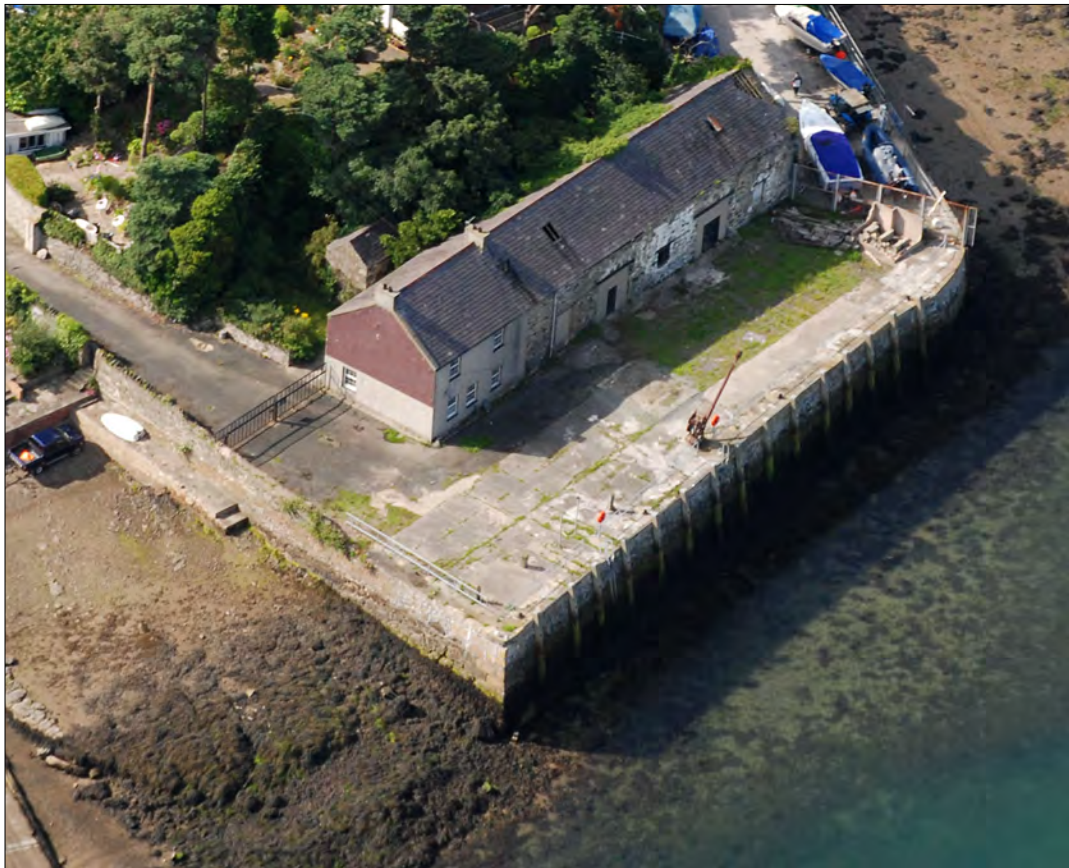

Prince's Pier Menai Bridge



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prepared by
David Longley
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Ymddiriedolaeth Archaeolegol Gwynedd
Gwynedd Archaeological Trust
Craig Beuno, Ffordd y Garth, Bangor, Gwynedd LL57 2RT

Prince's Pier, Menai Bridge

Prepared for the Menai Bridge Community Heritage Trust

by

David Longley

This report considers the historical significance of the Prince's Pier, Menai Bridge, provides a description of the structure of the pier and its warehouse and offers recommendations in this respect. A summary of the historical significance and recommendations will be found on pp.32-33.

A note on the names Prince's Pier, Porthaethwy and Menai Bridge.

Prince's Pier is first mentioned in the context of an iron pier built by the City of Dublin Steam Ship Company in 1873, when holding a lease, from Richard Davies and Sons, on part of the larger wharf between Porth Daniel and Porth y Wrach. The City of Dublin Company had been using the wharf since the 1860s and that part of the wharf held under lease may already have been known as Prince's Pier, reflecting the designation applied to the Liverpool terminus of the route, 'Prince's Pier' (or landing stage). Whether applied to the iron pier, or to the wharf, the name 'Prince's Pier' became associated with that part of the Menai Bridge wharf held under the lease to the City of Dublin Co. and its successors. The wharf, itself, was built around 1837-8

Menai Bridge has two names. Porthaethwy, is the more ancient and describes the area's intimate connection with an important ferry across the Menai Straits. Menai Bridge is the more recent and reflects the significant impact the building of the suspension bridge had on the local community and its subsequent development. The Road on which the wharf stands is known in the present day by the name Water Street or Stryd y Paced. During the nineteenth century Packet Street is consistently used in the documentary record.



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Prince's Pier Wharf and Warehouse

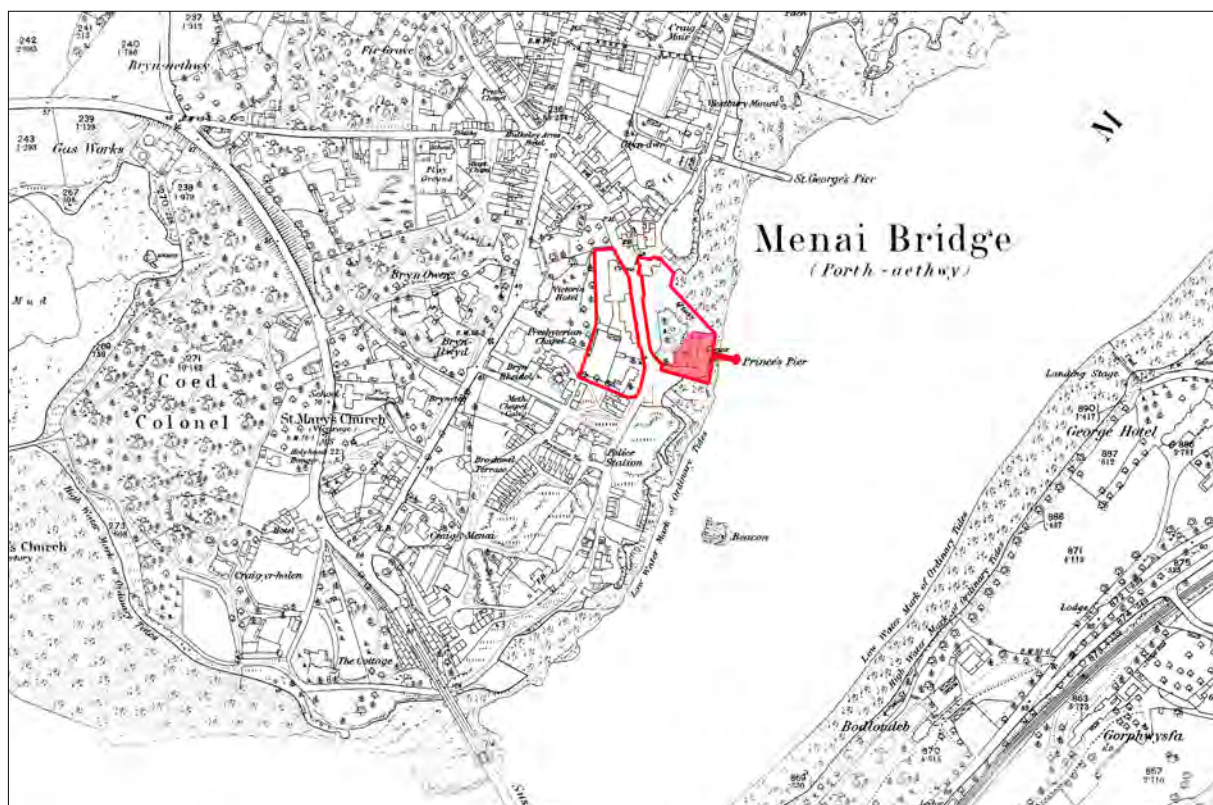
Geographical context

The Prince's Pier stands on the Anglesey shoreline of the Menai Straits on the eastern side of the headland of Cerrig y Borth at Menai Bridge (Porthaethwy). The rocky headland rises to around 25m OD, dropping relatively steeply to the waterline on the south and south-western sides and more gently on the eastern side. The outcrop of hard schist rock which forms the headland constricts the channel of the Menai Straits at this point to 150m at low tide and 260m at high tide, the narrowest along the length of the Straits. This hard rock has also created a scatter of small islands in the stream, both south-west and north-east of the headland itself. To the north-east the shoreline is indented and some of these embayments have been used as convenient landings for small boats.

The Prince's Pier or, more correctly, the Davies' Timber Wharf was built on the seaward side of a rocky knoll (bonc) between two of these embayments, Porth y Wrach, to the south, and Porth Daniel, to the north. From this point the Straits open to the north towards Conwy Bay, Liverpool, and the northern Irish Sea. To the south, the channel is navigable, with care, towards Caernarfon, Cardigan Bay and the Atlantic via the southern coast of Ireland.

The Prince's Pier which is the object of this study is marked in red infill on figure 1. The red outline marks the area of Messrs Davies and Sons warehouses, woodyard and wharf.

Fig. 1 Location



Existing statutory protection

The part of Menai Bridge within the present study area falls within a Conservation Area. The area is not within an AONB or Heritage Coast designation.

There are no scheduled Ancient Monuments within or immediately adjacent to the study area

Menai Bridge has a many Listed Buildings. The closest is the Richard Davies and Sons warehouse complex, described as follows:

AW 18560 Warehouses NGR 255780 371890
Listed Grade II as an impressive early nineteenth century warehouse retaining much historic character and original detail, including sixteen-pane sash windows to the first floor. The building reflects the economic growth of Menai Bridge in the early nineteenth century, following the construction of the Menai Suspension Bridge in 1826, and the continued importance of maritime trade. It contributes to the historic character of the lower quayside area of Menai Bridge.

A number of other listed buildings are reasonably close to the study area and have been listed in part because they are representative of that phase of economic growth which ensued following the construction of the suspension bridge. The location map shows those immediately adjacent to the wharf and includes two sites or findspots recorded on the Regional Historic Environment Record, one of which is the Prince's Pier wharf itself.

- AD18553 St George's Pier Booking Office and Gates, listed Grade II NGR 255820 371950
- AT18564 English Presbyterian Chapel, listed Grade II NGR 255670 371870
- AJ18558 Cottage on west side of Beach Road, listed Grade II NGR 255730 371680
- AU18556 Capel Mawr Presbyterian Chapel, listed Grade II* NGR 255690 371800
- AV18571 Capel Mawr Chapel House, listed Grade II NGR 255680 371790
- AK18555 Former Police Station, listed Grade II NGR 255740 371760
- AL18554 Menai Courthouse Church, listed Grade II NGR 255740 371770
- AC5406 The Cambria, listed Grade II*, NGR 255690 371650
- AM18561 The Foundry, listed Grade II NGR 255760 371690
- AS5407 Victoria Hotel, listed Grade II NGR 255700 371920
- AX18572 Menai Suspension Bridge, listed Grade I NGR 255650 37145
- PRN 2179 Bronze Age urn burials NGR 255600 371500A
- PRN 7215 Quay (Prince's Pier) NGR 255840 371850



Fig. 2 Listed buildings and sites

Historical context

The Early History of the Headland

There are indications of some activity on the Cerrig y Borth headland during prehistory. Stone axes of the Neolithic period have been found at Pen y Clip (255700 372600), Refail Newydd (254200 373600) and at two other, unspecified locations in Menai Bridge. A flint scraper has been recorded in Cwm

Cadnant. More specifically, the headland and the adjacent shoreline were used for burial during the Earlier Bronze Age (Lynch 1991, 193ff). It may be that the topographically significant promontory and certain noticeable rocky knolls and outcrops on the shoreline to the east provided a focus for this activity. An overhanging-rim urn and the fragment of two

others were discovered during work on the Menai Bridge to Beaumaris road at Plas Cadnant, in 1825. There was no directly associated evidence for burial at this location. Nevertheless, the pottery suggests a funerary context. At Bonc Mostyn, immediately to the north of Porth Daniel and the Prince's Pier, two urns, both containing cremated remains, were recorded in 1864. A small bronze blade was circumstantially associated, but not certainly included with the burial deposit. A further two urns were recorded close to the Anglesey Arms Hotel, and close to the summit of Cerrig y Borth, in 1855. One of the urns contained cremated bone and had been protected by a stone cist.

