

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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BRADFORD HOUSE Morfa Borth

On the beach side at the north end of Borth High Street. Home of an Arter family of master mariners and used for holiday visitors, and it had a shop until about 1900 and then the home of Thomas Tibbott, carpenter and joiner. Built after 1859 but before 1871.



LEFT Bradford House in 2010.

Bradford House is a single fronted, terrace house of three storeys, and it shares a gable roof with Boston House beside it on the north. There is an attic floor lit by roof lights. There are no chimneys. The roof has an overhang supported by pairs of dentils (brackets). The walls are exposed rubble stone, but this is not the best quality rubble, it is likely the walls were intended to be plastered. The stones are coursed and there are no rounded beach stones in the front wall. Twelve dressed stones top the windows with a flattened arch. These are local materials which did not come on the train, suggesting a building date of before 1863 when the station opened. The windows may be modern but are in the pattern of the original sash windows. The upper windows have the size and spacing to match those of Boston next door. The northern pair of windows and the front door are close to the join to Boston House which gives a larger ground floor front room and bedrooms above. The ground floor of the house is rendered and beneath a roof which extends right across the front. This protects a curving bay window and the front door. Over the front door is a window with coloured glass decoration to light the hall. A narrow front garden is enclosed by a low rendered wall with square pillars at intervals. This is all since 1952 when the front door was on the other side of the front and there was no roof across.



LEFT These are the brackets (dentils) supporting the overhang of the roof. They were commonly used for the buildings in this terrace. Tops of the windows like this, probably stone, are on the older houses and cottages in Morfa Borth. The stones of the wall are coursed but vary very much in size and shape. Photo taken in 2015. The rendering had been removed.



*LEFT The ground floor front in 2016.
ABOVE Coloured decoration in the glass above the front door.*



The rear of the house from the beach in 2016.

The first floor is extended on the north side for a porch faced with wood, and its door opens out on to a balcony and staircase leading down into the yard. The railed balcony has been extended right across the back, with slender carved and shaped posts, and this first floor has a picture window with fine views of the sea. The second floor has a curious small window, and a large window. There is a single storey extension on the south side of the yard. That has been built since 1904.

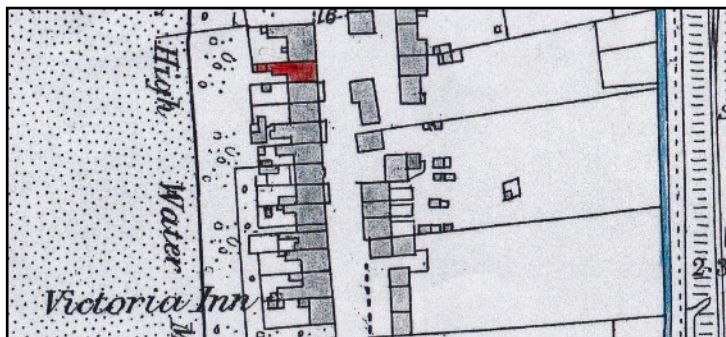
The ground for the house is the stone bank thrown up by the sea and called 'waste' by the Crown Manor who owned it as it was no use for farming. On a map of 1829 it was beach (National Archives LRRO 1/3060). The road had been there for centuries, it was used in the twelfth

century 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 behind the buildings on the other side of the road. By the time this house was built there was one tap with good spring water in the street outside the Cambrian Hotel.

In 1848 the site of Hafod was still not built upon. (Tithe Apportionments Map Llangihangel Genau'r Glyn, Cyfoeth Township - on line at CYNEFIN - National Library of Wales). However on a map of encroachments on the waste belonging to the Crown Manor in 1859, a beach side plot (numbered 18k) wide enough for many houses was drawn and said 'sold' but the surveyor had not drawn any buildings on it (1859 Map National Archives LRRO 1/3060).

The first mention of Bradford House was in the Cambrian News of 1871 when Mr Arter had holiday visitors staying in the house for six weeks that summer, many from Newtown who are likely to have come on the train. Two families could stay at the same time or a family with children and two nurses. At the 1871 Census in the house was Mrs Ann Arter aged 31 and born about 1840 with her children; Catherine Arter 7, William David Arter 6 and Annie Arter 1.

