

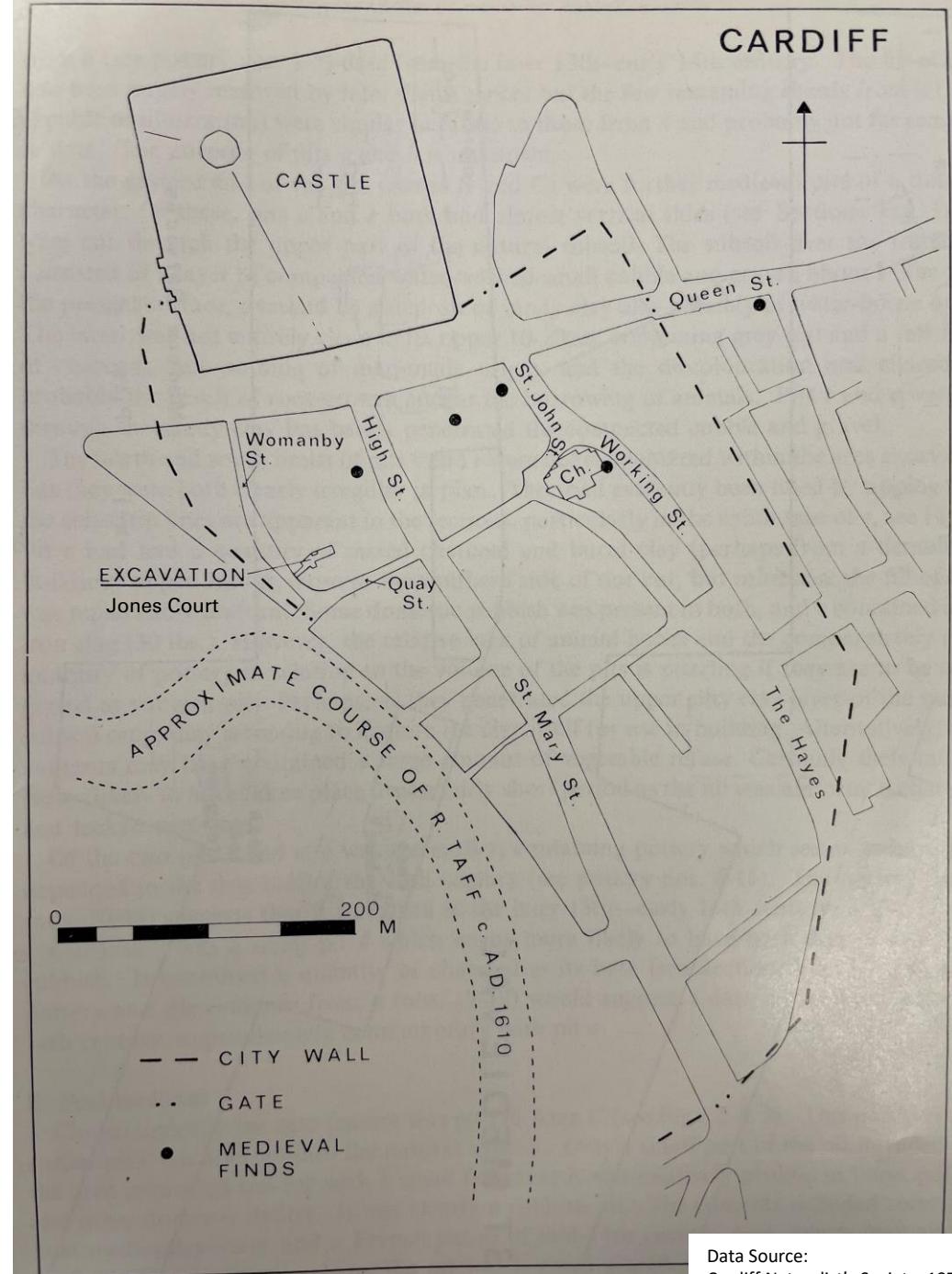
Cardiff u3a “Local History” Group

Womanby Street Area

“Mediaeval/Old Town”

January 20, 2023

Convenor: Stuart Swinburne



Context: Important developments of Cardiff re Womanby Street

75(AD): The Quay is site of "Wales Gate" – access to Cardiff (& Wales) from the sea since Roman times

1st-5th century: Roman annexation/fortification

850: Viking raids on Cardiff area, some settlement

12th century:

- Cardiff Castle rebuilt in stone by Richard Fitz Gilbert de Clare, Duke of Gloucester (English/Norman annexation reinforced)
- Mediaeval town develops between Castle, Working Street, Quay Street, Houndemammeby Street
- Town expands between Houndemammeby Street and River Taff ("Tent City")
- Norman influence continues:
 - St Mary's Church built (c1100) & expanded (1175). Benedictine priory/parish of Tewkesbury Abbey
 - St John's Church built (1180)
 - Town walled

c1263: Stone quay built. Its line is marked on the ground floor of Westgate Street car park

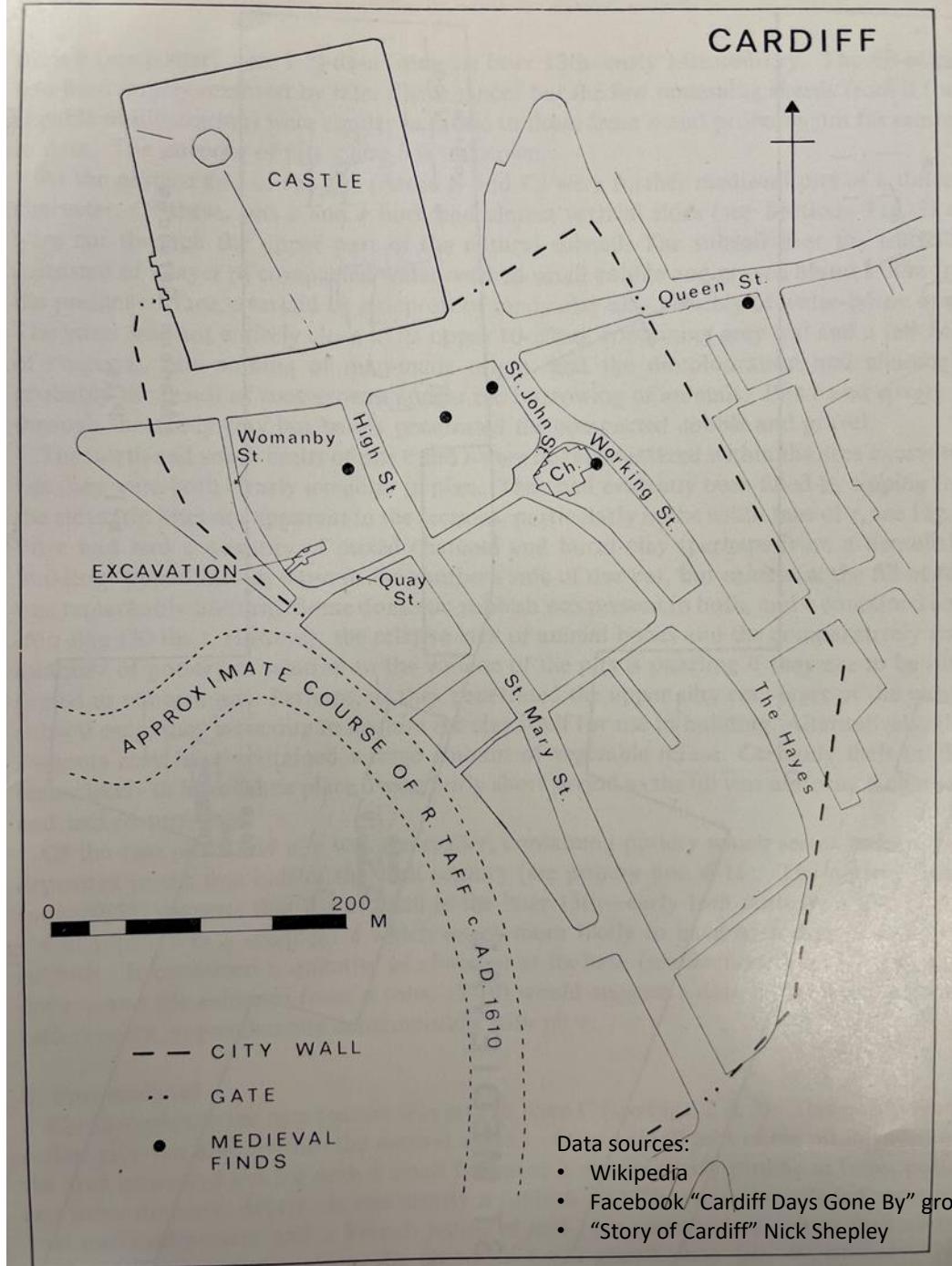
1760: Quay re-built & re-named Blounts Gate