A particularly important cache of bronze metalwork, unlikely to be related to the evidence of burial noted above, but nevertheless dating to the latest, Arreton, phase of the Early Bronze Age was discovered close to the Anglesey end of the suspension bridge in 1874-5 (Lynch 1991, 218-21). The find comprised eight axes with splayed blades, flanged sides and grooved decoration on the blades and flanges. The axes were discovered under two stones, six under one, two under the other. Only three now survive. The location of the discovery was described as a stone quarry. It might have been the stone quarry which has left a very visible gash across part of the headland from Cambria Road, northwards to the eastern end of St. Mary's church.

Activity on Cerrig y Borth during prehistory and the Roman centuries has left little evidence of its presence. The only direct evidence is represented by a hoard of thirty-seven coins of the late third century AD, found within Coed Cynol.

The Porthaethwy ferry and its demise

During the middle ages Porthaethwy, the ancient Welsh name for the township which included the Cerrig y Borth headland and extended beyond the town which took the name Menai Bridge after 1826, was the preserve of freeholding families of some substance. These families had a shared interest in their own mill, rather than the king's mill, and, most importantly, they controlled one of the five major ferries which gave communication between the mainland and Anglesey. Other than the ferries, however, there was little activity on the headland itself. The rough rocky nature rendered the ground intractable and, with the exception of a few small enclosures, much of the Cerrig y Borth remained common land until the early nineteenth century.

By the twelfth century a pattern of regional royal administration had developed and continued to develop under the Princes. The regional administrative unit which extended over south-east

Anglesey was the commote of Dindaethwy. Daethwy would appear to have been an ancient tribal name and, by extension a tribal region. Porthaethwy (Porth-Ddaethwy) was its passage or landing place. The five pre-conquest ferries – Llanfaes, Porthesgob, Porthaethwy, Llanidan (perhaps Porthamel) and Abermenai, were no casual or *ad hoc* crossings. They were significant and jealously guarded resources with particular rights in defined stretches of water. So important were the ferry crossings that the Welsh king established an enclave of his own bondmen, holding half a gafael in Porthaethwy under demesne tenure, to work the boat. More precisely, the costs and the manpower of running the ferry was divided equally between the freeholders and the Crown and the revenues were similarly shared fifty-fifty.

In the aftermath of the conquest of Gwynedd by Edward I in 1283, many of the rights claimed by their previous owners were respected, except, of course, those of Llywelyn ap Gruffydd, the Welsh Prince, whose rights and lands escheated to the English Crown. At Porthaethwy the shared arrangement between the freeholders and the English Crown continued. At this stage in the history of Porthaethwy there were two crossings within Porthaethwy waters. The southernmost crossed from Carreg yr Halen, on the south-western side of the headland, to Treborth mill. The second, and most important, crossed from the shoreline below the later Cambria ferry house, where a sloping stone jetty still stands, to the point where a trackway reaches the mainland shoreline below the nineteenth-century house, Bodlondeb. Eighteenth century enquiries confirmed the long-standing local opinion that Porthaethwy waters ran from the western side of Cerrig y Borth to Porth Daniel (the eastern edge of Prince's Pier, the property under discussion).

Records of the mid-fourteenth century account for Crown tenants at Porthaethwy in the service of the ferry and this situation appears to persist through the fifteenth century. The Crown moiety of the passage of Porthaethwy was granted to royal favourites or farmed for a fee. In 1451 the Crown interest was fixed at £3. 6s. 8d. for the next fifty years.

In 1453 William Griffith (later to become Sir William Griffith) is recorded as the farmer of the Porthaethwy ferry, or retained an interest in it, until the 1490s. In 1504, however, the ferry was leased to a certain Llywelyn ap Eignon ap Ieuan Coch for £14. 0s. 0d., a considerable increase on the traditional rate for the farm of the King's moiety. It would seem that the total value of the ferry had been re-assessed in or before 1502 and questions had been raised in respect of Sir William Griffith's obligation to account for the entire ferry or simply the Crown moiety.

Richard Bulkeley, Archdeacon, was assigned by Prince Arthur's Council to appropriate the ferry until the legal distinctions had been determined. It is clear that the farmers, William Griffith or his tenant William ap Rees and Richard Bulkeley, the appropriator, were now accounting for £7. 0s. 0d. to the Crown rather than the expected £14. 0s. 0d. William Griffith's response was that the moiety of the freeholders, as opposed to the Crown's half interest, formed part of his estate and was therefore, his by right.

It would appear that this point of view was bolstered by 40s. of Sir William's gold, presented to John Buttes, the auditor at Caernarfon through the agency of William ap Rees, for John Buttes to be a 'good friend in the matter of Porthaethwy, and was never the better'. William ap Rees was probably the farmer of the ferry at that time, in the tenancy of Sir William. Nevertheless, by 1502, Sir William Griffith had relinquished his claim, and the ferry reverted entirely to the Crown.

During the sixteenth century the south-western ferries, including Porthaethwy, were combined under one lease. The lessee would farm out the individual ferries, to one or more local entrepreneurs who would sub-contract the boat-work to operators on the spot.

In 1594, a not particularly unusual circumstance set in motion a train of events which was to have significant consequences for the Porthaethwy ferry and the Menai Bridge waterfront. In May of that year Queen Elizabeth made a grant of certain lands and assets to John Williams, son of Thomas Williams, in recognition of good service. The grant included a twenty-one year lease in the Porthaethwy ferry, which had the effect of removing Porthaethwy from the combined Crown lease. John Williams did not live long enough to benefit from his reversionary asset. However, his brother, Hugh Williams, inherited the lease and, co-incidentally, it may seem, also acquired through a separate conveyance, leases of the remaining south-western ferries.

In 1629, Charles I made arrangements to settle a large debt owed to Sir Alan Apsley through fee farm grants of extensive properties, with a provision that, after Apsley's death the properties should be conveyed to best advantage. The Porthaethwy ferry was among these properties. Thomas Williams, nephew of the beneficiary of the 1594 grant and son of Hugh Williams, already had an interest in the ferries and, in 1631, became the recipient of a perpetual lease in the Porthaethwy ferry from the Apsley disbursement. The terms were that the lease should be held freely for 99 years and, subsequently, at the specified annual Crown rent of £3. 6s. 8d. The ferry remained within the Williams family until the Porthawethwy

ferry closed at the completion of the suspension bridge in 1826.

In 1687 Coningsby Williams petitioned for, and built, a ferry house at Porthaethwy, close to the shoreline, immediately above the main ferry landing on the Anglesey side. The Inn, known as the Three Tuns, was part of the property of the ferry owners and is recorded in the hands of the last owner, Silence Williams, in the early nineteenth century. The name was then changed to the Cambria Inn, by which name it is still known. The former inn remains the oldest house in Menai Bridge and is a very significant component of the history and landscape of the Menai Bridge waterfront.

In 1686 Lord Clarendon, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, famously remarked, with reference to Anglesey, that 'never was, or can, come a coach into that part of the country'. But all this was to change during the following century. Road improvements, particularly round Penmaenmawr and across Anglesey in the 1760s, encouraged wheeled traffic to venture further west towards Bangor and the Menai Straits. The Bishop of Bangor, who owned the important Porthesgob ferry, plying out from the Garth headland, saw an opportunity to expand his operation. In 1768 he established an Inn on a tenement in his possession at Cae'r Glowr. Litigation ensued, however, and the Bishop was ousted as an intruder for operating within Porthaethwy water. Depositions taken as early as 1588 testified that the north-eastern limit of the Porthaethwy water and its corollary, the south-western limit of Porthesgob water, lay at Porth Daniel. Nevertheless, from about 1775, the tenement at Cae'r Glowr was developed as the George and Dragon Inn under the management of William Jackson. This became known as Bangor Ferry and took full advantage of trackway access to the shore on both sides on the Straits. On the Anglesey side the landing was the inlet of Porth y Wrach, a good wide slipway. Coaching stables were established at the George and Dragon on the Caernarfonshire side and within a very short distance of Porth y Wrach on the Porthaethwy shoreline.

In 1794 an Act of Parliament made provision for the private purchase of fee farm 'and other unimprovable' rents. Holland Williams, then owner of the ferry, took the opportunity of buying out the annual Crown rent of £3. 6s. 8d. for the sum of £72. 7s. 6d., the equivalent of approximately twenty-one years, eight months and two weeks rent. The Crown, henceforth retained no further interest in the ferry.

These were the ferry's busiest years. The last full year in operation saw 20,000 passengers and 800 carriages cross the Straits at Porthaethwy. The operators, however, had not risen to the challenge



Fig.3 Bangor Ferry 1811

and there were several complaints of sharp practice and poor maintenance, in respect of both the ferry boats and the Porthaethwy ferry house.

The Menai Bridge waterfront after 1826

The Act of Union of January 1801, had provided a catalyst for action and an alternative solution. Politicians now, as well as the general public, required safe and speedy connections between London and Dublin. The solution did not come immediately but the result was an engineering masterpiece – the new London to Holyhead post road and, more specifically, the Menai Suspension Bridge, both designed and engineered by Thomas Telford. Construction of the bridge was begun in 1818 and completed in January 1826. The immediate impact on Porthaethwy was dramatic.

The population of the parish of Llandysilio in 1811 totalled 300. The great majority of the headland of Cerrig y Borth was intractable common land. The principal activity on the headland concerned the operation and servicing of the ferries. The only road of consequence was that which hugged the shoreline of the Straits, providing access to landings, and struck north from Jackson's coaching stables at Porth y Wrach towards central Anglesey and Holyhead.

In 1821 the population had risen to 493. At the height of activity in 1821, four hundred men were at work on the bridge and at the limestone quarries near Penmon. Lodgings were provided, shops opened to supply groceries and hardware, men stayed and married locally.

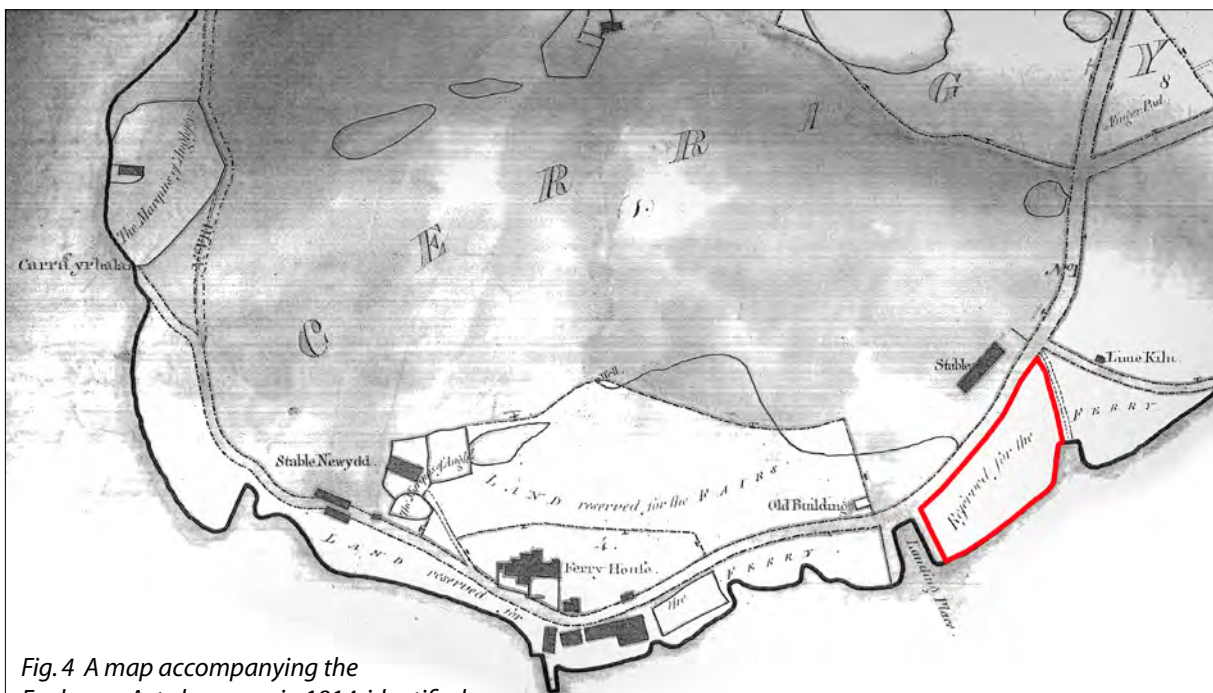


Fig. 4 A map accompanying the Enclosure Act, drawn up in 1814, identified a continuous strip of land, extending from Carreg yr Halen in the south-west, and Ponc Mostyn (at Porth Daniel) in the north-east, and bounded on the landward side by the shoreline road. This land is marked as reserved for the ferry. The site, yet to become Prince's Pier is outlined in red.

