

Name of Author: Glen K Johnson, BA (Hons.)

E-mail:

Site Name: **BLACK LION HOTEL, HIGH STREET.**

PRN: 6498

Site File Ref. No.: CARD/HSBL

Site Type: Hotel

N. G. Ref.: SN 1775 4604

Period: Post-Medieval; Modern

History:

The property is located on the east side of the street. The claim made in recent years that the 'Black Lion' was established in 1105 is a blatant lie – the Black Lion would pre-date the castle and town were the story true! The site was occupied from the mid-late 13th Century by medieval burgages, and the core of the present building may date from the Seventeenth Century. By 1761 the Cardigan Borough Council were using the 'Black Lion' inn for their meetings, suggesting that it was already regarded as the town's principle inn. The Society of Sea Serjeants visited the 'Black Lion' that year. In 1768 John Lewis, the Mayor of Cardigan, kept his council chamber in the inn, where Judith Price was the landlady. The venue was used regularly by the Cardigan Borough Council until 1770. From 1778 until 1789 they met there regularly again. On October 12th 1779 the Plas Newydd estate, St. Dogmaels, was sold by auction at the 'Black Lion'.

The building was largely rebuilt in 1780 using imported brick, and that is the structure that can still be seen today, though much altered internally. In November 1785 the Trustees of the newly-created Cardigan Poorhouse held a meeting here. In 1786 Rees Beynon was the innkeeper of the 'Black Lion'. On April 26th 1788 “...*That Well-accustomed Capital INN called the BLACK LION...*” was advertised to let. In 1789 it was noted that the building had been recently refitted by two brothers called Dickens from London. On April 20th 1790 the *Black Lion* was advertised to let again and it was reaffirmed that “...*the premises have lately had a complete repair...*” From 1791 until 1798 the Cardigan Borough Council met there again. In 1793 Sir Richard Colt-Hoare visited the town and later stated that: ‘...*the Black Lion is a good inn...*’ On May 22nd 1797 the Black Lion was advertised to let again. On April 20th 1805 the former landlady Mrs. Beynon died. On May 11th 1805 the inn was advertised to let with extensive stabling and coach house, and meadow land outside the town. The advertisement read as follows:

“...*CARDIGAN. TO BE LET, AND ENTERED UPON IMMEDIATELY. THE well-accustomed capital INN, called and known by the name of THE BLACK LION, with extensive Stabling and Coach-house; together with a considerable number of Acres of MEADOW LAND. The premises are situated in and adjoining to the town of*

Cardigan, where the Assizes for the County are held. The town of Cardigan is situated on the banks of the beautiful river Tivy, and within three miles of the sea. Fish, Poultry, and Butchers' Meat are reasonable. A respectable tenant will meet with encouragement, and none but such will be treated with. He may be accommodated with a small Farm adjoining the said town, required. Particulars may be had by applying to John William Bickermann, Esq. Tetbury, Gloucestershire, or Mr. Bowen, Priory, Cardigan..."

In December 1808 the ostler of the 'Black Lion' died after being kicked by a horse while moving it from one stall to another. In June 1809 a Mr. Williams was the landlord and he had two daughters named Mary Davies and Elizabeth Williams respectively. In November 1811 a banquet, which included a turtle feast, was held at the 'Black Lion' in order to commemorate the King's Golden Jubilee, and which was attended by the Mayor, Councillors and local nobility. The '*Carmarthen Journal*' for March 9th 1811 reported the event in the following terms:

"...The anniversary of St. David's day was celebrated yesterday se'nnight at Cardigan, in a style truly patriotic most of the gentlemen of the town and vicinity assembled at the Black Lion Inn, where they partook of a sumptuous dinner, after the removal of the cloth, The King," The Prince Regent," and several other loyal toasts were drank. The evening was spent in the most convivial manner, and a proposal for an annual celebration was received with enthusiastic applause..."

In August 1813 Daniel Nathan took over the hotel. On August 28th 1813 the following notice appeared in the '*Cambrian*':

"...Black-Lion Inn, Cardigan. D. NATHAN, Late Servant to JOHN TOUCHET Esq. of the Inner-Temple, London, MOST respectfully. begs leave to inform the NOBILITY, GENTRY, COMMERCIAL GENTLEMEN, and others in. general, that he has lately entered on the above INN, and made very extensive additions and improvements thereto, comprising a spacious Ball Room, and several commodious Lodging and Sitting-Rooms; and further begs leave to add, that he has laid in a large assortment of choice excellent wines, and prime Spirituous Liquors, and furnished himself with neat Post-Chaises, able Horses, and careful Drivers. together with healthy Stabling, and entertains a confident hope that, in point of general accommodation, the Black-Lion. will be found equal to any Inn and Tavern in the Principality. Under this impression D. N. humbly solicits the continuance and patronage, of public favour, assuring his friends that his utmost endeavours shall be constantly exerted to give them universal satisfaction. N. B. The Roads from Tenby to Aberystwith, through Cardigan, are lately put into excellent condition..."

From 1813 until 1836 Daniel Nathan was the landlord. On July 7th 1818 his wife, Mrs. Mary Nathan of the Black Lion, died aged 40 years. She was buried at St Mary's Church. On March 7th 1820 Daniel Nathan, a widower, was granted a license to marry Mary Harvey. In 1825 Daniel Nathan owned shares in the 129 ton Cardigan vessel '*Hope*'. In 1828 he had shares in the 97 ton Cardigan ship '*Friends*'. In February 1828 a pair of Irish elopers were discovered here and sent back to Ireland. The '*Carmarthen Journal*' of February 15th 1828 carried the following report of the incident:

“...ELOPEMENT.

