

The Port of Carmarthen



circa 1900

It was customary in the days when Carmarthen was an important port for the Mayor and Corporation to voyage down to the bar of the Towy on 'Admiral's Court Day', when it was the Mayor's duty to hold a Court of Admiralty for the purpose of inquiring into the state of the river and preventing nuisances.

Cyngor Tref Caerfyrddin
Carmarthen Town Council



The Mayor also has the title of **Admiral of the Port of Carmarthen**, granted by a Charter of Henry VIII in 1546. Henry granted a 'Charter of Admiral to the Mayor and Burgesses and Commonalty to the town of Carmarthen and to their successors for ever upon the River Towy from the bridge of Carmarthen to the bar of the said river'.

This Charter recalls the years when the Towy was a thriving artery connecting Carmarthen and its hinterland with the Bristol Channel and beyond. Cargo ships tied up at the Quay, which was lined with warehouses. The coming of the railway led to a decline in river traffic, and in the boat-building which was also carried on near the Quay and Island Wharf.



circa 1740

Tudor records show imports such as iron, lead, coal, honey, salt, wine, oil and spices, and exports of cloth and wool. The 17th century saw increased imports of luxury goods such as soap, pewter, vinegar, sugar, fruit, ginger, marmalade, bedsteads and brass goods. In the 1720s 57 vessels were registered in Carmarthen, and its tonnage at that time was twice that of Cardiff. The 1840s were Carmarthen's heyday as a port, for both sail and steam ships:

'The port carries on a small foreign, and a very considerable coasting trade, now fast increasing. The principal exports are, British timber, bark, marble, slate, bricks, lead-ore, leather, manufactured goods, grain, butter, and eggs; and the principal imports are, foreign timber, pitch, rosin, tallow, coal, culm, malt, and manufactured goods for the supply of the town and neighbourhood', Samuel Lewis, *A Topographical Dictionary of Wales*, 1849.

Ships of up to 330 tons were built in Carmarthen, in the vicinity of the present-day Quay Centre.



circa 1840

The tide was only suitable every two weeks for large vessels. At other times ships would anchor down river and off-load to barges and lighters. Silting of the river, and the hazard posed by the Carmarthen Bar – a sand bar in the estuary – were enduring problems across the centuries. The development of industrial Wales, and the railway, precipitated the port's decline. The last commercial vessel visited the port of Carmarthen in 1938.

The quay wall has been re-built and extended over the centuries. The wall which you see today probably dates from the early 1800s, when the quay was extended from the Jolly Tar eastwards to the town bridge. The iron bollards were cast in Carmarthen's Priory Foundry in 1860.



circa 1910

Published 2012, Carmarthen Town Council, 01267 235199. Sources: 'The Story of Carmarthen', Joyce & Victor Lodwick; 'Carmarthen - An Archaeological and Topographical Survey', Terry James; Journals of the Carmarthenshire Antiquarian Society; 'Carmarthen - The Oldest Town in Wales', Neil Ludlow; 'Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest', Cadw; Carmarthen Journal.

Porthladd Caerfyrddin



tua 1900

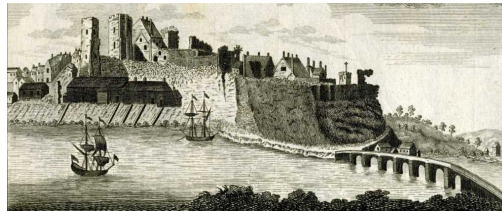
'Roedd yn draddodiad yn y dyddiau pan 'roedd Caerfyrddin yn borthladd pwysig i'r Maer a'r Gorfforaeth deithio i lawr i far y Tywi ar 'Ddiwrnod Llŷs y Llŷngesydd', pryd 'roedd yn ddyletswydd ar y Maer i gynnal Llŷs y Llŷngesydd at y pwrpas o wneud ymholiadau i gyflwr yr afon ac atal niwsans.