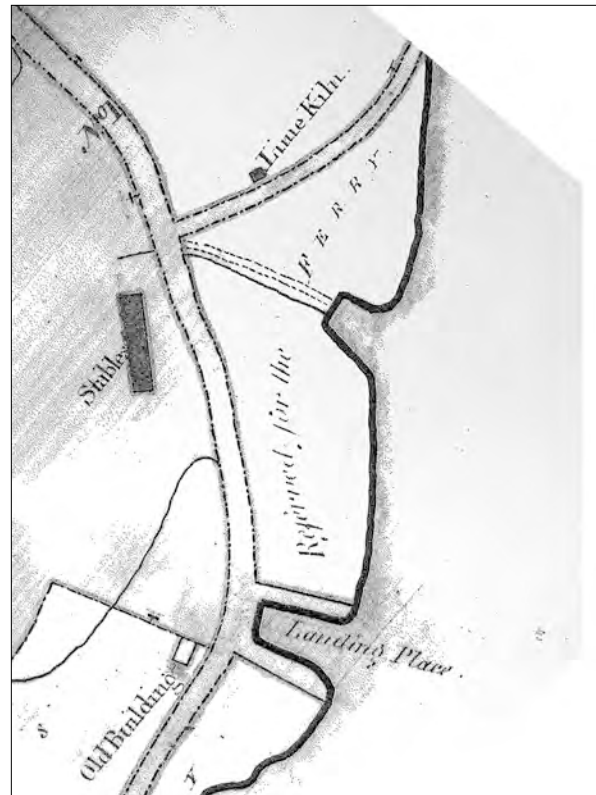
In June 1814 an Act for Inclosing Lands in the Parishes of Llandisilio and Llanelian was drawn up. The Act did not come into force immediately because of uncertainties regarding the land required for the suspension bridge and the new road. The principal recipients, however, included the Earl of Uxbridge (later the Marquis of Anglesey) and John Price of Cadnant. In 1826 the suspension bridge opened and the Porthaethwy ferry closed. The owner of the ferry, Miss Silence Williams, was compensated in the sum of £26,394 for a notional loss of thirty years future revenue. Holland Williams' purchase of the Crown rent at £72. 7s. 6d. would seem to have been a good investment.

In 1826, in consequence of the compensation paid to Jane Silence Williams, these ferry lands became Crown property. On the north-west side of the shoreline road, the now-redundant Jackson's coaching stables, near Porth y Wrach are shown to have been an intake of the common. The adjacent land, also shown to be part of the common, is identified as a component of the Marquis of Anglesey's allotment under the Act. In 1827 the enclosure award was enacted.

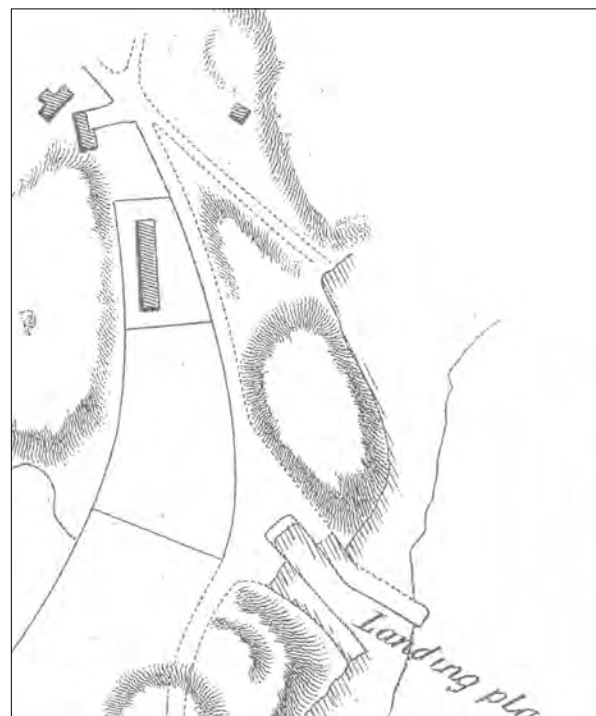
In the 1820s, a Llangefni general-store keeper, Richard Davies, saw the potential of shipping-in goods to a captive market at a cheap price for cash-on-the-nail. To this end he established a store at the Red Wharf Bay limestone quarries. With the ferries closed at Menai Bridge and the population increasing rapidly, Davies began to set up business at Menai Bridge. Here was a market, access to the sea and a waterfront ready for development. In 1828 Davies obtained a lease from the Marquis of Anglesey of nearly half an acre of land which included a warehouse, already built by Davies, and an associated timber yard. One suspects that Davies had set up shop before 1828 with the Marquis' consent but had not been able to take up a lease until the enclosure award had been enacted and the Marquis had taken possession.

Population and a ready market, access to good communications by road and sea, land available for development, opportunity and energy – all came together to create an entrepreneurial environment that would transform Menai Bridge during the mid-nineteenth century. In the words of Henry Rees Davies, grandson of Richard Davies of Llangefni, pencilled in his notebook before a St. David's Day speech in Menai Bridge, in 1913: 'Richard Davies and Sons ... took over the old coach stables [Jackson's coaching stables] and leased some adjoining property from the Anglesey Estate and presently proceeded (there being no watchful Urban District Council to say them, nay!) to squat on and to enclose

certain of the lands reserved for the ferry. A little later they build the wharf to which the Prince's Pier is now attached and cargoes began to be imported from England and abroad. Menai Bridge had now become the business!'



Figs 5 and 6 Maps drawn for the Enclosure Award (above) and surveyed and drawn by Thomas Telford and William Provis (below) showing the small promontory of Bonc Daniel between Porth y Wrach (Landing Place) and Porth Daniel. Scale 1:2500



The Davies' Wharf and the Prince's Pier

The wharf lies between Porth y Wrach, on the south side, and Porth Daniel to the north. The inlet of Porth y Wrach served as a convenient landing for the Bangor Ferry, plying from the Caernarfonshire shoreline at the George and Dragon Inn, later the George Hotel, from at least the 1770s. The coaching stables belonging to the George, on the Anglesey side, stood 100m north of the slipway. Porth Daniel was long recognised as the north-eastern limit of the Porthaethwy ferry and, while not a formal or regular landing for the ferry, will have been used as a point of access to the Straits and for loading and off-loading goods and cargoes. Tracks from the shoreline road to Porth Daniel are recorded on John Evans' late eighteenth-century map and on the Enclosure Award map of 1814.

The area between the two inlets, sometimes known as Bonc Daniel, comprises 2900 sq. metres in total although 1000 sq. metres (one quarter of an acre) is occupied by a conspicuous rocky knoll with a private house built on it. The total area of the wharf with its warehouse, access road and other structures comprises 1900 sq. metres. Immediately to the west of the wharf, across the shoreline road now called Water Street and formerly Packet Street, stand the large warehouses built by Richard Davies and Sons. These warehouses stand end to end. The earliest was built sometime before 1828 and is the structure referred to in the Marquis of Anglesey's lease of 1828 referred to above. The later warehouse was added to the south of the first, sometime before 1857 and most probably in the late 1830s or early 1840s. To the south of the warehouses stands Min y Don, the private house of the Davies family, looking directly eastward towards the slipway of Porth y Wrach and the Straits. Min y Don was built in the 1840s.

To the north of the Packet Street warehouses lies the land enclosed by William Jackson of the George Hotel, within which stood his coaching stables. This land, no longer required for the service of the Bangor Ferry, was encroached upon by the Davies's very soon after the acquisition of the Marquis' lease. Henry Rees Davies, the grandson of Richard Davies, Senior, is our witness to further encroachment, across Packet Street, onto the promontory of land between Porth Daniel and Porth y Wrach, which came to be known as Prince's Pier.

The land had been identified on the Enclosure Award map as being 'reserved for the ferries'. The ferries were no longer in operation and the former owner, Miss Jane Silence Williams, had quit the property, having been compensated by the Crown, in consequence of the construction of Telford's Bridge. The Davieses took the opportunity of making good

use of this, now untenanted, land and built the wharf. In 1913, Henry Rees Davies, in researching material for his monumental study of the Menai Ferries, made enquiries as to the precise date of construction. His correspondent, Mr. R. W. Roberts, searched the Bill Books, Cash Books and Ledgers of Richard Davies and Sons to no avail: 'I can find no date when the timber wharf was built, or the warehouses'. Nevertheless, some indication of when the Prince's Pier Wharf was built may be extracted from a long series of correspondence between the Government departments, the Office of Woods, Board of Trade and several interested parties in Menai Bridge, between 1865 and 1897. The issues concerned applications for leases on the shoreline, imputations of encroachment, applications for improvements at the wharf and the acquisition of Crown or Common land by the Llandysilio Improvement Commissioners. One document emanating from the Office of Woods in 1884 summarised the Government view in a Memorandum. Several encroachments had been identified along the waterfront between Carreg yr Halen and Bonc Mostyn from as early as the 1830s. Some had acquired leases from the Crown. In 1837 it had been agreed that a lease should be granted to Davies and Sons on three plots which included: an area on Bonc Mostyn overlooking Porth Daniels; the entire area of Bonc Daniel, part of which became the Prince's Pier, with the inclusion of the rocky 'bonc' itself; and Bonc Peggy which much later became the bowling green on Water Street. The terms of the lease had been set out and sent to the Treasury in 1838 but, on account of a legal discrepancy, the lease was never completed. Nevertheless, John Davies, then running the Davies family business in Menai Bridge, installed a steam engine, saw mill and smithy at the head of the Porth Daniel inlet and almost certainly built the wharf at the same time. In 1841 the Marquis of Anglesey made a clear statement to the Office of Woods that Bonc Mostyn, to the north-east of Porth Daniel and Bonc Peggy, to the south-west of Porth y Wrach, had not been enclosed at that time. The conclusion to be drawn is that the plot between the two inlets, Bonc Daniel, *had* been enclosed. This too, was the Government's understanding when considering Messrs Davies title to the wharf, they gave a view that the Davies and Sons would not have a sixty year title to that property until 1897-8. In other words, their commencement of occupation was considered to be 1837-8.

There are other, practical reasons to suppose that the wharf was coming into use in the late 1830s. John Davies had taken shares in a number of locally built ships, bringing timber and general goods to Menai Bridge (Eames 1973, 217). A steam-powered saw mill

implies the presence of a significant quantity of raw material to process. Later there would be saw pits and timber yards on Bonc Mostyn and Bonc Peggy too. North America was the main source of imported timber and in 1843 the Davies family bought their own North American ship at Liverpool. The Chieftain, built at St John, New Brunswick, was bigger, faster and more manoeuvrable than his previous locally built vessels, at 42m in length and 795 tons burden (Eames, 1973 passim).

A very significant trade had developed across the Atlantic, carrying emigrants to America and

bringing back cargoes of timber. Ships sailing from North Welsh ports carried slates out too. From its beginnings in the late 1820s, a very substantial business grew over the succeeding 75 years. Divided into three components, these included the shipping business, later registered as Richard Hughes and Co; a wholesale grocery business trading under the name of John Edwards and a timber yard in Menai Bridge, which continued to trade until recently on the original site, as William Roberts. All of this was focussed on the warehouses, timber yards and wharf either side of Packet Street on the Menai Bridge shoreline at Porth Daniel.

The Davies' Wharf and Prince's Pier in use

The Chieftain sailed from Liverpool for Quebec in May 1843 and arrived back at Menai Bridge with her cargo of timber on the 1st October. In just over a month in the Straits, loading slates and taking on emigrants, the Chieftain sailed for New Orleans, arriving back at Liverpool at the beginning of June, 1844. Another ship was bought the following year, two more in 1845 and another two in 1846. Four ships were purchased in 1847 and two more in 1848. These were the busiest years in the Straits.

In 1847 and 1848 there were a total of twenty-three voyages of Davies ships which departed from and/or arrived back at the Menai Bridge wharf, representing two-thirds of the business' total traffic during those two years. The following itineraries will give an indication of the level of activity, with big ships arriving and departing, cargoes being off-loaded and emigrants embarking.

In February 1847, the Chieftain sailed for the Gulf of Mexico and Mobile. On 23rd July the Courtenay arrived in the Straits from New York. Within three weeks, the Courtenay was at sea again, heading for Quebec, and was back at Menai Bridge on 16th November.

