

# 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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## AUBURN HOUSE Morfa Borth

At the southern part of the High Street on the beach side. One of two identical homes possibly built to let by Abraham Lloyd Lewis, draper and grocer of London House across the road and then owned by his son William Thomas Lewis. Built by 1881 and called Evelyn House.



*LEFT Auburn on the left and Ty Bijou on the right in 2009.*

*BELOW Their porch.*

Auburn is a single-fronted two storey house under a gable roof parallel to the street, and it is in a terrace. It has a third floor under the roof lit by roof lights at the back and front of the roof. There is a rendered slab chimney on the south side of the roof. The walls are probably rubble stone like Ty Bijou next door. The front windows are modern but have the pattern of old sash windows. There is a porch on the north side of the front extending almost out into the road, and it has a front door on the south side of it. There is another



front door within which is modern. The porch is identical and joined to that of Ty Bijou next door, possibly built when the houses had the same owner. The rendering of the walls is smooth and plain. The spacing of the windows allows for a larger room on the south of the front both downstairs and upstairs.

The rear of the house, rendered blue, has an extension for the upper floor ending in a glazed sun room with views out to sea. There is also a platform in the yard allowing a view of the

beach undisturbed by the substantial rubble stone wall at the north and beach side of it. This wall would give some protection to the house from the sea during bad storms. There is a



gateway on the side of it and steps down to the beach. At the back of the main house on the south side are narrow windows, and a single storey extension across to the wall of London Cottage. The impression of the rear of the pair of houses is complicated by the very different extensions behind them. There had been a simple extension on the back on the 1905 map shown as shared by the two houses when under the same owner William Thomas Lewis.



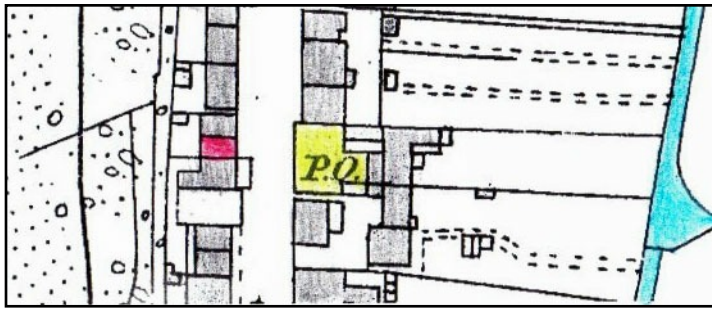
*The pair of houses from the beach in 2015.*

The ground for this house, a bank of stones thrown up by the sea, was still open ground in 1848 (Tithe Apportionments Map, Llanfihangel Genau'r Glyn, Cyfoeth Township, on-line at CYNEFIN National Library of Wales) The Crown Manor would have called it 'waste' as it was not suitable for farming, and when a villager enclosed this plot to build on he would have either paid a rent for it, or bought it. The road was centuries old and was a turnpike road by the 1770s. It led to a ferry from Ynyslas to Aberdovey and

was a quick way to North Wales. Fresh water for the cottages and houses came from a brook on the other side of the road - the tailrace from the Glanlerry Corn Mill (Felinwern) plus two small streams. For fuel villagers had their own area to dig peat on the other side of the River Leri just north of Ynys Fergi.

In the Census of 1881 in the house, then one of the two Evelyn Houses, was a mariner's wife, Margaret Williams who was 31, born in Borth about 1850. With her were her sons Richard Williams, aged 6 and Morgan Hugh Williams aged 2. Across the road was the important and flourishing London House, drapers and grocers and the post office, owned by Abraham Lloyd Lewis.

In the 1891 Census in the house was a young mariner, John Williams aged 26. His wife Elizabeth was much older, 47 and born at Minfford in Cardiganshire.



*In 1886 the two cottages both filled their narrow plots. Auburn House is marked in red. They shared a yard, and the small building was probably their Ty Bach (outside lavatory). There was no extension at the back of the houses. At the rear of them their yard had two fences, the outer one possibly a defence against the sea in storms. Across the road London House, (PO-post office), is marked in green. (Detail from the 25 inch Ordnance Survey Map surveyed in 1886, published in 1888. Cardiganshire III.10).*



*In 1904 the houses had an extension at the back which they shared, and many more lines of sea defences had been built. (Detail from the 25 inch Ordnance Survey Map, revised in 1904, published in 1905. Cardiganshire III.10).*

working for the master baker Captain Thomas Davies of Nathaniel, who had a stable for his horse at the street end of the cottage Myfanwy, and a coach house over the road for his horse drawn van.

Paying the rates for Auburn House in 1925 was John William Davies, tenant of Thomas William Lewis of London House. His wife Jennie was Borth's nurse. In 1924 their eleven month old daughter Jean died (Cambrian News). In August 1934 Mrs Davies gave a recipe written in Welsh for a sponge cake for a collection of recipes in aid of St Matthew's Church and published by the Cambrian News. (Ceredigion Archive). John Davies was a seaman on the steamship Dallas City and died in a hospital in Korea aged just 45 in 1938. (Cambrian News, January 3<sup>rd</sup>. 1939).

Jennie Davies had a vote for the house at the General Election of 1945, and she paid the rates in 1949.

In 1963 paying the rates was H. P. Smith, and no one had a vote for the house, which suggests it did not have a permanent resident at that time (Rates and electoral registers in the Ceredigion Archive).

It is likely the house was empty in the 1901 Census.

In 1910 for a tax planned but not levied this house was valued at £81. There would have been £3.4s to pay, £4 gross. Both the houses were owned by William Thomas Lewis, son of Abraham Lewis of

London House who was running the shop. There was no tenant in Evelyn Cottage (Auburn) at that time. By the Census of 1911 the house had its name, 'Auburn House'. Living there was a baker's van man, Hugh Stanley Jones aged 31. He spoke both Welsh and English, and his wife Elsie Evelyn Jones was English, born in Melton, Leicestershire. They had been wed for two years and had a one year old son Glyn. The house then had six main rooms - probably at the front one upstairs and one downstairs, and the same at the back, and two in the extension which suggests it had two storeys. Is it a co-incidence that Mrs Jones had 'Evelyn' as one of her names? Was she a relative of the Lewis's of London House perhaps? Hugh Stanley Jones was probably



*Reading from the left; London Cottage, Auburn, Ty Bijou and then The Orange Tree, and next door Leander. These were all called the 'London Cottages' and London House (and shop) is the big building on the right. Auburn and Ty Bijou had very plain fronts and sash windows with four panes. The photograph for the postcard was taken when the road was being dug up - possibly to lay a pipe.*

*Postcard courtesy of the Amgueddfa Ceredigion Museum.*

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**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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