1785: Blounts Gate was demolished

1794: Merthyr to Cardiff Glamorganshire Canal opens. Focus on Cardiff Bay Docks & 1st plans to re-direct Taff

1839: Bute West Dock opens – shipping re-directed

c1850/60: Quay closed & River Taff re-directed for flood relief & to make way for S.W. Railway



Data sources:

- Wikipedia
- Facebook "Cardiff Days Gone By" group
- "Story of Cardiff" Nick Shepley

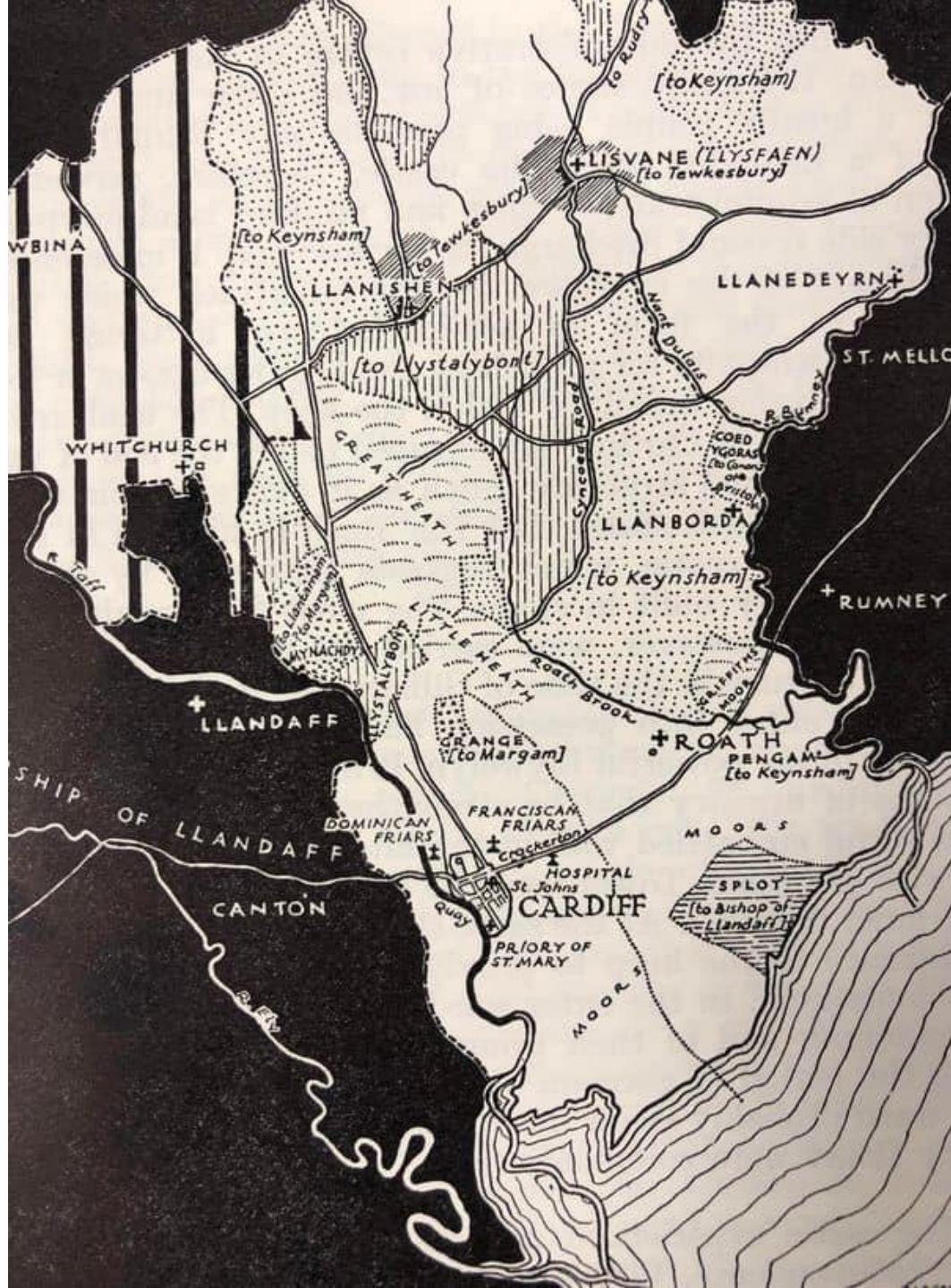
Henry VII reign:

- 1486 Jasper Tudor was “Lord of South Wales” (Earl of Pembroke, Lord Of Glamorgan, Abergavenny, Newport & Haverford, Lord Chief Justice of South Wales)
- Key player in relations between England & Wales facilitating wool trade through Cardiff between Wales, England & Europe
- **Wool trade drove Cardiff (Old) Town prosperity**

Data sources:

- “Story of Cardiff” Nick Shepley

Cardiff In Perspective (17th century)



Data source:
Facebook "Cardiff Days Gone By" group

John Speed's 1610 map of Cardiff, showing Hunmanby Street (Later Womanby Street)

Castle
Castle Street
Hunmanby Street
Later Womanby Street



Heraldic crest of
Tewkesbury Abbey
who owned Cardiff
at the time

Greyfriars House
Cokkerton Street
Later Queen Street (19th century)
Trinity Street
Working Street
St John's Church
High Street
Quay Street
Golate Street
Quay
Town Wall
St Mary's Street
St Mary's Church

Hunmanby Street:

- **(One of) The Oldest Streets in Cardiff**
- **Key link between Castle, Quay (Sea) & Town**
- **Name is not English or Welsh**

Data sources:

- Wikipedia
- Facebook "Cardiff Days Gone By" group
- "Story of Cardiff" Nick Shepley

Model of Cardiff
based on Speed's
map c1610 (or
thereabouts)



Data sources:

- Wikipedia
- Facebook "Cardiff Days Gone By" group
- National Museum of Wales Archives

Origins of Womanby Street name

75(AD): Romans -> Vikings? (Vikings definitely
(-850+) occupied St Davids, Haverford West,
Gower (Swansea) & Cardiff area)

1310: Early(est?) record of Houndemammeby
Street (Name is Norse – “Houndsman
or Huntsman’s dwellings”)