The curiosity of the inhabitants of Cardigan was last week strongly excited by the following strange and mysterious affair: Late in the evening of Wednesday se'nnight, a lady and gentleman, the former apparently about eighteen, and the latter thirty-five years of age, and both most fashionably attired, arrived in a chaise and pair at the principal inn. the Black Lion. They had reached Narberth on the preceding evening from Milford, to which place they had come in one of the packets from Ireland, and represented themselves to be a newly-married couple on their matrimonial tour. On their way to Cardigan they appeared fearful of being pursued, and directed the chaise driver, in the event of his meeting any persons on his return, making enquiries for them, to state that they had taken a different direction. This only created a supposition that the match had been a stolen one, but the result proved something more serious to be the case.

About seven o'clock in the. morning after their arrival at Cardigan, and whilst they were fast locked in the vigour-restoring arms of the drowsy god, two persons in a chaise and four drove up to the Lion at a rapid pace, their enquires were immediately directed to the happy pair above stairs, whom they stated they were in pursuit of, and finding they had at length come up with the fugitives, they retired to a room, and directed that their arrival should not be made known. One of them proved to be the lady's father, and the other a police officer, from whose representation it appeared that they were all natives of the Emerald Isle, and that the lady had eloped with her companion under extremely distressing circumstances, rumour stated the latter to be a married man, and in near connexion to the family; however, nothing positive was known on this head; but the father, a venerable looking old gentleman of a highly respectable appearance, seemed greatly affected, and having requested to be shown in a room for the purpose of arranging his dress, the landlady happened to introduce him into one where his daughter's bonnet had been placed, which he immediately recognized, and wept bitterly; the whole of his conduct evinced the most agonizing feelings, and the grief depicted on his aged countenance elicited the tear of pity from the eye of every beholder.

The young couple had arisen, and sat down to breakfast, little imagining who was so near them, when the father entered the room. Immediately on seeing him the lady shrieked and fainted, while her loving swain "looked unutterable things." A long conference then took place, the particulars of which did not transpire; but, about twelve o'clock, it appeared they had come to an arrangement to retrace their steps to the Land of Murphys; and two chaises were ordered to be got ready to convey them,—the father and daughter entered one, and the gallant Lothario, followed by the police-officer, took possession of the other. He at this time appeared rather dejected, and apparently" ready to exclaim with Pedrigo 'Potts: "I'll go and beg pardon – if a few months' hard labour, a whipping at the cart's tail, or any such trifle as that will make atonement, I'll receive the favour with gratitude."

The names of the parties were not ascertained, but a letter was dispatched off by the old gentleman, supposed to be for the mother of the damsel, addressed, "Mrs. P. Castle, Donnerrail, Ireland." ..."

On September 21st 1828 Elizabeth Rees, the daughter of hostler David Rees and Anne Rees, was christened at St. Mary's Church. At about that time Lewis Morris ran a coach from the yard here to Carmarthen every Tuesday. In August 1830 John Nathan of the 'Black Lion' married Miss Anna Hughes of the Emlyn Arms in Newcastle Emlyn. Marked on John Wood's 1834 map of Cardigan, the establishment was then a part of Philip John Miles' Priory estate. In 1835 landlord Daniel Nathan was a burgess of Cardigan. On May 9th 1836 Daniel Nathan died aged 62 years. He was buried at St Mary's Church. His will referred to his children Henry, John and Mary Nathan:

"...I Daniel Nathan of Cardigan innkeeper declare this to be my will. Having already laid out considerable sums in college and other education of my son Henry Nathan and in settling up my son John Nathan in trade I bequeath to them a legacy of One Shilling each. I bequeath to my daughter Mary the sum of Five Hundred Pounds for her separate use..."

He left all of his personal effects to Caleb Lewis – his next door neighbour. On May 21st 1836 the following notice appeared in the 'Cambrian':

"...On the 9th inst., at Cardigan, in the 63d year of his age, deservedly regretted by his family and an extensive circle of friends Mr Daniel Nathan, for upwards of 23 years landlord of the Black Lion Hotel, of the above town..."

That year the *Ceredigion Society* was formed and held their meetings here. In 1836 Mary Nathan owned shares in the 35 ton ship 'Friends'. In 1836 a traveller described the premises as '...a filthy old inn...' In 1837 the *New Society* held their meetings here. On September 16th 1837 the following advertisement appeared in the 'Cambrian':

"...TOWN OF CARDIGAN. Important Sale of Household Furniture, China, Glass, Post-Chaises, Phaeton, Car, Hearse, Post Horses, Gig, Farming Stock, Crop, &c, &c.

TO BE SOLD BY AUCTION, Without Reserve, By DAVID ROBERTS, At the BLACK LION HOTEL, CARDIGAN, on MONDAY, the 25th of SEPTEMBER, 1837, and following days, THE Whole of the Valuable HOUSEHOLD FURNITURE, China, Glass, &c., one Chariot with dicky, Post-Chaise, Car, Four-wheel Phaeton, Gig, Hearse with pall, plumes, &c. complete, Six able Post Horses, several Sets Wheel and Leading Harness, Saddles, Bridles, and other Effects, the property of Miss NATHAN, who retires from business, consisting of mahogany four-post and other bedsteads, with chintz and dimity furniture, moreen and chintz window curtains, excellent feather beds and bedding, mahogany dining, Pembroke and other tables; mahogany, rosewood and other chairs, sofas, mahogany and painted chests of drawers, superior eight- day clock, weather-glass, passage lamps, carpets, hearth rugs; chimney and swing looking glasses, wash-stands, night commodes; a variety of cut glass and china dinner services dairy and brewing utensils kitchen requisites, &c. &c. The Farming Stock, Crop, Implements of Husbandry, &c. comprise seven capital milch cows, three heifers in calf, several head of young cattle, six strong draught horses and colts, two sows, one boar, and 16 young pigs of the real Berkshire breed, 46 mows of wheat, 30 ditto of barley, and 60 ditto of oats, all well harvested, carts, ploughs, harrows, &c.

also four ricks of well-harvested hay. The post-chaises, hearse, car, post-horses, &c. will be sold at two o'clock precisely on the second day of the sale, -The sale to commence each day at eleven o'clock. Credit will be given on approved security. N. B. The House will be closed from Monday, the 18th of September, until the Sale is over..."

