

THE BUILDINGS OF MOREFA BORTH

- the Marsh Harbour

Ceredigion



That part of Borth Village on a pebble bank with the sea on one side and the Cors Fochno marsh some reclaimed and the railway on the other. In the distance is the River Dyfi. Photograph Michael Lewis

Photographs and History by BERYL LEWIS

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AERON HOUSE also called Aeron Cottage

Morfa Borth - the Marsh Harbour

Previously in Craig-y-don Place on the Cors side of the southern section of the High Street of Morfa Borth, and set back from the street. Now behind Steeplejacks. Built between 1829 and 1848. Known as Ty Bach in 1936.



ABOVE The east side of the house, on the far side from the High Street is its main front, and the entrance is on the south gable end. The walls are rubble stone, with many rounded stones from the beach. The main living room with the hearth would have been on the left hand, south end of the house and there is still a substantial chimney there. A smaller room was once on the right, but today there is one main ground floor room. The right hand north end of the roof shares a chimney with Wern next door which is rendered. Wern was once a cottage with a party wall to Aeron but has been rebuilt as a two storey house with a brick wing at the rear whose chimney extends into the garden of Aeron.

The walls of Aeron stand on the ground, there are no foundations. The windows were once smaller casement windows, and have been enlarged. There was a steened Ty Bach in the garden at the back, now filled in and gone.

Entering the house from the back door porch there is a small long narrow room on the left with an interesting wooden door of three panels, of different widths and is lit by a south facing window. This is now a kitchen. The staircase is ahead, and the stairs are not very wide and are enclosed, there are no banisters. On the right is the entrance to the living room whose plain wooden door has planks of the same size with no panels. In the living room the wide hearth for a big fireplace has a new (second hand) beam over it. The floor had been red quarry tiles now

replaced by a wooden floor. The ceilings are low but still with original timbers. There had been a timber partition dividing the ground floor rear room into two - the furthest room being smaller.

Upstairs the rooms are open to the roof, with a beam waist high that had to be removed. It is difficult to identify the wood which is stained a middle brown, it does not look like oak - possibly pitch pine?

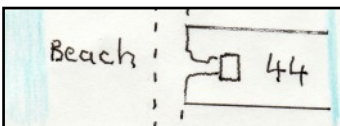


LEFT The porch and front door. A deep roof is at the rear of the house and a yard.

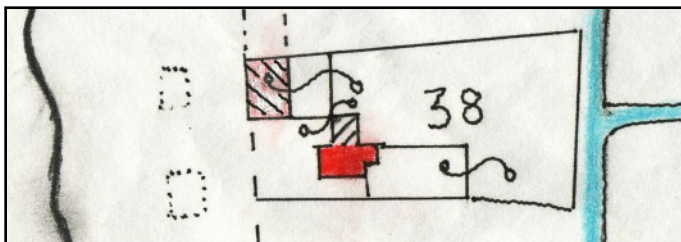
The narrow garden leads down to the ditch - the old brook.

The ground for this house was enclosed in 1820 by Hugh Hughes from the pebble embankment thrown up by the sea. It was called 'waste' as it was no good for farming. The ground measured 1 rod 19 perches, and extended to a brook. On a map of 1829 it is shown

with a single cottage built on it. A rent of £1. 3s. had to be paid every year to the Crown manor who owned the ground. The cottage was set back from the street, and opposite was the beach. Hugh Hughes owned shares in ships.



LEFT The site in 1829, Wern was there, Aeron Cottage had not yet been built (Detail after a map in the National Archives Map LRRO 1/3060 - a copy at Ceredigion Archives).

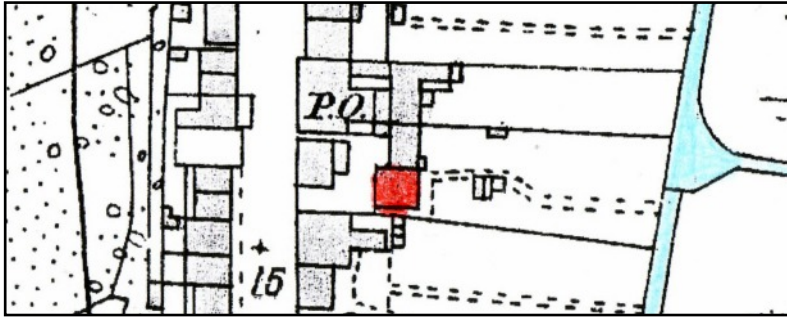


LEFT By 1848 the ground had new owners, and more cottages. Ebenezer Lewis and others owned all the cottages and all the ground, and William Jones and others occupied them. The earlier cottage was still there, and a cottage alongside that which is marked in red would become Aeron. The much larger

building beside the street against the northern boundary of the ground would become London House. Cottages were beginning to be built on the beach side of the street (Detail copied from the Tithe Apportionments Map of Llanfihangel Genau'r Glyn, Cyfoeth Township On-line at CYNEFIN).

The two old cottages (now Wern and Aeron) were eventually owned by a shoemaker John Lloyd (John Ellis, History of Borth, see Terry Davies's website).

In the cottage in the Census of 1861 was Elizabeth Jenkins, a widow, born in Borth about 1792. She turns up in the cottage again in 1871 and 1881. She was the widow of a mariner. By 1881 she was 89 years old. She lived on her own.



