

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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BROCKHILL Morfa Borth

On the east side of the road at the far north of the village. Built in 1935 by architect Ronald H. Franks for his client H. Melen G. Fisher. It was built as a holiday home in the garden of Fron-y-gôg.



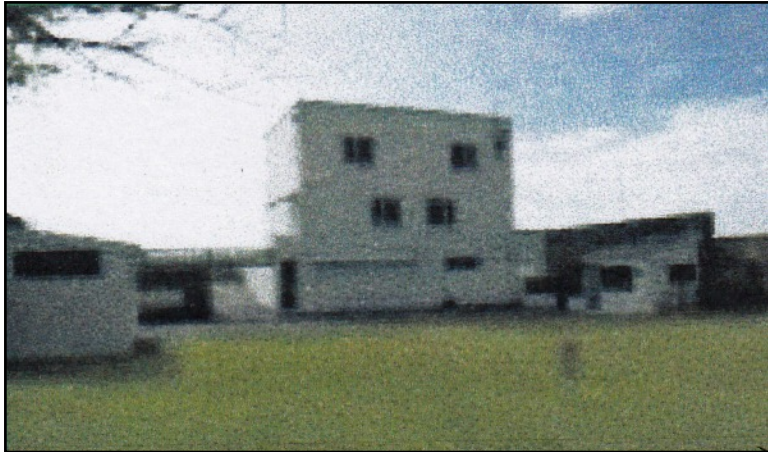
The house is set back from the street with a front garden enclosed by a low rendered wall with an interesting shape designed for metal rails to link each tall section but now gone. The house has a basement, a ground floor and a first floor. It is built of brick the walls rendered with white concrete. The roof appears to be flat but is pitched and this is hidden by the height of the walls. On the north side of the front of the house is a curved extension extending to the roof. This curved wall is typical of the 1930s and the Art Deco style. The curving section contains windows for the ground and first floors. The front door is at the centre of the front, protected by a roof leading off the curved section, and the door is high up off the ground to allow room for the basement so steps down are needed. The front door opens into a spacious hall. Leading off it are a front living and dining room with the large curved window giving fine views of the beach, also off the hall are stairs, a bathroom, a generously sized kitchen and a bedroom on the south side of the front of the house. The back door is on the south side of the building, opening into a passage to the kitchen flanked by two larder cupboards and a cloakroom. The basement at the back of the house contains a double garage a laundry, and a workshop, and in the curving section of basement at the front of the house is a games room, originally called a servant's room. On the first floor in the curving section is a lounge with a walk-in bar, and today this has a window, but it was designed to be an open loggia to enjoy fresh air, westerly sunshine and sunsets in a wide view over the beach and the sea. Also on the first floor are three bedrooms, two look out eastwards past Fron-y-gôg bungalow, over the railway and the Cors Fochno to the hills and one looks out southwards. There is a bathroom and a cloakroom and all the bedrooms have built in cupboards. There is also a linen store accessed from the landing. The north side of the house is close to a drive to Fron-y-gôg. On the north wall of the house is a window for the basement games room, on the ground floor are two windows at the rear for a bathroom, and on the first floor is a large window to light the stairs, and a smaller one for a cloakroom. The windows are carefully placed to make a satisfying pattern.



LEFT The north wall of the house which is very different from its neighbours.

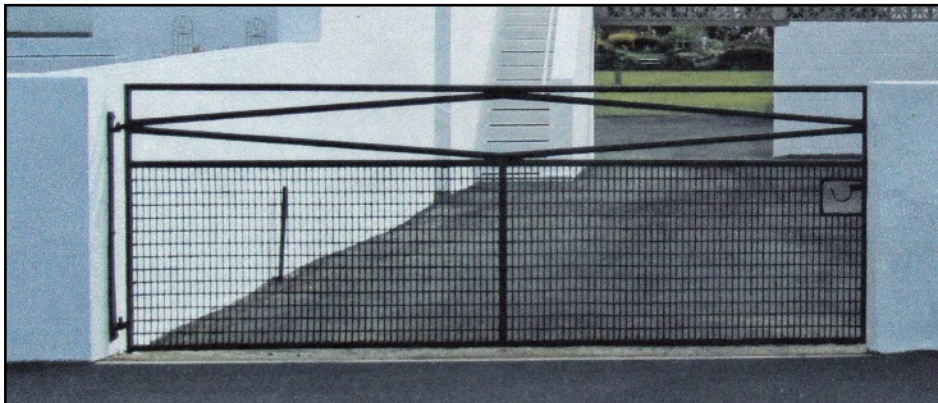
This was a sloping site, from the stone bank down to the level of the marsh, and so at the back the basement and garage floor become the ground floor. It has a basement window for the laundry and doors for the double garage which is built into the house. These have folding doors operated electrically by remote control. On the next floor are two windows for the kitchen which look out across the back garden and then towards Fron-y-gôg bungalow, across the railway and the Cors Fochno to the hills. On the top floor are windows for two bedrooms.

