

The Talbot

Also sometimes known as the Talbot's Head and there is one reference to the Talbot and Royal Hotel.

The Talbot may have been built as a Coaching Inn with a large entrance into an open yard into which coaches could drive to load and unload but there are no detailed descriptions until 1869 when a local lawyer described a memory of it (see below). There are no illustrations of the Talbot or of Great Darkgate Street before the end of the 19th century.

The name refers to a type of hound which may originally have appeared on the coat of arms of a Talbot family. The Powells had a Talbot at the top of their hatchment and on a jug made for William Powell in 1811 (now in Ceredigion museum). There was a Talbot inn in Aberaeron, Tregaron and Merthyr Tydfil and there were others in England including Shrewsbury.

The land on which The Talbot stood was owned by the Powells of Nanteos. The Nanteos Rentals put it on Castle Street (possibly a misnomer for Great Darkgate Street but equally possibly it was originally in what is now Upper Darkgate Street) until 1780; in Porth Mawr Street (definitely an alternative name for Great Darkgate Street) from 1783, then Great Darkgate Street until 1831 and Market Street from 1832.

Market Street was a completely new street cut through the site of the Talbot by the Powells of Nanteos in 1831-2. It was they who were responsible for building the new Market House in Market Street on the site of the stables and other buildings to the rear of the Talbot.

The reference in 1831 that the Market House was built on the site of the Talbot is partly true. There is no doubt that the main part of the Talbot was on Great Darkgate Street and it stretched back to Little Darkgate Street (now Eastgate) where it occupied some cottages and the stables may have been there too.

The 1809 map of the town is deceptive. It appears to show Market Street, but the map was annotated subsequently (it shows many buildings which were definitely not present in 1809). Market Street is almost certainly part of the annotation, or it was included to show what the Powell family had been thinking about in town improvements. The Ordnance Survey 2 inch scale 1824 map of the town doesn't show Market Street, but the next known map, Woods, of 1834, shows it clearly.

In 1815 an advert for leasing the Talbot described it as having stables for 80 horses, which were probably at the rear, and may have been accessible from Little Darkgate Street (now Eastgate)

In 1832 the Talbot was demolished by the land owners, the Powells of Nanteos, who rebuilt it in the new Market Street.

Occupiers (these may not have been the landlords)

(This list has been compiled from the Nanteos Estate rentals which survive in an incomplete run from 1772)

- 1772-1780 Richard Foy
1783-1814 Jacob Jones (who is mentioned by a number of visitors)
1815 Joel Morgan (who took up the new lease from May that year.
1817 – 1828 Edward Evans
1828 Letter: Notice to quit given to tenant of the Talbot, **NLW Nanteos, L1151**
1828 Inn, Hotel and Posting House. To be let from Michaelmas next. Talbot Inn, formerly held by Jacob Jones, now by Edward Evans. Further particulars from John Pughe, Ty'nrrhyd or Messrs James and Horatio Hughes, Aberystwyth, **Cambrian (Newspaper), 14.6.1828**
1831 William Jenkins
1832 Richard Williams. New Building in Market Street
1836-1854 - James Rees

Jacob Jones

Jacob Jones seems to have occupied lands around Plas Crug, and possibly Plas Crug itself in 1792.

The death of Miss Jane Jones, daughter of Jacob Jones, of Talbot Lane, Aberystwith, was announced in The Cambrian (Newspaper) : 14.10.1815

This suggests that there was a lane adjacent to the Talbot, or to the rear of it, possibly one which enabled horses to be taken under part of the Talbot to the stables at the rear.

Jacob Jones' death was announced on 28.12.1822 in the Cambrian (newspaper) when he was described as the Landlord of the Talbot's Head Inn, Aberystwyth. However, there is a reference to Jacob Jones and Edward Evans, owners of an Inn, Hotel and Posting house, Aberystwyth, The Cambrian (Newspaper) 14.6.1828, but this may refer to a son of the original Jacob Jones.