On October 12th 1837 Philip Samuel Bardons, a gentleman, of Pomeroy, London, and the son of surveyor John Bardons, married Mary Nathan of the Black Lion, the only daughter of Daniel Nathan, the innkeeper. On October 31st 1837 chambermaid Elizabeth Lewis of the Black Lion, the daughter of shoe-maker Benjamin Lewis, married widower Thomas Edwards of the Blue Bell, Conwy, the son of tanner Peter Edwards.

David James of the 'Angel Inn' on St. Mary Street, took over the 'Black Lion' for a time. On December 31st 1839 Anne James was born here – the daughter of Elizabeth and David James. On January 30th 1840 Anne James, the daughter of innkeeper David James and Elizabeth James, was christened at St. Mary's Church. On February 8th 1840 David Davies of Bridge House, purchased Castle Green (Cardigan Castle) at an auction held here. On February 28th 1840 William Davies, formerly of the 'Angel', but latterly of the Black Lion, was buried at the parish church, having died aged 77 years. In October 1840 David James moved back to the 'Angel'. On March 19th 1841 the following report appeared in the 'Welshman':

"...At the Cardigan Assizes, in consequence of the very great improvements in the Lion Hotel, the Bar decided on dining there, which they had not done for some years before. A sumptuous dinner was provided for them by the worthy host and hostess, Mr. and Mrs. Jones, consisting of the far-famed Tivy salmon, mock turtle, and other soups (for which Mrs. J. is so celebrated), besides every delicacy of the season. The wines were excellent, and the learned gentlemen enjoyed themselves until a seasonable hour, when they left highly gratified, and promising a continuance of their support. Too much praise cannot be given to Mr. and Mrs. J. for their strenuous exertions to please, and we sincerely trust they will meet that encouragement which it is evident it is their constant study to merit..."

At the time of the Census on 6th June 1841 the following persons lived here: John Jones, aged 45 years, the innkeeper; Maria Jones, aged 35 years, presumably his wife; Susanna Clifford, aged 25 years, an independent woman; Mary Simlett, aged 20 years, a servant; Mary Thomas, aged 25 years, a servant; Jane James, aged 20 years, a servant; Diana Davies, aged 30 years, a servant; Nancy Owens, aged 20 years, a servant; Betsy Williams, aged 14 years, a servant; Thomas Rushton, aged 15 years, a servant; William Thomas, aged 20 years, a servant; Woolfe Hewitt, aged over 40 years, a physician; Isabella Witherbun, aged 30 years, a servant; James Caro, aged 25 years, a servant; and Richard Strachan, aged 25 years, a man of independent means. From 1841 until 1844 John Jones was the landlord. In 1841 some election Poll Books were taken from the 'Black Lion' and something of a scandal ensued. In January 1842 a sumptuous feast was given here to celebrate the Christening of the Prince of Wales. A large party of *"the leading gentlemen"* of the district attended. D Jenkins, the Mayor, presided. On June 10th 1843 the 'Cambrian' carried the following advertisement:

“...TO INNKEEPERS. SOUTH WALES.

TO BE LET, AND ENTERED UPON NEXT MICHAELMAS,

THE old-established COMMERCIAL HOTEL and POSTING-HOUSE, called THE BLACK LION, situate in High-street, in the county town of Cardigan together with extensive arched Cellars and convenient Out-offices, Stables, and Coach Houses, also a considerable quantity of rich Meadow, Pasture, and Arable Land, conveniently situated, Tithe-free. The above establishment consists of numerous sitting-rooms, bedrooms, water closets, and other conveniences, all in excellent repair and condition. For particulars apply to Mr. Jenkins, Pantirion, Cardigan or to Mr. R. D. Jenkins, Solicitor, Cardigan...”

On October 16th 1844 the following notice was issued and printed in the 'Carmarthen Journal' a few days later:

“...BLACK LION FAMILY & COMMERCIAL HOTEL AND POSTING-HOUSE, CARDIGAN.

JOHN JONES Begs to return his sincere and grateful thanks to his numerous friends and supporters, for the very liberal and distinguished patronage, which he has received during the four years of his being in business; and on retiring from the management of the above hotel, hopes that a continuance of the same generous support may be extended to his successors, Messrs. Weston and Parker, whose well-known experience will, he feels convinced, merit it.

MESSRS. WESTON & PARKER, Late of the Bridgewater Arms, Commercial Inn, Newbridge, Glamorganshire, Respectfully announces to the Nobility, Clergy, Gentry, Commercial gentlemen, and the Public generally, that they have taken to and entered upon the above establishment and, in soliciting a continuance of the favours so liberally bestowed on their predecessor, pledge themselves that no exertion or perseverance shall be spared in every breadth of the business, combined with reasonable charges and goods of superior quality, to render it one of the most comfortable hotels in the Principality. THE POSTING DEPARTMENT COMPLETE IN ALL ITS BRANCHES. Handsome Carriages, steady Horses, and careful drivers. The Stabling has been greatly enlarged and improved, having new loose boxes for the reception of hunters; and good lock-up coach-houses. Cardigan, 16th October, 1844...”

