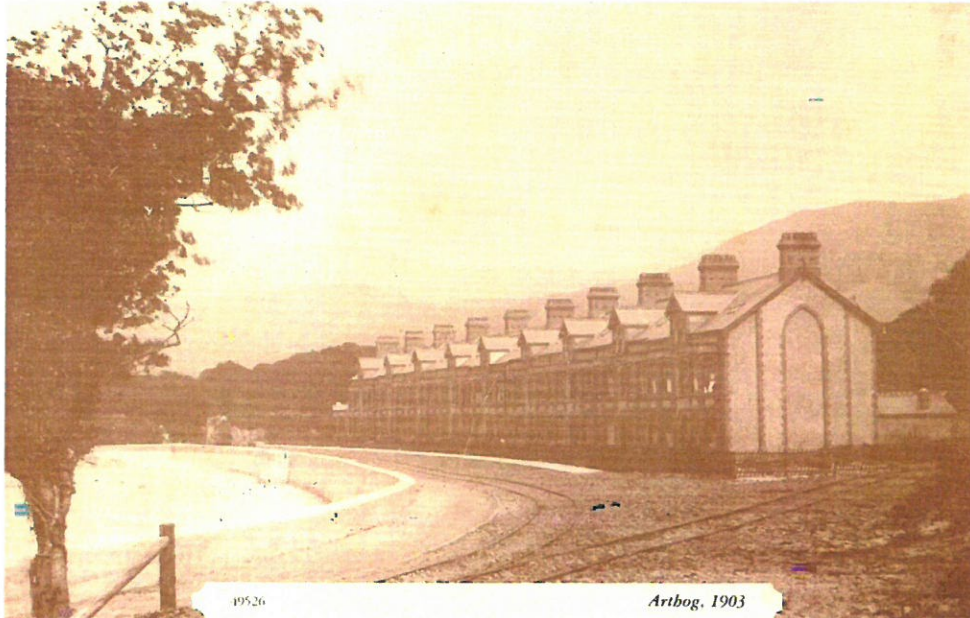


Mawddach Crescent Path – History, Gates and Signage.

Mawddach Crescent was built around the turn of the 20th Century by Solomon Andrews a Cardiff based businessman . This photograph shows the terrace of houses in 1903 together with the tramlines, also built by Mr Andrews. Note the presence of a wide footway/cycleway running between the river tidal wall and the tramlines in front of the terrace of houses.



The following extract from Wikipedia provides an explanation as to why this development took place. *“The tramway was built by Solomon Andrews in 1899 as part of his scheme to develop Arthog as a holiday resort. It used the routes of previous tramways which had been constructed from the 1860s as part of quarrying operations.*

The tramway connected Mawddach Crescent to Barmouth Junction railway station and other lines were built to local quarries to provide building material for the terraces of houses built as part of the holiday resort project.

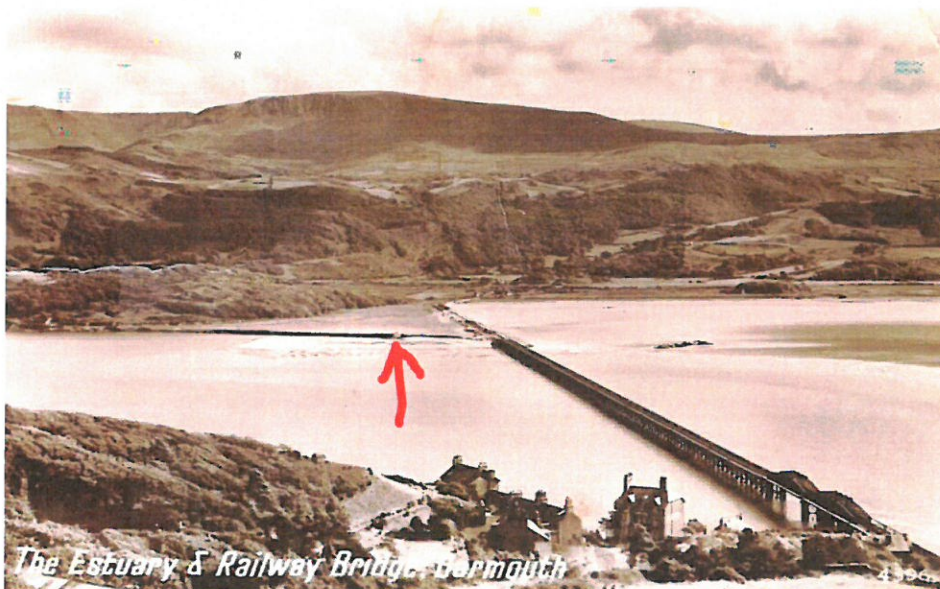
The project failed and after the summer season in 1903 the tramway was closed, never to re-open.”