COMMENTS ON THE TALBOT INN

These are all the known references to the inn compiled from hundreds of accounts of tours of Wales

1780s

[from brief description of Inns visited in Wales: town, name of inn, character of landlord]:

Aberystwyth, Talbot Head, Insolent

Anon, Notes of a tour between 1780-1790, in a copy of Wyndham's tour, NLW MS2589 B

1785

Jacob and Elizabeth Jones of the Talbot Head ... have made considerable additions to the house and fitted up several new apartments.

Herefordshire Journal, 9.6.1785

[These improvements may have taken place because the inn may have just moved from Castle Street/ Church Street (now Upper Great Darkgate Street) to Great Darkgate Street]

1787

We were set down at the Talbot Inn, the mistress of which (the wife of Jacob Jones) is, I believe, too civil to be sincere. ... After my father left us, my mother and I were allowed only one bed, and were obliged to mount another pair of stairs for that. There remained at the public table only three gay, dashing young men and ourselves, and desired to have a private room which was granted us. Here we ate our boiled chicken, or a mutton chop, till it was found that we did not drink a sufficient quantity of wine with it, and a hint was given us of a private lodging. We took the hint and soon after the lodging; and we now have a small parlour, a large chamber with two beds, a very good dinner, and our bread and butter for sixteen shillings a week each.

I am careless and happy; I sing to the waves; and twice I have danced at a ball at the Talbot. The first time, having no creature to go with, my mother was so kind as to accompany me. My partner was a clergyman, who would have been my partner for life, had I been so disposed. We met here a Captain Mostyn, whom we had known at Matlock, and who told my mother that I was the best dancer in the room. At the Talbot at Aberystwith this might be small praise, but he also said that I was the best dancer at Matlock.

Letter from Catherine Hutton to her brother, Hutton Beale, Catherine, Reminiscences of a gentlewoman of the last century; letters of Catherine Hutton (Birmingham, Cornish Brothers, 1891), p. 50

1790

We dined at the Talbot's head which is the best Inn in the place, but not being able to get beds there, or to take any private lodgings to our minds we were obliged to go to the Black Lion, where the people were very civil but the house dirty and uncomfortable.

Nicholson, Francis, The diary of Frances (Fanny) Nicholson, NLW MS15190C, p. 37

1793

Aberystwyth (Talbot's Head, Jacob Jones)

Anon, A short Journal of a tour through the counties of Denbigh, Merioneth, Cardigan and Caernarfon, and the Island of Anglesea in 1793, NLW 9854

1793

Talbot 'a good inn'

Anon, NLW ms 20073A, p. 29

1796

Two inns; the Talbot the best.

Journals of Tours in Wales made by Sir Richard Colt Hoare, 1796, NLW Llangibby Castle Mss A 30-31, p. 63

1796-1812

An immense number of company resort to this place during the summer, for the benefit of sea bathing; and it has several inns - among which, the principle is the Talbot, where the accommodations are both extensive and genteel.

Anon, A descriptive account of the Devil's Bridge, Hafod, Strata Florida Abbey ..., Hereford, 1796, p. 26

1797

We put up at the Talbot Inn where we found Mr and Mrs Thornton who with Mr Air, brother to the latter, were travelling through Wales.

Manners, John Henry, (Fifth Duke of Rutland) 1778-1857, Journal of a Tour through North and South Wales, the Isle of man etc, etc. [Sept] 1797. London, 1805, p. 196

1800

We this day entered south Wales, crossing the Llyfnant in our way to Aberystwith at which place we came in to a late dinner and put up at the Talbot and it was well we did for at the Black Lion there was a ball kept up till late in the morning [they had lost sleep the night before because of the Races Ball at Machynlleth, and mice and rats gambolling behind the wainscot] but in a much superior style to that at Machynlleth.

Trevenen, John (of Cornwall) (1781-1829), Journal of a Walk Through Wales in the Autumn of 1800, NLW facs 501 (photocopy), p. 42-3

1800

Arrived at 2 am at the Talbot

Cost of accommodation – 7/- a week for my horse at grass

Walks are interesting and lodgings and accommodation are indifferent. 'The idea of cheapness attached to a Welsh watering place is delusive there being not one article more reasonable than I found on the Devonshire Coast. We paid 1½ guineas a week for two bedrooms and a sitting room. ... Jones, of the Talbot is a civil man.

