

NORTH WEST WALES DENDROCHRONOLOGY PROJECT

DATING OLD WELSH HOUSES - ANGLESEY

THE GATEHOUSE, No 48, CASTLE STREET

Beaumaris, Anglesey

(SH 604 760)

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SUMMARY

It has been very difficult to identify this property and many others in Beaumaris in earlier periods. Even the census returns do not identify properties in a way which makes it clear which is the current No 48 Castle Street. This house is situated against the OUTSIDE of the Beaumaris town walls, and has a window opening facing west, out of the town, which may have been used to observe who was approaching. This window was blocked when a building was erected to the west of No 48.

The house appears NOT to have been part of the town owned by the Bulkeley family (Baron Hill estate). It is not known who built the house nor who were the early owners. It is possible that Thomas Shelmerdine (see 1695) owned this property.

The first definite link seems to be in 1883 when Hugh Thomas, 48 Castle Street, was named as a lodging house keeper. (see 1883). A Hugh Thomas occupied the same property in the census returns of 1871 to 1911. This may have been 44 or 48 Castle Street, but as house numbers appear to have been altered at different periods, this may be the current No 44 Castle Street (see part 4)

From 1891, when Elizabeth Girling was resident at the Gatehouse, 48 Castle Street, the names of tenants and owners becomes clearer.

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Part 1: SUMMARY of the DENDROCHRONOLOGY

A two-unit town-house with cross-passage probably incorporating part of one of the town's gateway. The timber detail belongs to the seventeenth-century rebuilding of the site, and includes narrow-chamfered beams, an arched fireplace beam, and collar-beam trusses. (Richard Suggett, 2010, RCAHMW)

Ten timbers from the main part of the Gatehouse, 48 Castle Street, Beaumaris, were sampled. All had exceptionally good ring counts. Despite this, very little cross-matching was found and none with bark edge dated. However, several timbers with some incomplete sapwood did date with Irish chronologies and a felling date of circa 1625 was suggested for this range. Two timbers from the roof of the rear range were also sampled, but despite producing a master of 125 rings, they failed to date. (Dr Daniel Miles, 2010, Oxford Dendrochronology Laboratory)

Part 2: OUTLINE of the EARLY HISTORY OF BEAUMARIS

- 1295 Edward I starts building the castle
1296 Borough Charter granted to Beaumaris by Edward I
90 burgesses – English and Welsh.
c1314 Parish church of St Mary & St Nicholas
1348-50 The Black Death
1381 Scottish attack on Beaumaris
1400 Owain Glyndwr leads Welsh war of independence against English.
1403-5 Glyndwr's troops hold castle; town in flames; French sail to support Welsh
1405 English retake town and castle.
1407 Ditch and bank dug around town
1414 Beaumaris town walls built
1440 William Bulkeley of Cheadle (Cheshire) appointed Constable of castle.
c1480 Bulkeley family builds Hen Blas (in Church Street); demolished 1869.
1485 Henry VII founded the Tudor dynasty
? town house – Tudor Rose
? The Bull's Head
- 1536/1542 England annexes Wales – Acts of Union
1539 Repair to town walls- fear of European Catholic invasion.
1540s Town house – George & Dragon
- 1603 David Hughes founded Beaumaris Grammar School.
?1612 White Lion Inn
1613 Almshouses
1614 Beaumaris Court House built
1618 1st Baron Hill mansion built
1610 John Speed's Map of Beaumaris – No building shown at the Water Gate

