

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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CAERFFYNNON

Morfa Borth

The house is at the northern end of the village with the beach over the road. It was close to the boundary of the Henllys and Cyfoeth-y-brenin Townships. Formerly called Cambrian House and for many years the home of some Hughes families, and it was used as a lodging house. Later the home of Doctor Hugh Jones. Built between 1848 and 1859.



Caerffynnon in 2015.

Caerffynnon is a double fronted terrace house, one and a half storeys high, beneath a gable roof parallel to the road. The walls are rubble stone with rounded beach stones visible on the base. The front has the layout of an old cottage with a front door not central allowing for a wider room on the south side which may once have had the hearth and been the kitchen/living room. The chimney which today comes out of the tall roof of Hafan Wen was shared by the two houses after Hafan Wen was built. The windows are small modern windows and the front rendering is very plain. There is a wide porch and its door is

on the north side, with windows on the front and the other side. The front garden has slate gravel and a flower bed on the street front, and is edged by a low wall that is rendered and in line with those of its neighbours. The ground floor windows could once see the beach, but can no longer as the concrete sea defensive wall and promenade was built about 1960.



LEFT The walling of the ground floor room on the south side of the front of the house has obvious rounded beach stones and some larger stones edge the window.



LEFT The rear of the house is very straightforward, though the spacing of the windows is interesting, there is a larger gap to the outside wall on the right hand, north side. This was the old kitchen/living room side. The chimney on the north end of the roof was recently rebuilt in dark brick. All the windows are modern, though they have the pattern of the old sash windows. There is one roof light.

Behind the house is a length of curving ground leading down to a ditch which was once a brook. The ground nearest the house is sand, silt and pebbles, the ground on the further part is alluvial, reclaimed from the marsh. It is likely this house was an earlier cottage enlarged. The present back section is down a step and today with a modern kitchen, has the thick stone wall with the windows of an older cottage on its inner side, and its outside wall is rubble stone with beach stones and not a modern wall.



RIGHT A detail of one of the pitch pine floors upstairs. There are floors of this kind throughout the house. Good quality pine was brought by sailing ships to Aberdovey Harbour from Newfoundland.



RIGHT The house has panelled walls. This detail which has been saved shows the old painted surface.



LEFT This door of the ground floor living room on the south side is old, possibly dating from the 1780s. It is suggested by the present owners that it was brought from an older house.



The house has a stone lined cellar with a few widely space steps leading down into it. It is usually dry.

LEFT This view looks down into the cellar from the tiled ground floor of the hall with a glimpse of the cellar door on the right, and the tiled floor of the hall on the left.

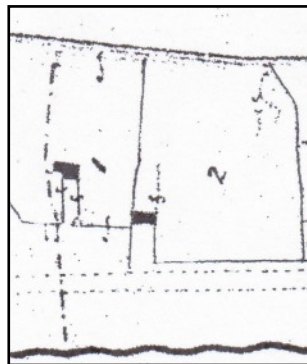
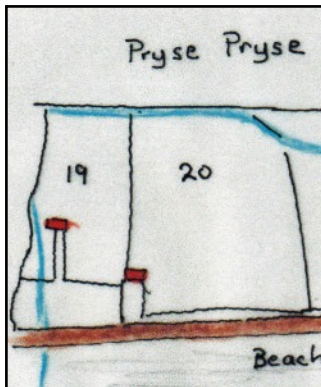


LEFT This was the staircase in 2015, with not many stairs as the ground floor ceilings are low. The walls are wood panelled. The kitchen with its door to the garden is beyond.



LEFT The banisters.

The ground for this house is the pebble embankment thrown up by the sea, and called 'waste' by the Crown Manor who owned it as it was no use for farming. It was enclosed in 1826 by William Thomas, and his ground measured over an acre and extended from the road to a brook. On a map of 1829 it is shown with one cottage on it set back a long way from the road. Where Awelon stands today was not built upon (Map 1829, National Archive LRRO 1/3060). Mr Thomas rented the ground from the Crown Manor and had the option to buy it. The road had been there for centuries 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 old cottages came from the brook, now a ditch, the tail race from the Glanlerry Corn Mill plus other small streams. For fuel the cottagers had their own area where they could dig peat on the far side of the River Leri near Ynys Fergi.

