

The Queen's Hotel, Aberystwyth

This was one of the largest, most impressive and most expensive hotels in the county. It was built during the building boom just after the arrival of the railway in Aberystwyth. It was opened on the 1st May, 1866.

The Queen's Hotel was built for was built for the Hafod Hotel Company by George Lumley of Aberystwyth. It had at least 83 bedrooms (some adverts claim 104 bedrooms, with all the visitor's rooms overlooking the sea). Like Savin who built the Castle Hotel, the Hafod Hotel Company went bankrupt in November, 1866 and the Hotel closed. The Mid-Wales Hotel Company soon purchased it and it reopened.

It was sold (with a sitting lessee) in 1876 (or 1877) and taken over by W.H. Palmer.

It was not very successful and during the early part of the 20th century its rooms were used for a variety of purposes.

It was used by the University for art classes after the fire in the College in 1885

It was used by the University as a college hostel from 1892.

In January 1914, it was purchased by the Cambrian Railway Co (see Welsh Gazette)

It was auctioned in 1913 and was improved (central heating added) in 1915. Further improvements were made in 1922 and the lift was added by 1926.

After a flood in Alexandra Hall in 1938, some of the women students stayed there.

During the Second World War it was used by the R.A.F., and at the very end of the war it was used as a Maternity Hospital.

In 1951 it became the offices for Cardiganshire County Council and a police station.

1863

Request by Hafod Hotel Co for land at Victoria Terrace

(Notices of the Aberystwyth Town Council, NLW, Aberystwyth Borough Records, C1b (1852-1874), 12.5.1863)

1864

The combination of stone used in the external walls forms a most elegant contrast. They are now sufficiently high above the Terrace to evidence the vast proportions and the entire character of this noble building will be a great ornament to the town.

(Aberystwyth Observer, 9.7.1864)

1864

The Queen's Hotel Croquet and Bowling Ground is now open.

(Aberystwyth Observer, 19.8.1864)

1864

A large girder for the centre of the Queen's Hotel was made at the Aberystwyth Foundry. It was part of a full charge (4 tons) of casting which completely illuminated the lower part of the town.

(Aberystwyth Observer, 10.12.1864)

1864

Col. Pryse fixed the inscription tablet over the principal entrance in 1864 and it was opened in 1866.

(Anon, (1874), Morgan's New Guide to Aberystwyth and Neighbourhood, p. 9)

1864

Queen's Hotel, Balcombe, J.B., Hafod Hotel Co. Ltd., managing director, Aberystwyth,

(Morgan, T.O., New Guide to Aberystwyth and its Environs, (4th edition), p. 149, (1864), advert)

1865

A letter from a 'spirit of Penbryn House' [the Bath House] was published by the Observer, defending

the building against accusations of ugliness, and compared it to the new Queen's Hotel which was said to have sacrificed comfort to appearance

(Aberystwyth Observer, 2.12.1865)

1865

The scaffolding has been removed. The Prince of Wales was invited to open it and stay there for a few days [but he did neither]. The report includes a list of suppliers of the furnishings and fittings. The sea wall to the north of the hotel has pipes in it to convey sea water to the suite of baths to be erected to the north of the hotel which is to have 40 bedrooms linked to the Queen's Hotel by an elegant bridge with a glazed enclosure.

(Aberystwyth Observer, 30.12.1865)

1866

Advert: 'The Carpenters on strike are requested to take their tools away forthwith. Signed, J.B.Balcombe'.

The committee of joiners and carpenters asked for 4 shillings a week [more?]. Balcombe said he would reduce their pay by 2 shillings. As it was, he had been keeping all the men on at full pay, even during the reduced winter working hours. The strike was referred to a 'Rinderpest' - a virulent infectious cattle disease like the one that was affecting the country's animals at the time. (The Council workmen's wages were reduced from 2/8d to 2/6d per day in 1867)

(Aberystwyth Observer, 10.2.1866, 20.4.1867)

1866

The strike was called off when Balcombe threatened to bring in London carpenters.