Part 3: HISTORY of BEAUMARIS with some references to 48 CASTLE STREET

- c1625 Erection of 48 Castle Street, Beaumaris.** (see Dendrochronology Report)
1640-41. “to build a house and garden in the ward of Watergate” (Bangor Univ Archives, Baron Hill, Catalogue p.152 no.710)
1642 Beaumaris castle garrisoned & Bryn Britain fortified for first Civil War.
1644 Deed of lease (22nd May) “by Thomas, Viscount Bulkeley, and Richard Bulkeley, his son and heir, to Owen Beakingsale,.... upon a tost or void ground in the ward of High Street in Beaumaris near the Water Gate, the ground being 33 ft. long, 18 broad; 21 years, 5/-. Owen Beakingsale to build a house of specified dimensions upon the site, with proper enclosures, the Bulkeleys supplying the timber” (Bangor Univ Archives, Baron Hill, p.152, no. 712).
The measurements of the present no.48 recorded by Andrew Davidson correspond roughly: i.e 4m x 2m = 34.7954ft x 17.3977ft. (see GAT report and drawings)
1646 Maj-Gen Thomas Mytton captures Beaumaris Castle for Parliament from Royalist constable Col Richard Bulkeley.
1648 Red Hill, Beaumaris, site of last battle in second Civil War.
1655 Refers to the building of houses in **1655**. (Bangor Univ Archives, Baron Hill, no 715)
1695. Last will and testament of Richard Rowlands of Beaumaris, shoemaker; to his wife, Catherine the house and its appurtenances which he had bought of **Thomas Shelmerdine** situate in Watergate St. “**Joyning ye Towne wall & gate** that leads to ye cross” ((Bangor Univ Archives, Baron Hill, No 732).

c1700 Liverpool Arms Inn built

1705 Beaumaris castle abandoned into ruin.

1736 William Lewis and William Bodvel esq. named as owners of **properties in Castle Street**. (Bangor Univ Archives, Baron Hill, no 746)

1741-2 Lease of “messuage and tenement in **Watergate Ward**” by the Baron Hill estate to Henry Owen Butcher, by William Hughes of Amlwch. There are Owens in the 19th century trade directories, a baker and a draper, but no butchers of that name. There may or may not be a family connection, but there is no specific mention of no 48. ((Bangor Univ Archives, Baron Hill, No 749)

1752 lease by Lord Bulkeley to John Griffiths esq. of “a messuage and appurtenances in **Castle Street**” no number. (Bangor Univ Archives, Baron Hill, Catalogue of the Bulkeley Papers by Dr. Tom Richards, vol 1. pp.96sq. May 1938).

1770s Decline of Beaumaris as trading centre.

1776 Baron Hill mansion rebuilt by Samuel Wyatt.

1802 Beaumaris to Pothaethwy road built; Brine baths built; Chimney corner.

1818 Typhus rages in area.

1821 * Census: no reference identified

1826 Green Edge built; Castle Street levelled and paved.

Slater’s Trade Directory: 1828-29, 1849, 1850, 1868, 1871, and Cassey’s of 1876; no house numbers. Hugh Thomas appears repeatedly as a Castle Street butcher and is also in the 1861 census.

1829 “New” Beaumaris gaol built.

1829 * Baron Hill Tenancy Map: SHOWS position of house and town wall.

No owners or occupiers identified. **NOT a Baron Hill property** (University of Bangor Archives Beaumaris map and schedule, 1829, BH 821)

1835 * Trade Directory:

1837 * Parish map of Beaumaris

1841 census: houses not numbered; not clear who lived where

1851 census: houses not numbered; not clear who lived where

1853 * Slater’s Trade Directory:

1854 * Borough of Beaumaris List of Burgesses 5 September 1854

1855 * Borough of Beaumaris revised List of Burgesses 7 October 1854:

(Bangor University Archives B &A Borough Records Series II 370)

1861 census: houses not numbered; not clear who lived where

1871 census: houses not numbered; not clear who lived where.

Margaret Jones is in Slater’s 1871 Trade directory as a Castle Street grocer and tea dealer, and she also appears in the 1861 census. Otherwise, all that the trade directories yield is lists of names, with streets but no house numbers. (Anglesey Archives, Llangefni)

1874 * Worrall Directory of North Wales: (University of Bangor Welsh Library)

1879 * Beaumaris Borough Council Papers: Valuation papers no occupier or owner identified

1881 census: No 48 Castle Street seems to have been empty

1883 Slaters Trade Directory lists **Hugh Thomas, 48 Castle Street**, as a lodging house keeper.

1889 * Large scale ordinance survey

1889 * Suttons Trade Directory North Wales: (Bangor University Welsh Library)

1889 First meeting of Anglesey County Council held in Beaumaris.

1891 census: **Elizabeth Girling: resident at the Gatehouse** in the 1891 census.