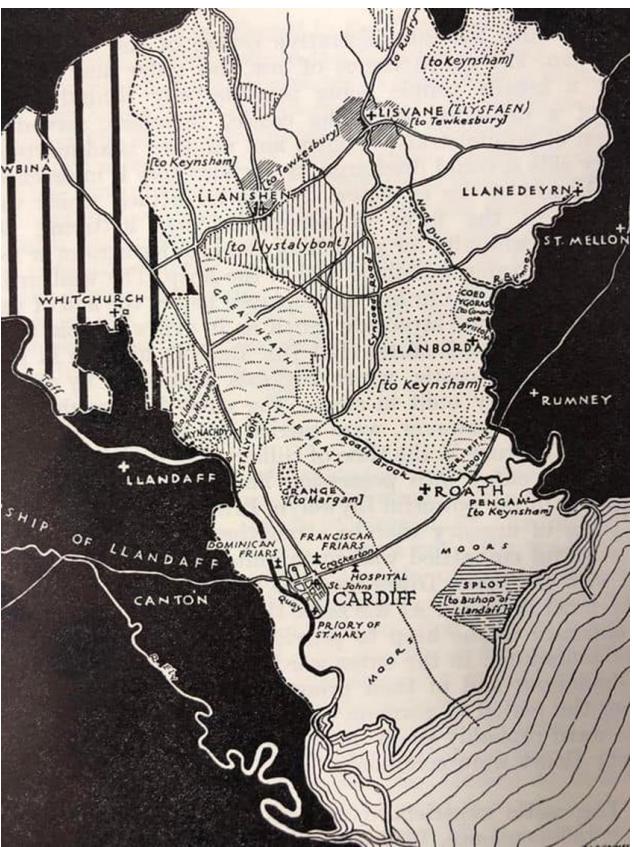
1550: Humanby Street

1715: Home & by Street

1730: Homeandby Street

????: Womanby Street (Name is early
Teutonic – “Abode of the foreigners”.
(Likely reflects the predominance of
“non Anglo-Normans” (including
Welsh) inhabitants (sailors, quay
workers, local traders))

probably all colloquial
derivations of the
original Norse

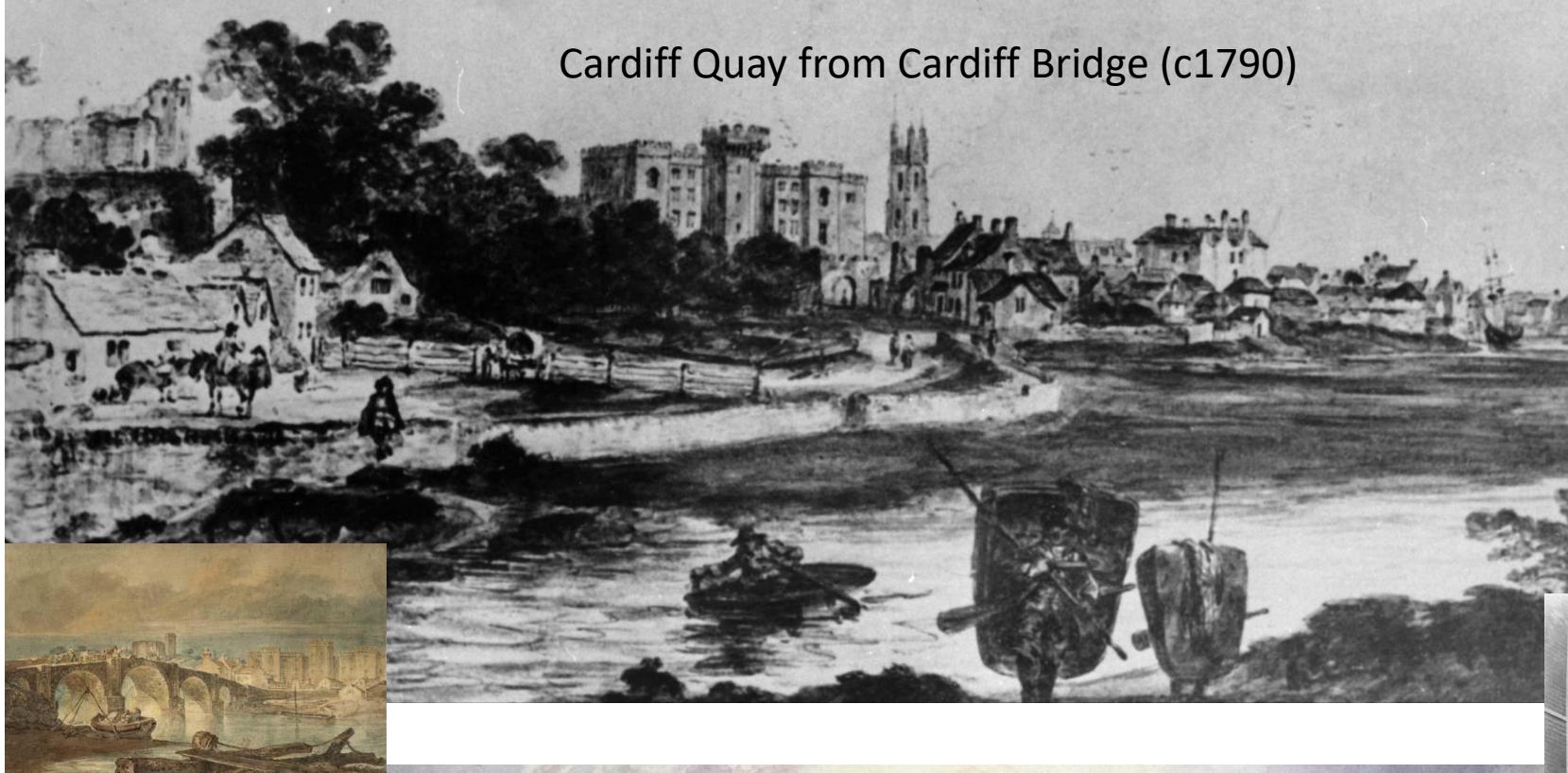


Data sources:

- National Museum of Wales
- Facebook “Cardiff Days Gone By” group
- Wikipedia



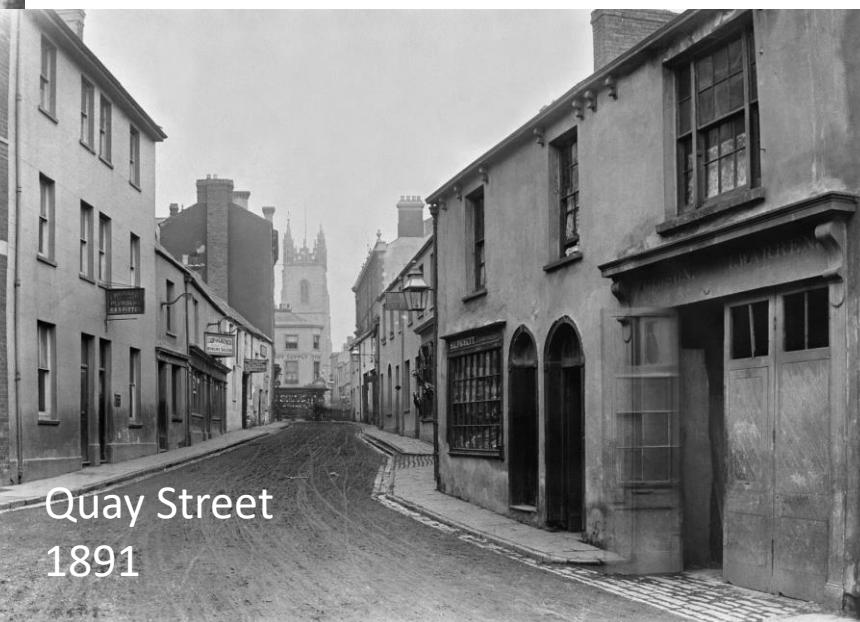
Cardiff Quay from Cardiff Bridge (c1790)