Cyngor Tref Caerfyrddin
Carmarthen Town Council



Mae'r Maer hefyd yn dwyn y teitl **Llŷngesydd Porthladd Caerfyrddin**, a roddwyd gan Siartr Harri'r Wythfed ym 1546. Rhoddwyd Siartr y Llŷngesydd gan Harri i'r Maer, y Bwrdeisiaid a Gwerin tref Caerfyrddin ac i'w hofnwyd 'for ever upon the River Towy from the bridge of Carmarthen to the bar of the said river'.

Mae'r Siartr hwn yn galw i gof y blynyddoedd pan 'roedd y Tywi yn afon lewyrchus yn cysylltu Caerfyrddin a'r cyron gyda Môr Hafren a thu hant. Bu llongau nwyddau yn angori yn y Cei, lle cafwyd llu o stordai. Arweiniodd dyfodiad y rheilffyrdd at leihad yn y drafnidiaeth ar yr afon, ac at y dirywiad yn y diwydiant adeiladu cychod a gymerodd le yn ymyl y Cei a'r Lanfa.



tua 1740

Mae recordiau Tuduriaid yn dangos mewnfario fel haearn, plwm, glo, mêl, halen, gwin, olew a sbeisiau, ac allfario o frethyn a gwlan. Yn y 17eg canrif gwelwyd cynnydd yn mewnfario nwyddau moeth fel sebon, piwter, finegr, siwgr, ffrwyth, sinsir, marmalêd, fframiau gwely a nwyddau pres. Yn y 1720au roedd 57 llong wedi eu cofrestru yng Nghaerfyrddin, gyda'i thunnell ar y pryd dwywaith un Caerdydd. Yr 1840au oedd anterdd Caerfyrddin fel porthladd, i longau hwyslio a stem:

'The port carries on a small foreign, and a very considerable coasting trade, now fast increasing. The principal exports are, British timber, bark, marble, slate, bricks, lead-ore, leather, manufactured goods, grain, butter, and eggs; and the principal imports are, foreign timber, pitch, rosin, tallow, coal, culm, malt, and manufactured goods for the supply of the town and neighbourhood', Samuel Lewis, Geiriadur Topograffig o Gymru, 1849

Cafodd llongau lan hyd at 330 tonnau eu hadeiladau yng Nghaerfyrddin, yng nghyffiniau'r Ganolfan Cei bresennol.



tua 1840

Dim ond pob dwy wythnos roedd y llanw yn addas i longau mawr. Ar brydiau arall byddai'r llongau yn gostwng yr angor lawr yr afon ac yn dadlwytho i ysgraffau a badau dadlwytho. Roedd siltio'r afon, a'r perygl a orwedda gan Foryd Caerfyrddin - bar tywod yn yr aber - yn broblem parhaol ar draws y canrifoedd. Prysuodd datblygiad Cymru ddiwylliannol, a'r rheilffordd, dirywiad y porthladd. Yn 1938 ymwelodd y llong fasnach olaf ym mhorthladd Caerfyrddin.

Mae wal y cei wedi ei ail-adeiladu a'i ymestyn yn ystod y canrifoedd. Mae'r wal a welwch heddiw yn dyddio tua'r 1800au cynnar, pan gafodd y cei ei ymestyn o'r 'Jolly Tar' tua'r dwyrain i bont y dref. Castiwyd y bolardiau haearn yn Ffowndri Priordy Caerfyrddin yn 1860.



tua 1910

Cyhoeddiedig 2012, Cyngor Tref Caerfyrddin, 01267 235199. Tarddleodd: 'The Story of Carmarthen', Joyce a Victor Lodwick; 'Carmarthen - An Archaeological and Topographical Survey', Terry James; Cylchgronau Cymdeithas Hynafiaethau Sir Gaerfyrddin; 'Carmarthen - The Oldest Town in Wales', Neil Ludlow; 'Adeiladau o Ddiddordeb Pensaernïol neu Hanesyddol Arbennig', Cadw; 'Carmarthen Journal'.