Mrs. Weston was the landlady in 1845. On January 13th 1846 more than 100 people attended a Bachelors' Ball here. In 1847 the Black Lion was owned by Rev. Robert Miles of the Priory and was occupied by Messrs. Weston & Parker, who traded and lived here from 1844 until 1861. In October 1847 Daniel Lewis redecorated the ballroom. On May 26th 1848 a ‘ceffyl pren’ procession reached Cardigan from St. Dogmaels, and a riot broke out following the arrest of their spokesman – James James, a farm servant from St. Dogmaels. As the 'Pembrokeshire Herald' stated:

“...A true bill having been found against James James for riot and tumult, the prisoner surrendered in discharge of his bail, and pleaded not guilty. Mr. Lascelles

stated the case to the jury. On the evening of the 26th of May last, the prosecutor, David Jones, P.O., stationed at Cardigan, received intimation of an intended ceffyl pren procession, and being armed with authority from the mayor, met the mob on Cardigan bridge, and succeeded for the time in turning them back. Shortly afterwards, however, he found the mob re-assembled to the number of five hundred at least, in the centre of the town, opposite to the Black Lion Hotel, many of them carrying torches and sticks. The prosecutor, assisted by P. C. Kelly and others, succeeded in seizing the prisoner, who was dressed in female attire, and rode astride the wooden horse (which was carried by four men), and took him into the hotel. The mob violently assaulted the, police constable, and had it not been for Mr. Parker, of the Black Lion, who admitted the officers with their prisoners into the house, murder would probably have been committed. After the capture of the prisoners the rioters broke the windows of the hotel, and became so violent, that the mayor thought it his duty to apply for the assistance of the military, and with the aid of a serjeant's guard the prisoner was ultimately lodged in gaol. The learned counsel concluded by observing that the present were not times to pass over such riotous proceedings with impunity. Evidence having been adduced, The learned chairman in summing up to the jury, observed that there were two points for their consideration, 1st, whether there was a riot? 2nd, whether the prisoner was one of the rioters? After explaining the law of the case, and recapitulating the evidence, he said he thought they could have little doubt on either point. The prisoner in defence wished to make it appear that he was carried on the wooden horse against his will, it was for them to say whether he was a willing or an unwilling party; but being disguised in female attire, it was for the jury to judge whether that did not show premeditation..."

Another newspaper added:

"...The doors and shutters of the Black Lion were closed, and in consequence of the mob being so numerous and so violent...the Mayor...immediately...ordered a Sergeant Guard to escort the prisoner to the Gaol...followed by a mob..."

At the time of the Census on 30th March 1851 the occupiers were:- Maria Weston, a widow, aged 53 years, the inn keeper, who had been born at Wrington in Somerset; Thomas Parker, aged 37 years, her brother, an inn keeper & saddler, born at Newport Pagnell; Emma Parker, aged 40 years, his wife, born in Wrington; John Weston, aged 25 years, her nephew, a saddler, born in Wrington; Elizabeth Lintell, aged 25 years, a barmaid, born at Haverfordwest; Isaacc Stephen, aged 44 years, visitor, a flax spinner, born at Bridgeport, Dorset; Robert Ludcombe, aged 32 years, a visitor, a commercial traveller, born in Nashborough; Thomas Rees, aged 22 years, a visitor, a commercial traveller, born in Glamorgan; Servants – David Jones, aged 46 years, a house servant, born at Llandygwydd; Ann Isaacs, aged 34 years, house servant and cook, born at Manordeifi; Elizabeth Evans, aged 26 years, a house servant, born at Hubberstone; Anne Llewellyn, aged 22 years, a house servant, born at Burton; Lucy Phillips, aged 28 years, a house servant, born in London; and David Morgan, aged 12 years, a house servant, born in Cardigan. On October 31st 1851 the following item appeared in the 'Welshman':

"...CARDIGAN.—

On Tuesday evening last, Mr. Barnardo Eagle, the celebrated professor of the art of legerdemain, accompanied by his daughter, commenced a series of entertainments at the Assembly Rooms of the Black Lion Hotel, Cardigan. The band consisted of several performers upon brass and stringed instruments. After a short introductory address, Mr. Eagle proceeded to exhibit a number of tricks of legerdemain, in the performance of which it is but fair to say that he evinced very superior excellence. Mr. Eagle was much applauded throughout his performance. The imitations of Massa Rebel Juba of a railway engine in its various phases of motion, were very excellent and obtained applause. The exhibition of Miss Eagle as a clairvoyant, resulted, as is usual in most cases where the introduction of a recently discovered, or not fully understood, science has taken place, in creating both believers and sceptics. The powers of the young lady were tried to a great extent and the feeling of the audience appeared to be one of general satisfaction at the answers received, some of her replies being perfectly astounding..."

In June 1852 a regular coach service from the Black Lion to Aberaeron and Aberystwyth was begun by Messrs. Cummins, Weston & Parker. The same company ran a service to Milford Haven via Fishguard and Haverfordwest.

On May 11th 1856 Elizabeth Evans, the cook here, the daughter of shoe-maker James Evans, married Benjamin Davies, a widower and hostler of Pwllhai, the son of carpenter Thomas Davies. The wedding took place at St Mary's Church and was witnessed by Thomas Morgan and Mary Isaac. On October 16th 1856 waitress Mary Isaac of the Black Lion, the daughter of labourer David Isaac, married mariner William White of St. Mary's Lane, the son of George White. The wedding took place at St Mary's Church and was witnessed by Annn Isaac and Lewis David. On January 20th 1857 servant Ann Isaac of the Black Lion, the daughter of labourer David Isaac, married carter Thomas Francis of Pontycleifion, the son of farmer Thomas Evans. The wedding took place at St Mary's Church and was witnessed by John Isaac and James Francis. On March 19th 1860 Thomas Parker of the Black Lion became a member of the newly-created Cardigan Company of Rifle Volunteers. On 7th April 1861 the following persons lived here at the time of the Census: Thomas Parker, aged 47 years, the landlord, born at Newport Pagnell; Emma Parker, aged 49 years, his wife, born in Wrington, Somerset; Caroline Clockson, aged 25 years, their niece, born in Plymouth; John Weston, aged 35 years, their nephew, a saddler, born in Somerset; Anne ??, aged 22 years, a servant, born in Shropshire; Hannah Mahoney, aged 33 years, a servant, born in Llangoedmor; Maria Davies, aged 23 years, a servant, born in Llangoedmor; Jane Thomas, aged 13 years, a servant, born in Cilgerran; David Morgan, aged 22 years, a servant, born in Cardigan; Julius Smith, aged 36 years, a visitor, a commercial traveller (tobacco), born in Essex; Evan Thomas, aged 28 years, a visitor, a commercial traveller (draper), born in Carmarthenshire; and Ellen Rowlands, aged 35 years, a servant, born in Llangoedmor. In 1861 Thomas Parker owned shares in the 251 ton Cardigan ship '*Mary Ann Newell*'. Thomas Parker was still the proprietor between 1861 and 1882. On August 19th 1864 the following advertisement appeared in the '*Welshman*':