Cardiff Quay: Commercial & Military:

"In 1759, an affray took place in the [Womanby] street between the crews of the trader The Eagle of Bristol and the man-of-war Aldbrough. With all participants armed with either swords, pistols, cutlasses, pikes or muskets, they fought between themselves until Edmund Ffaharty lay dead, and many others were wounded. Investigated by the sheriff's men, they passed the case to the coroner's court with the brief to hush the whole affair up. Thus, the court ruled that Ffaharty had been shot by a "person unknown", and that no further investigation was required"

Cardiff Bridge under construction (1795-6)
Turner



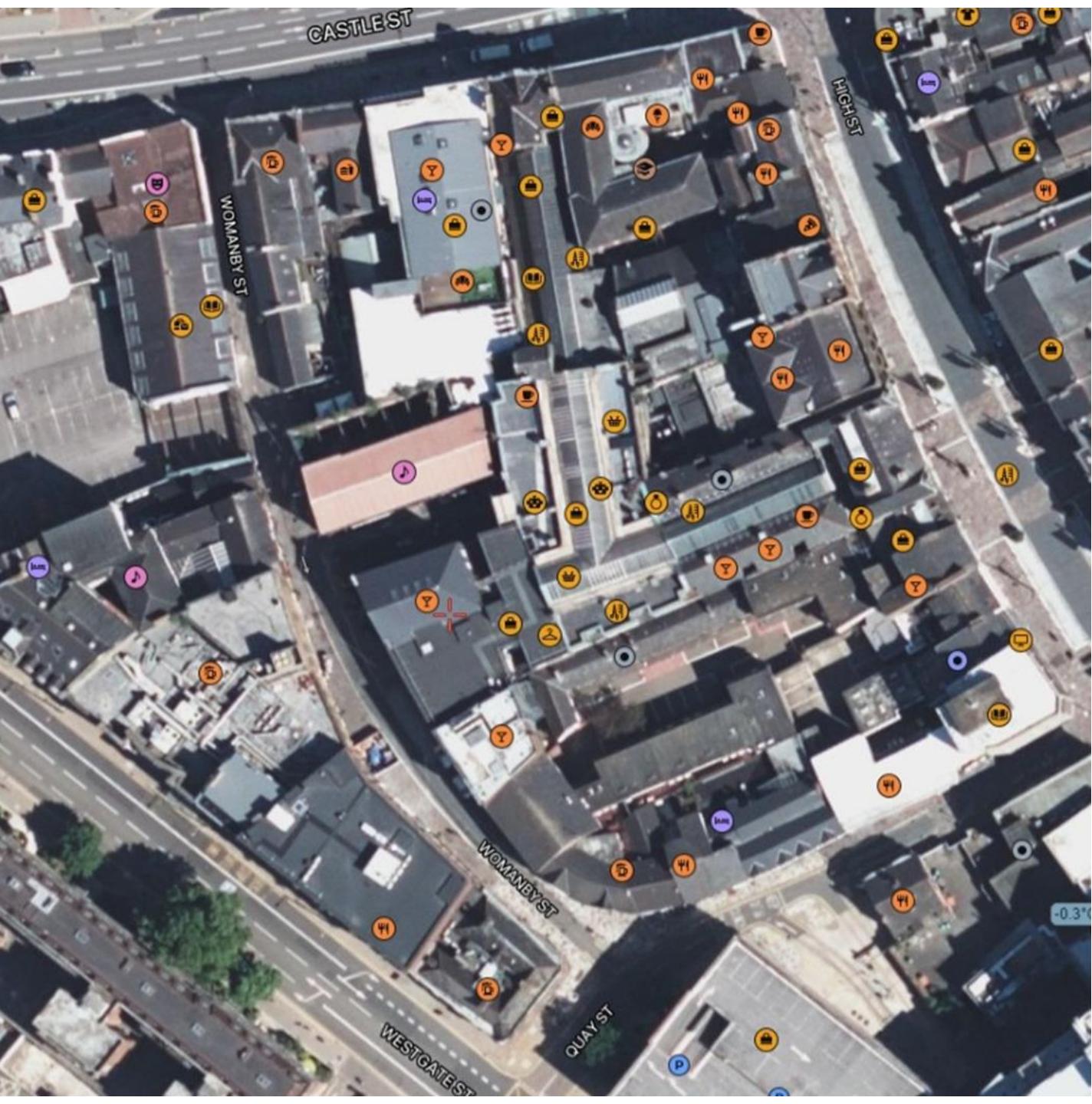
Quay Street
1891

Data sources:

- National Museum of Wales Archive
- Facebook "Cardiff Days Gone By" group
- Wikipedia

Cardiff Quay infrastructure well established
and flourishing up until early 19th century

Womanby Street likely a key link between
Quay & Castle (and on to Town)



