

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

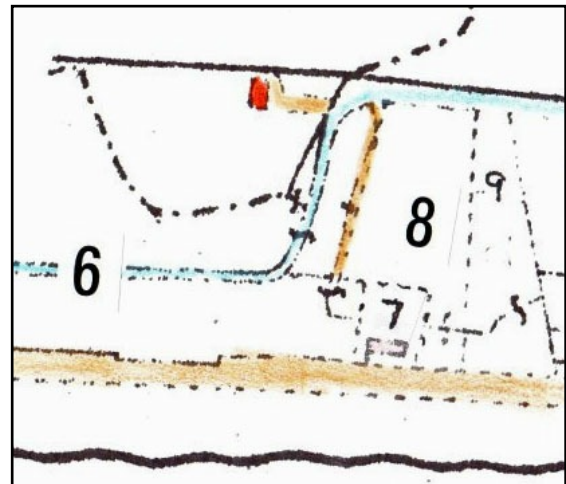
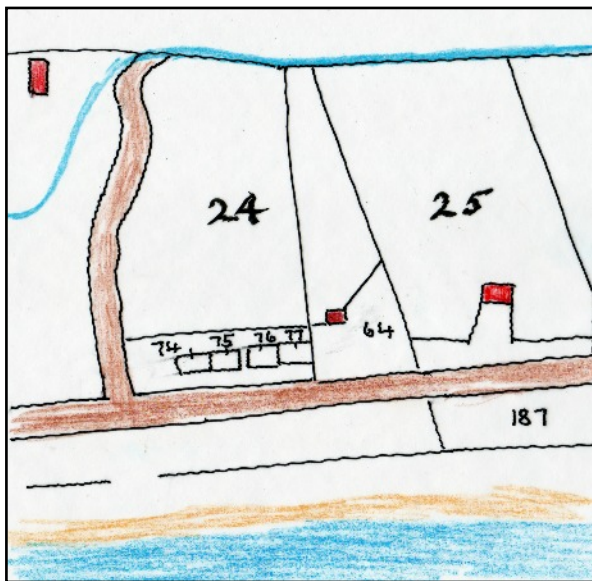
Photographs and History by BERYL LEWIS

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CAMBRIAN TERRACE, an INTRODUCTION

In 1829 there was a map drawn of Morfa Borth - the Marsh Harbour - for the Crown Manor which carefully showed enclosed land formerly waste, some with cottages, and the owners or tenants of the plots. There was a lane from Morfa Borth's main street going eastwards. Although not ruler straight, it was parallel with the course of a brook to begin with, then continued at right angles to the main street. Along it would have gone John Lewis the lawyer to his house, Terfynau, which stood somewhere beneath the railway station building, then a pasture, part of his smallholding. The lane ended at a brook of fresh water, probably with a ford, to access a large area of pasture enclosed from the bog and drained for Pryse Pryse of the Gogerddan mansion, and farmed by a tenant of his estate. On the north side of the lane alongside the main street was nearly five acres of pasture, formerly 'waste', that John Lewis had bought from the manor in 1802, Number 23 on the old map. On the other side of the lane was an acre of land plus 24 perches with a cottage on it rented from the manor by Jones since 1803 (on the map his Christian name is illegible). The map has additions added in 1859 which showed that four plots with cottages had been enclosed from the ground alongside the main street. 74, 75, 76 and 77. Plot 74's cottage had empty ground on the north side of it. It is possible that the Crown had this additional survey done because plans for the railway might concern the Crown's 'waste' with enclosures and cottages that brought it rent.

BELOW LEFT A detail from the map of 1829 with 1859 additions, cottages 74 to 77.

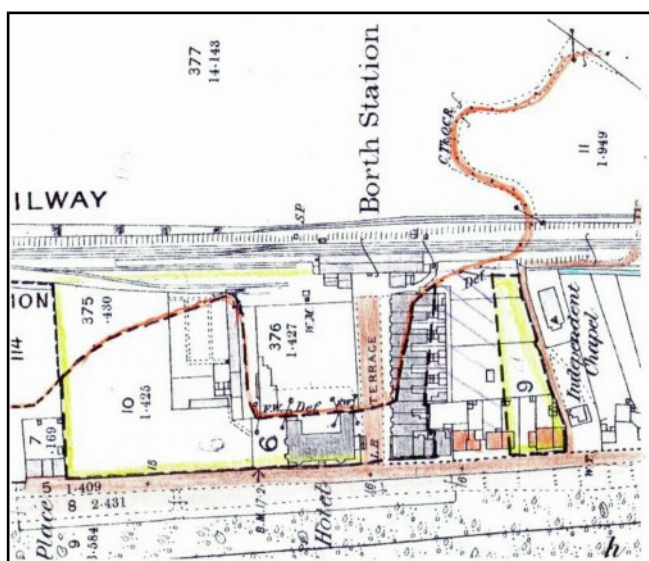


ABOVE RIGHT This ground in 1848. The lane from the main street is still there, though it had been straightened. It was

marked as part of John Lewis's ground, Number 6, and was not drawn all the way to the main street. John Lewis's ground then included the garden belonging to cottage 74 on the older map. He also owned plot Number 9. (Tithe Apportionments Map for Llanfihangel Genau'r Glyn's Cyfoeth township online at CYNEFIN)