"...SOUTH WALES. TO BE LET, and entered upon next Michaelmas, all that First-Class and Old-Established HOUSE, called "THE BLACK LION HOTEL," situate in the Town of CARDIGAN together with the Stables, Yards, Gardens, and other Premises thereto belonging. Any quantity of good Meadow, Pasture, and Arable

Land, not exceeding 200 acres, may be had therewith. The above Premises are most conveniently situated for carrying on an extensive business. The Manchester and Miltord Haven Railway is now being constructed so far as Lampeter, thereby opening a direct Railway communication with England, which will doubtless be the means of inducing many to visit the place, which affords some of the best Salmon and Trout Wishing in Wales, in the far-famed, river Tivy. For particulars, apply to R. D. JENKINS, Esq., Solicitor, Cardigan. August 15, 1864..."

From 1868 until 1875 David Rowlands ran an Inland Revenue Office here. On April 20th 1871 David Hughes Jones of the Black Lion was buried at St. Mary's Church, having died aged 34 years. On 2nd April 1871 the following persons lived here at the time of the Census: Thomas Parker, aged 57 years, born in Newport Pagnell; Emma Parker, aged 58 years, his wife, born in Wrington, Somerset; Kate Barrow, aged 10 years, their niece, a scholar, born in Bristol; Emily Croker, aged 29 years, a visitor, a governess, born at Exeter; Kate Croker, aged 29 years, an assistant, a barmaid, born in Exeter; Rebecca Nicholas, aged 39 years, a cook and domestic servant, born in Nevern; Sarah Owen, aged 25 years, a waitress and domestic servant, born in Lampeter; Ann Lewis, aged 25 years, a housemaid, born in Llechryd; Margaret Thomas, aged 18 years, an under waitress, born in Llechryd; Martha Rowland, aged 30 years, a kitchen maid, born in Llechryd; and guests – David Thomas, aged 30 years, a commercial drapery traveller, born in Pennal; Thomas G Miles, aged 40 years, a commercial traveller, born in Clevedon, Somerset; John Deary, aged 30 years, a commercial drapery traveller, born in Peranzubalo, Cornwall; Charles Bann Williams, aged 31 years, commercial drapery traveller, born in Abergavenny; and John Reed, aged 30 years, a commercial drapery traveller, born in Montgomeryshire. In 1873 there were large quantities of manure piled here, which was noted as a sanitary nuisance. On January 18th 1877 Sarah Owens of the Black Lion married John Morris, a widower of Castle Street, referred to as a builder, but perhaps referring to the recently-retired coach-builder of No. 20 Castle Street. In 1878 Thomas Parker owned shares in the 'Cardigan Mercantile Company'. On October 5th 1880 Thomas Chaloner of No 21 Foxhill Street, Liverpool, a commercial traveller, died here aged 34 years. He was buried at St Mary's Church.

At the time of the Census on 3rd April 1881 the following persons lived here at the 'Lion Hotel': Thomas Parker, aged 66 years, an innkeeper, born in Cardigan; Emma Parker, aged 70 years, his wife, born in Cardigan; Ellen Danke, aged 28 years, his cousin, a barmaid, born in Cardigan; Hannah Davies, aged 29 years, a domestic servant, born in Cilgerran; Letty Davies, aged 34 years, a domestic servant, born in Llechryd; Ann Charles, aged 21 years, a domestic servant, born in Llechryd; Louisa Morgan, aged 28 years, a domestic servant, born in Llechryd; Mary Davies, aged 19 years, a domestic servant, born in Llechryd; John John, aged 24 years, the "boots", born in Cardigan; Frank Parsons, aged 23 years, a visitor, a commercial traveller, born in Shaftesbury, Dorset; William Ashman, aged 31 years, a visitor, a commercial traveller, born in Yeovil, Somerset; and Edward Sherratt, aged 31 years, a gentleman, born in London, Middlesex. Thomas Parker died on June 24th 1882 aged 68 years.

In April 1882 the hotel passed to Jacob Trollip, formerly of No. 2 High Street but hailing originally from Wiltshire. From 1882 until 1891 Jacob Trollip was the landlord and lived here with his wife. Letitia Trollip, his wife, was a member of the Hope English Congregational Chapel in the town. On March 20th 1884 Sarah James,

aged 23 years, of the Black Lion, the daughter of porter John James, married William John Hocking, aged 27 years, an Inland Revenue Officer, of No. 5 Priory Terrace, North Road, the son of shipwright William Hocking. The wedding took place at St Mary's Church and was witnessed by D Maclean and John Morgan. In 1884 David Gwilym Trollip may have been born here. In November 1884 Jacob Trollip became the Mayor of Cardigan. Jacob Trollip's second son, Henry Greenhill Trollip, was lost at sea on April 13th 1886 from the ship '*Easterhill*' in 15 degrees 10N, 9 degrees 30W, aged 19 years. On August 30th 1887 David Davies, aged 23 years, the "boots" here, the son of shoemaker John Davies, married Hannah Morgan, aged 28 years, a waitress, also of the Black Lion, at the parish church. The witnesses were Elizabeth Jane Davies and William Lewis. On September 10th 1887 George Henry Trollip, the son of Jacob and Letitia Trollip, was born. On November 9th 1887 Jacob Trollip became the Mayor of Cardigan again. In 1888 George Henry Trollip was born here. On November 19th 1889 Catherine Elizabeth Trollip, aged 20 years, the daughter of hotel proprietor Jacob Trollip, married commercial traveller William Conway Jones, aged 33 years, of Liverpool and Swansea, the son of farmer William Jones. The wedding took place at St Mary's Church and the witnesses were David Price ??? and Gertrude Annie Trollip.