Her parents, John and Eliza Girling, had settled in Beaumaris by 1876 - they lived at 22, Rating Row (together with another family in a relatively small house); John is described as Fishmonger and Oyster Merchant. They had married in the autumn of 1863 in Alverstoke, Portsmouth ((2b 767) and must have moved often. Their first child is described in the 1881 census as Eliza Sarah, aged 16, born in Clayhall, Hants. A likely birth is recorded (2c 398) as Eliza G Girling at Windsor in the June quarter of 1866. Elizabeth gave her birthplace in the 1891 census as Stoke, Hampshire – which might be a reference to Alverstoke. Her occupation is given as “art needleworker, fancy”. A Mrs Girling is remembered as a teacher at the grammar school in the early 1950s; she taught geography and could often be seen around the town riding her bicycle.

Elizabeth was joined at No 48 by Emily Barry, aged 22 and described as her cousin, who gave her occupation as “artist”, born at Merythr Tydfyl. Just one marriage between a Girling and a Barry is recorded at Manchester in late 1850 (20 452); this might explain the relationship. No marriage of either lady has been found, and no other records of Emily Barry have come to light. John Girling had rented a stable at the rear of Castle Street prior to 1884 (Baron Hill Rents).

1900 *Large scale ordinance survey

1901 & 1911 census: **John Lloyd, resident in 1901 and 1911**. David Wilson’s index of Anglesey births lists only one parent for John Lloyd, born 7th July, 1861.

However, the baptismal record on 18th July, 1861 (St Mary’s, Beaumaris, p 116, No 922) gives his father as John Lloyd, sailor, and his mother as Margaret Lloyd, resident at Plas Coch. The entry is unusual, however, in that both parents are recorded as “Lloyd” when in every other entry the family name is given just once.

The 1871 census record for him is as a boarder with Mary Williams at no. 1, Steeple Lane, Beaumaris (5724, 79 1). Later, at John’s marriage on 30th September, 1886 (St Mary’s Beaumaris, p. 246, No 492), his father is given as John Lloyd, sailor, and the family home at The Hermitage. His bride was Mary Hughes, daughter of William Hughes, stonecutter, resident in Llanallgo (though she gives her address as Beaumaris). Their first home, described in the 1891 census (4663, 83 17), was at no. 30, Rosemary Lane, a smart, two fronted house round the corner from Castle Street. They had three children at this time, and gave accommodation to four lodgers.

By 1901 they had a fourth child and the family was at the Gatehouse. There were no lodgers, and John is described as “gas engine driver”. It may be that he was associated with the gas works in Nant Meighan.

The 1911 record lists their last child, Annie, now aged 17; but John (born 1887), Margaret (born 1888) and Mary E (born 1891) have all left home. There is no further record of any of them, save perhaps a marriage record for John Lloyd, their son, who married an Ann Lewis at Trewalachmai on 29th November, 1909. (The register of baptisms at the church is not available at present).

1920 No. 48 Castle Street **does not** appear in the list of properties offered for sale by the Bulkeley family in the auction of 1920-21.

DATE: It had previously been a printer’s shop. [check directories]

Early 1953. The Huntington family settled at no. 48 in the middle of the century, and still live locally. David Huntington knew that as a baby his parents had lived in Menai Bridge; but his earliest memory is of being given a toilet roll to play with whilst his parents watched the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II in June, 1953 at no. 48 on television. The earliest Christmas he can remember was at no. 48, so it seems that the Huntingtons had moved in early 1953.

The Huntington family were well aware that the most complete stretch of the original Town Wall remaining is built into the property. Both David and his mother, Jean, told of two former windows that had been in the south-west wall, which would have given a good view of folk approaching the town from Menai Bridge. Both of these would have been closed as no. 50 was built. David told of marks on some of the roof timbers, which he thought were more than carpenters' marks, but rather Masons' marks - runes and masonic symbols. Jean Huntington was pleased with the services installed by "the previous owner but one" which included a boiler for supplying hot water.