(Aberystwyth Observer, 24.2.1866)

1866

The hotel was opened, as planned, on the 1st May, 1866

(Aberystwyth Observer, 5.5.1866)

Report of the Hafod Hotel Company which is to be wound up

(Aberystwyth Observer, 23.11.1866, Aberystwyth Observer, 26.1.1867)

1867

Article about the new company, the Mid Wales Hotel Company Ltd which consists of many of the same people as the former company. The Queen's has been completed except for the five rooms for salt water baths. Description of the building. It is now managed by Mr and Mrs W.H. Palmer, late of the Royal Hotel, Norwood (Crystal Palace).

(Aberystwyth Observer, 16.2.1867, 2.3.1867)

The hotel is illuminated by its own gas supply

(Aberystwyth Observer, 6.4.1867)

1867

The Queen's Hotel formerly belonging to the Hafod Hotel Company has been purchased by a new company and registered as the Mid-Wales Hotel Company. The hotel contains lofty drawing, coffee rooms and library; spacious and elegant private sitting rooms, all facing the magnificent Bay of Cardigan; 104 bedrooms; also a central assembly-room and two billiard rooms.

(Black's Guide to North and South Wales, (Edinburgh, 1867), p. iii (corrections for 1867)

1860s

Conveyance of land to John Barton Balcombe now forming a portion of the site of the Queen's Hotel in exchange for other lands and in consideration of the erection by the grantee of 180 ft in length of the new Terrace wall and conveyance of land in Albert Place from Balcombe to the Corporation. [It was common for the documents for the conveyance of land to be much later than the decision to convey].(Notices of the Aberystwyth Town Council, NLW, Aberystwyth Borough Records, C1b (1852-1874), 6.3.1869)

One of the finest buildings of its class.

(The Times, 19.2.1869)

1869

The Queen's Hotel is situate north of the present Terrace, and is probably one of the finest and most substantial structures of the the kind anywhere to be found. It is built on designs furnished by Messrs Hayward and Davis, London architects, to whose genius and ingenuity it does the greatest credit. This spendid Hotel was started by a company of which J.B. Balcombe, Esq., was the Managing Director. To the indomitable courage and energy of this gentleman the Hotel owes its completion, and the company the triumph of tiding over possibly one of the most violent panics that ever attacked the English money market. The Hotel contains a Drawing Room, Dining Rooms besides 16 private Sitting Rooms fitted up with the most admirable taste, and 104 bedrooms. There are also two Billiard Rooms and Coffee Room, situate in the east end of the building, and a library. One of the most attractive features of the Hotel is an exceptionally beautiful Assembly or Concert Room, in which the majority of polite entertainments with which our town is favoured are given. Here also, during the season, are held weekly musical and literary meetings, under the title of 'Tuesday Popular Entertainments', which are a source of delightful recreation to the educated residents and visitors, who contribute, in their voluntary aid, to the success by which they are constantly crowned. (Morgan, T.O., (1869), New Guide to Aberystwyth and its Environs, p. 16)

1869

Opened May, 1866. The Queen's Hotel is a noble building, erected with Native stone, embedded in hydrolic lime, with the special object of securing a residence warm in the winter and cool in the summer. The Hotel has a frontage of 154 feet, containing Coffee Room; Dining Room, (54 feet long); and elegant Drawing Room; and a spacious Private Sitting Room on the ground floor. Nine well furnished Private Sitting Rooms on the first floor - all of which, together with the principal Bedrooms on the second and third floors, face and are within 50 yards of the sea. The building is also 84 feet in depth, thus Sleeping Apartments are available on its four sides - either to or from the Sea. The quadrangle is fitted up with an elegant Assembly or Concert Room, 63 feet by 31 feet. Library, two billiard Rooms, One Hundred and Four Bedrooms... The HOTEL is replete with every modern appliance; and owing to its protected position on the North and North East, the character of the structure, and to its being situate on the best and most healthy part of the Marine Terrace, it will be found to be a warm and comfortable residence at all seasons of the year.

(Morgan, T.O., (1869), New Guide to Aberystwyth and its Environs, Advert p. [166])

1874

The Queen's Hotel has its own gas (by Messrs J.R. Porter of Lincoln) [because of the high cost of the local company's gas]

(Anon, (1874), Morgan's New Guide to Aberystwyth and Neighbourhood, p. 20)

The Queen's Hotel was up for sale, and was, at the time, leased to W.H. Palmer of the Hoop Hotel, Cambridge for seven years, under a lease dated 1.1.1875 at £1,500 p.a. The sale particulars describe it in detail.

