



A B E R A E R O N
1 8 0 7 - 2 0 0 7

ABERAERON TOWN TRAIL



Celebrating our Heritage



Heritage
Treftadaeth

LOTTERY FUNDED
ARIENNIR GAN Y LOTERI

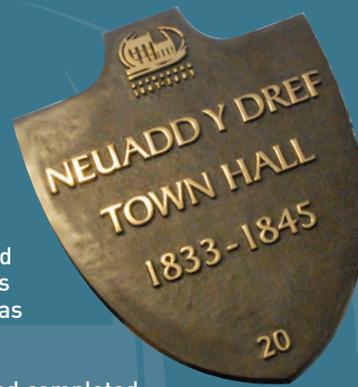
ABERAERON TOWN TRAIL

Welcome to our Town Trail which was opened in 2007, by Lord Elystan Morgan, to celebrate the Bicentenary of the passing of a Private Act of Parliament. This Act allowed the building of the harbour by The Reverend Alban Thomas Jones Gwynne, Lord of the Manor of Llyswen, also known as Aberayron.

By 1811 William Green of Aberystwyth and Edward Ellis had completed the work of constructing the harbour. This was the beginning of the town of Aberaeron as you see it today.

The Town Trail map will show you the route to each plaque, while this guide gives you a brief history of each building, as well as some of the landmarks you pass.

Before you start your walk, a word on the architecture you will see. It was thought that Nash had a hand in the design of Aberaeron but that theory has been disproved. Edward Haycock, an architect from Shrewsbury, was employed by Reverend Alban Thomas Gwynne's son, Colonel Alban Gwynne, in the 1830s to design the planned part of town around Alban Square, in what was one of the first planned towns in Wales.



1 GENERAL STOREHOUSE

Thought to be one of the oldest buildings along the Quay. In the C19th it stored goods brought in by ship and was later used as a mortuary.

When the harbour was first built a plaque was erected to commemorate its completion. In time it disappeared but in 2007 a replica was erected and if you walk to the end of the pier you will see it on the lookout.

To the north of the harbour entrance, the Reverend Alban Thomas Gwynne built a row of houses for the labourers employed in building the harbour, called Mynachdy Row, though locals named them Bedlam Barracks and in 1818 a school was built. All were lost to the sea in the late C19th.



Harbour Entrance, Aberayron.

2 HARBOURMASTER'S HOUSE

This building was the first building to be built along the new quay in about 1812. The height of the building made it easy to keep a lookout for smugglers. The ground floor was a public house and up until the 1950s it was known as the Red Lion.

3 SPILLERS FLOUR WAREHOUSE

Originally built as a house it was reportedly destroyed in a fire. A warehouse was erected in its place and in the early 1900s was owned by Spillers and used for the storage of flour transported by steam ships from the main outlet in Cardiff.

4 STEAM PACKET COMPANY

The Steam Navigation Company was established here in 1863 but went into liquidation when its ship the Prince Cadwgan, captained by John Evans, Milford House, was lost in 1876. The Aberayron Steam Packet Company was established in 1877 and ran steam ships on the milk run to Bristol. Payments were made at the harbourmaster's office until December 1916. Steam ships continued to visit the harbour up until the 1920s.

By 1819 there were five houses on Quay Parade; two were to become taverns – No 4, the Hope Inn, and No 10, the Swan Inn.

5 WAREHOUSE AND COAL YARD

Built around 1840 and used as a warehouse to store chippings, as well as a ships' chandlery and a coal wharf.

On the quay near this building was where Carriage Bach, also known as the Aeron Express, operated. It was an aerial carriage propelled by hand-operated winches, and was in use from 1880 up until the 1920s.



6 MILFORD HOUSE

Originally the site of Aberaeron Isaf (Lower Aberaeron) farmhouse this was the home of Captain John Evans who built the Carriage Bach to transport workers across the harbour to South Beach where the shipyards and his sawmill were situated, after the main bridge was destroyed by a flood.

Since 1970 Milford House has been known locally as the Stamp House when it appeared on a series of stamps of British Rural Architecture. It was also at one time a tavern known as Milford Tavern while the house attached to it by the upper floor, was once a tavern called the Ship on Launch.



The Inner Harbour and car park are known as Pwll Cam and an annual fair has been held here on 13 November since the early C19th.

As you cross the wooden bridge, stop and look inland and notice the row of houses in front of you, called Portland Place. The best example of the town's Georgian style is considered to be the large house at the left end of the row, Portland House.

As you walk along the footpath you will notice the concrete remains of the landing stage of Carriage Bach. At the join of the footpath and the single track lane you come to a row of three houses in Vulcan Place. This was where blacksmiths lived and forged fittings for the shipbuilders.