The south wall of the house has no windows for the basement. On the first floor is a small



window for the bedroom at the front of the house, the back door which has a glass panel in it and a staircase to reach it from the front garden. On the second floor is a small window on the street side for the bedroom at the front and a larger window at the rear for a bathroom. All the windows are modern and double glazed and their frames were not part of the original house.

The house stands on about one third of an acre. At the rear is a patio with a geometrical design, a large lawn, a couple of detached buildings, all enclosed by a rendered brick wall. Access from the main street to the garage at the back of the house is along a drive at the south side of the house.

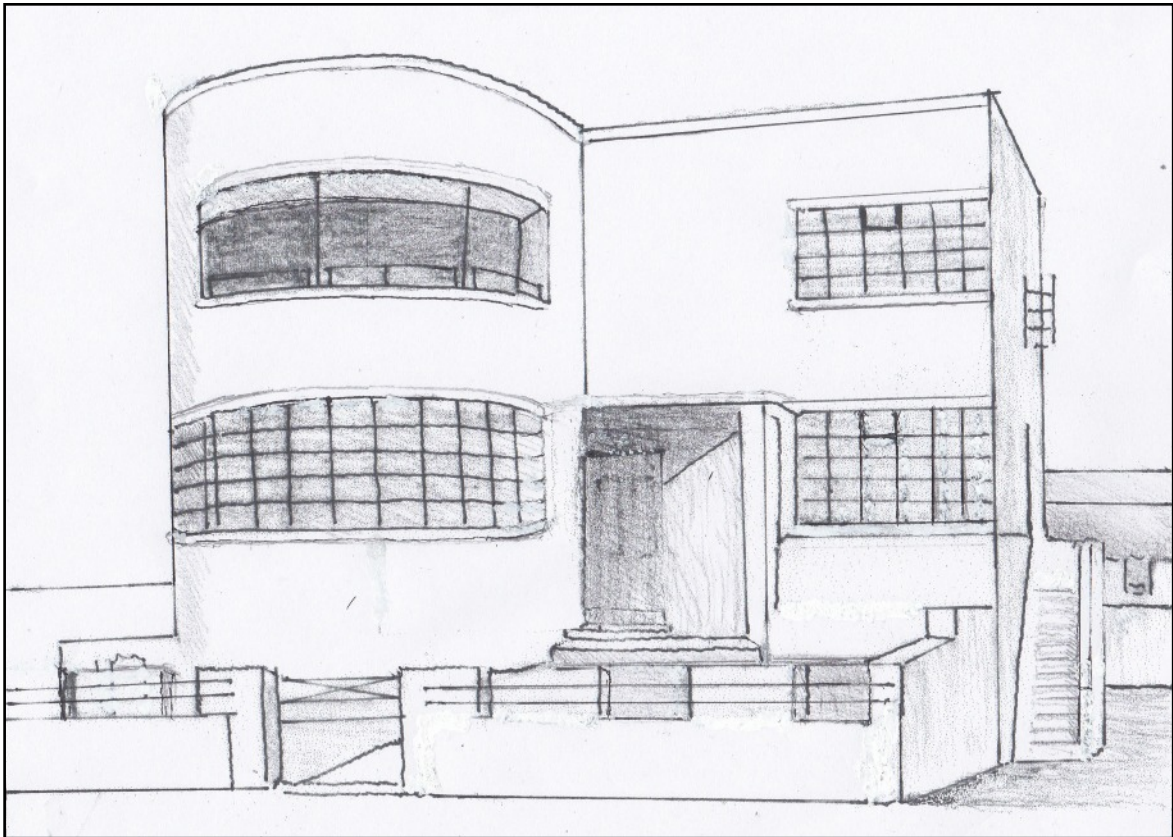


LEFT The gate to the drive has the geometric metalwork of the original house.

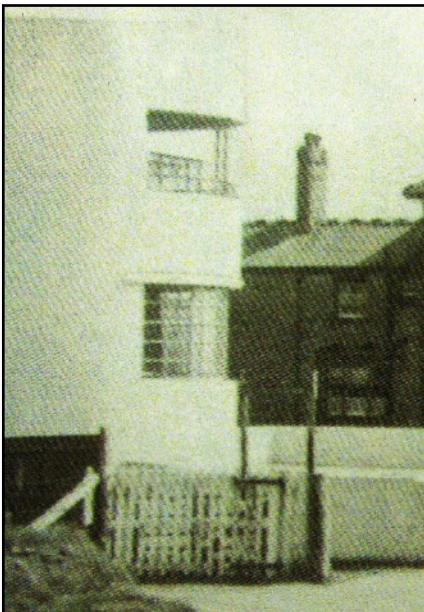
Brockhill's architect Mr Franks also built Moorlands further south along the main

street for the same client, also in 1935. He is well known for his 'White House' at Holland on Sea in Essex, formerly called 'Biana' which he built in 1934. Flat roofed homes were popular in seaside resorts in the 1930s. A note at the Royal Commission said that Brockhill was originally called Rockhill, and the basement had a double study room, and the house had a chimney.