Womanby Street now

Globe Hotel 19th century



Site of Palace Theatre

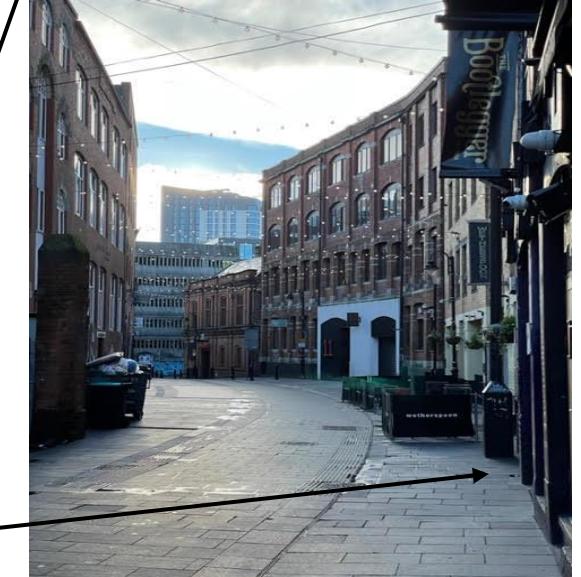


Site of Red Cow PH



Entrance to Jones Court/ Corporation Yard

Site of Trinity Chapel & Horse & Groom PH

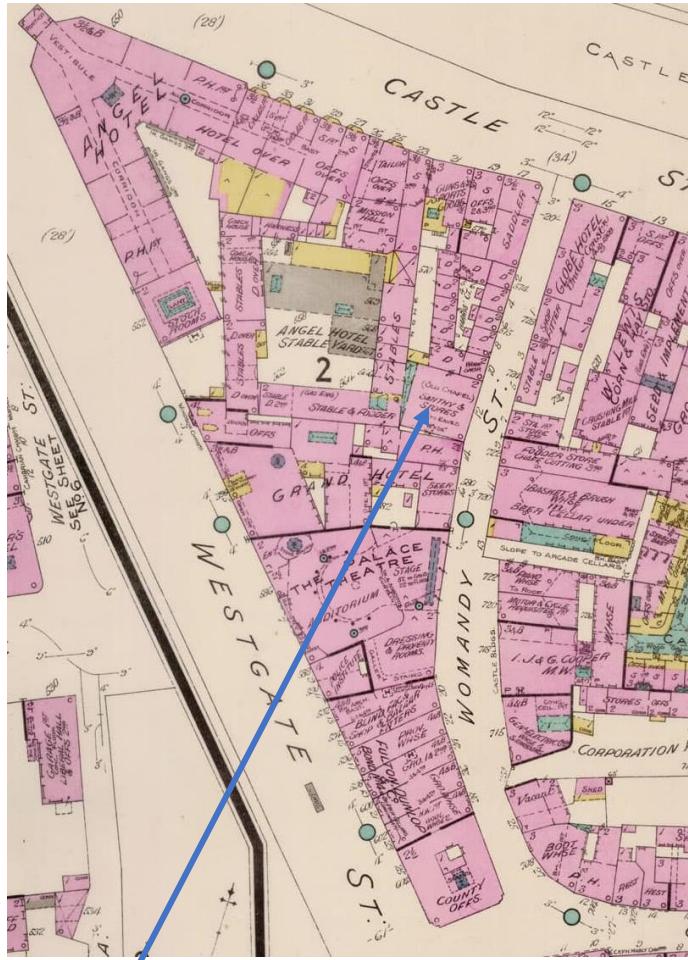


Clwb Ifor Bach



[NTS:
Ifor Bach, Lord of Senghenydd, 12th century
Owain Glyndŵr, c. 1354 – c. 1415]



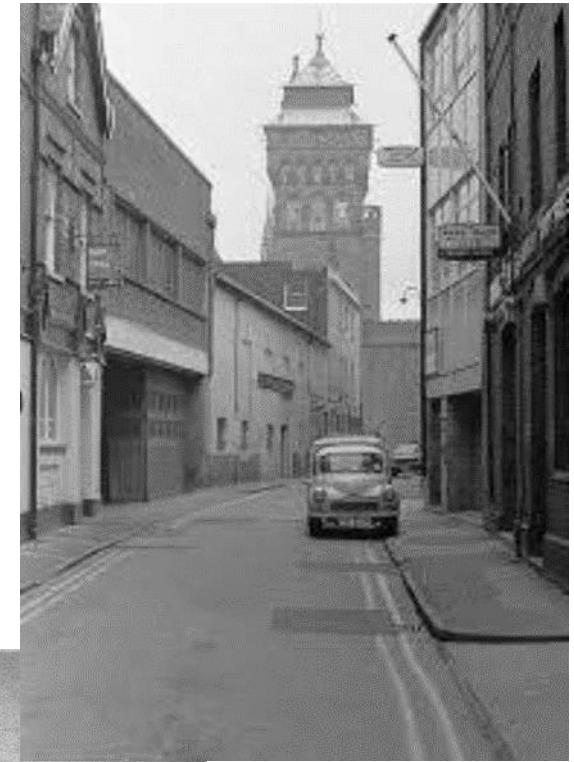
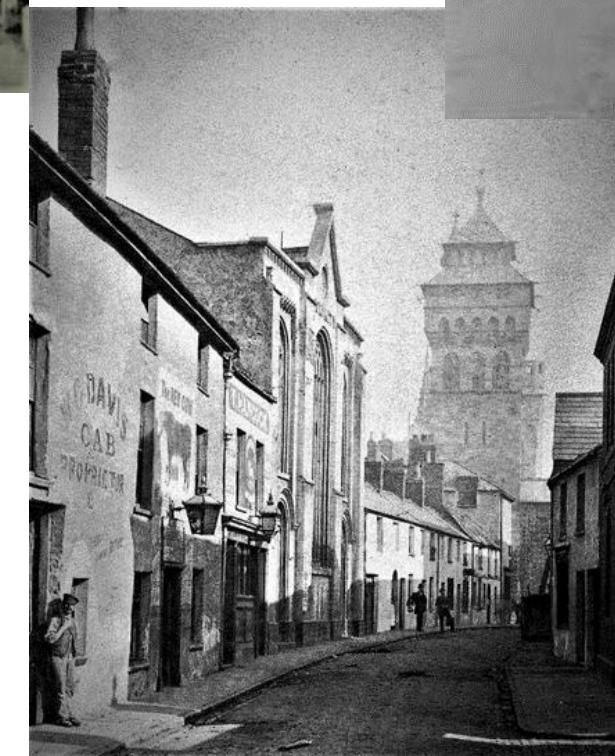


Trinity Chapel:

- 1638: Rev William Ebury & others barred from St Mary's Church
- 1640: Ebury forms 1st non-conformist congregation
- 1654: Ebury dies
- 1696: Sir John Thomas of Wenvoe granted land in Womanby Street to Alderman John Archer
the first Trinity Church, (later Presbyterian Chapel) built
- 1718: dwelling house added in Castle Street (Archer)
- 1847: church re-built after fire
- 1888: amalgamated with Llandaff Road English Congregational Church
church in Womanby Street sold to fund build of
- 1894: current New Trinity English Independent chapel in Cowbridge Road East



Ted?



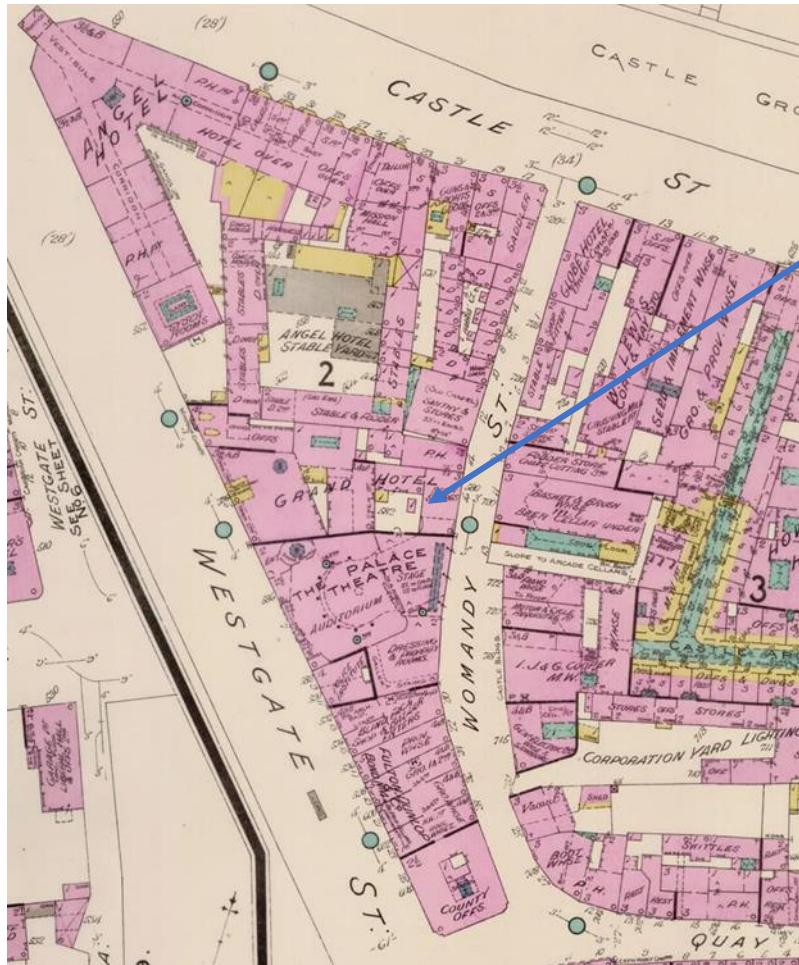
Womanby Street had its own religious centre

Established its place in non-conformism ?