On 5th April 1891 the following persons lived here at the time of the Census: Jacob Trollip, aged 54 years, an hotel keeper, born at Horningsham in Wiltshire, English-speaking; Letitia Trollip, aged 45 years, his wife, originally from Whitechurch, Pembrokeshire; G. Annie Trollip, aged 19 years, their daughter, born in Cardigan; E. Ivor R. Trollip, aged 16 years, their son, a draper's apprentice, born in Cardigan; David Gwilym Trollip, aged 7 years, their son, born in Cardigan; George Henry Trollip, aged 3 years, their son, born in Cardigan; William Conway Jones, aged 30 years, a visitor, their son-in-law, a commercial traveller, born in Caernarfonshire; Catherine Elizabeth Jones, aged 22 years, a visitor, their daughter, born in Cardigan; Alick Cow, aged 21 years, a commercial traveller, born in Ireland, English-speaking; Tom Connor, aged 21 years, a commercial traveller, born in Roscommon, Ireland, English-speaking; Evan Evans, aged 70 years, a commercial traveller; John Locke, aged 66 years, a confectioner, born in Worcester, English-speaking; Sarah Ann King, aged 50 years, a book-keeper, born in Lampeter; Letitia Davies, aged 35 years, a general domestic servant, born in Cilgerran; Mary Williams, aged 27 years, a general domestic servant, born in Llantood; Elizabeth Isaac, aged 26 years, a general domestic servant, born in Pontselly; Catherine Timothy, aged 15 years, a general domestic servant, born in Cardigan; Sarah Davies, aged 23 years, a general domestic servant, born in Aberporth; Elizabeth Davies, aged 23 years, a general domestic servant, born in Cenarth; and David Davies, aged 30 years, an inn servant – boots, born in Llandysul. On October 20th 1891 George Henry Trollip died aged 4 years. He was buried at Netpool Cemetery. On December 12th 1891 landlord Jacob Trollip died aged 54 years. He was buried at Netpool Cemetery. From 1891 until 1895 Letitia Trollip was the landlady. In 1893 the Cardigan Cycling Club was formed and held many of their meetings here. A photograph of ca1895 shows the rendered façade of the building. On November 7th 1896 the widow Margaret Alice Belcher, aged 37 years, of the Black Lion, the daughter of John Richard Belcher, a gentleman, married farmer Thomas Davies of Llwynysgaw, Mwnt, aged 47 years, the son of farmer Samuel Davies. The wedding took place at St Mary's Church.

The 22 bedroom hotel, was sold as part of the Priory estate on July 31st 1897. It was described as follows:

“...*LOT 9. BLACK LION HOTEL.*

Freehold Premises known as The Black Lion Hotel, occupying a large and very valuable site in the centre of the town. The Hotel contains Hall, Coffee Room, Commercial Room, Bar, Smoking, Billiard Room, Lavatories, Large Assembly Room, with Ante-room and Reception Rooms, Stockrooms, Twenty-two Bedrooms and Bathroom, Kitchens and Domestic offices. Excellent Wine and Ale Cellars. The Stable Yard and Posting Establishment is extensive and includes The Black Lion Tap, open and covered Coach Houses, Loose Boxes and Stalls for 30 Horses, Harness Room, Granaries and Lofts, the whole forming a most complete property and one of the principal Hotels in South Wales, and has been in the occupation of the present Tenant, Mrs Trollip, and her predecessors for 50 years. It enjoys the reputation of being one of the best hotels in South Wales for management and Trade. The present Tenancy expires at Lady Day next...”

It was sold to Mr. Johns of the Park Hotel, Abercynon, for £3, 750. It is said that George Webb Potter acquired the Black Lion in 1897. In March 1898 an intended clear-out sale for Mrs. Trollip, who was leaving, was cancelled at short notice. In 1899 Miss Evans was the hotel manageress. In 1900 George Webb Potter became the manager of the ‘Lion Hotel’. He was the landlord and manager from 1900 until 1914. On 31st March 1901 the following persons lived here at the time of the Census: Annie Evans, aged 29 years, a hotel manageress, born in Worcestershire; William Godfrey, aged 69 years, a boarder, a jeweller wholesaler, born in Oxfordshire; William A. Oakway, aged 28 years, a boarder, a traveller in drapery, born in Bristol; Elsie Williams, aged 22 years, a book-keeper at the hotel, born in Herefordshire; Rose Price, aged 26 years, a waitress, born in Mardy; Rachel Jones, aged 21 years, a waitress, born at Penbryn, bilingual in Welsh and English; Elizabeth Williams, aged 25 years, a kitchen maid, born at Bayvil, bilingual in Welsh and English; Robert G. Marsden, aged 27 years, the ‘boots’ in the hotel, born in Belfast; and Ernest B. Davies, aged 15 years, a billiard master, born in Cardigan, bilingual. Except where noted otherwise, all of them were English-speaking. On October 15th 1901 Rose Price, aged 26 years, of the Lion Hotel, the daughter of the late William Price, a gardener, married pottery worker Frederick Charles Horton, aged 25 years, of Grangetown, the son of pottery worker Charles Horton. The wedding took place at St Mary's Church and the witnesses were Thomas Davies and Florence Barton. By March 14th 1902 a room at the hotel had been turned into a “Ping-Pong Room”. In 1903 J. Thomas and W. Joseph Thomas occupied the property. Between February 1905 and December 1918 George Webb Potter lived here. On September 15th 1907 D. W. Potter of Cardigan married Miss L. A. Ledbitter, the manageress of the ‘Black Lion’. In 1908 Mrs. Webb Potter, the wife of the owner George Webb Potter, died.