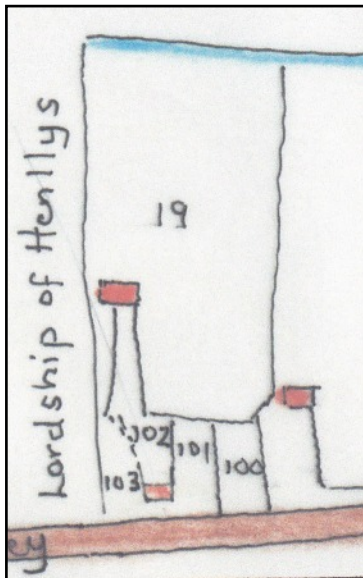


FAR LEFT William Thomas's cottage and land was Number 19 in this detail from a map of 1839. At that time the Cyfoeth/Henllys boundary had a water course along it (Map National Archive LRRO 1/3060)

LEFT In 1848 there were still no houses by the road. Number 1 was Mary Thomas's cottage and land and Number 2 was Hopewell (Tithe Apportionments Map, Llanfihangel Genau'r Glyn, Cyfoeth township and 1841 Census).

Llanfihangel Genau'r Glyn, Cyfoeth township and 1841 Census).

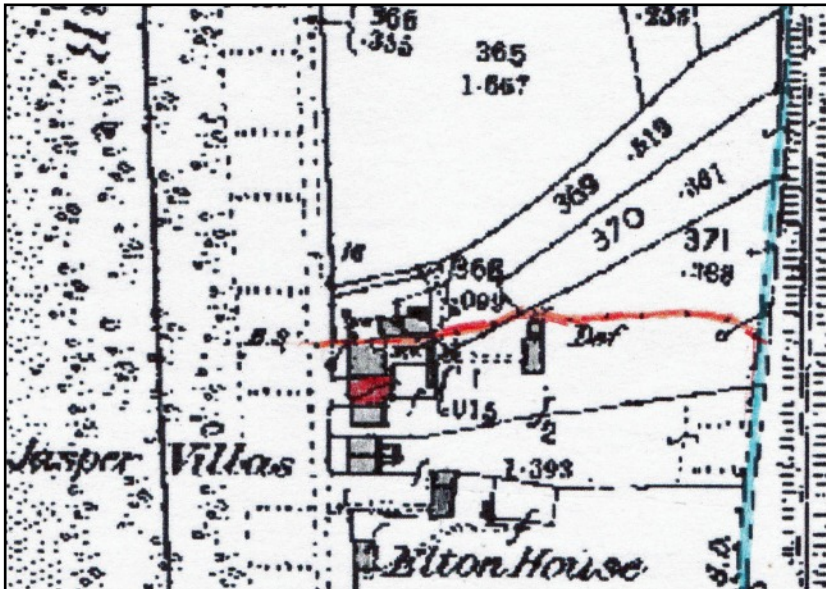
Mary Thomas, a mariner's wife was living in the cottage in the 1841 Census, when she was 35 years old. In the house were her young children, Margaret (born 1836), David (1832), Jane (1829) Anne (1838) and Mary (1840).



LEFT In 1859 the Crown still owned the ground, and plots by the road had been marked out for houses. Caerffynnon was already there, built on plot 302 which was at the end of, and belonging with the Thomas's cottage. This detail is copied from the Crown Manor's map (National Archive, Map 1859, LRRO 1/3060).

It is not possible to find who lived in the cottage at the 1861 Census. However at the 1871 Census the house was the home of a shoemaker, Richard Hughes, aged 54 and born at Llancynfelin about 1817. His wife Mary was local. With them was their unmarried daughter Mary, 28, their sons Hugh aged 24 and Henry 20. Both were mariners. They had lodgers, an English family, fibre merchant Edward Clarke 33 born in Highworth Wiltshire, his wife Mary 35, born in Cardington, Bedfordshire, and their children, Sarah 11 born in London and Frank aged 1 born in Ynyslas. This was not a small cottage to be able to accommodate all these people.