Ground Floor: Smoking lounge, Billard Room, Bar, Coffee Room, Dining Hall, Drawing Room, Recreation Room, small Library, 4 visitor's bed chambers, Assembly Room with platform and green rooms, 3 WCs, cloak room, store room, private office, waiter's pantry, entrance hall.

First Floor: 19 bedrooms and 2 secondry bed chambers (one double), 3 sitting rooms, bathrooms (number unspecified), 5 lavatories, waiter's pantry

Second Floor: 30 bedrooms (5 double), 4 lavatories, 2 bathrooms

Third floor: 27 bedrooms (5 double), 5 servant's dormitories for 10 beds, 3 WCs, hot closet, luggage room, lofts over

Basement: Kitchen, Scullery, Still room, larder, dairy, Servant's hall, housekeeper's storeroom, knife room, 7 servant's bedchambers, wine store, 3 WCs, laundry, scullery. Bodega bar with two bedrooms, sitting room and WC and Billiard room

(Ceredigion Archives, Hafod collection, box 10)

1875

Queen's Hotel, Hotel, posting house, Assembly Rooms, Marine Terrace, Aberystwyth. Additional information: Queen's Hotel, Aberystwith, Limited. This hotel is a noble detached building of native

stone, embedded in hydraulic lime, where by has been secured a residence warm in winter and cool in summer. The hotel was opened in 1866. It has a frontage of 154 feet; and each of its Public & private sitting rooms face, and are within 50 yards of, the sea. Table d.'hote at 7 o'clock (Worrall's Directory, 1875)

1877

Taken over by Palmer on the 5th November 1877 (It had been in his family for 36 years when it was sold in 1913) [This doesn't correspond with the date above]

(Sale Particulars, 1913 (NLW, Sale Catalogues, Cardiganshire, 53; Bills of sale 1854-1937 (5 bundles), PRO, KB114, KB16, J11)

1880

Queen's hotel, Palmer, W.H., hotel proprietor, Marine Terrace, Aberystwyth, (Heywood, A., Guide to Aberystwyth, p. j, (1880), advert)

1880

Queen's Hotel, Palmer, William Henry, hotel manager, Marine Terrace, Aberystwyth, (Slater's Directory, (1880)

1884

Queen's Hotel, Palmer, W.H., hotel proprietor; Jenkins, John, livery and posting stables, Marine Terrace, Aberystwyth, (Anon, Guide to Aberystwyth and its Environs, p. B, (1884)

1884

Queen's Hotel, Palmer, William Henry, Hotel, Marine Terrace, Aberystwyth, (Kelly's directory, (1884)

1885

11 rooms used by the college for art classes after the College fire.

1895

Queen's Hotel, Palmer, W.H., Victoria Terrace, (Thorough Guide, p. adverts section, p 57, (1895), advert)

1900

Same Proprietor as the Belle Vue Hotel in about 1900.

(Anon, (about 1900), Peeps at Picturesque Wales, Aberystwyth and District, (Cosmopolitan Advertising Company)

1900 (about)

Queen's Hotel, Palmer, W.H., Hotellier, Marine Terrace, Aberystwyth, (Peeps at Picturesque Wales , p. 12, (1900 (about), advert)

1901

Queen's Hotel, Palmer, W.H., hotel proprietor, Marine Terrace, Aberystwyth, (Ward Lock's guide to Aberystwyth etc, p. adverts section, p. 2, (1901), advert)

1902

Queen's Hotel, Palmer, W.H., hotel proprietor, Marine Terrace, Aberystwyth, (Anon, A Souvenir of Aberystwyth, p. 37, (1902), advert)

1903

Queen's Hotel, Palmer, W.H., hotel proprietor, Marine Terrace, Aberystwyth, (May, George W., Aberystwyth, p. 6, (1903), advert)

1905

Queen's hotel, Palmer, W.H., hotel proprietor, Marine Terrace, Aberystwyth, (May, George W., Aberystwyth, pp. 1, 6, (1905), advert)

1905

Petty Sessions: Aberystwyth; number on list: 31; name of premises: Queen's Hotel; Parish / Place: Aberystwyth; Licensee: Palmer, William, H.; owner or tenant : owner ; registered owner : W.H. Palmer, Queen's Hotel; free or tied: free; tied to: [blank]; type of licence: full; on or off licence: on; number of licenced days per week: 7. (1905 list)

1913

For sale. Description of the building, floor by floor, with plan of the land, and photographs of the site, external view and view of the Assembly Rooms. The hotel building was lot 1.

total: 90 bedrooms, 2 baths, 13 lavatories.