On March 30th 1908 the Black Lion hosted the first recorded meeting of Freemasons held at Cardigan, which was attended by William Woodward; David Davies, solicitor; Llewelyn Davies, schoolmaster; D Lloyd Jones, Bank Manager; G W Potter, owner of the 'Black Lion'; Dr. George E Jones; Jenkin Jones; H Nicholson; an M L Jones. That April they met here again, with additional members F Hood Williams; Capt. Jones, Penrhiw; Capt. Wigley; Capt. Bowen; Capt. Jeff Davies; and

D T James, Gwalia House. On August 14th 1908 His Highness Chud Had Hing, the Prince of Siam, aged 15 years, was a guest at the Black Lion. The hotel was advertised to let on April 30th 1909. On 2nd April 1911 the following persons lived in the 30 room property here at the time of the Census: Marguerita Webb-Potter, aged 39 years, unmarried, the Hotel Manageress, born at Cefncoed in Breconshire; Elizabeth Devonald, aged 36 years, the Lady Housekeeper, born at Amblesstone, Pembrokeshire, bilingual in Welsh and English; Gertrude Maddocks, aged 23 years, the Barmaid, born at Crewe in Cheshire; Margaret Ann Jones, aged 22 years, a Waitress, born at Netpool, Cardigan, bilingual in Welsh and English; Mary Elizabeth Evans, aged 23 years, a Chambermaid, born on Quay Street, Cardigan, bilingual; Arthur Vincent Williams, aged 45 years, a Bank Inspector for Lloyd's Bank, born at Newtown, Montgomeryshire; Evelyn Williams, aged 10 years, his daughter, born in Cardiff; Thomas G Piddock, aged 34 years, a Bank Clerk for Lloyd's Bank, born at Burton-on-Trent; Ada A Williams, aged 37 years, born in Cumberland; Albert Edward Leonard, aged 40 years, married, an oil-colour traveller, born in Bristol; Emiah Mathias, aged 19 years, the under-waitress, born in Moylegrove, bilingual; E Jane Williams, aged 22 years, the Cook, born in St Dogmaels, bilingual; William Williams, aged 16 years, the Kitchen Boy, born in St Dogmaels; and Lodwig Golling, aged 17 years, a Billiard Worker, born in Bavaria, Germany. Except where noted otherwise, all of them were English-speaking. On March 22nd 1912 the Black Lion Hotel garden on Chancery Lane was advertised for sale. On 17th March 1913 George Webb-Potter of the Black Lion Hotel purchased a dark red five-seater Humber motor car, registration number EJ 114. On December 4th 1918 George Webb Potter, the owner of the 'Black Lion' since 1897, died aged 70 years.

From 1918 until 1930 Lewis Lewis, an architect, was the proprietor and lived here. From 1918 until 1946 Mrs. M. E. Lewis, formerly of the 'Commercial Hotel' on Pendre, lived here. From 1920 the Cardigan & District Motor Cycle & Light Car Club began to meet here. In December 1920 Mrs. M. E. W. Lewis was granted permission to add 4 bedrooms to the hotel. In October 1925 Lewis Lewis, architect, bought Paris House, High Street, in order to extend the hotel. On June 18th 1926 tenders were sought for building a hall here to designs by Lewis Lewis. On February 15th 1929 permission was given for garages to be built on Chancery Lane for the "Black Lion Hotel". On December 17th 1930 Lewis Lewis of the 'Black Lion' died aged 53 years. He was buried at Netpool Cemetery. On 11th May 1931 Mrs Mary Elizabeth Lewis of the Black Lion Hotel purchased a black saloon Humber motor car, registration number EJ 3123. From at least 1932 until 1939 Glen Lewis, the son of the late Lewis Lewis and Mrs M E Lewis, lived here. On September 10th 1934 the Black Lion Ballroom was opened for Mrs. M. E. Lewis. In 1934 the Teifi Lodge of Freemasons began to hold their meetings here. The local branch of the British Legion held their Annual Ball here on November 27th 1935. From 1938 until 1940 Mrs. Elizabeth Evans, the widow of John Evans of Castle Green lived here.

In the autumn of 1939 the following persons lived here: Thomas G H Lewis (b. 20/10/1911), a G W R Cartage Agent; William Blackman (b. 20/10/1894), an M o D scientist; William D H Blackman (b. 30/01/1920), the son of the previous William, a student; Gordon Strachan (b. 23/09/1886), a Civil Engineer; Mary E Lewis (b. 21/02/1881), the hotel proprietress; John Owen Jones (b. 16/11/1863), a retired Railway Official; one un-named; Nina M Lewis (b. 06/03/1913), a chambermaid; Elizabeth J Davies (b. 16/02/1919), a hotel waitress; Joan P E Thomas (b.

04/06/1918), a hotel waitress; one un-named person; Sarah "Sally" Olive Hester Eden (b. 01/08/1913), the cook; Hannah E E Norman (18/02/1887), a domestic worker; Kate E Blackman (b. 13/03/1893), presumably the wife of William above; Hellenor Mary Williams (b. 14/09/1886), a widow, doing domestic work; and Esme C Matthews (b. 26/05/1915), doing domestic work. It is claimed that Winston Churchill visited Cardigan in 1941, arriving via the railway, attending a meeting at the Black Lion, and then inspecting the base at Aberporth. A dance was held here on November 6th 1942 in aid of the Swansea Sailors' Society. In October 1943 the news was received that Pilot Officer T. Glendenning Harries Lewis, R. A. F., the only son of Mrs. M. E. Lewis, had been killed in action on May 24th 1943, aged 31 years. On 28th October 1943 engineer Charles Stanford Davidson, aged 33 years, of the Black Lion, the son of astronomer Charles Davidson, married Bettina Mary James, aged 24 years, of Briarley, the daughter of cabinet-maker William Morgan James. The wedding took place at St Mary's Church and was witnessed by W M James, Una Phillips and J Brittain. In April 1946 Miss Phyllis Myfanwy Lewis transferred the license to Major Morton-Smith.