The Council rates caught up with the new house and in August 1937 paying the rates for the house with its garage was F. Melen Fisher as owner and occupier. F. Melen Fisher also paid the rates in 1938. The rates were £26 to pay and £35 gross. This was a little more valuable than the houses in the North Parade terrace just to the south and Brockhill was considered one of the most valuable houses in Borth at that time. In 1945 with a vote for the house in the General Election was Mary E. Wilkinson. In 1949 Mrs Gray paid the rates. In 1957 paying the rates was J. Q. Billingham and the house was valued at £52. In 1963 paying the rates was Joseph Eric Billingham and with Dora E. Billingham had votes for the house. (Notes, Royal Commission of Historic Monuments Wales, Rates and Electoral Registers Ceredigion Archives)

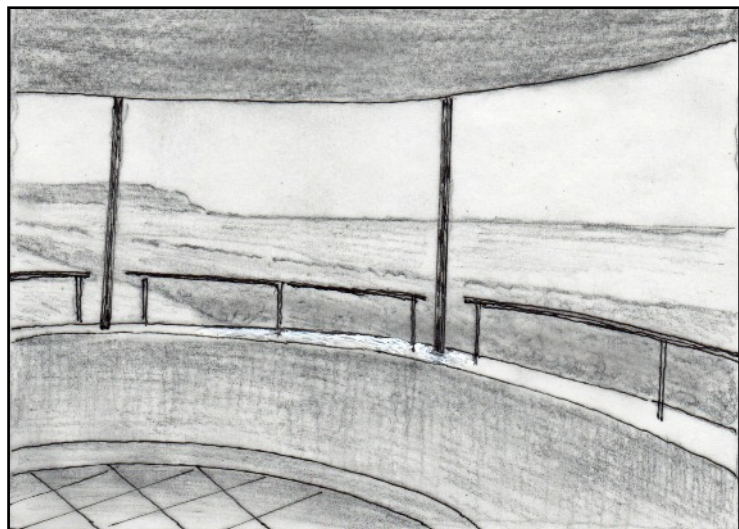


ABOVE The house in the 1930s with its strong geometrical design.

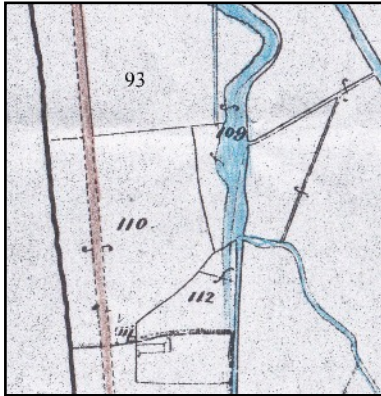


LEFT This detail from a postcard of the early 1920s show the great curve of the front of the house, with the metal framed window below and the open 'loggia' above.

BELOW The view from the loggia. The sketches are based on photographs by Ronald Frank the architect in the collection of the Royal Commission of Historic Monuments Wales.



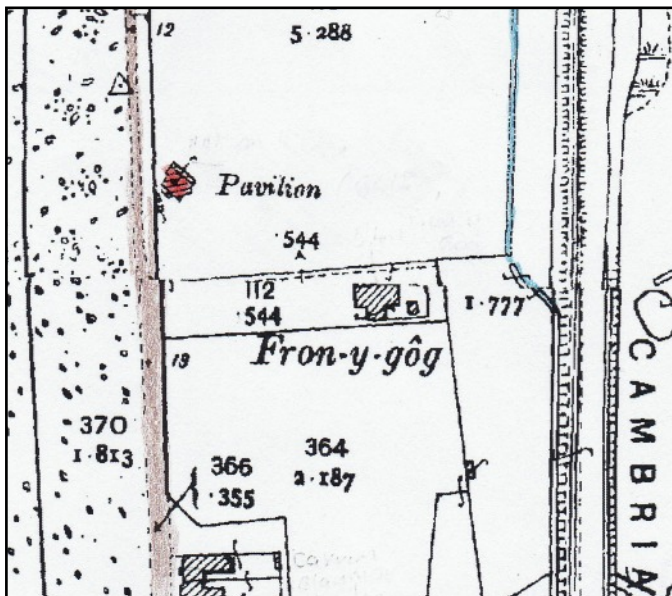
The land on which Brockhill stands was a bank of stones thrown up by the sea and the marsh to the east owned by the Crown Manor who called it 'waste' because it was no use as farmland. The marsh land beside this on the east was sold to Pryse Pryse who drained it to use as pasture.



