

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

This work is for research and educational purposes only.

BWTHYN DYFI - DOVEY COTTAGE

Morfa Borth - the Marsh Harbour

Formerly called a Cottage and Garden at Pwllmawr, and once part of New Gift Place. It is on the east side of the High Street. Home of master mariner Captain William Jones and his family, and later a Fancy Drapery Business.



ABOVE Bwthyn Dyfi in 2017.

This rubble stone cottage was planned by 1832 and built by 1848. It is one and a half storeys high with an upper floor and shares a roof height with Frolic next door on the north. It is under a gable roof parallel to the High Street, with a brick chimney at the southern end. It is semi-detached and double fronted, and the front upper floor windows are small with four lights and thin glazing bars. The windows on the ground floor are larger and modern. The stone walling is interesting because there are some quite large stones and few rounded stones from the beach. A buttress supports the southern end of the front. Over the front door is a gabled canopy with plain barge boards held up by decorated brackets. The front door is modern and the front garden is small and enclosed by a wall.

This building stands on a substantial pebble embankment built up by the sea over many centuries, and alongside an ancient highway. Since early medieval times travellers to North Wales came along this highway on their way to cross the River Dovey by boat, later by ferry. By 1770 the highway was important enough to be a turnpike road. So access to a building beside it was easy, and the highway was especially convenient for mariners; for fishermen to

reach Aberleri when the River Leri spilled out into the sea where they could moor their vessels, and for mariners to reach the port at Aberdovey to join wooden sailing ships. The River Lerry once flowed along the landward side of the embankment and beyond was the huge Cors Fochno peat bog. By 1790 the river had been re-routed further inland allowing drained pastures to be created (National Library of Wales Gogerddan Estate Map 232). A water supply for the dwellers on the embankment had been made by 1829 called 'The Brook' and it used the old route of the river. (National Archives LRRO 1/3060) This had fresh water from a leat from the River Lerry first used by the Melyn-y-wern water mill at Glan Lerry (now gone), and added to by streams from above Ty Gwyn at Glanwern, and Bryn Owen. Today the water is directed out to sea by a pipe close to the Lifeboat house, and behind Morfa Borth its old route is still a deep ditch, possibly straightened when the railway was built alongside. The position of the 'Brook' allowed enough space for gardens behind the dwellings. The stone embankment on which the buildings stood was considered to be 'waste' by the manor of Llanfihangel Genau'r Glyn as it could not be used for farming. When a plot was enclosed to build a cottage on it - an encroachment - the Crown which owned the manor charged annual rent for it. In 1829 the plot could be bought for three years rent. (National Archives LRRO 1/3060) Bwthyn Dyfi was not there yet.

In 1848 the cottage was in a cluster of houses and gardens alongside the street owned by Mary Hughes, the widow of master mariner Captain John Hughes with shares in ships who had been able to afford to buy the ground in 1822 and build a terrace of homes on it set back from the street. But by 1832 there were plans to build more dwellings alongside the street (No. 37, Map, National Archives LRRO 1/3060 and Tithe Apportionments Map No. 29 on-line at CYNEFIN)



LEFT In 1848 the block of buildings marked in red are where Gleaner, Frolic and Bwthyn Dyfi stand today. No 29 was the land and buildings of master mariner John Hughes. Marked in green are the earlier cottages built by John Hughes (A detail from the Tithe Apportionments Map for the Cyfoeth-y-brenin township in the parish of Llanfihangel Genau'r glyn. On-line at CYNEFIN)

In the 1861 and 1871 Census it is likely that master mariner Captain William Jones born in Bronheulen (Bronheulyn) in 1812 and his wife Mary, also born in Borth lived in the cottage with their daughter Mary. By 1871 she was unmarried and 23 years old.