LEFT In 1886 Aeron House marked in red shared the ground with Y Wern and Craig-y-don (Steeplejacks) which suggests there was one owner of all of them. Aeron had a small enclosure behind it, and a path marked to the brook. The small buildings in the garden would

be a Ty Bach and possibly a pig sty (Detail from the 25 inch Ordnance Survey Map of 1888, surveyed in 1886, Cardiganshire NW III.10)

In 1891 living in 'Aeron House' was a retired mariner, David Hughes, aged 62, born about 1839. His wife Margaret was also 62. In the house was their son John aged 35, a master mariner and a widower, and born about 1856 in Borth, also their daughter Jane Williams, the widow of a master mariner. She had two small children, Maggie 10 and David 5. There was also a baby grandson there John Hughes aged 10 months. It is possible this family gave the cottage its name.

In 1894 Thomas Hughes, a master mariner was living there. He took part in the Inquest on the murder of Mary Davies (Cambrian News)

In 1901 living in the house was Jane Jones a wife, born in Borth about 1846/1851 and a Welsh speaker.



LEFT In 1904 there was one addition, a fence or wall from Craig-y-don (Steeplejacks) to the northern corner of Aeron. Access to Aeron was then from the main street, where a wall or fence enclosed a garden area (Detail from the 25 inch Ordnance Survey Map revised

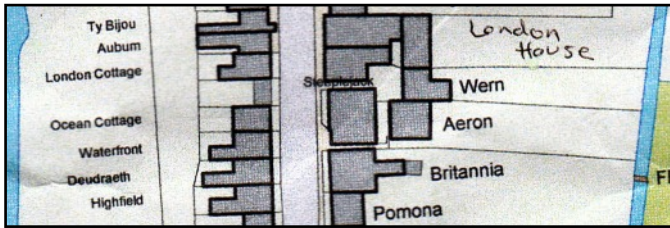
in 1904 and published in 1905, Cardiganshire NW III.10)

For a valuation in 1910 for a tax planned but not levied the cottage was valued at £58 - a bit more than Y Wern next door at £41. There would have been £3.4s to pay, £4 gross. Living there was Jane Jones by then a widow with private means. In 1911 she filled in the Census form in Welsh. The owner was Jane Lewis who lived in Craig-y-don. In 1911 this was still a cottage, and was listed with four rooms.

In 1925 the house was listed as Craig-y-don number 3. Paying the rates was Rebecca Forlet, she was the tenant of John Lewis, a marine engineer who had moved from Craig-y-don to Cambrian Villa and who was to die in 1936. In 1934 Laura Ross paid the rates as his tenant. Called 'Ty Bach' Aeron House was bequeathed to Mrs Marion Rowlands of Cambrian Villa a cousin of John Lewis, and another cousin. Mrs Rowlands bought the two properties for three hundred and seventy four pounds. In 1959 she was to sell them to Miss Lizzie Jones of Manchester House.

Tenants were put into both properties. With a vote for 'Aeron' in the 1945 General Election was Beatrice M. H. Evans and in 1949 paying the rates was Laura Ross. In 1957 and 1963 Nora Griffiths paid the rates and Eleonora Griffiths had a vote for the cottage in 1963 (Electoral Registers and Rates Ceredigion Archives).

A 25 inch Ordnance Survey Map of 1975 shows Steeplejacks was much wider and Aeron's front garden had gone. Access to the cottage was by a passage between Steeplejacks and Britannia. It still had a back garden leading down to the ditch - the former brook (Historic Maps on-line)



LEFT A more modern Council map shows the cottage the same shape as in 1904. Steeplejacks was extended as it was to be a restaurant, and this took away most of Aeron's ground, leaving it with a narrow yard (Detail from a map of the Council, courtesy of Councillor Ray Quant when assisting research for a local event).



LEFT This is a photograph of Aeron House before it was altered, it had tiny top windows, and there is a glimpse of one of the ground floor windows on the right. In the garden with some brick work and greenery is the ruin of the Ty Bach (outside lavatory).



RIGHT Larger windows were put into the front (east face) of the house both upstairs and downstairs.



LEFT The deep roof at the rear of Aeron House, coming right down to the top of the ground floor windows. This is unusual for Morfa Borth (Photographs courtesy of Mrs Marianne Baron).

Living in Aeron Cottage in February 2011 were Marianne Baron and her husband and their daughter. Their dogs woke them up when the top flat of Steeplejacks caught fire in the early hours of the morning, and they called the Fire Brigade. There is only a narrow passage to reach the High Street, and how they escaped when Aeron Cottage was at risk of damage was told in the Cambrian News of 24th. February. Mr Baron had woken up Brian and Sylvia Hollands at Britannia next door so they could escape too as their home was 'badly damaged' by the fire. Steeplejacks has since been repaired.

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Ceidw Beryl Lewis yr hawlfraint yn ei gwaith ac mae'r hanesion yn cael eu rhannu at ddibenion preifat ac ymchwil yn unig.

Houses of Borth consists of over 350 histories of individual buildings, lavishly illustrated with photographs, maps and documents. All the files are available from our website: <https://www.archifdy-eredigion.org.uk/tairborth.php>

We would like to thank Beryl for her kindness in letting us share her work with the widest possible audience.

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