLAND**

Just one year before Princess Victoria's visit to Beaumaris 130 people had lost their lives on the Straits when the steamer the 'Rothsay Castle' ran aground and broke up on nearby Lavan Sands in 1831. Since that time, Master shipment in the nearby city of Liverpool had called for a lighthouse to be built at Penmon Point and in 1838, the current lighthouse, designed by James Walker, was finally erected at a price of £11,589.





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*Trwyn Du Lighthouse & Puffin Island*

## **ROYAL VISITS TO NEIGHBOURING PRINCIPALITIES**

During Princess Victoria's stay in Beaumaris she accompanied her mother on a number of state visits to neighbouring principalities. She visited Carnarvon on the 9th August, Conway on the 13th and Bangor On the 17th, each visit was accompanied by cheering crowds paying their respect and admiration for the Royal visitors.

*'The Duchess and Princess, with their suite, got into their carriages, and drove off to Carnarvon. On reaching the Menai Bridge, a royal salute was fired from a battery of guns planted in the vicinity, and which had been procured from Conway for the express purpose of showing this mark of respect to the illustrious visitors.*

The Royal carriages were greeted in Carnarvon, the birthplace of Edward I, in front of the Uxbridge Arms Hotel by the gunfire of a royal salute and a large procession of the Burgesses and town's dignitaries waiting to escort them along the mile long journey along Bangor Road into town. The procession was led by a band of music amidst the applause of thousands of admiring spectators who lined both sides of the road to the ruins of Carnarvon Castle.

The North Wales Chronicle reports:

*'On arriving at the Castle the royal party entered by the principal gate, and after inspecting the interior, and ascending to the top of one of the turrets which flank the Eagle Tower, they returned to their carriages, and proceeded by Castle street and High street, through the Porth yr Aur to the quay, where the barge was waiting to convoy them to the royal yacht. Joseph Goddard, Esq. who throughout the day had fulfilled the office of Deputy Mayor in the most dignified and polite manner, had here the honour of handing the Duchess and her illustrious daughter into the boat, in which they were towed to the royal yacht amidst the thundering of artillery and the cheering of almost the whole population of the town and neighbourhood of Carnarvon, who crowded the quay, the walls, the shipping in the port and every spot from whence a view of the royal embarkation could be procured. Having received the royal party on board, the yacht weighed and set sail for Beaumaris, where the Duchess and Princess disembarked and returned to the Bulkeley Arms.'*

*On Friday, the Princess Victoria partook of an early dinner with T. A. Smith, Esq. of Vaynol, and his Lady, on board of that gentleman's magnificent steam vessel, the Menai.*

*In the course of the week, the illustrious strangers were visited at the Hotel, Beaumaris, by most of the people of distinction now resident in this quarter of the country.*



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*Yesterday, Mr. Smith, of Vaynol, had the honour of conveying the Duchess and Princess in his steam vessel to Conway, from whence they returned in the evening by land.*

## **THE ROYAL PARTY RELOCATE TO PLAS NEWYDD**

The North Wales Chronicle recounts the Royal departure from Beaumaris on the 25th August to ‘...*Plas Newydd where they have resided since Saturday last, and will remain during the present week, in order to accommodate Mrs. Bicknall by leaving The Bulkeley Arms, Beaumaris and Penrhyn Arms, Bangor open for the convenience of the multitude of fashionables who now resort from all quarters to the Eisteddfod.....the Hotel is now open for the reception of the nobility and gentry, who will no doubt gladly avail themselves of the comforts and conveniences it contains.*’ So whilst Beaumaris became bustling with visitors for the Royal Beaumaris Eisteddfod the Royal Party relocated to the calm of the Marquess of Anglesey’s ancestral home, Plas Newydd.

## **PLAS NEWYDD**

Plas Newydd country house and gardens founded in 1470, is set in parkland and woodland near Llanfair PG. The house’s successive ownership by Griffiths, Baylys and Pagets over the centuries has led to the house evolving and it was greatly altered in the 18th century and made predominantly into the building that stands today.

During the 19th Century Henry William Paget, 2nd Earl of Uxbridge and a major-general, was appointed in 1815 as cavalry commander, leading a spectacular charge of the British heavy cavalry at the Battle of Waterloo where he lost his leg from one of the last cannon shots of the day. In recognition of his heroism he was honoured with the title of the Marquess of Anglesey, and Plas Newydd became the country seat for subsequent Marquesses. In 1817, a 27 metre column was raised in his honour, sited at LlanfairPG.

At the end of the 19th century the 5th Marquess renamed the house ‘Anglesey Castle’. Renowned for his extravagant spending and flamboyant lifestyle, he converted the family chapel into The Gaiety Theatre and regularly put on plays often taking the lead role earning his reputation as “the Dancing Marquess”. By the time of his death in 1905 he had depleted the family fortune.

The 6th Marquess sold off assets to help restore financial solvency and removed crenellations from the roof, disposed of the theatre, combined servants’ quarters to create a dining room and created a courtyard roof to accommodate the servants. In the 1930s the artist Rex Whistler regularly visited Plas Newydd and between 1936-38 painted the largest canvas painting in the UK; a trompe l’oeil seascape filling a whole wall of the dining room with an imagined Italianate scene incorporating Snowdonian mountains, castles and churches and a complete harbour wall. Tricks of perspective change the scene when seen from different parts of the room.

Since 1976, the house and grounds, has been owned by the National Trust and today offers visitors events and tours of the mansion with views from the grounds over the Menai Straits.