In August 1946 Major Morton Smith was the publican. In October 1948 Horace James Aldous was described as the manager, though Morton Smith still lived here in November 1948. On July 28th 1950 "Miss Cardigan" – the carnival queen, was chosen at a carnival ball held here. On 21st May 1950 Mr Morton Smith of the Black Lion died. He had been a former Managing Director of the Anglo Pencil Company of Long Eaton and a former chairman of Long Eaton Council. His property was left to Mrs Edna Smith. On September 23rd 1950 the hotel, with 25 letting rooms plus staff accommodation, was sold by auction to Mrs. Edna Smith of Cardigan for £14, 000. On December 26th 1952 Glyndwr Owen, aged 23 years, was found hanged in the basement here during a dance. In January 1956 Percy Lawrence Warlow of the Black Lion died. Mr. Frank Aspinell and his wife, Cynthia, took over the hotel in 1959. Their Liverpool contacts ensured a lively series of bookings at the Black Lion Ballroom over the next decade. The building was 'listed' in 1961.

In the 1960's visitors to the 'Black' included Allan Williams (the Beatles' first manager), Bill Harry, the creator of 'Mersey Beat' magazine, Bob Wooler of the Cavern Club, Liverpool, and jazz great George Melly. On March 24th 1964 Cllr. Britt Griffiths, the landlord of the "Ship Inn" on Pendre, received a letter carrying 176 signatures from youngsters who used the Dance Hall here on a Saturday night – whom Cllr. Britt Griffiths had referred to as "*Teddy Boys*". The letter asked him what he thought they should do – "*...if you don't want us here, tell us...*". His written response was "*...Go, man, go...*" A photograph from c.1960 shows the façade rendered with plate glass sashes to the ground floor. On April 23rd 1964 Screaming Lord Sutch visited the Black Lion. At about that time Rory Storm & the Hurricanes from Liverpool performed here. In July 1964 Freddy Starr was at the Black Lion to perform. In April 1966 The Iveys (later 'Badfinger') performed here. On November 22nd 1968 the Casserole Restaurant opened here. On May 11th 1973 Frank Aspinall died.

In March 1974 planning permission was sought for internal alterations to create a restaurant. In 1975 Bob Morgan became the manager until at least 1980. Plans were made for the conversion of the courtyard into a shopping arcade called the 'Black Lion Mews' in 1975, the hotel by then being the property of the Cliff Hotel,

Gwbert. The plans were approved and the work was conducted. A number of shops opened in the Mews in May and June 1977. From 1988 until 2003 Frame By Frame traded at Unit 11 here under the management of Graham Holdsworth. From 1989 until 1994 Deli Delights traded at the Black Lion Mews. Tiger's Eye traded here from 1989 until 2021. Jan & Ron Antoniazzi were the landlords of the inn from 1991 until 1997. In 1992 the property was re-roofed and the internal layout extensively altered. In 1992-3 'Georgian House Miniatures' traded at Unit 10 of the Black Lion Mews. In 1992 'Mirror Image' hair salon traded at Unit 3. Permission to turn the former ballroom to office accommodation was refused in 1993. In 1993 'Moonlight' lamp shop traded here. From 1993 until 2021 'Go Mango' whole-foods traded here. In 1994 Gwyn Thomas was trading here at 'Deli Delights.'

The hotel was still trading between 1995 and 2007. In August 1997 the license was transferred from Jan & Ron Antoniazzi to Henry Clive Scourfield, formerly of the Phoenix in Gorslas. In 1999 Annie and Alvin Biddyr became the landlords. There were proposals to unveil the medieval well in the mews in 2001. In September 2005 Michael Power and Petra Phillips became the managers and remained so in 2007. A refurbishment of the property began in February 2006 and was completed in May. In May 2007 the interior was used as a location for a film about Dylan Thomas and the actress Kiera Knightly was present. The pub closed suddenly in January 2008 when Michael Power and Petra Phillips left. It remained vacant for some time. In May 2009 it was announced that the hotel would shortly re-open, having been purchased by Peter Phillips and his wife Anne Phillips of Crymych. It did so on July 3rd 2009, under the management of their daughter, Olivia, but closed again in 2010 and was offered for sale in August 2010 for £775, 000. It re-opened in May 2011, still managed by Olivia Phillips, and traded again in 2011-12. Before the end of 2012 it was closed again, but re-opened in 2013. The property failed to reach the reserve price at a property auction in September 2015. It re-opened briefly in 2016, but closed again that October and remained closed in 2017-18. In the autumn of 2019 it was announced that the inn would re-open, which it did and traded in 2019-2020 before closing again because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Description:

The building was described by CADW in 1992:

“...Later C18 inn, red brick, Flemish bond with stucco cornice and parapet and slate roof with brick end stacks. Three-storey, 5 window range of sashes with cambered brick heads, 6-pane to second floor, 12-pane to first floor, ground floor sashes replaced by shallow 12-pane C20 bow windows. Centre door with traceried overlight. Slate sills except for ground floor that has C20 brick sills. Door is in C20 rebuilt timber classical porch of 2 Roman Doric columns, the shafts untapered and without bases, pilaster responds, entablature with triglyphs over columns and flat cornice. Two lead downpipes with embossed lions on rainwater heads.

Rear is stone with 2 rear wings, that to south taller with truncated brick stack, that to north with 2 brick corner stacks and arch-headed gable window.

INTERIOR – Ground floor altered, one brick-arched fireplace on south end.

The principal inn of Cardigan from the C18, site of Town Council meetings before Shire Hall was built 1784. The façade was stuccoed in C19, and is the earliest surviving brick front in the town. The porch was rebuilt after vehicle damage..."

ADDITIONAL (2007) – Ground floor windows replaced with 12-pane sashes.

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Images:

IMG_1011 (2015)
Top-020 Medieval well (2001)
Top-024 (2007)