Walking on, you come to a house facing the Green named Trelawney. Built as the Dolphin Inn by shipbuilder John Harries, better known as Siôn Harri. He and his sons are mentioned on the plaque erected on the Green in tribute to Aberaeron's maritime heritage. He had his shipyard in front of the house and he used to pay his employees from its side window, nearest the harbour, hoping they would then enter by the front door to spend their wages in his inn!

Sir Geraint Evans, the world renowned opera singer, had a long association with Aberaeron from early childhood and made Trelawney his family home in 1966.

7 WEIGH HOUSE

Between the years 1800 –1900 it was used for weighing lime. The lime was burnt with coal in the nearby limekilns. The two grass-topped humps are the only remains of the limekilns now to be seen.

Behind the Weigh House at the side of the car park is the house Neptune which was the home of the other shipbuilding family, David and Evan Jones, who had their shipyard here.

8 ENID STORES AND COAL YARD

Another shipyard was situated here, but known as Enid Stores and Coal Yard. This is now the headquarters of the Yacht Club.

Shipbuilding yards developed in the 1830s on this side of the harbour, known as



South Beach, and expanded throughout the 1840s and 1850s declining rapidly from 1866. There was also a steam sawmill and a sawpit at the south end of South Beach.

9 WESTGATE TOLL HOUSE

In about 1813, this was the last of the three Aberaeron turnpikes to be built. In 1843 two of Aberaeron's three toll houses were attacked by Rebecca Rioters protesting against the Poor Law and the payment of tithes and tolls. However, it has not been established which two toll houses were attacked.



Note the names on this street, Greenland and Newfoundland Terraces, indicating some of the destinations of Aberaeron mariners.

Before turning right, up Panteg Road, notice on the opposite corner of Panteg, the side of a big house called Pengarreg Fawr. The back of the house faces the road – apparently because it was built before the main road was developed and hence is facing “the wrong way”. The outbuildings were restored in the 1990s and are now a Craft Centre. A walk around the inner courtyard of the centre shows the quality of the restoration work.

10 BRITISH SCHOOL

Opened in 1873 by the Nonconformists, it was financed from voluntary subscriptions and proceeds from local concerts.

On your left is Holy Trinity Church which opened in 1872. It was erected on the site of the old Chapel of Ease built in 1839 for the English speaking families of the area and designed by Edward Haycock. Holy Trinity's chancel and tower were added later and the church you see today was completed by 1900.

At the main road turn right and walk along the pavement of Portland Place until you come to Portland House which was built by Benjamin Evans in 1855. He typified the people who were making up the new town of Aberaeron – a farmer, turned trader. Turn right, walk alongside the river and about 50 yards / 45 metres after the bridge there are some seats. Sit a moment and look over the river at the buildings opposite, as this is the best view of the Industrial Area. These buildings are explained under Plaque 14.



When you reach the footbridge known as Lovers' Bridge you can shorten your walk by crossing it and going straight to Plaque 13.

To continue to plaque 11 keep walking along the path alongside the river. This path takes you through a field known as Cae Ffynnon Waun, though known to locals as Cae Ffynnon Wîn (field of the wine well).

11 DOLHALOG COTTAGES

Here are believed to be three of the oldest houses still standing in Aberaeron, their exact date is unknown but it is believed that dwellings have been on this spot for some centuries. The lowest of the cottages is a typical example of a mud or cob built house with a thatched roof which has now been covered by corrugated iron sheets. This was a very common form of construction in the Aeron valley.

12 SOUTHGATE TOLL HOUSE

This toll house was said to be originally situated near the Feathers Hotel, in the middle of town, but there is no evidence, to date, to verify this.



Just past the playing fields at the bottom of Vicarage Hill, on your right, you will see a modern local government building which stands on the site of the old Railway station and yard. Opened in 1911 the coming of the railway meant the decline of the harbour of Aberaeron. The railway was closed by Beeching's Axe in 1963 and the last train left in 1965.

On the other side of the bridge on your left are buildings on the site called Dolau Aeron in what was Aberaeron Uchaf [Upper Aberaeron]. In 1769 the earliest known reference by a visitor to an inn at Aberaeron was made about the one standing here. It closed in about 1815 and the large house called Dolaeron was built in 1852. Carry on a short distance until you come to the Memorial Hall which was opened on 1 April 1925.

As you enter the path leading through Parc y Fro you see on your left, Aberaeron Sports Club. The tennis club was opened in 1882 just seven years after the establishment of the modern game in 1875.