Skinner, John, (1772-1839), Tour in South Wales, A.D. 1800, Central Library, Cardiff, MS. 1.503, p. 131, 149

1801

... arrived at the Talbot head in Aberystwith. The house was quite full but they got us good lodgings close to the Inn.

Martyn, T., A Tour of South Wales, [1801], NLW MS 1340C, p. 118

1807?

... at the Talbot, kept by Mr Jones, an attentive and well behaved man, who during the bathing season keeps an excellent ordinary.

Anon, quoted in 'South Wales, the Country of Castles' GWR, 1907, p 100-1

1808

The principal Inn is the Talbot.

Directory, 1808, (A Directory found by George Eyre Evans, extracts from which he published in Evans, G.E., (1903), Cardiganshire, A Personal Survey of some of its Antiquities, Chapels, Churches, Fonts, Plate and Registers, p. 6-8)

1808

Bill at Aberystwyth £2/18/6 Talbot Head

Anon, Financial accounts of tours, 1808-1814, NLW MS 22732B

1810

The Talbot Inn is a decent house of entertainment; and the lodgings, if not elegant are at least commodious and reasonable.

Feltham, John, (1810), The Watering and Sea Bathing Places

1810

At the Talbot Inn may be found a boarding table and strangers cannot fail being satisfied with the good accommodations, reasonable charges, urbanity and attention of Jacob Jones.

Carmarthen Journal, 9.6.1810

1813

The extortionate Jacob Jones [of the Talbot, Aberystwyth] insists on our taking 4 horses [to Machynlleth]

Duncan, John Shute, Keeper of the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, Tour Through Wales 1813, NLW MS16715A, p. 11

[This was that Jacob Jones in which could make a greater profit]

1814

The Royal Cardigan Rifle Corp marched into Aberystwyth. They expect to be disembodied later in the month. On the 23rd ult, the treaty was celebrated. Instead of illumination, the Gents of the town gave the officers of the Cardigan regiment a dinner at the Talbot at 5 pm, and the Non-commissioned Officers and privates a plentiful dinner [where?] with a liberal allowance of cwrw da at a cost of 40 guineas. There was a ball and supper at the Gogerddan Arms at 8. pm, George Bonsall, president, Rice Williams, vice president. There were many toasts and volleys, the band played a Prussian Air, there were innumerable squibs, rockets etc and firing of cannon. {There is a full list of toasts and the bands programme.}

Carmarthen Journal, 1.7.1814, 8.7.1814

1815

Advert: To be let from 12.5.1815. The Talbot Inn in Aberystwyth with stables sufficient for 80 horses and 140 acres of arable, meadow and pasture. Particulars from Mr Barber, Nanteos.

Carmarthen Journal, 14.4.1815

1815

Yesterday se'nnight a large party dined at the Royal Hotel to celebrate the Victory at Waterloo. The band of the Royal Cardigan Regiment attended, assisted by the scientific harper, Mr Wood. The town was most brilliantly illuminated on the occasion.

The Cambrian, 8.7.1815

1816

The Lord Hill Coach from the Talbot and Royal Hotel every Wednesday and Sunday morning at seven returns the same evening about six by way of Devils Bridge.

1816 guide to Aberystwyth, p. ?

1816

Aberystwyth - Talbot a good inn.

Diary of Mary Coare, Kent Record Office, U1823/8Z4, p. 18

1817

Stayed at the Talbot.

Fisher, Paul Hawkins, A Three weeks tour into Wales in the year 1817, Stroud, 1818, p. 17

1818

Coach from Kington to arrive at the Royal Hotel and Talbot Inn, Aberystwyth (Edward Evans)

Hereford Journal, 1.7.1818

1819

The Talbot Inn and the Gogerddan Arms [inn] deserve commendation.

There are also weekly assemblies held alternately at the Talbot and Gogerddan Arms.

Stringer, Dr (c 1819), Welsh Excursions, The European Magazine and London Review (1819-1820), 'Aberystwyth', p. 218-219,

1819

We got a comfortable room at the Talbot Inn and ordered some mutton [but it may have been goat and they had it replaced by Welsh rarebit] the only other eatable to be had.