Thomas Savin who planned to build a railway to Aberystwyth, and build hotels there and at Borth to encourage people to use his trains, chose land for his railway as close to the existing Borth village as possible. The railway was opened to the public as a terminus in 1863. He had bought land from John Lewis, Tithe Number 6, (23 on the old map) a pasture of 3 acres 3 rods and 12 perches which included his house, and also Lewis's plot number 9, 1 rod and 37 perches of pasture (of Jones on the old map and with no number). He also bought Tithe 8, which was a garden of John Thomas of 3 rods and 10 perches (number 24 on the old map). Savin could not buy the row of plots for cottages old map numbers 74, 75, 76 and 77 so his garden for the Terrace had to be behind them. Today 75 is the Premier Stores and the building

on the north of it (formerly Garibaldi) stand there. Behind would be the gardens of the Terrace. Savin needed a road to access the station from the main street and the little old lane was replaced by a wider lane exactly at right angles to the main street set between the terrace he was planning and his great Cambrian Hotel and its gardens in over two acres of grounds on the other side of the lane. He built the Hotel conveniently close to his railway station. His Cambrian Terrace Numbers 1 to 12 therefore faced north/south on the other side of the roadway, and he fitted twelve, three storey, brick terrace houses into that space. Number 13, Taliesin House, was larger and turned the corner to the main road and he had room for one more house beyond, now Uppingham House. Most Terrace houses would have had an attractive view northwards to the splendid hotel and its 'pleasure' gardens. John Lewis's house - a wooden farmhouse called Terfynau - was used for the station until the brick station building was built, when it would have been taken down. (Terfynau is the Welsh for boundaries - John Lewis having his house and parcels of land very close to the township boundaries once the course of the River Lerry).



LEFT This is a detail from the 25 inch Ordnance Survey Map surveyed in 1886. John Lewis's former land is outlined in green. John Thomas's former garden is striped. The dotted line with red was the township boundary - Henllys on the north, Cyfoeth on the south, so the Terrace Numbers 1 to 4 were just in Henllys. The old cottages (Garibaldi etc.) are marked in red. The Terrace facing the main street and the sea had to end at Uppingham House. (Cardiganshire III.10, published in 1888).

On the map above the part of the township boundary with a straight line marked 'Def' shows the villagers had forgotten its exact route. Savin re-routed the brook on the old maps as it passed his Terrace and railway buildings but it is not clear from the 1888 map where it was put. He gave access the Gogerddan pasture on the other side of the railway line with a small lane from the main street running behind the gardens of the Terrace, past the Chapel to a level crossing. By 1888 this was a presentable 'Church Lane' bounded by drainage ditches which allowed access for the villagers to St Matthew's Church opened in 1876 and built on the island land at Ynys Fergi.

There is a sound footing beneath the Terrace and Railway Station. People living in the Terrace have said that the outer walls have given no trouble, and the Railway Station is reckoned to have sunk hardly at all, perhaps half an inch. (George Romary Museum Director) An interior wall of one of the Terrace houses has given some trouble but it was not load bearing. This is a brick built terrace. Bricks were lighter than local stone and they could be brought by train. So too could the pale yellow sandstone dressings. Brick would have been cheaper to use than local stone which was not of good quality and needed skilled masons to work with it. Brick had already been chosen for the railway station and the Terrace would match it. However brick buildings were entirely foreign to Borth in 1864 - it was a settlement of whitewashed cob and rubble stone buildings. The writers of the 'Buildings of Wales, Carmarthenshire and Ceredigion' suggest that the architect W. H. Spauell of Oswestry may have designed the Terrace, built c. 1865 to 1870.



The Terrace was still fairly new when this photograph of it was taken about 1876,1877. The large building in the foreground was Taliesin House. The Terrace makes a strong pattern of repeated slab brick chimneys each with a pale coloured stripe, and canted bay windows with their hipped roofs. The houses are linked by the line of shadow below the string courses - prominent mouldings carved in stone. Number 1 had a different chimney. Pupils from Uppingham School are in the foreground.

(Courtesy of the Uppingham School Archives).