13 CHALYBEATE WELL

Known in Welsh as "Ffynnon Goch" (Red Well), so called because the water was impregnated with iron. A circular shelter was built over the spring in 1881 and visitors were encouraged to drink the waters.

14 INDUSTRIAL AREA

Now private dwellings, these buildings were the site of a woollen mill, a forge, a tannery, a wood turner's workshop and a wheelwright. Four water wheels served these industries.

The forge was established in 1850 to produce reaping hooks for local farmers, and then the famous Aberaeron Shovel. Blocks of steel were hammered by a large waterwheel-operated hammer, known to everyone as Y Morthwyl Mawr, into the unique shape of the Aberaeron Shovel, which is the inspiration for the shape of our plaques. The noise from y Morthwyl Mawr could be heard around town and when it started the children would run to see Dafis y Gôf swinging from a chair suspended from the ceiling as he fashioned the hot metal under the massive hammer.

The woollen mill continued producing tweeds and blankets up until 1950. As mentioned, the best view of these buildings is from the other side of the river.

Walk past the entrance to the Industrial Area and note the second house on your left called Madras. The Madras was a 3-masted barque bought by the shipbuilder David Jones and his son Captain Evan Jones. On 8 March 1891, captained by Evan Jones, it sailed from

Penarth loaded with coal for Amboina in Indonesia, intending to trade there for the next two years. No news was ever heard of it again and a year later on 8 March 1892 a memorial service was held for the 13 Aberaeron and 1 Aberarth sailors who had been lost. Madras is one of many houses around town named after ships which were built in or sailed from Aberaeron or were captained by Aberaeron men.

On your right is Peniel Independent Chapel, built in 1833. It originally had its entrance at the back in Peniel Lane but it was reversed to its present position in Water Street to discourage worshippers from exiting the chapel and entering the tavern directly opposite.

15 NAVIGATION SCHOOL

The Peniel Lane Aberaeron Commercial and Navigation School was one of three known navigation schools in the area. Between 1817 and 1864 a second was based in the buildings of the Industrial Area, and the third in Henfynyw.

At the end of Albert Street on the right hand side there is a large building called Compton House which was once the town's post office.



Opposite, on the Square Field side you will see a statue of a Welsh Cob.

Square Field or Cae Sgwâr is, to many locals, as integral to the town as the harbour. It was, in the past, the venue for cycle races, eisteddfodau, agricultural shows, and a photographer's studio.

Today it is used for the annual carnival, football matches, festivals, fairs and markets.

16 FEATHERS HOTEL

This hotel was built in about 1815 by William Lewes of Llanerchaeron and patronised by visiting magistrates. Petty Sessions were held here between 1817 and 1846 before moving to the Town Hall in Market Street



17 ABERAERON POOR HOUSE

This workhouse was opened on 1 June 1839. During the Rebecca Riots of 1843 soldiers were billeted here. It was used as a hospital in 1916 to treat soldiers from the Great War and was known during that time as the Red Cross Hospital. Until recently it was Aberaeron's Cottage Hospital.

18 NORTHGATE TOLL HOUSE

Built in about 1785 this is one of Aberaeron's three toll houses.

19 NATIONAL SCHOOL

Built in 1848 as a national or church school, it is now the Masonic Hall.

You pass on your left the old Siloam Baptist Chapel built in 1878 but long since closed.

As you turn right at the Castle Hotel into Market Street stop at the corner of the Castle Hotel and looking down you will see a stone in the pavement. This stone is the demarcation of the boundary of the two parishes which divide Aberaeron. To the south is the parish of Henfynyw and to the north that of Llanddewi Aberarth.

20 TOWN HALL

Originally the site of Aberayron Ganol (Middle Aberayron) farmhouse, the Town Hall was built between 1833 and 1845. In 1833 it was known as Market Hall but by completion of the building in 1845 it was known as the Town Hall. The first gaul

was situated at the rear with the stocks on the opposite side of the road in front of lanthe House. The ground floor used to have open arches and was used as a market place with goods being sold here well into the C20th.

Opposite is a pub called the Monachty, named after Rev Alban Gwynne's home. As you continue towards plaque 21 you pass the Cadwgan pub, which used to be called Star of Wales, but is now named after the last ship to be built in Aberaeron.

At the Cadwgan look down towards the sea and you see Tabernacle Street and on the right Tabernacle Chapel which was opened in 1833 but underwent many changes in the mid 1800s. In 1850 a gallery was added, with the inscription "Cofiwch y Morwyr" (Remember the Sailors).