By about 1960, Mrs Huntington turned the whole of the ground floor into a shop, to sell Welsh Craftwork. It meant building out on the first floor over "a shed" to provide a kitchen; and the family now lived upstairs.

March 1970: An assistant at the shop was Caroline Tranter, and in March, 1970, her parents bought the property and continued to use it as a shop selling Welsh Crafts.
Article in "Houses & Gardens" re Vera Tranter's shop "rich in Welsh crafts of every description" (pers comm. Mrs A Owen, 2010)

1970s?: Mr & Mrs Smith, owned it. He was a Bangor accountant & his wife was an American interior designer who added the red brick chimney. They did not stay long. (pers comm. Mrs A Owen, 2010)

1970s?: Mr & Mrs Lowry owned it briefly, but Mrs Lowry died and Mr Lowry returned to the Wirral. (pers comm. Mrs A Owen, 2010)

1972/3 -2013: The property was sold to Gwilym Owen, bank manager, his wife Audrey and their two daughters. Mrs Owen still lives there. (pers comm. Mrs A Owen, 2010)

Ordinance Survey maps. 1829. no numbers.

(photocopy in Beaumaris library) no numbers.

1889 SH 6076 a few numbers. 52 where 48 would be expected. 2nd edition ditto.

1900. no numbers

1914 a few numbers (i.e. 18 & 19 Castle Street), the latter on the opposite corner of "Alma Street" , i.e.Steeple Lane, to no. 48.

Researched by a group of local Project volunteers. March 2013

PART 4: Social History of the Gatehouse/No 48, Castle Street, Beaumaris. Researched by Bernard Thomas

Census records for the last third of the nineteenth century show that the Jones family lived at the last house in Castle Street before the junction with Steeple Lane: no. 52. During 1871 and 1881, the head of household was William Jones, and in 1891 and 1901, it was his eldest daughter, Alice Jones. Similarly, the family of Hugh Thomas occupied no 44: initially Hugh Thomas, and from 1891 Hugh Thomas, his son. The occupants of the intervening properties during this period are recorded as follows:

Table 1: Heads of Households listed in part of Castle Street during the census years, 1871 - 1911

1911	1901	1891	1881	1871
	<i>Alice Jones</i>	<i>Alice Jones</i>	<i>William 52 Jones</i>	<i>William Jones</i>
<i>William Spargo</i>	<i>William Spargo</i>	<i>(house empty)</i>	<i>Henry 50 Redding</i>	<i>Griffith Thomas</i>
<i>John Lloyd</i>	<i>John Lloyd</i>	<i>Elizabeth Girling</i>	<i>(house 48 empty)</i>	
<i>Thomas Davies</i>	<i>Thomas Davies</i>	<i>(house empty)</i>	<i>E(van) 46 Thomas</i>	<i>James Pidgeon</i>
<i>Hugh Thomas</i>	<i>Hugh Thomas</i>	<i>Hugh Thomas</i>	<i>Hugh 44 Thomas</i>	<i>Hugh Thomas</i>

No 48 may well have been empty in 1871, as it was in 1881; but the empty property could also have been either Nos 46 or 50. It is not possible to tell who was living at no 48 in 1871 with any certainty.

In 1861, it is very likely that the Thomas family had already taken up residence at what was to become no. 44. Because of its corner position, we can be sure that a Jones was living at no. 52, though this Margret Jones seems to have been unrelated to William Jones who followed her. But there are four families listed as living in the three properties we are aware of between these two identified houses, and there is a record of two houses also being built at this point. The record for 1861 was taken in the opposite direction to all other censuses; and the records for houses further along the street are also confusing. It is quite impossible to decide who lived at no. 48 prior to 1871.