On the left in this postcard of 'Cambrian Terrace Borth' are the steps into the main entrance of the great Cambrian Hotel, a short walk from the station. The station made a fine viewpoint at the end of the street, its colour once echoed by the red bricks and sandstone dressing of the houses. They had no front gardens. Taliesin House on the right had its walls rendered to match the Cambrian Hotel and a shop front had been added under the moulded string course. Little walls either side guided people into the shop. Postcards and model yachts can be seen on sale. In 1934 the Gift Shop opposite the Grand Hotel sold gifts, handicrafts and flowers, proprietor P, Goring Thomas. ('Guide Book to Borth', Aberystwyth Library and Postcard Private Collection).



LEFT Robert's Crib, the shop in the foreground was in Number 1, Rutland House, in 1924. The first four houses in the row still had their bricks showing, and the sandstone dressings were quite bold and decorative (Detail from a postcard by courtesy of the Amgueddfa Ceredigion Museum).



ABOVE The east side of Rutland House (Number 1) has been cleaned, showing the colour of the bricks and the sandstone dressings.



ABOVE Rutland House, Number 1 the Terrace today. The former sash windows have been replaced by modern windows in the same pattern, but the house is open to the street - as all the houses once were. The houses 2 to 10 now have front gardens.

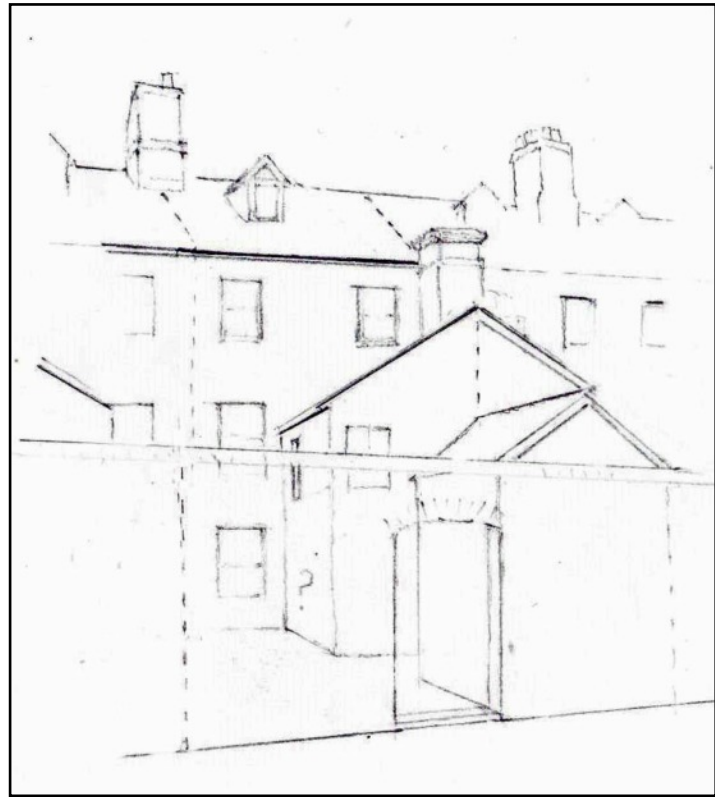


ABOVE The decoration of these houses was enhanced by a pattern made by protruding bricks at the eaves inside a moulded frame. This is Number 10. Each bay was topped by a hipped roof and most of these have survived.

The geologist Dr Tim Palmer has discovered that the sandstone came from a quarry at Cefn Mawr, owned by Savin.



The Terrace houses had quite a large window above the door to light the hall. The front doors were probably wooden with panels like this one. (Number Four)



ABOVE RIGHT is my reconstruction of the rear of one of the Terrace houses. There was a single dormer window in the roof and the slab chimney was shared by neighbouring houses. The two storey wing that extended into the yard was also shared between the houses. It had a chimney for a kitchen and this with its fireplace still survives in Number 8. The drawing could not show a kitchen door into the yard, as most houses have been altered there. The extension had a room upstairs, one window facing the yard, one facing the rear. BELOW In this photograph taken in 2016 the rear of Number 7 has plain brick walls with no sandstone dressings and the old chimney is on the extension.





Rear windows at Bibury (Number 2). The photograph on the left was taken in 2009, the one on the right in 2016 when the left hand window had been replaced by a modern one, though keeping the sash pattern. The right hand window is probably an old one. It is likely that all the rear windows of the Terrace were sash windows with twelve lights.