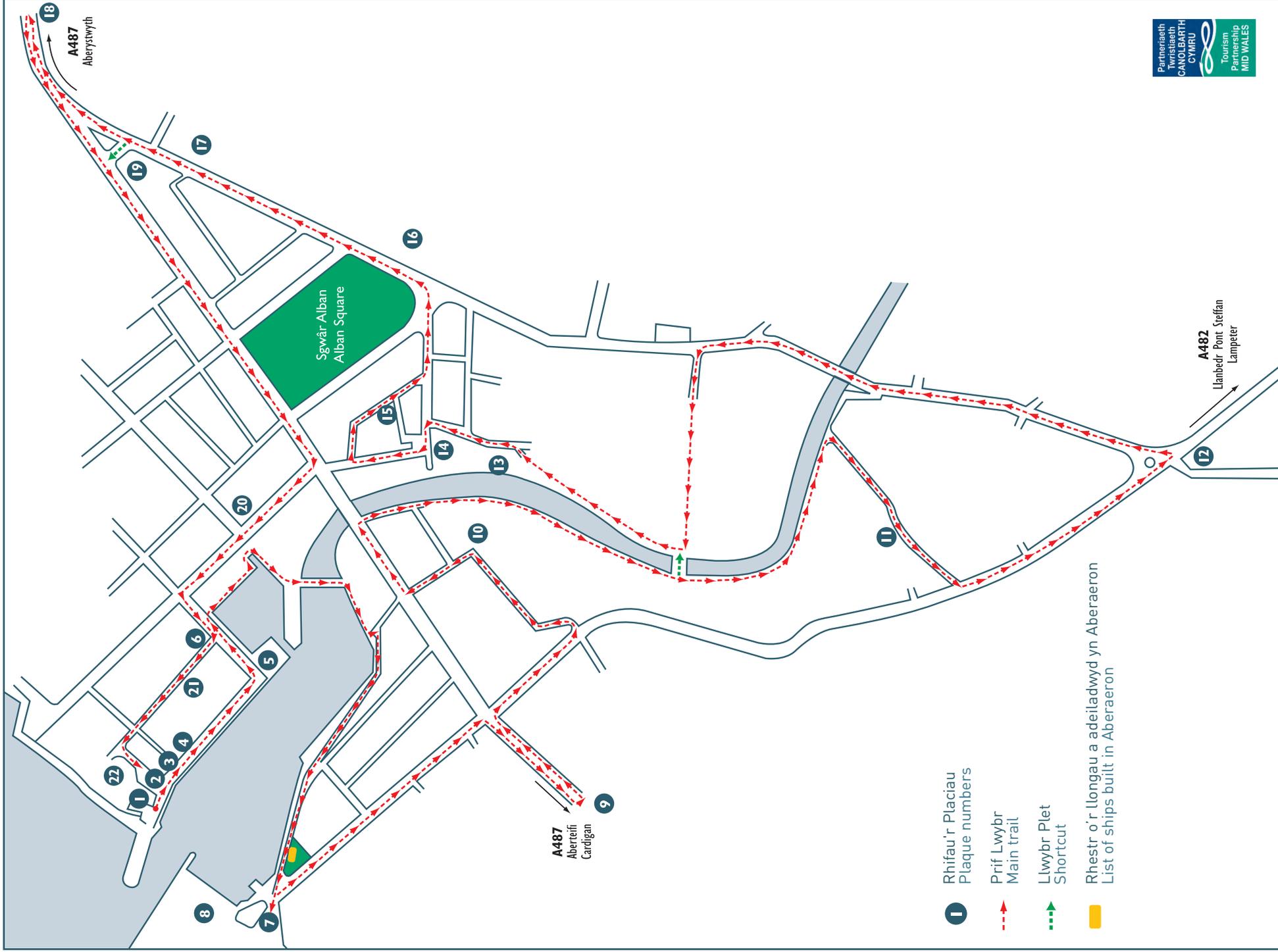
21 BIG STOREHOUSE

Built in 1870 and was at one time used to build rowing boats.

22 PIER COTTAGE

This is said to be one of the oldest houses in Aberaeron but its origins are unknown. Inside, it reportedly has features of the mid 1750s while other locals claim it is much older. It has had a colourful history with many of the characters of the town at one time or another living here.

We hope you have enjoyed your walk, together with this brief history, and thank you for visiting Aberaeron.



Er cof am R. Gareth Owen, am mai ei deithiau ef a ysbrydolodd Lwybr y Dref, ac o ddiolch i'w deulu am eu cyfraniad hael o'i Gronfa Gofio tuag at brosiect y Lwybr a'r Placiau.

In Memory of R Gareth Owen, whose walks inspired this Town Trail, and in gratitude to his family for their generous contribution from his Memorial Fund towards the Town Trail and Plaques Project.