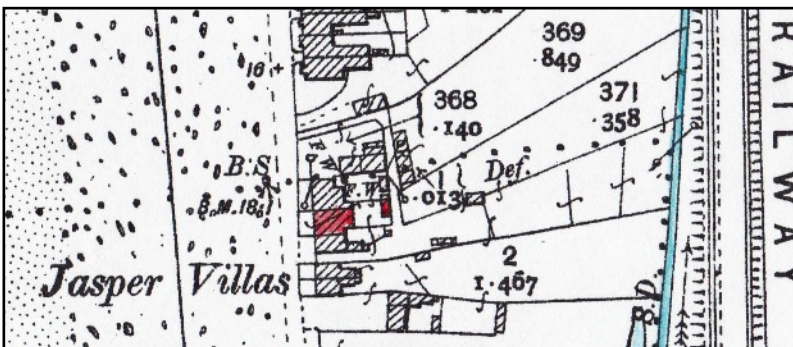
In 1880 the Cambrian News listed holiday visitors staying in the house for three weeks in July and August. Their landlady was Mrs R. Hughes, They could put up a clergyman and his family and a single lady at the same time. The house had a name, 'Cambrian House'. Margaret Hughes aged 29 was the wife of a master mariner, and she was born in Aberystwyth and in the 1881 Census in the house with her was her son Richard aged 4.



LEFT The house in 1886 is marked in red, and was bigger than an old cottage, much deeper and it filled its road frontage space. The 'S' shaped lines called 'braces' show that it owned the land behind it, Number 371 on which still stood the 1929 Mary Thomas cottage - a track led to it, and it also owned the smaller building on the south what would eventually become Penmount, now called 'Hafan Wen. The

front of the house is narrower than that of Awelon next door, but the house stretches back further. There is an enclosed garden or yard, with a building at the rear (Detail from the 25 inch Ordnance Survey Map surveyed in 1886 and published in 1888, Cardiganshire III.10).

At the 1891 Census Cambrian House was a lodging house run by a widow, another Margaret Hughes, aged 63 and born in Newport. She was a Welsh speaker. Also in the house was her dressmaker daughter, Lydia Hughes, unmarried and aged 27, who spoke both Welsh and English, and her son Thoma Henry Hughes, a mariner. The had a 'general domestic servant', a single woman of 65, Margaret Jones who spoke only Welsh.



LEFT In 1904 the house, marked in red, seems a little wider in front and it still owned the land behind it (Detail from the 25 inch Ordnance Survey Map revised in 1904 and published in 1905, Cardiganshire III.10).

In 1901 at the Census the house was still called 'Cambrian House' and in the house was a married woman, Hannah Hughes aged 37, born in Amlwch, Anglesey. With her was her ten year old son David Richard Hughes born in Battersea, London. They spoke both Welsh and English.



We can see the house in this detail from a postcard of about 1904. It is third from the left. It had rendered walls, a central front door and four front windows, probably sash windows. The upper windows reached up to the eaves as they do today. This was a plain and simple front.

By 1910 for a tax planned but not levied there are two entries for this house. Firstly as Cambrian House The owner and occupier was Anne Jones, and she owned the land behind it, then 14 perches, with 15s to pay. Her rates were £7,13s, gross £9. Secondly Caerffynnon was in the list, vacant, but owned by George Birch Davies of Salt, Staffordshire and was valued at a substantial £450, its rates having not yet been decided. Mr Salt did not have the land behind it - Caerffynnon was listed as a house and garden. It is likely that this change of ownership happened during the time the surveyors went round listing the houses (Ceredigion Archives T/DV/18 and map at the National Library of Wales).

Sometime after 1922 furnished holiday accommodation was advertised at the house of four bedrooms and two sitting rooms (Illustrated Borth Guide, Aberystwyth Public Library).