LEFT Brockhill House stands on the north end of field number 110 called an 'Allotment' in 1848 after a Parliamentary Enclosure of the 'waste'. It was part of the Gogerddan Estate, and with drainage channels dug it was pasture. (Tithes Apportionments Map, Llanfihangel Genau'r Glyn, Henllys Township, CYNEFIN on-line.) Across the field running parallel to the sea and marked in brown was the road to Ynyslas which had been there for centuries. It was in use 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. Field number 110 avoided the old course of the River Lerry marked in blue. The field to the north number 93 was owned by the

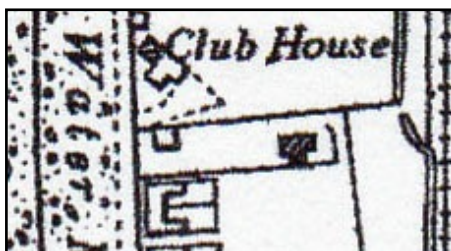
Jones family of the Gwynfryn Estate at Taliesin, and became the site of the Golf Club. There was an 18 hole course there well before homes in the village reached there.

On September 1st 1891 Sir Pryse Pryse of Gogerddan sold some of his field 110 to a surgeon from 'Buttrells' Llandre, John Harden Jones. In December 1902 Dr Jones sold a strip of it to Mrs Elsie Wright and her husband Alfred Cecil Wright, a Birmingham, manufacturer of screws who lived at Edgebaston. The land cost £95 and they built a bungalow on it. They bought more land from Dr Jones in 1906 - the ground on the north of the bungalow abutting the hedge of the golf course. Mr Wright was a keen golfer and a president of the golf club for many years (Details from Deeds to Morlais, privately owned)



LEFT This was the golf course with its Pavilion marked in red and just to the south the bungalow called Fron-y-gôg in 1904. That almost filled the width of the strip of ground, and was set back a long way from the road. (Detail from the 25 inch Ordnance Survey Map revised in 1904 and published in 1905. Cardiganshire III.10)

In Fron-y-gôg's garden Brockhill would be built. J. C. Corfield owned it in 1935. He was to set up the holiday camp now the Golden Sands and caravans still stand today between the end of Fron-y-gog's garden and the railway line.



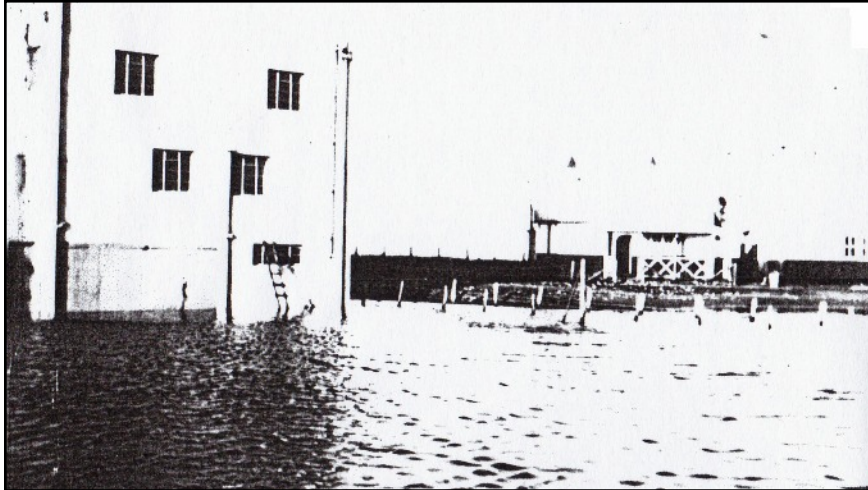
LEFT In 1948 a six inch map Ordnance Survey Map sketched in the position of Brockhill, but did not draw its garden.

Today Brockhill has most of the Fron-y-gôg's garden. The empty ground to the south of Fron-y-gog was sold in 1908 to build a pair of semi-detached houses Pen-y-morfa and Maesteg which were still there when

Brockhill House was built. In 1952 Maesteg became a Youth Hostel and later the other house was added to it and the pair are now Morlais.



Brockhill from the air in about 1956 (Aberystwth Public Library)



The rear during a flood, a person is climbing into the laundry window with a ladder from a boat. The building in the background is the 'Pavilion' (clubhouse) of the Golf Club. (This is from a terrible old photocopy - private collection).

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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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