On 29th March the Ann Davies sailed from Caernarfon to Baltimore and on to the Bay of Fundy and St. John for timber, which she brought back to the Menai Bridge woodyard in early August. Two weeks later she was headed for Dalhousie and back to the Straits in November.

Three newly-bought ships, the Peltoma, Tamarac and Eliza Caroline all sailed from Liverpool in the late spring of 1847, for North America. The Eliza Caroline and the Tamarac, both bound for Quebec, arrived back at Menai Bridge on 1st and 17th September respectively. The Peltoma had sailed for New York, stayed two weeks and was back in the Straits one

day later than the Tamarac, after a five month, 20 day round trip. The Eliza Caroline stayed in the Straits for four weeks before putting out for St. John on 28th September. She arrived back at Menai Bridge on Christmas Day 1847.

Four days before the Eliza Caroline's return, the Northumberland, newly built, set out for New Orleans. Nine days later, on 30th December, the Tamarac sailed for Savannah. The Peltoma sailed from Caernarfon to New Orleans at about the same time. These were emigrant voyages on pretty big ships. Inevitably there would be cargoes of slates on board too, as, the Penrhyn Quarry letter books show, there was considerable demand for Welsh slate in New Orleans.

New Orleans and Savannah were portrayed as good points of entry to the Southern States and the Mid-West. New Orleans, in particular, provided good steam-boat access up the Mississippi. The winter sailings aimed to avoid the unhealthy climate of the Delta in summer. These voyages were repeated in the late autumn and winter of 1848-49 when the Oregon and Chieftain both sailed from Menai Bridge on the same day in the last week of October, and the Tamarac and Northumberland sailed on the 20th and 21st December. These voyages to the Gulf of Mexico involved, on average, five month round trips.

On return from Savannah the previous summer, the Tamarac put in at Liverpool on the 22nd May, returning to Menai Bridge in early June and sailed for Quebec on the 15th June.

In the meantime, the Ann Davies could be seen in the Straits in mid-March, loading slates at the Port Penrhyn quay to the order of Asa Wilbur of Boston. The Ann Davies left Menai Bridge on 25th March for Boston, continuing to St. John, New Brunswick. The Infanta arrived at Menai Bridge in August 1848

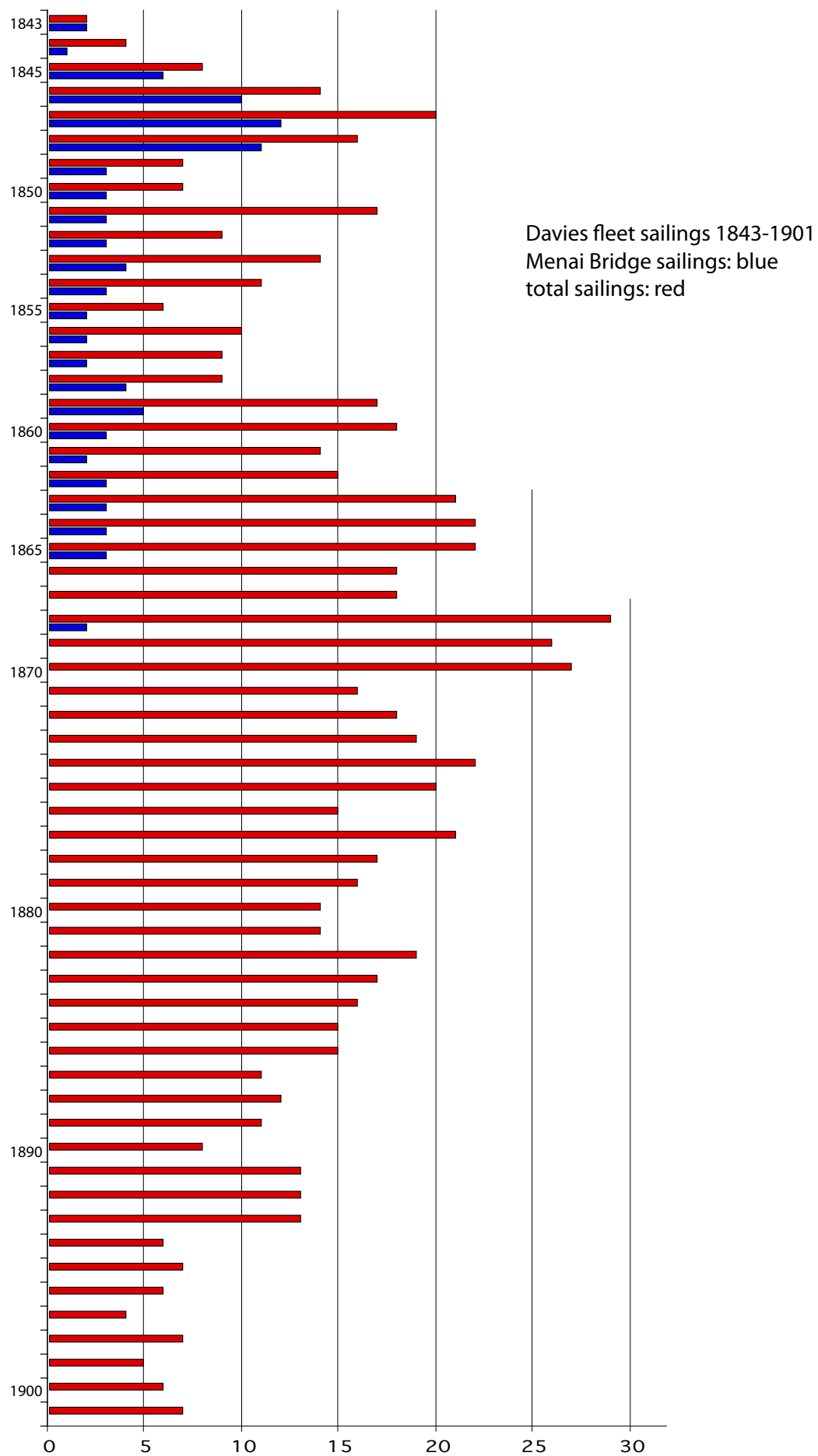


Fig. 7 Davies fleet sailings in each year

with a cargo from St. John. She was at sea again two weeks later, bound for Quebec. On 23rd August, eight days after the *Infanta* sailed, the *Eliza Caroline* returned to the Straits after a four month voyage, calling at New York and Quebec; a day later, the *Oregon*, arrived, also from Quebec, followed by the *Chieftain*, on the 30th August, again with a cargo of Quebec timber. On 5th October the *Tamarac* sailed into the Straits from Quebec. The *Tamarac*'s next voyage would be the winter run to New Orleans.

A Change of Direction

In 1849 the shipping business took a new direction. John Davies, the driving force of the Menai Bridge branch of the business, died in the spring of 1848. His father, who had come to Menai Bridge in that year, died in 1849. Richard (junior) and Robert Davies were now in control of the firm. In 1848 there had been sixteen Davies voyages of which eleven sailed from or returned to Menai Bridge. In 1849 there were seven voyages of which only three used the Menai Bridge wharf. With the exception of 1844, this was the first year in which Menai Bridge did not have an interest in the majority of sailings.

In 1850 three new ships were added to the fleet and seven more in 1851. In 1850 four long haul voyages were undertaken out of a total of seven, each one lasting more than twelve months. New destinations were sought and new ports used. Davies ships began to sail to south-east Australia and Peru from the larger ports of Plymouth, Liverpool and London.

In May 1851 the *Eliza Caroline* sailed from London to Sydney, Callao (Peru), Payuna and back to Antwerp via Queenstown (Cork) in December 1852, an eighteen month round trip. The *Caroline* a different vessel, sailed from London on 17th April 1852 to Cardiff where she stayed for a month, to San Francisco for three months between the 5th December and 26th February 1853, on to Callao, loading guano for four months, returning to London in February 1854, via Queenstown (Cork), a round trip of twenty-one months and twenty-three days.

The 1860s and 1870s saw the greatest level of traffic and it is during the mid-1860s that the Menai Bridge wharf ceased to be a part of the Davies' long distance shipping operation. The west coast of South America, the Indian Ocean and North West Europe occupied a significant part of the trade during these years. From 1880 until 1902 the volume of traffic declined. Nevertheless, 139 voyages were made to San Francisco alone during these later years.

Nevertheless, the original North American trade was not neglected after 1849. In the seventeen years up to 1865 an average of three voyages per annum

were made to or from the Menai Bridge wharf. The destination was almost invariably Quebec (41 voyages) or St. John, on the Bay of Fundy (5 voyages). On six occasions, Boston was a port of call *en route*. Almost all the return sailings to the Menai Bridge wharf during this period brought North American timber to the Davies wood yard (40 in total).

There were sailings to other destinations to, and from, the Davies wharf during this period. The *Olivia*, sailing from Menai Bridge was in Pensacola in June and July 1858. The *Highland Mary* sailed from London to Savannah in the winter of 1858-9, two years before the outbreak of the American Civil War, returning to Menai Bridge on 8th February. On 22nd October 1862 the *Eliza Caroline* sailed for Cardiff *en route* to Rio de Janeiro where she stayed for six weeks before sailing to Quebec. She loaded timber for two weeks during May 1863 and was back in the Straits in June. She left two weeks later for Quebec again, returning on 5th October 1863.

In the early years, up to 1848, the *Chieftain*, *Courtenay*, *Ann Davies*, *Northumberland* and *Agnes* were the stalwarts of the North American run. After 1848 the voyages out of Menai Bridge were less numerous but steady, usually involving two ships or two voyages of the same ship, one putting out and returning to Menai Bridge, the other alternating with another port such as Liverpool. The workhorses of these years were the *Infanta*, *Avon* and *Peltoma*, joined by the *Highland Mary*, *Eliza Caroline* and others in the later years.

The last years of regular trade from Menai Bridge are symptomatic of the third phase in the Davies shipping business. 1865 was effectively the year in which Menai Bridge involvement in Davies long distance shipping ceased. The ports of departure of the two ships which brought timber to the wharf in 1865 were Rotterdam (the *Olivia*) and Cardiff. When the *Olivia* set sail again from Menai Bridge she was bound for the Caribbean and back to London.

The last big ship to use the Menai Bridge wharf was the *Lord Stanley* in August and September 1868, built at Quebec in 1849 (Eames 1973, 564-5). The *Lord Stanley* arrived on 27th August, having loaded timber for three weeks at Quebec. She sailed from the Straits on the 9th September, for Cardiff, heading for Montevideo and Pensacola in the Gulf of Mexico. She returned to Liverpool twelve months and eleven days after leaving Menai Bridge.

This chart, derived from the records of Messrs Davies sailing logs, shows the level of activity in the Straits over this long period, the use of the Prince's Pier wharf, the Davies company ships which frequented it and the dates when these ships were present and their destinations.