Paying the rates for Caerffynnon in 1925 was Dr Hugh Jones - again £7.13s and £9 gross. Written in was a new name, Mrs Gilbert Phillips. In 1934, 1938 and 1949 Mrs M. L. Phillips paid the rates.

In 1957 M. L. Phillips was crossed out, and Miss G.

Woolley's name added. She also paid the rates in 1963. No-one had a vote for the house that year (Registers of Electors and Rates, Ceredigion Archives).

ABOVE At the far end of the garden is a rubble stone outbuilding, shown on maps back to 1886. On the left was the Ty Bach, outside lavatory, and on the right a larger room.

RIGHT The former Ty Bach which had a small window to light it. There is a similar window on the

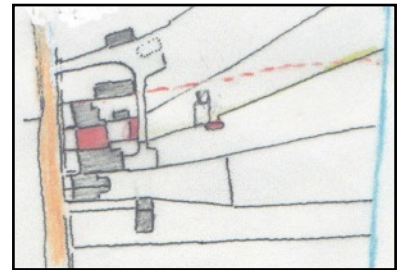




south side of the building, also with a small window

LEFT This is the view of the curving piece of pasture at the end of the garden that belonged with the house.

In the hedge line on the right is the remains of an old cottage now with a shed at the south end of it.



BELOW Overlaying maps the Caerffynnon and its buildings are coloured red, and also red is a ruin in the right hand hedge line. This was the remains of the ancient Thomas's cottage.



LEFT This is a glimpse of a fireplace, and plenty of rounded stones from the beach had been used. This end wall is all that remains, the rest is under the grass of Caerffynnon's garden.

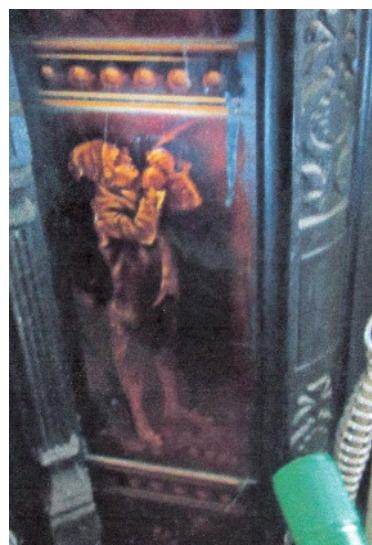
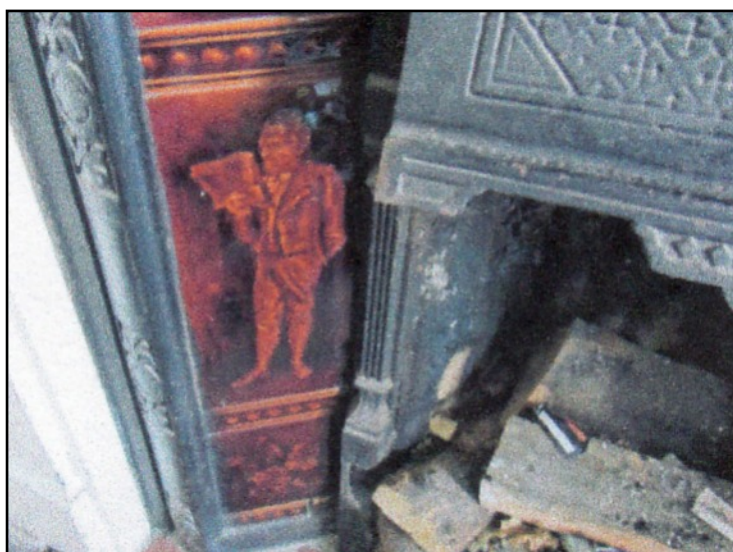


BELOW This is Elton House as it once was. On the far left is the Thomas's Cottage, and partly hidden by Elton is Hopewell. (Old postcard by courtesy of David Matthews).



LEFT This fireplace is in the living room on the south side of Caerffynnon.

It looks Victorian but at present we do not know its history.



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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-eredigion.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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