Three other sources of information could throw light on this matter. The Bulkeley Estate Rent Books Show clearly how much was paid in rent by families living in its properties - and houses in much if not all of Castle Street were liable for rent. But before 1881, the properties were not numbered, and there is no clear evidence of which family lived where. Three neighbours - Ann Jones at no. 38, Richard Thomas at no. 40, and Hugh Thomas at no. 44, show consistently during the period 1890 back to 1870; and the Delamere family, living at no. 42 over this period, are listed separately as being a major tenant - they had an interest in five other properties. But there is no consistency over this period for houses numbered 46 and upwards. Neither Griffith Thomas or James Pidgeon appear on the 1871 list of tenants. Beyond suggesting who lived in the vicinity, the Estate Rent Books offer no evidence of who lived just there. No. 48 Castle Street does not appear in the list of properties offered for sale by the Bulkeley family in the auction of 1920.

Table 2: Heads of the households listed for part of Castle Street in the 1861 census. (RG9 4346) (record starts from Bulkeley Terrace)

Margret Jones - boarding house keeper (thought to be no. 52 from

1881 onwards)

Ann Owen - boarding house keeper

Ann Tyrer - of independent means

(2 houses being built) (probably what is now no. 46)

Margret Jones - grocer & tea dealer

John Jones - tailor & draper

Hugh Thomas - butcher

William Thomas - butcher (father of Hugh Thomas, later resident at no. 44)

The position in 1861 is rather different, but no clearer. In the corner house, the family of William Jones was preceded by Margret Jones, a boarding house keeper, and apparently no direct relation to William Jones. Two occupants of adjacent houses are given - Ann Owen and Ann Tyrer - before two houses are described as "being built". This description can only relate to no. 46, a double-fronted property of two discrete parts even today. This would imply that Ann Tyrer lived at no. 48. However, beyond the two houses being built are listed Margret Jones (this one a grocer and tea dealer), John Jones, and Hugh Thomas (a butcher). Next again was William Thomas, another butcher, who can be shown through census records to have been the father of the Hugh Thomas who was at no. 44 in 1871, and so it is likely that it was William who had been at no. 44 in 1861. If this were so, it would leave nowhere for the three intervening families to live. Furthermore, the only way to ascribe houses to families in other parts of Castle Street in 1861 is to accept that families had moved within the street. The whole analysis is unsound: it is not possible to determine just who lived where in 1861.

Since this part of Castle Street seems to have been used for family living accommodation rather than business, it is unlikely that old photographs will show evidence of who lived where, as they might if bill boards or signs were displayed. Similarly, before c 1881, trade directories are unlikely to pin point just where businesses were sited, and it is unlikely that any of the houses near No 48 were businesses at this time.

At present, census records after 1911 have not been released, so evidence of occupants over much of the twentieth century must depend on memories of local people. The Huntington family settled at no. 48 in the middle of the century, and still live locally.

David Huntington knew that as a baby his parents had lived in Menai Bridge; but his earliest memory is of being given a toilet roll to play with whilst his parents watched the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II in June, 1953 at no. 48 on television. The earliest Christmas he can remember was at no. 48, so it seems that the Huntingtons had moved in early 1953. It had previously been a printer's shop. The name "Gatehouse" was established before this time. By about 1960, Mrs Huntington turned the whole of the ground floor into a shop, to sell Welsh Craftwork. It meant building out on the first floor over "a shed" to provide a kitchen; and the family now lived upstairs. An assistant at the shop was Caroline Tranter, and in March, 1970, her parents bought the property and continued to use it as a shop selling Welsh Crafts. Subsequently, the property was sold to Gwilym Owen, a bank manager, and his wife Audrey, and they have used it as a family home ever since.

The family were well aware that the most complete stretch of the original Town Wall remaining is built into the property. Both David and his mother, Jean, told of two former windows that had been in the south-west wall, which would have given a good view of folk approaching the town from Menai Bridge. Both of these would have been closed as no. 50 was built. David told of marks on some of the roof timbers, which he thought were more than carpenters' marks, but rather Masons' marks - runes and masonic symbols. Jean Huntington was pleased with the services installed by "the previous owner but one" which included a boiler for supplying hot water.

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