Horse & Groom (one of Cardiff's earliest PHs)





Red Cow (1776)
 "The Grand" (part of the Grand Hotel) – 19th century
 Full Moon
 Moon



Religious centre closely linked with other social centres of the time

Non-conformist thread runs through to today

Main hotels – 19th century:

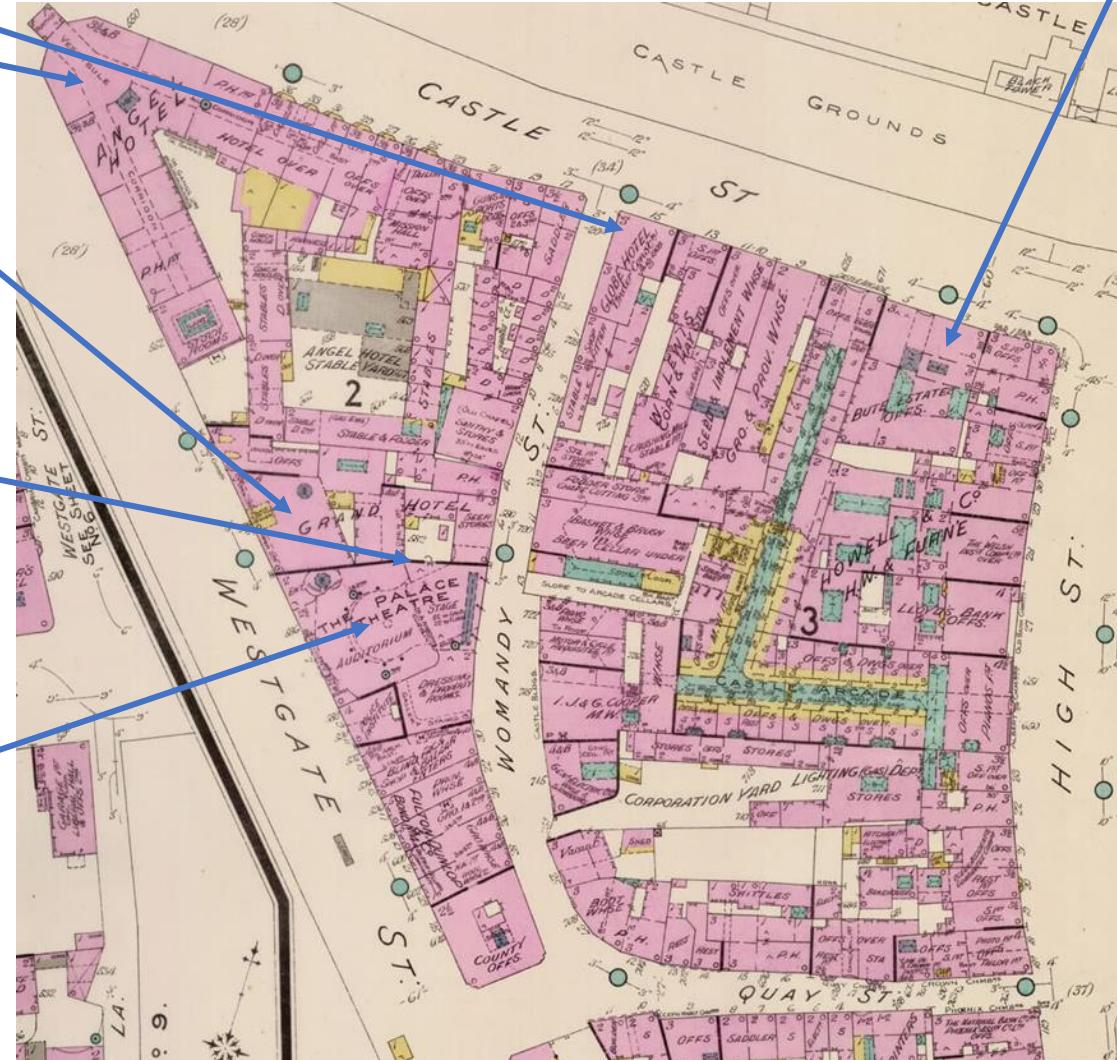
- Globe
- Angel
- Grand

Early hotels included:

- the Angel Hotel (17th century)
- Cardiff Arms Hotel

Cardiff Boat – Seaman's hostelry
– Red Cow Lane - 19th century

First theatre in Cardiff:
Palace Theatre/
Grand Theatre of
Varieties (1887)
Now Gatekeeper PH



Womanby Street area well established
as focal point for accommodation
between quay, castle & town



- built in 1830 by the Marquis of Bute on the site of the High Street rubbish dump to house labourers imported for the expansion of Cardiff Docks
- 50 houses each just two rooms, no water supply or drainage
- One of several foci for cholera outbreak in the city in 1849
- Cardiff Council acquired Jones Court in the early 1900s for council offices until post-World War II (1980)
- fully restored and reopened by the Lord Mayor in February 1982.
- last remaining example of the over 50 19th-century housing courts that had existed in Cardiff



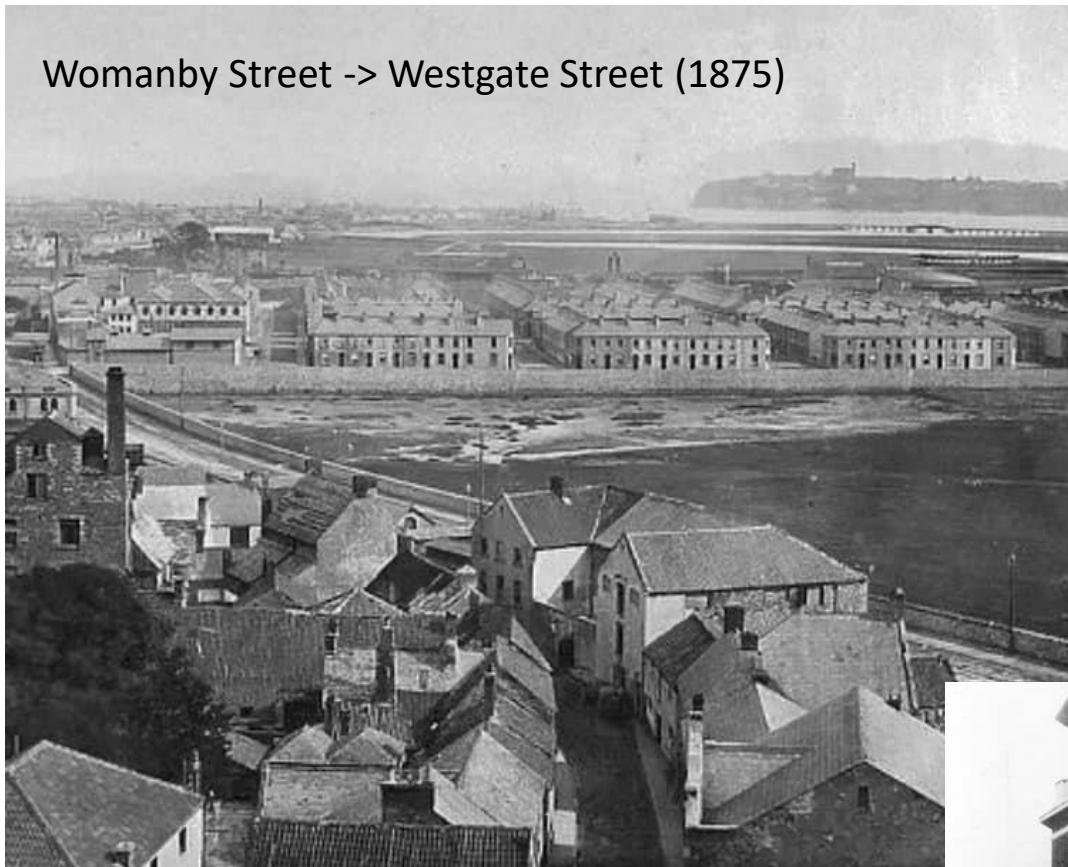
Data sources:
 Wikipedia
 National Museum of Wales archive
 Roath Local History Society