Holiday visitors seem to have been a regular feature of the house in the summer. In 1880 visitors were staying in the house for six weeks, some came from Monmouthshire and Machynlleth. In the 1881 Census Mrs Annie Arter had become widowed, and was running a grocery shop. Her daughter Catherine then 18 was acting as housekeeper. She would have been needed as there were small Arters to look after; John aged 7 and Thomas born that year. It was sad for the children to lose their father so young, but sailing in the wooden sailing ships could be dangerous and mariners were drowned. The Census listed these Arters as Welsh speaking.



LEFT This was the Annie Arter's home in 1886 marked in red. It had an extension on the north side of the back of the house and this opened on to the beach. The small building at the end of the extension was probably its Ty Bach - outside lavatory (Detail from the 25 inch Ordnance Survey Map surveyed in 1886 and published in 1888, Cardiganshire

III.10)

In the 1891 Census Annie Arter was listed as a 'lodging house keeper' and Kelly's Directory of 1895 listed her as a grocer. In 1899 her daughter Catherine married Thomas Tibbott, a young carpenter and joiner born about 1867 in Machynlleth and they had children; John Richard Tibbott who would become a carpenter himself and work at home with his father, another son Thomas Albert Tibbott who would go to sea, and daughters Claudia, Irene, and

Norah. Bradford House became their home and they owned it in 1910.



LEFT In 1904 the end of the extension was different and there was a proper yard. The house still opened directly on to the street. (Detail from the 25 inch Ordnance survey Map revised in 1904 and published in 1905. Cardiganshire III.10)

In 1910 for a tax planned but not levied, the house was valued at £230 with £8.10s to pay, £10 gross. It was the least valuable of the three storey houses in the terrace. Thomas Tibbott also owned and occupied a workshop at Wellington Place. This was somewhere behind Leronian, Manchester House and Ysbryd-y-gors where there was a row of old cottages, some by then unoccupied and suitable for workshops. The 1911 Census listed seven main rooms for Bradford House - probably six in the main house and a kitchen in the extension.

In April 1920 the Cambrian News reported that Thomas Albert Tibbott who had become a seaman, left with some other Borth men to join a ship at Middlesborough. Steam ships were too big to use the Mid-Wales harbours, and the Borth men went to English ports or South Wales to join their ships.

In 1925 the Tibbott family were still in Bradford House. In the Trader's Directory of Wales of 1926 Thomas Tibbott described himself as a 'cabinet maker' and no doubt he did some business at his house and probably had items of furniture on display in his ground floor sitting room overlooking the High Street.



This detail from an old postcard shows the back of the house rendered cream, second from the right. It had a fat, rendered chimney with one chimney pot on a single storey extension on the back. A high wall protected the house and extension, and a gateway led out on to a platform beyond, with a ladder to get down into the yard, the stony bank, which ended with another fence where it joined the sand. There was a ladder to get down on to the beach.

Paying the rates in 1934 had been Thomas Tibbott but this was crossed out and altered to Catherine Tibbott who paid the rates in 1938. Thomas Tibbott had died in 1925 aged 73. Catherine died in 1939 aged 76 (Parish Register, Ceredigion Archives)



With a vote for the house in the General Election of 1945 was Sybil F. Whitehurst. In September 1947 paying the rates was R. W. Gregg and Gregg and Whitehurst owned the house. In 1949 paying the rates had been R. W. Gregg but this was altered to Mr J. Hawkins.

LEFT This detail from a postcard dated 1952 shows how the house looked then. The front wall was rendered, and the front door was on the south side, the bay window on the north side, and a wooden beam right across the front matched that of Boston's shop nearest the camera. That was probably left behind from Annie Arter's grocery shop. There were some very smart balls on the posts of the little wall around the front garden. The windows were sash windows, one on the first floor is partly open. (Postcard Private Collection)

Paying the rates in 1957 was M. England.

Paying the rates in 1963 was J. Collins and with votes for the house were Isaiah and Monica Collins (Electoral Registers and Rates, Ceredigion Archives).

LEFT Since 2010 the stones on the front have been exposed and the old rendering removed.



These are the first floor and top floor window on the south side. Some large stones were chosen to put around the lower window and it is interesting how small some of the other pieces of stone were, but they are skilfully integrated in with larger ones.

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Tai'r Borth / Houses of Borth
gan/by Beryl Lewis

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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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