

### **King's Arms Hotel**

Built in 1850 the King's Arms Hotel was Oban's second largest hotel with 56 bedrooms.

Advertisements in the Glasgow Herald stated that 'particular attention was made to the cleanliness and airiness of the bedrooms'.

In 1851 the owner Mrs Sinclair added stables and a coach house for the benefit of visitors.

By 1852 Oban had become so popular that a party of over 20 visitors had to sit up all night in the parlour of the King's Arms as there were no beds in the town.

The hotel was extended in 1866 and Charles Robertson Proprietor was keen to promote the refurbished establishment. He advertised that he had at great expense greatly enlarged the hotel, redecorated, painted, papered and furnished it in a style equal to any hotel in the west highlands of Scotland. Boats would meet all steamers and coaches and all orders by letter would be punctually attended to. Visitors arriving on the swift steamer from Glasgow would be assured of a meal at 5pm. Coaches with careful drivers were available for visitors. Guests could enjoy the comfort of private sitting rooms from 3s, 6d to 5 shillings. Single bedrooms were available at 2s, double rooms from 3s, 6d to 4 shillings. Breakfast was 2s, dinner at table d'hote 3s, plain tea 1s, 6d, tea with meat 2s and attendance 1s, 6d.

The hotel was again extended in 1889. The new frontage was designed by Edinburgh architect Mr John Hay in the Scots Baronial style. The hotel had five storeys and a tower where a flag staff was to be placed. On the first floor a balcony linked the drawing room and parlour where visitors could enjoy views across the bay. The top floors provided accommodation and the hotel advised prospective guests that it had the latest in 'sanitary improvements'.

### **Queen's Hotel**

The original Queen's Hotel was opened in the late 1850s. It was owned by Mr William Forbes but was little more than a large guest house. In 1878 the hotel was bought by a Miss Agnes Angus for £4,000. She also owned the Imperial Hotel where Cuan Mhor is now located. In 1882 she extended the hotel and added additional floors. Following a major fire in the 1880s the Queen's Hotel burnt down but was rebuilt in a much grander style in 1891 at a cost of £8,000. It was considered on completion to be one of the most striking in the West Highlands. In 1891 the census enumerators' returns recorded Agnes Angus as the owner of the Queen's Hotel although she still owned the Imperial which she sold in 1892 to Captain Cumstie. Cumstie, a local general merchant owned property adjoining the Imperial Hotel and a large villa on the esplanade.

## Area 6

In 1895 Agnes planned to extend the Queen's Hotel but had a dispute over access with the owner of the adjacent land to the rear of the hotel which was held at the Court of Session. The owner of the adjacent property, Mrs Catherine Sim, widow of John Fraser Sim (who designed St Columba-Argyll Square Church and the Oban Times Buildings) maintained that access to her property would be blocked as work to the Queen's Hotel would temporarily close off access to her property until building work was completed. The judge ruled in favour of Agnes Angus and the hotel was extended in 1898 to provide a total of 120 bedrooms and shops on the ground floor. In the 1901 census, Agnes Angus was still registered at the Queen's Hotel with a staff of nine which included a book keeper, a barmaid, a hotel cook, a laundry maid, two housemaids, a pantry maid, a waiter and a hotel boots. She dies in 1925 left a bequest to the town council of Oban for the benefit and advantages of the community. Agnes Angus was unusual in Oban as all of the town's other large hotels were run by men or husbands and wives not a single lady. She was an example of how a Victorian woman could progress in business without a husband.