Womanby Street area showed later re-focus from
“transient” population associated with Quay to
more stable population

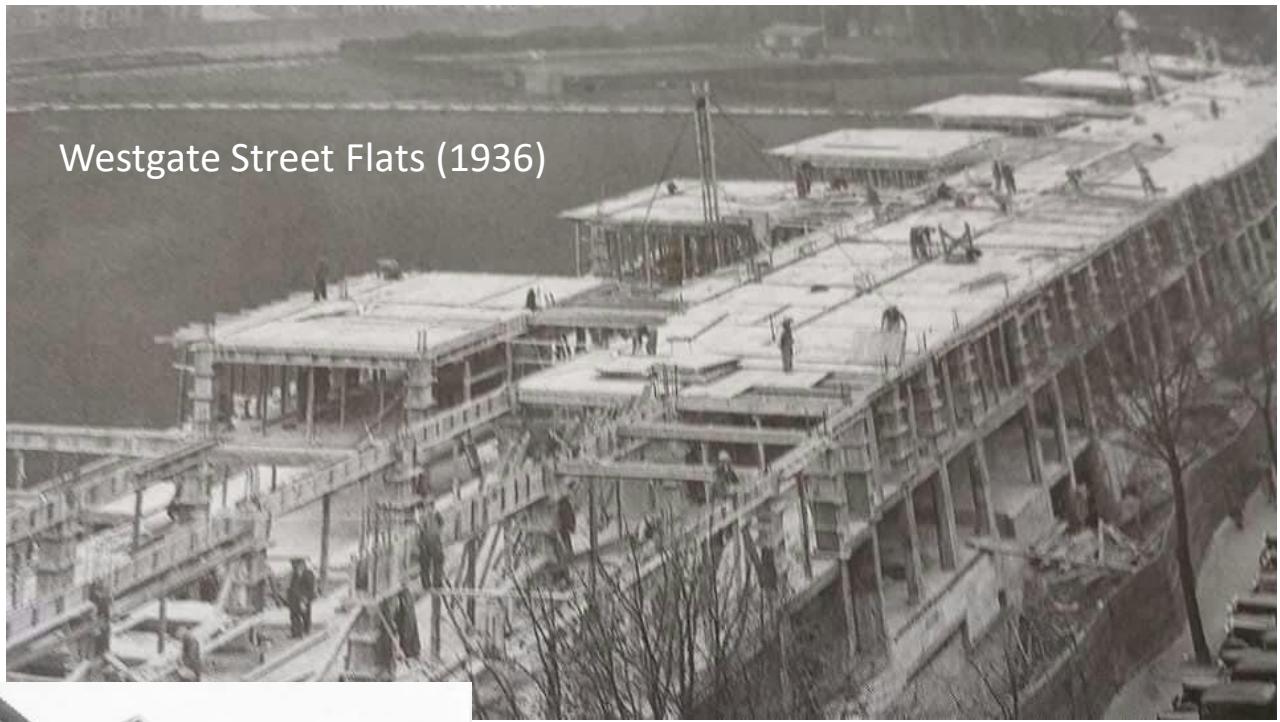
Focal area for later labouring population growth

As well as civic administration

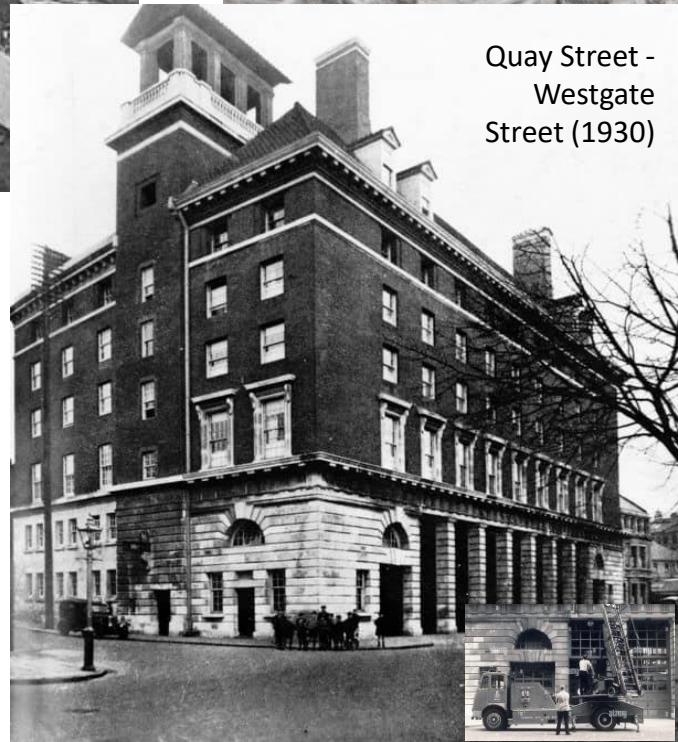
Womanby Street -> Westgate Street (1875)



Westgate Street Flats (1936)



Quay Street -
Westgate
Street (1930)



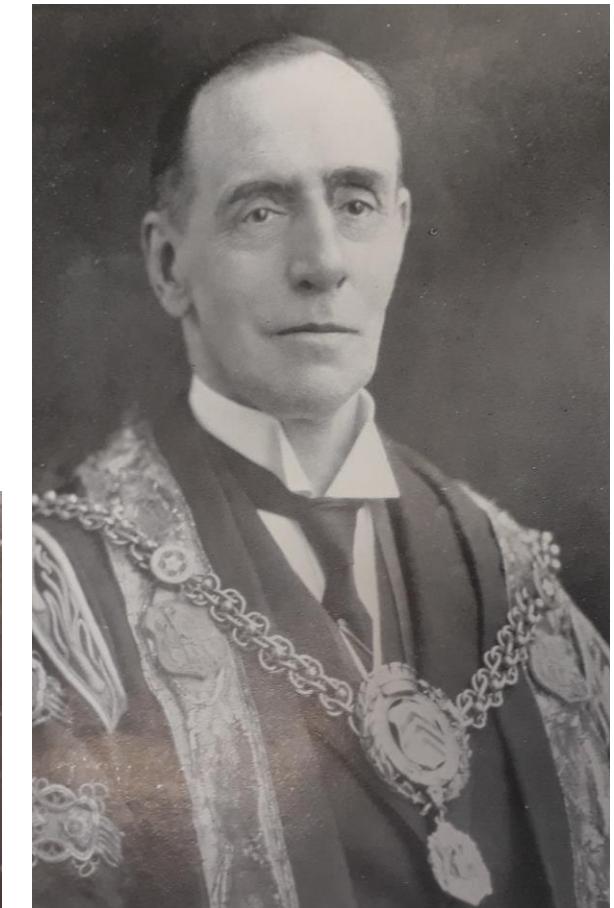
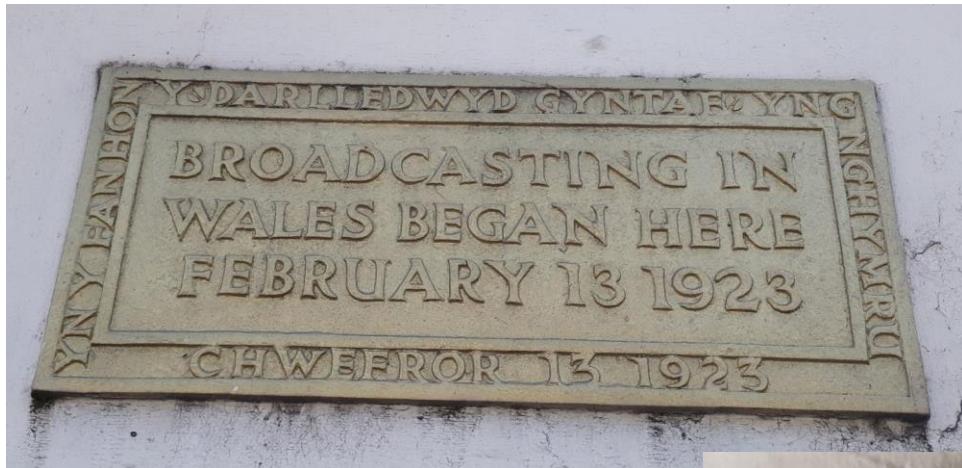
Data sources:

