

# THE BUILDINGS OF MORFA 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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# BEACH COTTAGE

Wernfach (small marsh) Morfa Borth

At the southern end of the Wernfach, almost at Upper Borth, on the east side of the road to Clarach. In same ownership until 1934. Built as a New Cottage by a retired gamekeeper John Davies born at Bow Street and his master mariner son Thomas Davies for both their families. Called New Cottage in 1881 but two Davies families were together in the 1871 Census though it does not name the house, so possibly it was already there in 1871. Now two homes.



*Beach Cottage Number One in 2016.*

Beach Cottage is built of rubble stone and has a brick faced roadside wall. All the walls are rendered. It is one and a half storeys high under a gable roof at right angles to the road. Each end has a brick chimney. The barge board of Number One is decorated. Its windows are modern. Access is from the north side, and a conservatory almost the length of the

building protects the front door and an inner window. A low stone wall with a gate encloses a very narrow front garden area. A passage leads to the rear. The stone wall continues as the land over the wall once belonged with the house.



*LEFT Beach Cottage Number Two in 2016.*

This house has a view of the beach from upstairs. There is a narrow balcony, and french windows open on to it. The window below matches that of Number One. All the windows are modern. Access is from a gateway in the stone wall along the south side of the building,



*The rear of Beach Cottage in 2016.*

where there is a back door, and a window. A passage leads to the back garden. Adjacent on the other side of the wall is the paved lane past Craigfryn and the block of cottages to the south. Beach Cottage's ground opens on to the Lôn Glan-y-môr (Sea-bank Lane) at the back. On the left Number Two's yard is lower than the house, and steps are needed to reach it and a back door opening on to a railed terrace. Most of the rear is taken up with a gravel parking area. The extension has a flat roof and upstairs a door leads out on to a narrow balcony. There will be a view over Borth Common to the hills beyond. Number One on the right has some extensions at the back and a wooden garage at the rear. All the windows are modern.



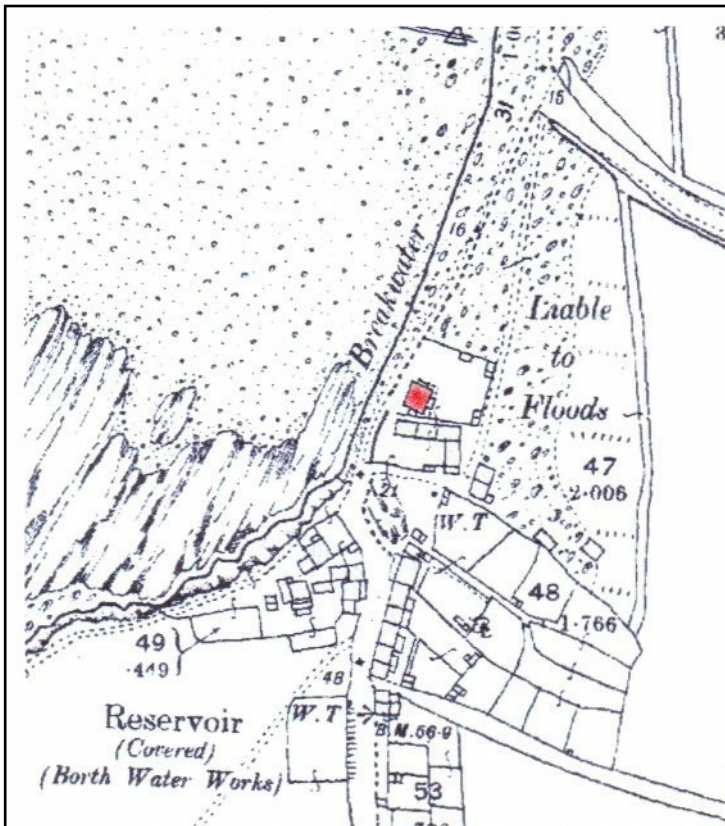
*LEFT This detail from a postcard of 1914 shows the shingle bank on which Beach Cottage, rendered white, was built. The modern road to Clarach was not there yet, the Lôn Glan-y-môr can be seen on the far left. There was in important door on this north side of the cottage, and a single window. There was a boat pulled up on the shingle bank in front of the cottage.*