	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	August	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Destinations
1843 Chieftain													Quebec New Orleans
1844 Enterprise													Quebec
1845 Chieftain													Quebec
1845 Courtenay													Quebec
1845 Agnes													Quebec New Orleans
1846 Courtenay													St John
1846 Northumberland													Quebec
1846 Chieftain													Quebec
1846 Agnes													Dalhousie Quebec
1846 Ann Davies													Parsboro Richibucto
1846 Oregon													Quebec
1846 Cape Fraser													Montreal
1847 Chieftain													Mobile Quebec
1847 Courtenay													New York Quebec
1847 Ann Davies													Baltimore St John
1847 Peltoma													New York
1847 Tamarac													Quebec Savannah
1847 Eliza Caroline													Quebec
1847 Northumberland													New Orleans
1848 Ann Davies													Boston St John
1848 Eliza Caroline													New York Quebec
1848 Infanta													St John Quebec
1848 Chieftain													Quebec
1848 Oregon													Quebec
1848 Tamarac													Quebec
1848 Northumberland													New Orleans
1849 Peltoma													New York St John
1849 Infanta													St John
1850 Infanta													Boston Quebec Moulmein
1850 Peltoma													Quebec
1851 Infanta													Boston Quebec N Y St John
1851 Mersey													New York Quebec
1852 Infanta													Boston Quebec
1852 Avon													Quebec
1853 Infanta													New York Quebec
1853 Avon													Quebec
1854 Infanta													Boston Quebec
1854 Avon													Quebec
1855 Infanta													Boston Quebec Quebec
1856 Avon													Quebec Quebec
1857 Avon													Quebec Quebec
1858 Avon													Quebec
1858 Lady Louisa													Quebec
1858 Highland Mary													Savannah
1859 Lady Louisa													Bombay
1859 Highland Mary													Boston Miramichi Quebec
1859 Avon													Quebec Quebec
1860 Avon													Quebec Quebec
1861 Eliza Caroline													Rio de Janeiro Quebec
1861 De Salabery													Quebec
1862 Eliza Caroline													Quebec Quebec
1863 Eliza Caroline													Rio de J. Qbc. Qbc. St J
1864 Highland Mary													St John
1864 John Davies													Quebec
1865 Olivia													Quebec
1865 Eliza Caroline													Quebec
1866 none													none
1867 none													none
1868 Lord Stanley													Qbc. Montevideo Pensacola

Fig. 8 Calendar of Davies fleet sailings

The Wharf and Pier after 1866

In November 1866 William Haslam replied to an enquiry of the Office of Woods regarding a map drawn by William Haslam's father John Haslam, the surveyor. The map is of the Menai Bridge waterfront. It is based on the outline of the 1814 Enclosure Award map but has some more recent additions and is undated. It cannot be later than 1861-1862 when John Haslam died. It cannot be earlier than the late 1830s as the 'Old Foundry', is shown, on the shoreline between the Prince's Pier and the Suspension Bridge. The map also identifies Prince's Pier as 'Pier' and the Packet Pier at Bonc Mostyn as the 'Old Packet Pier'. The delineations in red pen would appear to represent corrections and annotations made by William Haslam on his father's map. The 'Old Foundry' marked on the map was built by Edward Edwards in 1838. In 1851, however, Mr Edwards is described as a marine contractor and, in 1861, as an aquarium manufacturer. It is possible, therefore, that the foundry had closed by 1851. It is less likely that the Packet Pier could be described as 'Old' by the early 1850s but might, perhaps, be so by the late 1850s. The map, annotated and returned to the Office of Woods in 1866 was accompanied by a schedule of properties considered to be occupying Crown land between Carreg yr Halen and the 'Old Packet Pier', accompanied by a schedule of the acreage and value of these properties. The question was one of encroachment and the presence or absence of a lease. For the present purpose the land in question is that which lies between Porth Daniel and Porth y Wrach, that is, Bonc Daniel. The background to this enquiry has been described above, as has the conclusion of the Government Office of Woods that, by 1837 or 1838, plots 3, 4, 5 and 6 on Haslam's annotated survey (Bonc Daniel or the Prince's Pier wharf) had been occupied by Messrs Davies and Sons and that a steam powered saw mill had been installed and the wharf built. John Haslam's plan and William Haslam's 1866 additions and annotations allow us to refine the chronology of the development of the wharf during its third phase, from the 1860s onward.

On Sunday, 8th June 1822, the first steam packet to visit Menai Bridge, the Albion, anchored at Bangor Ferry for the night (ARO SDY/-11). There were no wharfs at Menai Bridge at this time, other than the purpose built quays in use in the construction of the suspension bridge. Bangor Ferry, therefore, continued to be used as a mooring for steam boats. From 1826, daily or alternate daily sailings from Bangor Ferry to Liverpool were advertised at 10s. 6d. for a cabin fare or 5s. steerage. The journey took six hours in 1831. In 1832 the George's Steam Packet Company agent's office was in Bangor and in addition to the Liverpool route, a service

was advertised to Dublin from Bangor Ferry. This suggests that a packet pier was yet to be built at Menai Bridge. By 1835, however, we learn that the St. George's Company's Steam Packet, Prince Llewelyn, would sail from St. George's Pier Menai Bridge and that the Company's agent was now based at Menai Bridge (North Wales Chronicle, May 1835). The Pier is the mooring perpendicular to the shore, at Bonc Mostyn. It appears as such on the Llandysilio Tithe Map of 1843 and on the Haslam Survey, referred to above as the 'Old Packet Pier'. It does not appear on Lieutenant Robinson's Coastal Survey published in 1835 but does appear on the 1st edition one inch to the mile map of 1841.

By the middle of the century, three steamers a day were landing passengers at St. George's Pier. By the 1860s however, the 'old' pier had become dilapidated to the point that boats would no longer use it (Bangor MS.4905).

Haslam's document of 1866 identified Bonc Mostyn as unenclosed but nevertheless in the occupation of Messrs Davies and Sons. At the corner of Bonc Mostyn and Porth Daniel, the Davieses had erected a saw pit. Plots 3, 4, 5 and 6 (that is, Bonc Daniel, the wharf between Porth Daniel and Porth y Wrach) are respectively described as:

- *a sawmill and smithy;*
- *a timber yard and wharf;*
- *the Packet Pier;*
- *storehouse and offices.*

Plots 7 and 8, to the south-west of Porth y Wrach, are described as a timber yard and saw pit. All these are also described as in the ownership, or reputed ownership, of the Davies brothers, supposing that they have a lease from the Office of Woods.

Plots 3 and 4, the saw mill and smithy and the timber yard and wharf, on the north (Porth Daniel) side of the complex are described as in the occupation of the Davieses. Plots 5 and 6, however, the Packet Pier, storehouses and offices, were occupied by the City of Dublin Steam Packet Company. It emerges from the detailed correspondence of the Board of Trade and Office of Woods in the 1880s and 1890s that Messrs Davies had sub-let part of the wharf, including the warehouse, to the City of Dublin Company. The City of Dublin Company had taken over the Liverpool and North Wales routes of the St. George's Company in 1843. The date at which the City of Dublin Company took the lease on the pier is unclear. However, as described above, the nature of the shipping business entered a third phase in the mid 1860s. The steady North American trade between Menai Bridge and New Brunswick and Quebec effectively closed in



Fig. 9 WG Haslam annotated map of waterfront

1447/66

Reference accompanying tracing of land between the
Menai Suspension Bridge and the Old Packet Pier -

Description	Owner, or reputed Owner	Occupier	Remarks as to Occupation or title
1 Unenclosed land	Robert & Richard	Themselves	Lease to the
2 Saw Pit	Jarvis Esqrs	}	Messrs Jarvis from the Office of Woods &c
3 Saw mill & smithy	do		
4 Timber yard & wharf	do		
5 Packet Pier &c	do	The City of Dublin	do
6 Storehouse, offices &c	do	Steam Packet Co.	do
7 Timber yard	do	Themselves	do
8 Saw pit	do	}	do
9 Three cottages	Reps. of the late		
10 Old	Reps. of the late	M ^r Thomas, builder	Quiet possession, no

Fig. 10 schedule of land in vicinity of Prince's pier, 1866

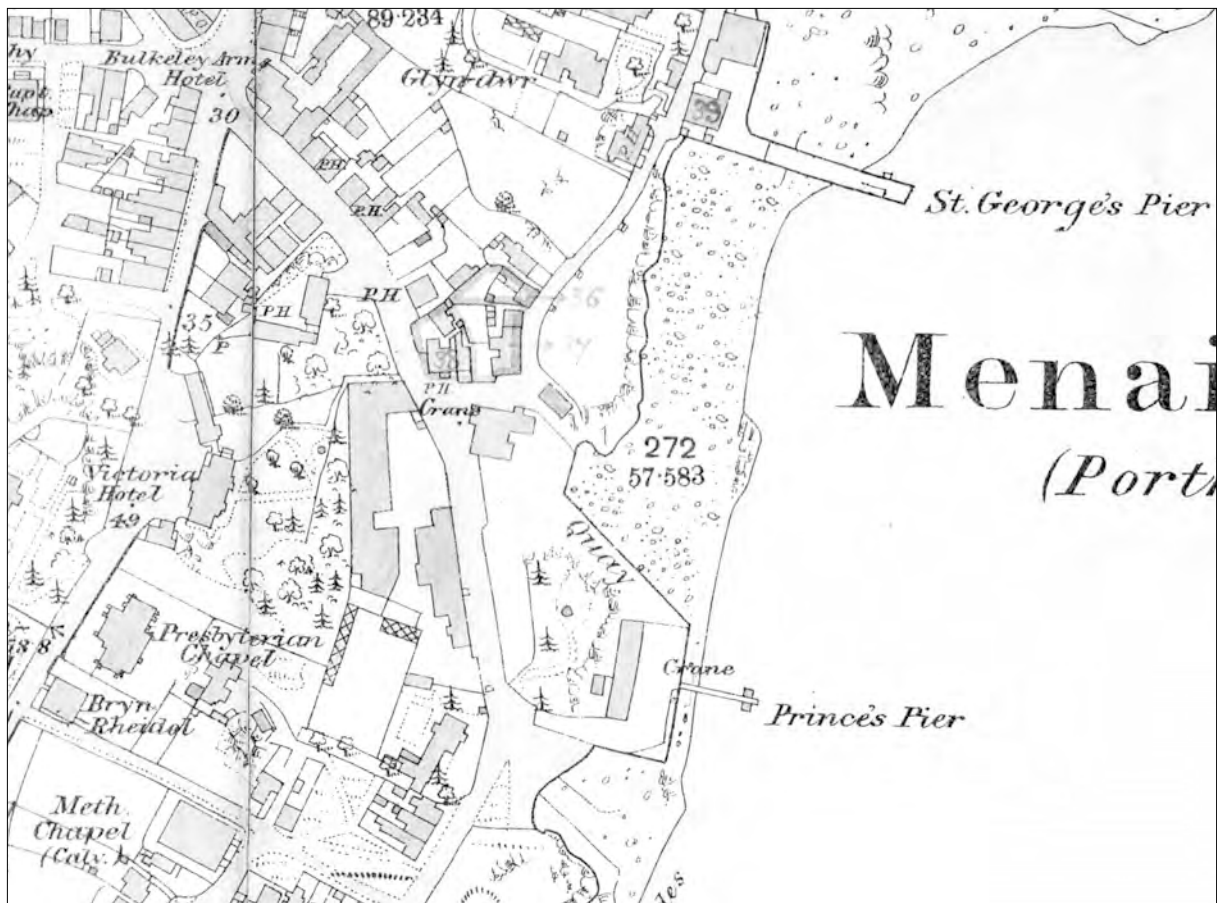


Fig. 11 Prince's Pier and St George's Pier 1889 (OS 1:2500)

1865. The Old St. George's Packet Pier was in decay. The lease to the City of Dublin Company must have been in place by 1866, as attested by Haslam's schedule. Notwithstanding, it made commercial sense to sublet part of the pier to the steamship company at a time when the large freighters were no longer using the wharf.

In January 1873 the City of Dublin Steam Packet Company acquired a sanction to improve the passenger facilities at the wharf. The sanction was granted by the Board of Trade in consideration of 2s. 6d. acknowledgment of the retention of Crown Rights in the foreshore and sea bed. The pier, as distinct from the stone wharf was, at the time, described as an iron girder bridge resting one end on the quay and the other on a wooden pile pier, erected at low water high springs. A pontoon was fixed to the seaward end and was removed in the winter months when the steamer service was suspended. This iron pier received the name Prince's Pier and, by association, the stone quay or wharf came to be called the Prince's Pier.

In 1881 the City of Dublin Company sold their interest to the Liverpool, Llandudno, North Wales Coast Steam Packet Company which was, in turn,

taken over by the North Wales Steamship Company in 1890.

The result of the enquiry into the question of encroachment recognised the long standing interest of the Davieses and the matter of the offer of a lease having been agreed fifty years previously but not completed. There was also the probability of rents having been paid in good faith, in the absence of a lease. A further complication was that the Board of Trade's sanction for the construction of the pier was, in fact, outside its jurisdiction and should have been the responsibility of the Office of Woods. A solution suggested was that new leases should be offered and taken up. There were objections, however. The North Wales Company was unwilling to pay a high rent on the pier where an expensive outlay had already been made. The Davieses were concerned that a lease outside the existing sublease from themselves could allow obstacles to navigation in the area of the wharf to arise. The Davieses claimed an existing common law right of ingress and egress from the quay to deep water which extended over the last fifty years, in respect of vessels of 1000 tons register and downwards. They certainly did not want these rights impeded.