- National Museum of Wales
- Facebook "Cardiff Days Gone By" group

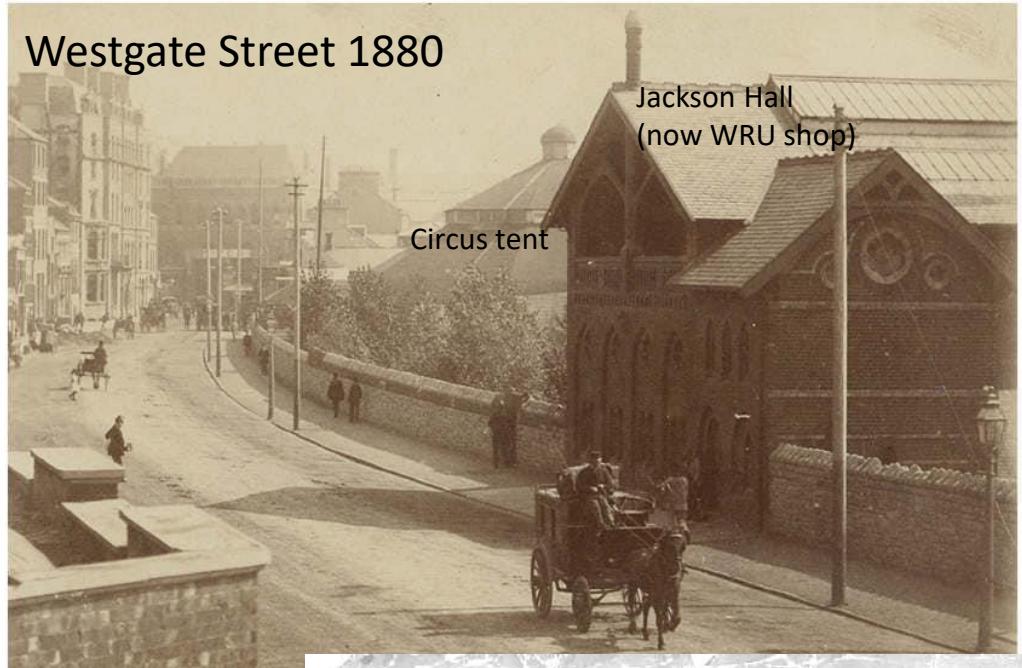


BBC in Wales

Ted?



Westgate Street 1880



Westgate Street 1940



Data sources:

- National Museum of Wales
- Facebook "Cardiff Days Gone By" group

Westgate Street
Post Office
(Henry Tanner)



1900



1930



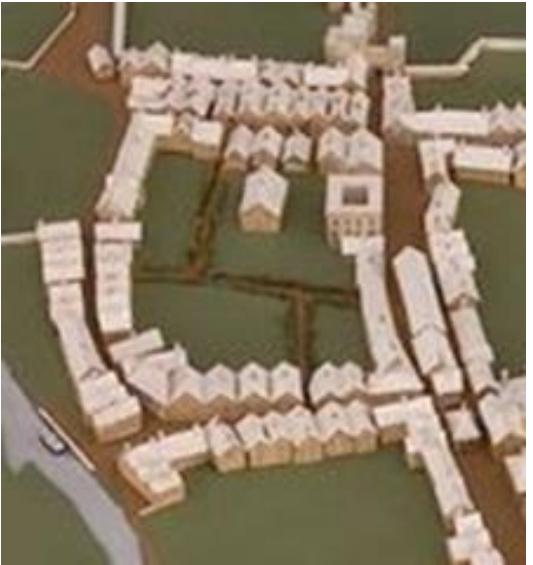
Data sources:

- National Museum of Wales
- Facebook "Cardiff Days Gone By" group

Womanby Street area transformation
complete with eradication of docks and
development of Westgate Street area

In conclusion

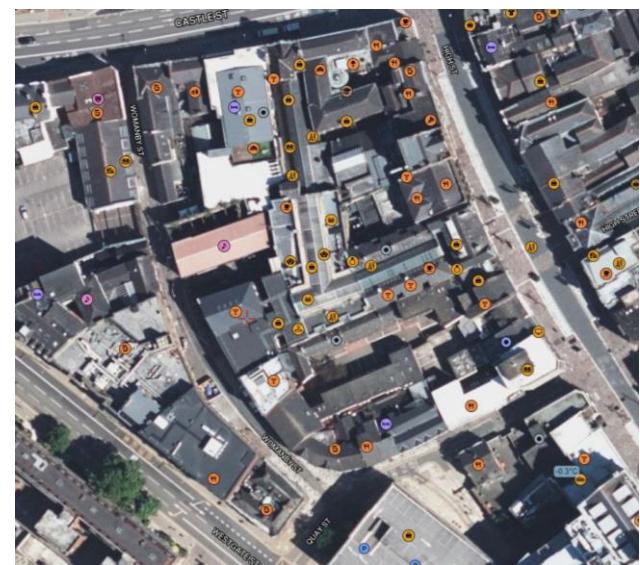
1610



1909



2023



- Cardiff (Old) Town was well established port with quay, main street lay-out, fortifications
- The quay was the link with the ROW through the River Taff. Wool was a major wealth driver
- WS was a key route between Quay and Castle (military significance?)
- WS was a central area for visiting travellers, sailors, traders (it is assumed that most buildings were trade, hostelleries & taverns)
- Conflicting governance influences – Viking/Danes, English, Normans, strong religious influences
- Rebellion fermented??
- Favoured pirate haunt
- Vulnerable geography due to River Taff course changes & flooding

- Quay remained significant port until early 19th century
- Strong commercial and military use
- Land developments consolidated area as:
 - civic centre (Bute Estate Offices, Cardiff Council Offices)
 - key port commercial area (warehouses, trader premises)
 - hotels, boarding & public houses flourished

Major change early - mid-19th century

- Cardiff Bay docks developed
- Brunel re-directs Taff
- Quay closed
- workers housing/slum area
- Old Town reduced in importance
- Westgate Street developed

- Old Town declines further until re-development
- WS maintains “spirit” of Old Town through:
 - businesses
 - PHs
 - music & arts venues/clubs
 - Welsh culture & language promotion