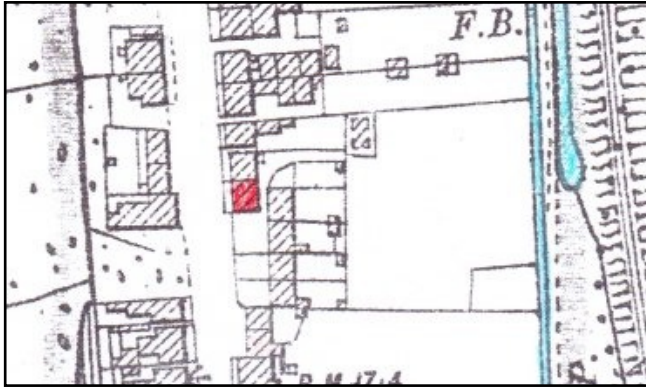
By 1881 Captain William Jones had died. The cottage was called Pwllmawr and living there was a his widow, now 70 years old. Their daughter Mary was aged 33, and already widowed. Her husband was one of the Arter family of mariners, and she too was of 'independent means'. The Terrace of cottages at the back was then called Green Place.



LEFT In 1886 this cottage appears smaller than Frolic next door, and they shared a back garden. The tiny building may have been a privy. There was then a big pool - Pwll Mawr just over the brook across the field (Detail from the 25 inch Ordnance Survey Map of 1888, surveyed in 1886 and published in 1888. Cardiganshire NW iii.10)

In 1891 at the Census living in the house was a 33 year old mariner called David Davies, a Borth man, with a wife Maria J. from Penybont. They had a 5 year old daughter, Dora born at Glanywern.

In 1901 a Fancy Drapery' business was run from the cottage (still called Pwllmawr) by Martha Louisa Booth, a 53 year old widow. She was an Englishwoman, born in Brierley Hill, Staffordshire. (Census)



LEFT In 1904 the back has changed with clear access to a stable building in the field for a dairyman in the cottage at the back. Bwthyn Dyfi marked in red had a front garden as it does today. (Detail from the 25 inch Ordnance Survey Map revised in 1904 and published in 1905, Cardiganshire NW III.10)

In 1910, for a tax planned but not levied, the cottage was called Pwllmawr, though it shared that name with Pwllmawr Cottage in the terrace behind it. The owner was

Elizabeth Davies, and living there was John Jenkins. The cottage was valued at £51, and the tax to pay would have been £3.4s, £4 gross. Elizabeth Davies also owned the cottage now called Morolwg three doors away. There was a tenant in that cottage too. Elizabeth Davies may have been the 43 year old widow of 'Independent Means' living in 1911 at Inman Cottage.

When the Census takers called in 1911 in Pwllmawr Cottage was a young sailor's wife, Elizabeth J. Jenkins aged 26, married in 1903. She had been born in Penmaenpool Station at Dolgellau. She had a six year old son Thomas Richard, born in Eglwysfach, and Ivor Wynn aged 2 and a one month old baby John Llewellyn. Also in the cottage was a boarder David Williams, aged 46, a widower from Talybont. The Census takers also found a farm labourer there born in Widnes, Lancashire, and aged 29.

In 1925, for the Rates, the owner was Thomas Richards, and living there was Lizzie Williams. The name of their home had changed to Dovey Cottage.



Paying the rates in 1934 was Thomas Rds who owned Gwelfor close by. Lizzie Williams was his tenant.

In 1945 with a vote for the house were David G. Williams, Elizabeth J. Williams, Elsie Love and David Jenkins, and Elizabeth Williams paid the rates.

LEFT Bwthyn Dyfi was rendered white about 1962. It still had the old small windows. One of the old cottages in a ruinous state was still there behind it (Drawing after a postcard)

David Williams and Elizabeth J. Williams had votes for the cottage in 1963. A map of 1975 shows it with an extension on part of the back. Today the cottage shares a garden with Gwelfor and the old cottage has gone.

Bwthyn Dyfi



ABOVE The rubble stone of this cottage is interesting. Some stones are rounded from the beach, and others are large, and coursed. This is the south gable end.

Archifdy Ceredigion Archives
yn cyflwyno / presents
Tai'r Borth / Houses of Borth
gan/by Beryl Lewis
[cyf/ref ADX/1629]

Mae **Tai'r Borth** yn cynnwys dros 350 hanes sy'n ymwneud ag adeiladau unigol ac mae'r hanesion wedi'u darlunio â chyfoeth o ffotograffau, mapiau a dogfennau. Mae'r ffeiliau ar gael ar ein gwefan: <https://www.archifdy-ceredigion.org.uk/tairborth.php?lang=cy>

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.

Beryl Lewis retains the copyright in her work and the histories are made available for private use and research only.



Cyngor Sir
CEREDIGION
County Council



Archifdy
Ceredigion
Archives