Ground Floor: Smoking lounge, Billard Room, Coffee Room, Dining Hall, Drawing Room, Recreation Room, small Library, 4 bedrooms, Assembly Room with stage and dressing rooms.

First Floor: 27 bedrooms, 3 sitting rooms, children's nursery, 2 hot and cold baths, 6 lavatories, staff room, linen closet, house maid's pantry

Second Floor: 34 bedrooms, 4 lavatories, linen closet, house maid's pantry

Third floor: 29 bedrooms, 3 lavatories, linen closet, house maid's pantry

Basement: Domestic offices, Public bar and vaults with separate entrance.

General: heated with radiators, lighted with electricity

Lot 2: land opposite the hotel used as a tennis Lawn and gardens, suitable for building.

Lot 3 stables, motor and carriage accommodation with 6 room cottage, laundry and smithy, 1,260 square yards.

Lot 4 Kitchen garden, 1,410 square yards

Lot 5 Kitchen garden, 2,560 square yards

(Sale Particulars, 1913 (NLW, Sale Catalogues, Cardiganshire, 53; Illustrated particulars with plans and conditions of sale of the Queen's Hotel, Aberystwyth, Cooke Bros and Roberts. Catalogue and map, 1913 (NLW Cards. 053 filing cabinets)

1914

Purchased by Cambrian Coast Hotels

1926

Queen's Hotel, Anon, hotel proprietor, Marine Terrace, Aberystwyth, Tea room, (Anon, What to See and How to See it, p. 49, (1926), advert)

1926

Queen's Hotel, Jervis, W.H., hotel manager, Marine Terrace, Aberystwyth, lift mentioned, (Anon, Official Guide and Souvenir, p. a1, (), advert)

1928

Queen's Hotel, Anon, Hotel proprietor, Marine Terrace, Aberystwyth, Oak Tea Room, (Anon, Parish Magazine for Aberystwyth churches, p. 3, (1928), advert)

1933

Queen's Hotel, Anon, hotel proprietor, Marine Terrace, Aberystwyth, Tea room, (Anon, Aberystwyth, What to See and How to See it, p. 61, (1933), advert)

1934

Queen's Hotel, Anon, tea room manager, Marine Terrace, Aberystwyth, (Anon, What to see and How to see it, p. 63, (1934), advert)

1934

Queen's Hotel, Anon, hotel manager, Marine Terrace, Aberystwyth, (Anon, Official Guide and Souvenir, p. 80, (1934), advert, photograph)

1935

Queen's Hotel (Cambrian Coast Hotels Co. Ltd.), Anon, hotel manager, Marine Terrace, Aberystwyth, (Anon, Official Guide and Souvenir, p. 82, (1935), advert, photograph)

1937?

Queen's Hotel, Anon, Cambrian Coast Hotels Co., Ltd., hotel manager, Marine Terrace, Aberystwyth, Passenger lift, (Anon, Official Guide and Souvenir, p. 76, (1937?), advert, photograph)

1940s

Queen's Hotel, Anon, hotel manager, Marine Terrace, Aberystwyth, under entirely new management, (Anon, Official Guide, p. 39, (1940s), advert, photograph)

1940-1941

Queen's Hotel, Anon, Cambrian Coast Hotels Co. Ltd., hotel proprietor, Marine Terrace, Aberystwyth, (Anon, Aberystwyth, Official List , p. 8, (1940), advert, photograph)

1948

Queen's Hotel, Anon, hotel proprietor, Marine Terrace, Aberystwyth, under entirely new management, (Anon, Aberystwyth, Where the Mountains come down to the Sea, p. 14, (1948), advert, photograph)

1950

Purchased by the County Council, 11.12.1950

(Patch, Maureen, (Former archivist), Notes on the Queen's Hotel).

Contents for sale 27.11.1950

(Ceredigion Archives, ADX/376)

Compiled by Michael Freeman