The renewed interest in the Office of Woods, in these matters arose from an intervention by the Llandysilio Improvement Commissioners. In the early 1880s an opinion was forming that certain plots of land which had been excluded from the Enclosure Award of 1814/1826 as 'reserved for the ferries' should, more appropriately, be treated as common land for the public good. In particular the Commissioners attempted to recover Bonc Mostyn, Bonc Daniel (the site of the Prince's Pier) and Bonc Peggy (the present bowling green). The Crown claimed ownership of Bonc Mostyn and Bonc Peggy but, nevertheless, through negotiations, agreed to sell these plots to, what had become, the Urban District Council, in 1895 (Anthony 1974, 17-18). Soon afterwards the Council acquired the foreshore of Porth y Wrach and the site, fixtures and fittings of the old St. George's Packet Pier on Bonc Mostyn. Messrs Davies and Sons retained their use of the north side of the Prince's Pier wharf at Porth Daniel. However, in 1901, the Liverpool and North Wales Steamship Company sold their interest in the Crown lease of Prince's Pier to the Town Council in an agreement that the steamship company would now have access to a new pier which was proposed for construction on the site

of the Old St. George's Pier. An Act of Parliament was passed in 1902 authorising the Council to construct the new pier and additional amenities on Bonc Mostyn. The work was completed and the pier was opened by David Lloyd George on 10th September 1904. The former agent of the City of Dublin Company and the Liverpool and North Wales Company was retained by the Council and continued to operate, from the Prince's Pier, as Pier Master, Harbour Master and Collector of Dues.

Prince's Pier was used as the wharf for all shipping and steam packets from the 1860s to the construction of the new pier in 1904. Although the long haul business of the shipping arm of Davies and Sons ceased to operate from Menai Bridge in the 1860s, the wharf continued to be used for smaller vessels. Timber continued to arrive in the Straits. Stocks were stored at Cadnant and secured by running a chain from the shore to Ynys y Gaint. When required the timber was floated on the tide to the Prince's Pier and the Davies' wood yard (trading as William Roberts) (Anthony 1974, 17; NA.CRES 37/1573). Davies and Sons ship owners, registered as Richard Hughes and Co, ceased trading in 1905.

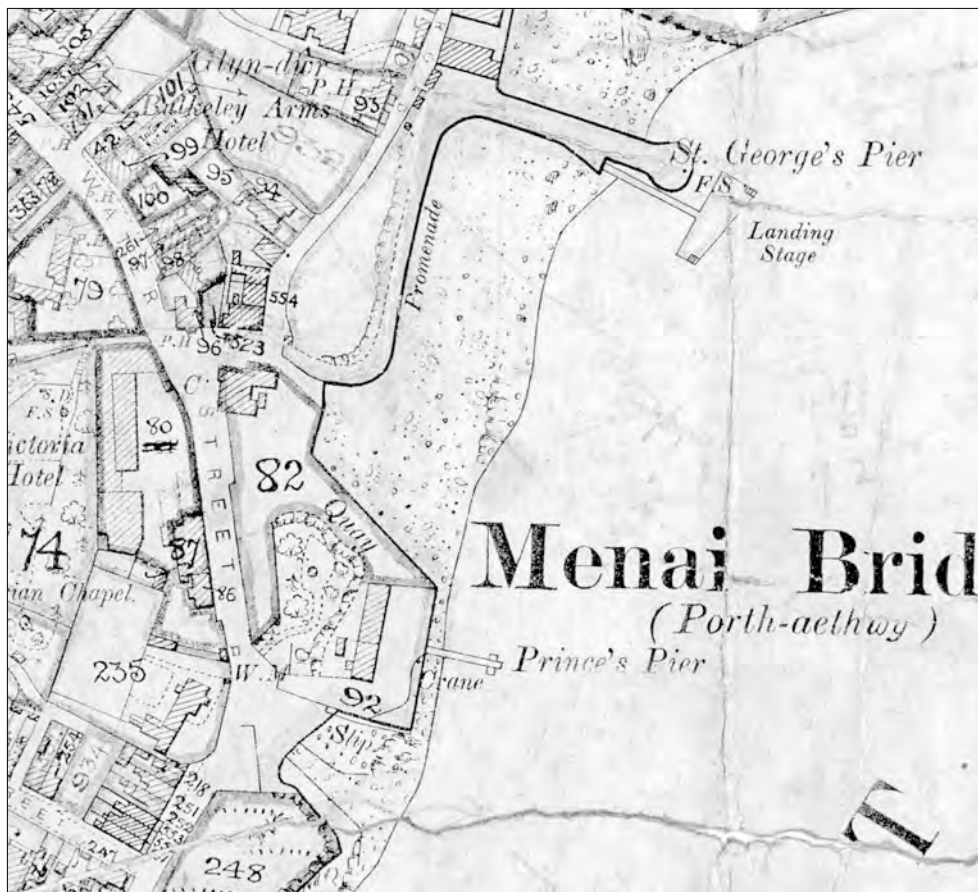


Fig. 12 Prince's Pier and St George's Pier 1909 (OS 1:2500)

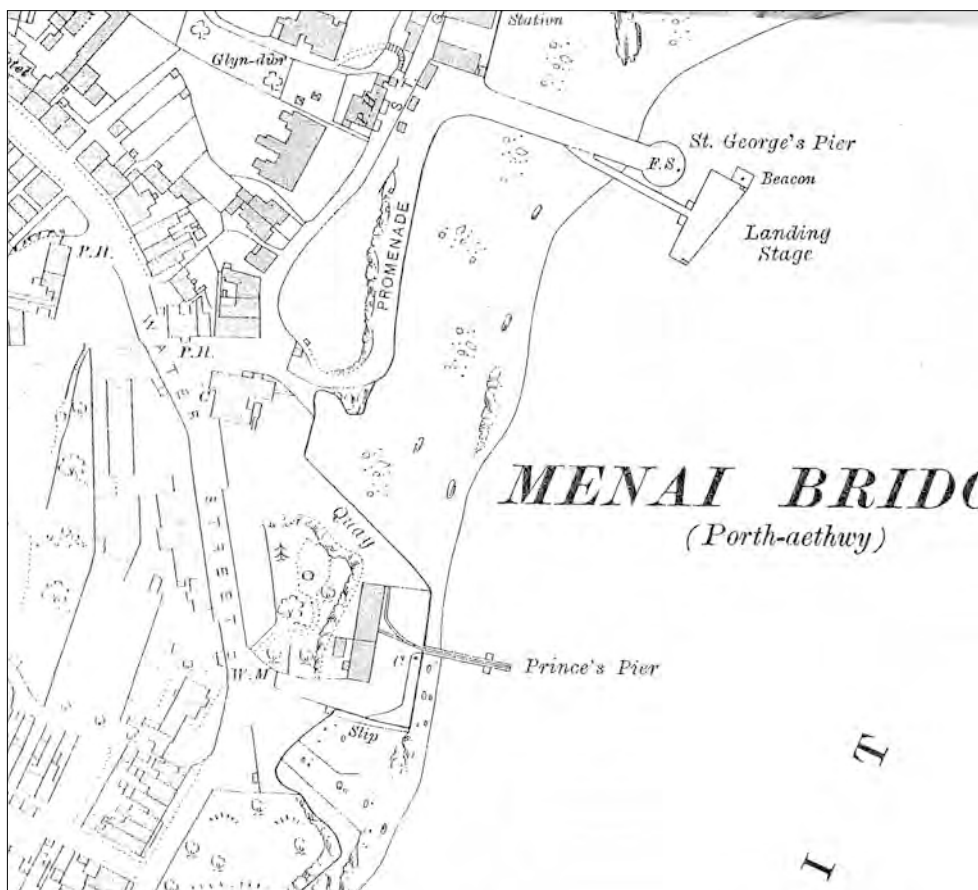


Fig. 13 Prince's Pier and St George's Pier 1914 (OS 1:2500)

The Prince's Pier in the twentieth century

In the early years of the twentieth century the economic climate of Menai Bridge was depressed. One of the few opportunities for regular employment was in the William Roberts timber yard and in loading and unloading on the wharf.

In 1914 the wharf and pier is mapped with what appear to be tram-lines extending from the warehouse to the full length of the iron pier. There are two tracks. One extends from the southernmost of the two large three metre wide doors; the other runs parallel with the east face of the warehouse at its northern end, to join the other track as a single line along the pier (OS 1:2500 Ang xix.ii.1914). A crane is marked on the wharf at its junction with the iron pier, in the same position as shown on the 1887 OS 1:25000 map. The Urban District Council had acquired the Crown lease on Prince's Pier in 1901 and in 1920, sub-let the facilities to John Blyth and Son of Liverpool who used the warehouse as a distribution centre of merchandise across Anglesey (Anthony 1973, 40).

During the Second World War the St. George's Pier and the Prince's Pier wharf were under the control of the Admiralty. The Straits became a base for patrol boats. An aerial photograph taken around 1945

shows a second shed or warehouse in front of and abutting the original warehouse. Nissan huts are visible at the head of the Porth y Wrach slipway. The War Department continued to occupy the Prince's Pier until 1959.

After the derequisitioning of the pier, various alternative uses were considered. The site was let to Pochin's, then a joinery and construction company, who intended to build and market pleasure speedboats. The venture failed and the warehouse was used for plant maintenance (Anthony 1973, 60).

In 1967 the Prince's pier wharf was inspected. Damage from wave action and the abrasion of vessels was identified. Financial support was sought from Crown Commissioners who owned the site. The Crown denied responsibility and offered to sell the Prince's Pier wharf outright. The offer was accepted and the Urban District Council acquired the wharf for £2,500 (Anthony 1973, 64). William Roberts Woodyard continued to occupy the northern part of the wharf facing Porth Daniel and continued to import and trade in timber but the last cargo of timber to come in by sea arrived at the wharf in the early 1970s

Fig. 14 Prince's Pier and St George's Pier. Aerial photograph 1945





Fig. 15 Prince's Pier aerial photograph 2007



Fig. 16 Prince's Pier and Davies' wharf, 2004

Prince's Pier

Description

The Wharf

The wharf is a trapezoidal area defined on the north side by the inlet of Porth Daniel and on the south side by the inlet and former ferry landing of Porth y Wrach. The shoreline road, Water Street or Packet Street, defines the western limit of the wharf. At high tide the wharf is washed by the sea on the north, east and south sides. At the lowest tides the base of the wharf wall is dry where it meets the shoreline. The total footprint of the trapezoidal area described above is 2,900 sq. metres. The effective area of the wharf is restricted, by a large and prominent rocky outcrop towards the centre and west of the area, to a zone, about 10m wide on the north and south sides and 20-25m wide on the east side facing the Straits.

The three sides which face the two inlets and the Straits are revetted with an almost vertical wall, battered slightly inwards, of large irregular stone blocks derived, mostly from the local schist. The south-eastern corner of the wharf is strengthened by large ashlar blocks in good courses. The north-eastern corner has been repaired in its upper courses with coursed smaller stone. The north side (facing Porth Daniel) and the east side (facing the Straits) have rectangular section vertical posts set at intervals of between 3.0 and 3.5m on the east side and 4.0 and 4.5m on the north side, as a protection for the masonry and for ships. The south side, facing Porth y Wrach has no such protection.

The portion of the wharf which forms the subject of this present study is that which transferred to the Menai Bridge Urban District Council in 1901 and further description will be confined to this area.

The Prince's Pier

The boundary of the area transferred to the Menai Bridge Urban District Council in 1901 and now known as Prince's Pier is defined by:

- the full extent of the eastern wall of the wharf facing the Straits on the east side;
- the southern wall of the wharf and its access road facing Porth y Wrach on its south side;
- the base of the steep rocky knoll of Bonc Daniel (now in private possession as a domestic residence) on the west side, and
- a line drawn between the north-east corner of the wharf and the north-east corner of the warehouse which stands on the wharf parallel to the east-facing wall of the wharf.
- The area of the wharf to the north is in private possession.

This area, in total extends over, approximately, 1462 sq. m.

The complex of features within the area, so defined, include:

- a long warehouse and piermaster's house set a few metres in front of the rocky knoll and parallel to the eastern wall of the wharf;
- a small garden and outhouse to the west of the pier master's house;
- an access road leading from Packet Street to the wharf;
- the open area of the wharf facing the Straits
- the walls which revet the wharf.

The Warehouse

The warehouse is a long rectangular structure aligned north-north-east, south-south-west and parallel to the east wall of the wharf facing the Straits. The warehouse is 26.41m long, externally and 8.00m wide with walls 0.65m thick.

Exterior

The walls are of un-coursed rubble, for the most part quarried from the local schist. The mortar is sandy clay with lime and small sharp grits and pebbles. The external elevation on the east side is symmetrical. There is an original 2-light window, set centrally, 1.2m above the external ground surface, 1.22m wide, 1.24m from bottom of sill to lintel. The window has chamfered wooden jambs and mullion and a timber lintel. The window is closed on the inside with boarded shutters.

