

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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ARDWYN HOUSE Morfa Borth

At the southern part of Borth High Street on the beach side. Built in this form by 1886, and a good quality house. Formerly called Ardwyn Villa. Home of a Hughes family of mariners from enclosing the ground for a cottage in 1826. Still in the family in 1938.



This is an imposing single fronted, semi-detached, two storey stone house under a gable roof parallel to the street. The roof has roof lights for an attic floor and on the north gable wall is a small window for it. At both ends of the roof are rendered slab chimneys, each with two chimney pots. Their shape suggests they are brick. The walls are rubble stone, but do not have rounded stones from the beach, the stones are coursed and include some large ones. This is good quality work from a stonemason and was more expensive. The windows, under very shallow arches, and with modern frames and the modern front door are surrounded by a rendered and painted

framework, and there is a similar strip along under the eaves. It is likely these conceal yellow bricks which together with the exposed stonework walls was characteristic of houses fashionable in the second half of the nineteenth century, and there are several other examples along Borth High Street. The large London House or Gordon Villa for example. There is a step down from the front door to the enclosed, narrow front garden.

At the rear the house has a two storey wing under a nearly flat roof, which continues with a single storey section which reaches to the boundary fence. The rear windows are large and modern with good views to the sea. The upper window possibly has a door beside it on to the roof of the single storey section. This would act as a balcony though there are no railings. The two windows on the main house have the pattern of the old sash windows. The yard is not very big but has a platform to give a picnic table a view of the beach over the vertical plank, sea defensive fence. There is a doorway to the beach which is boarded up.



Ardwyn from the beach in 2015. The attic floor rooms have large windows for views of the sea, as do the windows in the upper floor of the wing. The house already had a rear wing in 1886, and eight main rooms in 1911.

The ground for this house is the stone embankment thrown up by the sea and called 'waste' by the Crown Manor who owned it as it was no use for farming. A plot was enclosed in 1826 and in 1829 Evan Hughes had a cottage on it. His ground measured 24 perches, just over an eighth of an acre. A rent of 16s had to be paid every year, or by paying £4 he could buy the plot

(National Archive, map and details, 1829, LRRO 1/3060). Evan Hughes in the 1841 Census was a mariner, born about 1786. He would have been a man of 40 when he enclosed the ground. His wife Margaret was fifteen years older. The road had been there for centuries and was a turnpike road by the 1770s. It led to a ferry from Ynyslas to Aberdovey, a quick way to North Wales. Fresh water for the old cottages came from a 'brook' behind the cottages on the other side of the road, and for fuel the villagers could dig peat on the far side of the River Leri just north of Ynys Fergi.

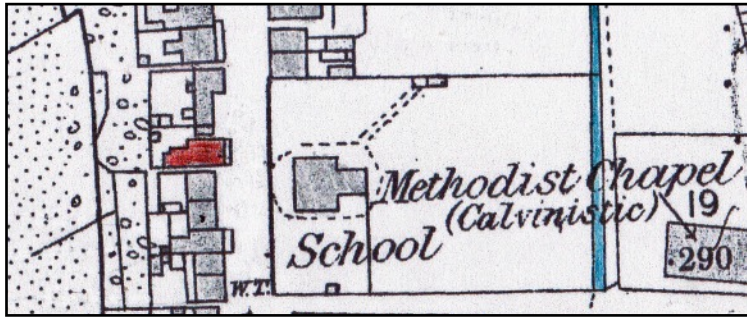


Evan Hughes's plot was number 12 on this detail from the map of 1829. He had some empty ground to the north of the cottage. Now his cottage has gone and his run of street frontage now has Ardwyn, Beach House, Gwynfa and Kidderminster House built on it. There was only room for these to be single fronted, and Beach House is particularly narrow. Number 41 with a cottage across the road belonged to the Vicar and the National School would be built there in 1842. The lane to Brynlllys was narrowed later, by another Glanrhyd Cottage added to the row already there.

By 1848 another long building was added on to the north of Evan Hughes's cottage.

In the 1861 Census in the area of the Hughes cottage were Hughes families - David a merchant seaman with a son Evan Hughes, with a widow, Mary Hughes next door but it is not possible to say which house or cottage as none then had house names.

