

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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BRIG-Y-DON

Princess Street, Morfa Borth - the Marsh Harbour

Formerly called Bay View. Built by 1884. A home of the Arter family of mariners, replacing their earlier cottage, 2 Princess Street in 1881, and still owned by them in 1925.



ABOVE Brig-y-don is the right hand villa in this photo taken in 2013

This is a villa three storeys high with a further floor under the roof with roof lights. It has a gable roof parallel to the road and is one of a pair with Bronheulyn. This was the smarter end of Borth, near the impressive Cambrian Hotel, The Terrace, the Railway Station and the Golf Course. With 10 rooms, excluding bathrooms or back kitchen, this was probably designed with holiday visitors in mind, who before the age of cars, could come to Borth on the train.



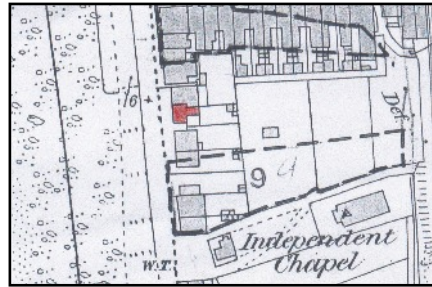
The front wall is rubble stone, the south side being rendered. Yellow bricks frame the windows, edge the arched doorway, and edge the outside walls making a pattern like quoins. There are no chimney stacks.

LEFT The eaves have an attractive pattern made with yellow and red shaped bricks. Bricks like these could come on the train from places like Ruabon in North Wales.

The two lower front windows are bay windows, with modern plastic frames and large plate glass central windows with a good view of the sea. Between the bays are hung slates, and below the lower window are dark red bricks.



LEFT The rear of the house is rendered and two top sash windows match those on the façade. The extension shown on the old maps has gone, replaced by a tall narrow window.

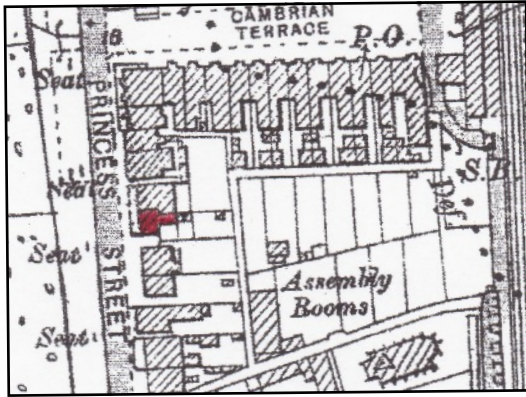


RIGHT Marked in red is Brig-y-don in 1886. It has an extension on the back which probably contained its kitchen (Detail from the 25 inch Ordnance Survey map, surveyed in 1886 published in 1888. Cardiganshire III.10)



The first mention of the villa was in the Census of 1891 when living there was the Welsh speaking family of a mariner, Ann Arter, aged 32, born in Borth c. 1859, and her three sons, Thomas, 10, David, 7, and John, 5. By 1901 Thomas was 20 and a steam engine fitter who could speak English and Welsh, and there was a small daughter, Phyllis Barbara Arter, aged 4.

LEFT This detail from a postcard shows the Arter house about 1899. There were Gothic style porches over the front doors supported by carved wooden brackets and sash windows with blinds. This hood is like those on a block of villas in Queen Street Aberystwyth. There were chimney stacks on both ends of this building, as a postcard of 1906 shows. On the 1899 postcard the chimney appears to be brick, yellow possibly with red stripes. Several flues would have run up inside this chimney but there were no chimney pots in the 1899 photograph, nor in the 1906.



LEFT Brig-y-don/Bay View on the twenty five inch Ordnance Survey map of 1905, revised in 1904. It no longer opened on to the street, but had a tiny strip of front garden, and a small new building at the rear of the house. Today the projecting wing of the house plus the small building have gone.

In 1910, at a valuation for Rates, this house and garden, then called 'Bay View' was valued at £600, with £17 to pay, and £29 gross. This was one of the more valuable houses in Borth. The

owner and occupier was John Arter. In 1911 Anne's husband, John, a master mariner aged 57 was back in Borth, but the family had moved away to a grander and larger house further south along the street which they named 'Bay View'.

Brig-y-don (top of the wave) was now the name of this house, and living there as a tenant was Joseph Foulds aged 38, a coal merchant, born in Castleton Lancashire, his wife Leah who was born locally, and a fifteen year old son, Joseph Edward Foulds. Also in the house was Frederick William Marsh, a widower aged 35, and a Railway Agent. He had been born in Withington, Shropshire.

In October 1924 there was a Miss Arter there, and in 1925 Anne Arter was owner of the house. Joseph Foulds and his family were still there.

However, thereafter, the house was 'to let' to holiday visitors, furnished with 5 bedrooms and three sitting rooms. People had to apply to Mrs R. Hughes (Borth Guide, Aberystwyth Library) and after 1950 to Miss M. Lloyd (Handbook Guide to Borth, also in Aberystwyth Library). Martha Lloyd paid the rates for the house in 1963, and she had a vote for it so was probably living there (Electoral Register and Rates, Ceredigion Archives).

John Ellis, a descendant of a Borth Maritime family, wrote in 1920 that 'Brig-y-don and Bronheulyn were built where two cottages stood, homes to the mariners Evan Jenkins and John Arter'. (Terry Davies's web site 'Borth Maritime History' on the Internet). For the history of the ground on which Brig-y-don was built please see 'Bronheulyn Cottage'.

We can trace the Arter family through the Census's - and from their position on the lists it is likely that they were living in the cottage which today is gone but would have been at the rear of Brig-y-don. In 1841 William Arter, aged 20, (born c. 1821) a mariner and his wife Margaret also 20, had their first child, a son called John, probably after William's father, possibly the Tithe map John, the owner of the cottage. There were further children - Catherine and in 1841 William, David, Enoch and Thomas (Census).

By 1861 William had died, and when the Census takers called Margaret was at home with her son Thomas, aged 17 but already a merchant seaman, and a son John born in 1854. We last hear of Margaret in 1871, when her son William was at home with her. He was a mariner aged 25. She died in 1877.

By 1881, John born in 1854 was married and with his wife Ann had a son of Thomas, aged 5 months. This was the family to be in the newly built Bay View (Brig-y-don) in 1891. Ann took in holiday visitors in 1880 for 5 weeks from July 9th to September 10th. (Cambrian News). She was a very young wife, and the money from the visitors would have been useful.

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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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