There are two large openings, spaced 2.87m and 2.68m either side of the central window. These openings were originally 3.05m wide and 3.00m tall, surmounted by large timber lintels. They are both now blocked with framed timber panelling and mortared on the outside. Modern tongue and groove panelled doors have been inserted into the originally wider spaces. These openings once served as the main warehouse doors.

There are openings at either end of the east elevation, more or less centrally disposed between the large openings and the end walls. That on the left (south side) is 1.53m wide with a timber lintel 2.76m above the external ground surface. The opening is now blocked and mortared on the outside. The jambs have been heavily repaired with brick. There would appear to have been a ledge or sill at 590mm above the external ground surface which corresponds to the raised floor of the interior. Brickwork below this sill, however, suggests that this opening accommodated a door with a step down to the external ground. The comparable opening on

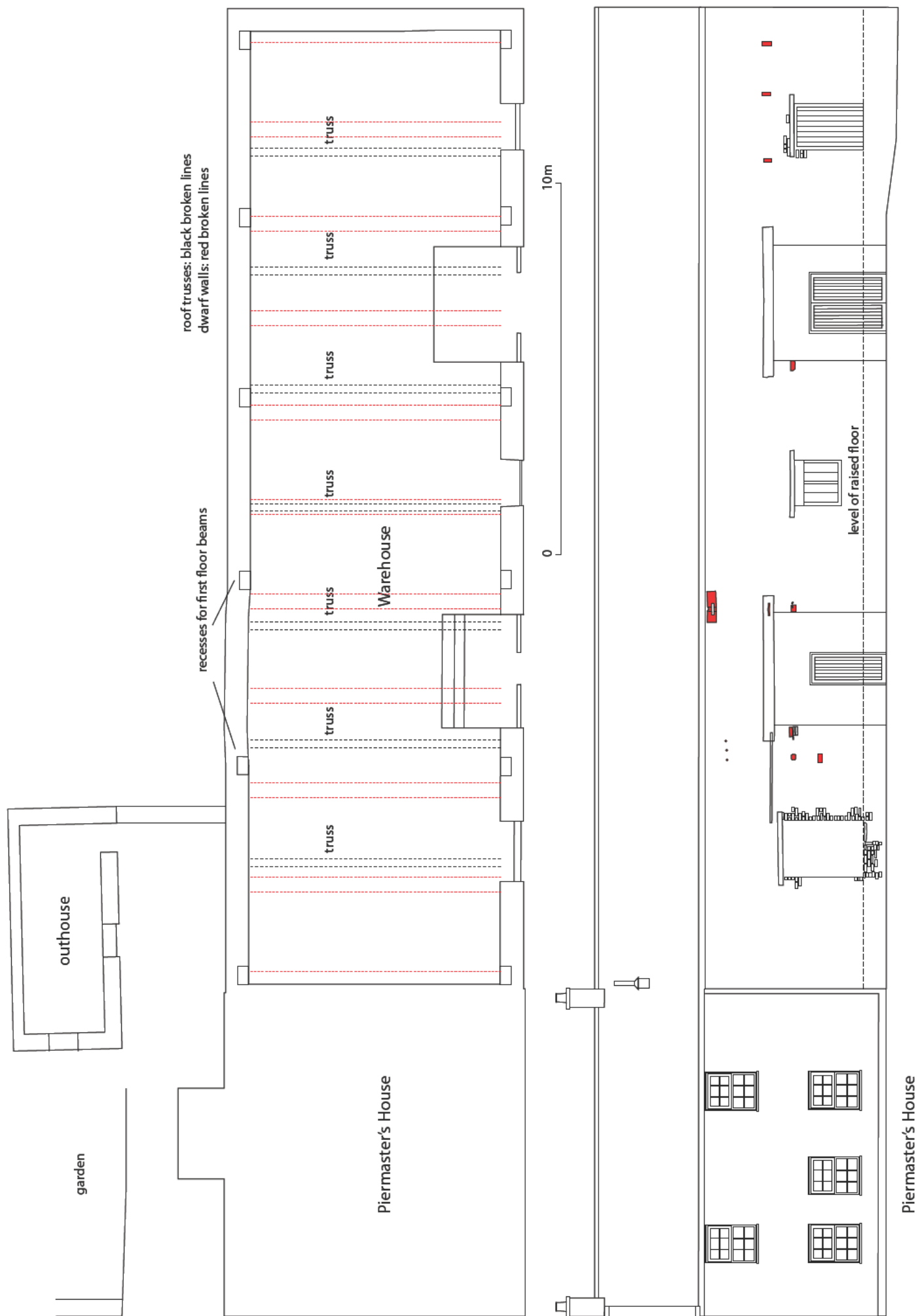


Fig. 17 Prince's Pier warehouse and piermaster's house, 26
plan and elevation

the north side is smaller at 1.24m wide, 1.83m from sill to lintel, with no suggestion of a break in the wall to accommodate a step.

The roof is slated with relatively modern slates. There are two skylights in the east facing pitch at about 5m from each end of the warehouse.

Interior

The walls are rendered with clay and lime mortar, whitewashed. The interior space has been partitioned with stud and chipboard to create office or storage space. There is a stud and chipboard toilet facility, set against the rear wall. Modern pipe work for the toilet and stink-pipe exit the rear wall.

The warehouse as designed would appear to be on two floors. The warehouse is now open from the ground floor to the roof.

The 'ground' floor is raised 600mm above the external ground surface and supported on dwarf walls of rubble schist. The dwarf walls run in parallel from west to east at a spacing of 2.13m. The walls themselves are 406mm wide. The walls carry joists 80mm wide, 150mm tall, spaced at 560mm. The joists support heavy floor boards 200mm by 80mm (8in. by 3in.). At the large, but now blocked, openings in the east wall, the floorboards and joists have been cut away to provide stepped, or perhaps, ramped, access from the external surface to the raised floor. The size of these cut-aways is approximately 3.1m along the wall length and 1.60m to 1.8m in from the wall.

The presence of a former first floor is indicated by a rebate, now filled, at a level of about 2.9m above the lower floorboards. Immediately below this rebate are large recesses, regularly disposed, six along each of the long walls, directly opposite each other. The recesses vary slightly in their dimensions and their heights but are, on average 500mm wide by 650mm tall, framed by lintels and sills. The recesses in the west wall are consistently 350mm higher than those in the east wall. These are beam slots but the recesses are too big to take transverse beams snugly. The offset heights and the large openings may possibly be to facilitate the insertion of beams which could then be chocked in place.

The tops of the walls are 4.95m above the external ground surface. The roof trusses spring from the tops of the west and east walls. There are seven trusses, evenly spaced along the length of the warehouse at 3.18m intervals. There are no trusses against the north and south gables. The style of truss employed here is a king-post type with horizontal tie-beam. Two angled posts spring from the base of the king-post to the principals beneath the upper of

two purlins and vertical posts rise from the tie-beam to the principals to support the lower purlins. The purlins carry rafters at 305mm (12 inch) intervals.

There is a blocked opening with a timber lintel in the east gable. The base of this opening is just below the presumed level of the second floor. There is a second, small blocked opening just above the one previously described. These features may represent a loading hatch in the east gable with a recess for some lifting mechanism.

The Piermaster's house

The Piermaster's house stands attached to the southern end of the warehouse. The house shares the same width as the warehouse and is 8.80m long. There is a porch roughly central to the length of the house on the west (rear) side. There are chimney stacks at each gable of the house and each stack carries two pots. The house has received a considerable amount of modern treatments on its exterior.

The east wall is pebble-dashed above a mortar skirt, 200mm above the ground surface. There are five windows in the east face elevation, three on the ground floor and two on the first floor. Each one is identical, in two lights, each framing a single pane, double-glazed, divided by false glazing bars giving the appearance of six panes arranged three over three. The lower light is fixed, the upper is top hung, casement style; the frames are upvc.

The south wall is pebble-dashed above a 200mm mortar skirt to a height of 2.4m. The remainder of the gable is clad in vertical slates. There is one upvc double-glazed window of the same pattern as those described above in the ground floor to the western side of the south gable façade.

The west wall is pebble-dashed, as is a flat-roof porch of one storey, roughly central to the west façade.

The south end of the piermaster's house is occupied by a single room which extends the width of the house. The north end space is divided. A sitting room faces east and also accommodates a stair to the first floor. A second room faces west and is occupied by a small kitchen.

There is a small structure or outhouse built of random rubble, quarried from the local schist, roughly parallel to the piermaster's house and warehouse on the west side, 2.8m from the house and warehouse. The structure overlaps the south wall of the warehouse but, nevertheless, appears to be associated with the house as a low wall springing from the northern limit of the outhouse extends to the west wall of the warehouse creating a



Fig. 18 Prince's Pier warehouse interior, north end



Fig. 19 Prince's Pier warehouse exterior, main doors

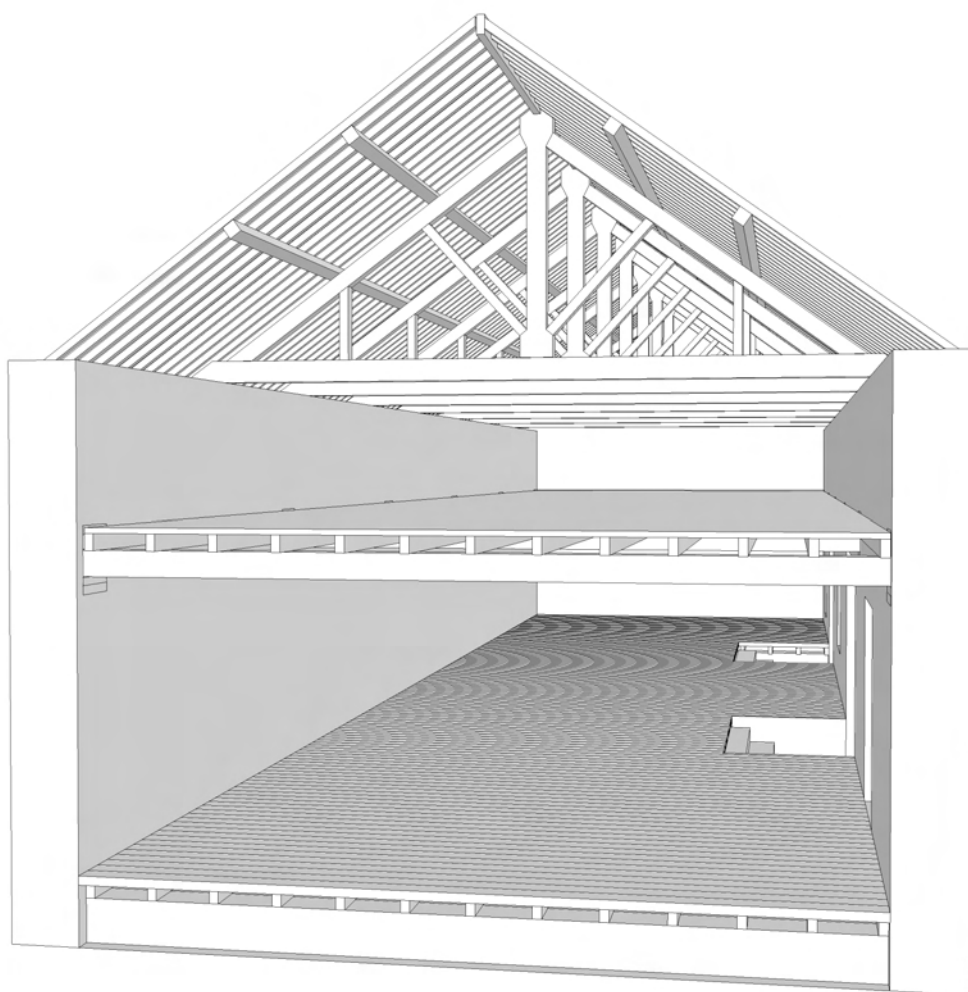


Fig. 20 Prince's Pier warehouse reconstruction: showing first floor beams and roof trusses