Sandys, William, (1792-1874), Sandys, Sampson, (1797-1880) (brothers), A Tour Through Wales in October 1819, NLW Cwrt Mawr MS393C, p. 84

1821

Aberystwyth is much frequented in the bathing season, and there is then a public boarding table at the Talbot, the principle inn.

Newell, Robert Hasell, Rev, (1821), Letters on the Scenery of Wales, p. 106

1824

Castle House ... is now a lodging house attached to the Talbot Inn

Prichard, Thomas Jeffery Llewelyn, (1824), The New Aberystwyth Guide ..., p. 12

1824

The Talbot inn is in the town but they have a house on the beach called that Castle that is delightful and I suppose they send almost all their visitors there and it is impossible to be better accommodated than we are.

Margaret Martineau, Hampshire Record Office, 83M93/21, p. 30

1824

We arrived at six o'clock at the Castle House which is an establishment belonging to the Talbot Inn. This is a castellated building on the beach near the ruins of the old castle & was erected by lady Caroline Price of Foxley for her summer residence & after twenty years she grew tired of the place & let it to the people of the inn. It will contain three small families.

Anne Porter, Worcestershire Record Office, BA 3940 Parcel 65 (ii) 705: 262

1827

The landlord of the Talbot possesses several houses - the new built one, fronting the sea, is his as an appendage [possibly the Castle House, built 1793-1795]; to which he sends his company when the Talbot is full, and I hear that it answers well to him.

**Diary of Mrs and Miss Beecroft, Cardiff Central Library, 2.325, Wednesday
June 20th**

1828

Aberystwyth, Talbot Head: breakfast 1/9d; waiter 6d; paper of s?plaster 3d; letter 1/5d

Clark, Charles B., Tour of Wales in August and September, 1828, NLW MS 15002A

1830

Aberystwyth – Talbot a good inn.

Mary Coare, Centre for Kentish Studies – depositor Maidstone Museum, U1823/8Z4

1830

Talbot run by William Jenkins

Pigot, (1830), Directory, p. 819 [CHECK THIS DATE]

1831

Another general Market house, upon a handsome plan, has just been finished upon **part** of the ground where the old Talbot Inn stood. A completely new street has also arisen upon its site.

Leigh, Samuel, (1st edition, 1831), Guide to Wales and Monmouthshire

1831

Next to the Belle Vue Hotel, the Black Lion or Gogerddan Arms is the best house, the situation of it appeared objectionable at the corner of the most bustling street in the place. The Talbot Head, our former quarters ranks now a third. The situation is preferable to that of the Lion, but the landlord does not have a good name.

Anon, (1831), A journal of tours to Tenby, Aberystwyth, etc., from August 9 to September 3, 1831, NLW MSS 6685C, p. 39

1834

The Talbot hotel, lately rebuilt on the same site as the former inn of that name is favourably spoken of.

Hemingway, J., (1st edition, 1834?) Panorama of the Beauties, Curiosities and Antiquities of North Wales, intended as a Pocket Companion to the Tourist and Traveller

1834

The new Talbot inn has been completed.

The Welshman, 31.10.1834

1869

The Talbot Hotel, in Market Street, managed by Mr J.R. Jones, is one of the oldest and best known hostels in the county. There are many living who remember when its court-yard was fitted up with galleries, onto which the bed-room doors opened like the Old Tabard Inn, now in High Street, Borough, from which the Canterbury Pilgrims started on their sacred pilgrimages. This is an exceeding comfortable house, and is a favourite resort of the county squires and farmers who visit the town on market days. It contains a Coffee and Smoke Rooms, besides numerous sites of

apartments, and a public bar. To [this] hotel a well ordered Posting Establishment is attached.

Morgan, T.O., (1869), New Guide to Aberystwyth and its Environs, p. 17

1874

Formerly its courtyard was fitted up with galleries onto which the bedroom doors opened. Mr J.R.Jones, proprietor and manager.

Anon, (1874), Morgan's New Guide to Aberystwyth and Neighbourhood, p. 11

Compiled by Michael Freeman, 2015