*This is from a postcard of 1915 and shows Beach Cottage on the far right with a small extension on the rear of it and the Glan-y-môr lane.*

*This small detail from a postcard of about 1895 shows the rear of Beach Cottage at the back of the block of cottages. (Craigfryn was still a single storey cottage). Beach Cottage partly rendered had one window on the north side (Postcards private collection).*





*LEFT In 1886 Beach Cottage is marked in red. The old cottages were already there behind it, and it had quite a large area of garden on the shingle bank. The Lôn Glan-y-Môr was just an unfenced track, and there was another track on the beach side of the house. There were some small extensions on the side and back of Beach Cottage. The house was all in the same ownership. The 'liable to floods' was the Wernfach - a little area of marsh. On the right is not a road, but a drainage ditch leading north to more ditches alongside the road to Llandre (Detail from the Ordnance Survey 25 inch map surveyed in 1886 and published in 1888. Cardiganshire NW III.10)*

In 1861 at the Census John Davies aged 60, a gamekeeper born in Bow Street and his wife Margaret aged 55 and born in Borth. and father in law John Evans aged 84 a widower and merchant seaman were all living in Borth - but it is not possible to know where they lived then.

At the 1871 Census, John Davies and his wife Margaret had room in their house for a lodger Catherine Lloyd 25 unmarried, a dressmaker and scholar. The next Census entry was John's son, Thomas Davies aged 29 and already a master mariner, with his wife Margaret also 29 with their children Margaret aged 3 and William Thomas aged 1. They were all born in Borth. I think the Beach Cottage had been built for the two families.

At the 1881 Census we have a name for the house, 'New Cottage'. Living there were Margaret Davies, by then 74 and a widow. With her was her grandson William Thomas Davies by then 15. Also in New Cottage was Margaret Davies 39, born Llanfihangel-y-creuddin, the master mariner's wife, and their sons; John 8, Enoch 4 and Evan 1.

1891 Census we have the addresses - a Davies family again were still in Number One New Cottage - John Davies aged 49, a widower, a farm labourer, born in Pembrokeshire. With him was his daughter Mary A. Davies 27, a domestic housekeeper, born in Borth. Welsh speakers both.



Living in Number Two was Mary Hughes aged 63, a widow, kept by her son, also born in Borth and a Welsh speaker. With her was her daughter Avarina Hughes aged 20, a dressmaker. She was born in Borth and could speak Welsh and English. At the 1901 Census in 'New Cottage' were a Jones family. In Number One was William Jones aged 40, a general labourer born in Borth, his wife Jane aged 39, born Bontgoch

and five children; Jennie 16, Thomas 11, William John 9, Mary S. 5, and David Llewellyn 3. All were born in Borth. In Number Two was Mary Jones, 33, born Borth, who was a 'rural letter carrier'.)

In 1910 there was no name for the house - it was just listed under Wernfach. Number One was valued at £95 for a tax not levied - the owner was J. and O. Butler and the tenant was Catherine Jones. Number Two was valued at £110, and J. and O. Butler not only owned it, but 'occupied' it. This could mean they put tenants into it. No-one was there to fill in the form for the 1911 Census - so it was not listed.

Paying the rates in 1925 was Charles H. Wilkes. Mr Wilkes owned both the Beach Cottages homes, he lived in one and the other had a tenant Charles A. De Boinville.

In 1934 Mr Wilkes still had one cottage, and occupied the other. That one, Number Two had a new owner Richard Jenkins. Mr Wilkes and Mr Jenkins paid the rates in 1938 and 1949. It was Richard and Margaret Jenkins on the Electoral Register in 1949 and likely to be living there.

Mabel Wilkes was in Number One in 1963 and on the Electoral Register, with Margaret Jenkins in Number Two, and Mabel Wilkes and Richard Jenkins paid the rates for the cottages.



*On this detail from a postcard dated 1906 there is some clues to the old windows. The front ones were sash windows and had small panes. The window alongside the door also had small panes. For the main door there was a porch with a gable roof on slender posts. The fence is made of brushwood and was a defence against the sea.*



*This detail from a postcard dates from the 1960s and shows the garden area beside Number One before Isgraig was built on it. The next building after the gap is Rockside and Sandiway.*

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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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