Ward Lock & Co, a publishing house specialising in tourism guides, produced a “Red Travel Guide” which covered North Wales including Barmouth and the surrounding area. The 11th edition of Ward Lock’s “Barmouth and North Wales (Southern Edition)” published circa 1936/37 describes a suggested walk from Barmouth as follows. *“Walkers after crossing the [Barmouth] Bridge, turn left to a path over an embankment. A couple of hundred yards from the embankment, a terrace of red brick houses comes into view. Continue past the terrace through a gate to a second wicket gate about 120 yards on the right. Through this gate a path leads to Arthog over a level crossing.”* This description can only refer to the route in front of the terrace. This path was first described in Ward Lock’s North Wales Complete Edition dated 1912 which reads *“After crossing the bridge, pedestrians pass over loose sand to a road on the left forming an embankment and from that to a footpath at the foot of the hill. Passing a terrace of modern villas, continue by the path, till a wicket gate on the right marks the path across marshy ground by a level crossing over the railway to a high road.”* In their Red Guide ‘North Wales Southern Section’ 5th Edition, dated 1918/19 the walk uses the following text *“After crossing the bridge, pedestrians can at once go down to a road on the left forming an*

embankment across the sands, and from that pass to a footpath at the foot of the hill. Following the path through a wicket gate clearly indicated, the high road is reached just by Arthog village. Whilst in this edition, the description of the path is less detailed and fails to refer specifically to the Mawddach Crescent, there can be no doubt that the route is exactly that which is referred to in the 2 other publications. It is, therefore, clear that the claimed path appeared repeatedly in the Ward Lock publications for a number of decades (at least 25 years based on the extracts above).

Bernard O'Connor has recently published his book 'Mawddach Crescent, Arthog, North Wales' from which the following is a direct extract "*The views from the Crescent, as any resident or visitor acknowledges, are magnificent. Being only a 15 minute walk from the railway to London made it a popular holiday spot for those who knew about it. Some of the earliest visitors were artists, one of whom was Ward Lever. According to W. A. Norman, a subsequent resident of the terrace, Ward Lever rented No. 7 from about 1930. He also sold [his paintings] to passers by who noticed his paintings in the window or who chatted with him as he painted outside.*" These passers by would have had to pass to the front of the Crescent for this to be the case.

Below is a postcard photograph taken from Barmouth and looking South over Barmouth Bridge. It shows the embankment referred to in these guides commencing at the Southern end of the viaduct and taking an Easterly route. This embankment still exists and is widely used to this day although, by the 1950s, the wooden planks on the former tram bridge (the location of which is shown by the arrow) which carried the road/path (as described in the Ward Lock publications) over an opening in the embankment were beginning to rot away. The iron structure of the bridge was also not being maintained and it is understood that in the early 1950s, the Urban District Council raised their concerns over the condition of this route but little was done by way of redressing these problems. Over the years the bridge rusted away so that this part of the path was then being negotiated over stepping stones, as is the case today.



The photograph, below, believed to date back to the 1950's, and possibly earlier, shows a field gate and pedestrian wicket gate side by side, on the Western approach to the Mawddach Crescent i.e. on the route that Ward Lock's guide described. Note that the wicket gate, which is in the open position, is on the path which leads along the river wall in front of the Mawddach Crescent and note the

absence of any signage which might deter the public from using this path. There were also no signs indicating the presence of a public footpath to the rear of the terrace



The following photograph shows the Eastern approach to the Mawddach Crescent and it is also believed to date back to the 1950's or earlier. Note the similar format (i.e. field and pedestrian gate) to the Western approach although it isn't clear whether the wicket gate is open or missing altogether. There is no evidence of any sign to deter the use of the path. Note the cyclist photographed using the route.



This postcard which dates to the early 1960s shows the Western approach to the terrace. The only change evident on the approach is that the pedestrian/wicket gate is missing.



The following photograph taken from virtually the same point is from the late 1970s and shows the field gate in a state of collapse and the pedestrian gate still not replaced.



As a number of the statements of evidence testify, the path in front of the Mawddach Crescent has been used for several decades for business, commuting, accessing services, and for leisure and tourism purposes. Some of those testifying are able to state that they were able to do so without challenge for in excess of 60 years and one of these is able to testify to her use of the path for over 80 years. Until recent years no signage purporting to designate the path in front of the properties as

unavailable to the public, was erected. If the path was not intended for public use, signage would surely have been present at the gated access points shown in the above photographs.

At some time, possibly in the late 1970s or early 1980s, a public footpath waymark sign was erected at the Western end of the terrace showing the presence of a public footpath to the rear of the terrace. This is believed to have been a general initiative by the County Council to waymark definitive public footpaths and not a specific initiative relating to this path in this location. No signage was introduced to suggest that the path in front of the terrace was unavailable to the public and it is clear from the statements of evidence submitted with this application that the use of the path was unchanged by the introduction of these signs.

In recent years new gates have been erected (believed to have been erected by one or more residents of Mawddach Crescent) and notices posted seeking to deter the public from using this path. The photographs below show the new gates, fences and notices erected by residents on the Western approach. At least one resident has sought to challenge members of the public seeking to use the route.



The following pictures show a similar set of fences gate and notices on the Eastern approach.



Some statements, in response to the question *“Give details of wording of any notices which you know to have existed on the claimed P.R.O.W.”* have referred to the notices erected recently.

Original report compiled by Huw Roberts in July 2014 and subsequently added to and updated.

Current version V3 dated October 2016