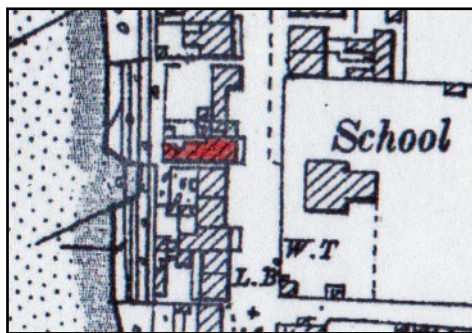
In the 1871 Census was Jane Hughes, a mariner's widow, and widowed quite young, she was only 37. With her were her sons Evan Hughes aged 9 (1862) and David Hughes aged 6 (1865).



By 1886 Ardwyn was built very close to the cottage which today is Y Nyth. Ardwyn had a good size wing on the back, and a narrow front garden. It had a little ground to the north of it with a small building. Detail from the 25 inch Ordnance Survey Map, surveyed in 1886, published in 1888 Cardiganshire III.10

By the 1891 Census the house had its name 'Ardwyn Villa' and in the house was Jane Hughes, a fifty eight year old widow, who put her occupation as 'housekeeper'. There was no-one else there. She had been the wife of Evan Hughes, and their son William - baptised September 15th 1840 - when an elderly, retired master mariner, would eventually live in Ardwyn Villa. In 1881 at the Census, William by then a master mariner aged 39, was living with his mother Jane in a small cottage in the terrace near the Railway Inn. Had Evan Hughes built the new villa on the family's ground for himself and his wife?

In 1901 at the Census in the house was a young wife, Mary Ann Hughes aged 29. With her was her daughter Jane Lilian Hughes aged 2, and her niece Jane Jones, also aged 2. William Hughes with his wife Ann Ellen Hughes was living next door in what is now Y Nyth. By 1910 they had moved into Ardwyn Villa.



In 1904 Ardwyn had spread further towards the beach. Something had happened to the narrow plot alongside, but it is not clear what it was. It had been fenced off. On the beach end of the plot there were four rows of sea defence fences - usually stakes driven into the stone bank and shared with neighbours - each house responsible for their own section. There had been a very bad storm in 1906. Detail from the Ordnance Survey Map revised in 1904 and published in 1905.

In 1910 for a tax planned but not levied, Ardwyn Villas was valued at £187, and there would have been £7.13s to pay. £9 gross. William Hughes was both the owner and occupier. For the Census of 1911 the house was listed with eight main rooms. William Hughes was then 68, a retired master mariner. His wife Anne Ellen was 44. They had been married for 10 years. With them was their daughter Ada Louisa Hughes who was 22, and as yet unmarried. All the family spoke both Welsh and English.

Sometime after 1922 holiday furnished accommodation was advertised in 'The Illustrated Borth Guide' of four bedrooms and two sitting rooms (Aberystwyth Public Library).

In 1925 William Hughes was still in the house and paid the rates. In 1934 paying the rates had been William Hughes as owner and occupier, but this was altered to Anne Ellen Evans. It seems this was his widow who had married again.



There is a glimpse of the house sometime after 1934. It is the third from the right and had sash windows and a decorative use of bricks under the eaves, a strip above and below, and alternate bricks between. The National School is opposite behind the wall.

(From a glass plate, by courtesy of Peter Fleming).

In 1938 paying the rates had been Anne Ellen Evans, but this was altered to S. M. Lewis.

With votes for the house in the General Election of 1945 were Alfred A. Lewis, William T. Lewis and Sarah Lewis.

Paying the rates in 1949 was S. M. Lewis.

In 1963 David Howard Williams paid the rates and had a vote for Ardwyn.

Terry Davies writes of a Thomas Davies, a mariner, born in 1937 who lived in Ardwyn for over a decade. His story is told in 'A Maritime History' pages 50 to 52.

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Hoffem ddiolch i Beryl am fod mor garedig â chaniatáu i ni rannu ei gwaith â'r gynulleidfa ehangaf bosibl.

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-ceredigion.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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