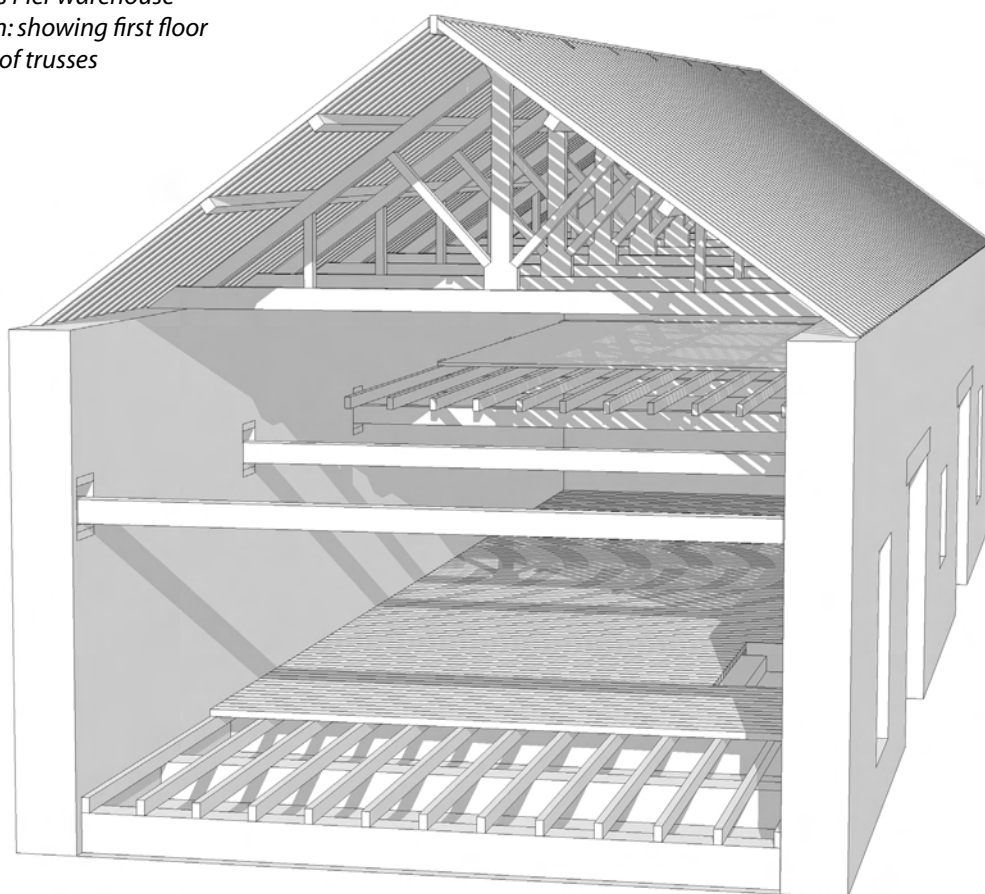


Fig. 21 Prince's Pier warehouse reconstruction: with cutaway of floors to show supports

demarcation between the garden of the house and the back of the warehouse.

The outhouse has two ground floor rooms, one narrow, at the north end, the other more spacious. There is a blocked window in the south wall and the indication of a blocked opening at first floor level, suggesting a small loft. The structure may have been a coal store, outside toilet, or both.

Access to the Pier Masters House and Prince's Pier

The piermaster's house is approached from Water Street/Packet Street through an impressive, if vernacular, gateway, 4.5m wide. The gate pillars comprise massive squared blocks and the access is flanked by a contemporary, random rubble, schist wall. The road is approximately 25m long between the gate and the pier-master's house.

The open area on the surface of the wharf between the warehouse and the wharf wall

There is an open space between the warehouse and the sea wall, on the east side which measures 12.3m at the northern end and 14m at the south eastern corner of the pier-master's house. The width of the open space between the south wall of the house and the sea wall overlooking Porth y Wrach is 10m. Tram-lines once ran across this surface onto the iron pier in the early twentieth century (see fig. 13). An

additional storeroom stood against the east wall in the 1940s.

Three bollards stand close to the eastern edge of the wharf at the south-east corner. A crane stands near the edge of the wharf on, or close to, the position in which it is recorded in 1889.

The date of the wharf and warehouse

The stone wharf was most likely built around 1837-8. The argument for this will be found under the heading 'The Davies' Wharf and Prince's Pier' (p.13). The warehouse and piermaster's house were built somewhat later, possibly in the 1840s but more probably in the 1850s. The style of the warehouse is in character with other commercial/industrial structures in the immediate vicinity - the Davies Packet Street warehouses (1828-1840s) and the Edward Edwards foundry (1838). One significant difference is that the Davies and Edwards buildings have hipped roofs, whereas the Prince's Pier warehouse has a gabled roof. Nevertheless, the roof trusses in the Prince's Pier warehouse are very similar, in their distinctive design, to those in the Davies Packet Street warehouses and, also, to the Davies private house, Min y Don, which stands adjacent. Min y Don was built in the mid-1840s; the Packet Street warehouses were re-roofed at about the same time, and certainly before 1857.



Fig. 22 Prince's Pier, piermaster's house and Porth y Wrach from south

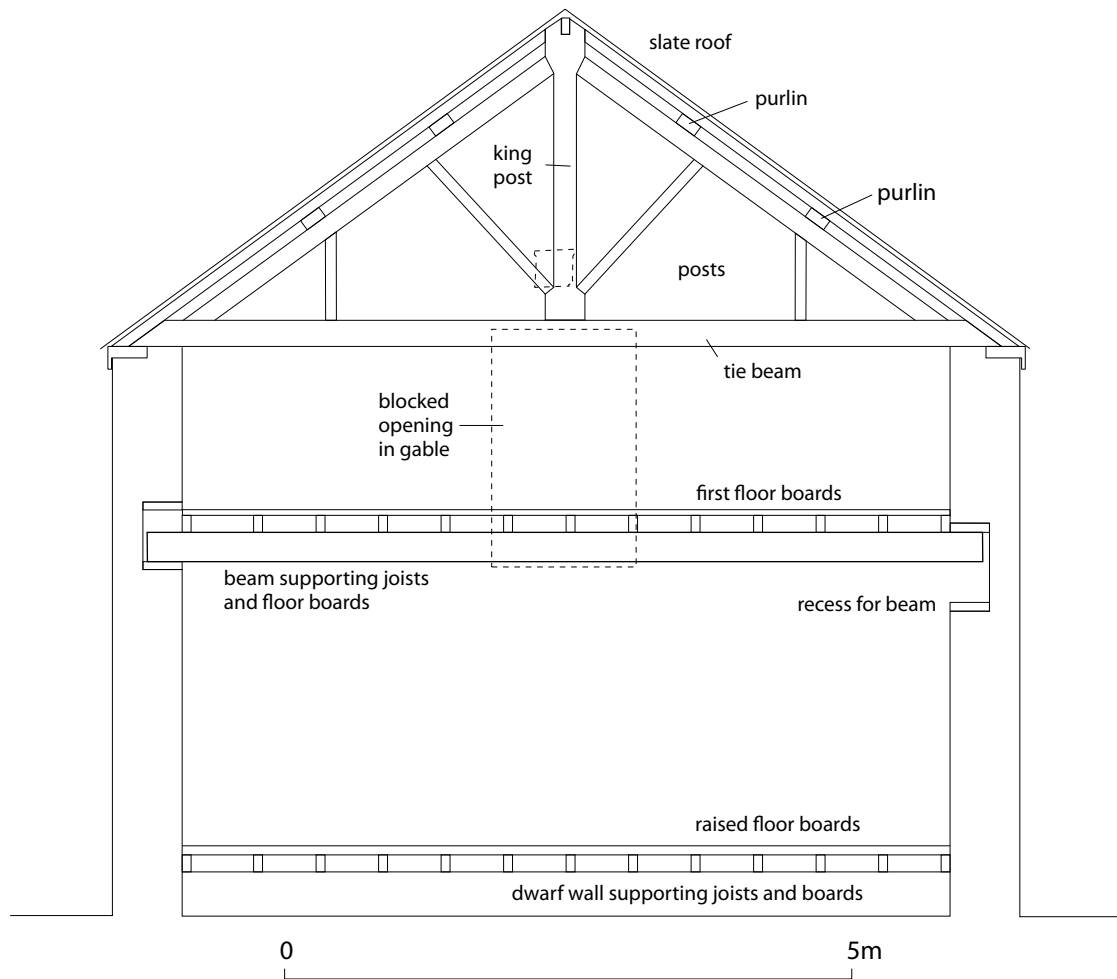


Fig.23 Prince's Pier warehouse cross-section



Fig.24 Prince's Pier warehouse exterior, east side

Summary and recommendations

Historical summary and assessment of significance

The wharf now known as Prince's Pier with its warehouse and pier master's house is a visible and significant component of the historic Menai Bridge waterfront.

The wharf was built in around 1838 and the warehouse was added a little later, possibly the 1840s but perhaps, more probably, in the 1850s. The wharf was built to facilitate the commercial expansion of Richard Davies and Sons who were importing goods and materials, including timber, to their Packet Street warehouses, adjacent to the wharf. During the 1840s Messrs Davies bought and managed several North America ships, carrying emigrants to North America and the Southern States, exporting slates to New Orleans, Boston and other destinations and regularly returning to the Menai Bridge wharf with cargoes of timber from Quebec, Nova Scotia and new Brunswick. During the busiest years, 1846 to 1848, Davies ships made fifty voyages, thirty-three of which used the Menai Bridge wharf.

After 1849, the emphasis of Davies shipping turned to long haul destinations in South America, the

Pacific and the Indian Ocean, using the larger ports of Cardiff, Liverpool, Plymouth and London more regularly. Nevertheless, the North American timber trade was not neglected and a steady procession of, on average, three voyages a year, continued to bring Canadian timber to Menai Bridge up to 1865. The last big Davies ship to use the wharf was the Lord Stanley, which sailed out of Menai Bridge, bound for Montevideo, on 9th September 1868,

At this time, 1866 or earlier, that part of the wharf facing the Straits, with its warehouse and offices, was sub-let to the City of Dublin Steam Packet Company. The City of Dublin company, and its successors, continued to operate steam packets from the wharf until 1904 when the new St. George's pier was built nearby. In 1873, new facilities for steamboat passengers were established on the wharf with the provision of an iron pier and floating pontoon. This was the 'Prince's Pier', the name of which has subsequently been associated with the adjacent part of the wharf.

In 1901 the Menai Bridge Urban District Council acquired the rights to a lease in the pier and in 1967 bought the site outright.

Fig. 25 Prince's Pier from the Menai Straits



Recent modifications have been made to the wharf and warehouse and inappropriate treatments have been applied, in particular to the pier master's house, where modern pebbledash and upvc windows completely mask the original structure. The large warehouse doors and certain of the original openings which face the Straits have been blocked. Accretions, such as the additional structure applied to the face of the warehouse in the 1940s have been removed but have left some trace of their former presence on the eastern elevation.

Nevertheless, many of these modifications and treatments are superficial and reversible. Notwithstanding, the wharf and warehouse have retained much of their original historic character and contribute very significantly to the atmosphere and character of this waterfront landscape. The immediate proximity of other structures of similar date and related function and the historic depth of the landscape within which these structures sit, contribute very considerable group value to the wharf and warehouse. These related structures include the Edward Edwards foundry built in 1838, the Davies warehouses on Packet Street, built 1828 and 1840s, Min y Don, the Davies family house, built in the 1840s and the Bangor ferry landing at Porth y Wrach.

It is difficult to overstate the significance of the developments which were taking place in Menai Bridge (and elsewhere) during the first half of the nineteenth century. This was a period of transition which transformed Menai Bridge between 1826 and 1900. The catalyst was the construction of the suspension bridge which brought an increase in population and a demand for goods and services. The driving force, however, was the energy, enthusiasm and entrepreneurial acumen of a new

radical, Non-Conformist, middle class, typified by the Davies family.

Project Menai's proposal is that the warehouse on Prince's Pier should become a museum and interpretational facility which presents the history and achievements of this period, in the context of the Menai Straits. The proposal has been generated from within the community and it is entirely appropriate that the story of the growth and development of the town, the achievements – engineering, mercantile and social – should be presented at the wharf which was itself at the heart of these achievements and part of this story.

Recommendations

It is recommended that, should the proposal be accepted, consideration should be given to retaining visible features of the historic structure of the wharf and warehouse wherever possible, so that the waterfront and warehouse character might be retained.

In particular, consideration should be given to the retention of those features which represent components of the function of the building as a warehouse and of its structure.

Consideration should also be given to removing the modern treatments from the exterior walls of the pier master's house and replacing the upvc windows with wooden sash windows.

Should any development take place on the site, consideration should be given to making provision for a drawn and photographic record at an appropriate level of any original features which might be revealed or, alternatively, covered or compromised.

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