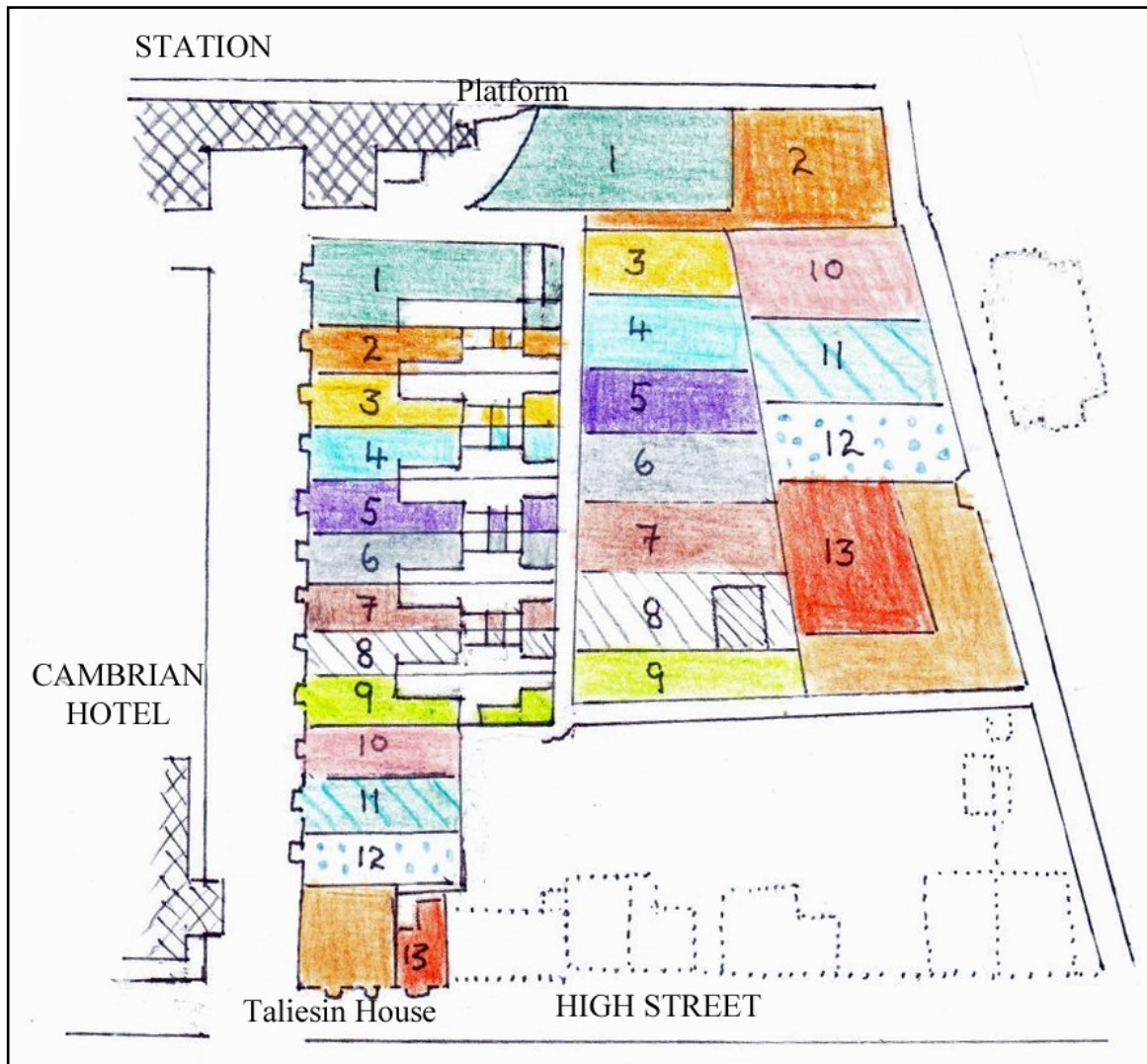
LEFT This is the yard at Number 8. Like most of the houses it had a building against the rear wall which was brick, quite spacious, and open to the roof. This one has been modernised. One of these has survived almost as original at Heulwen (Number 4). Number 3 had a stable in theirs for the postmaster from 1891 to 1924. There were smaller outbuildings too. There were no basement cellars in Numbers 1 to 12 so storage for coal would be needed in the yard. Not all the yards are the same size, the 25 inch map shows that Numbers 3, 5 and 7 were narrower.



LEFT Doors in the rear wall opened on to a little lane. These bricks are probably original and of varied colours.

RIGHT The bricks of the Station seem to be the same - these were beside the door to the lavatories at the north end of the platform. They were once protected by a canopy removed in 1932, so are cleaner (C.C. Green - The Coastlines of the Cambrian Railways)





ABOVE The houses and gardens based on the Map made for their Sale in 1888 which hangs in the Borth Railway Museum. Taliesin House shared a garden with Number 13, Today Number 13 is called Uppingham House, Number 1 is Rutland House, Number 2 is Bibury and Number 5 is Heulwen. BELOW This was the garden of Number 6 which now belongs to Charene in Church Lane.





LEFT The carved shapes of the sandstone dressings have survived on Number 10. The columns had a special top and base, and the chamfers above the window and door have decorative ends. However if allowed to rust the iron columns make unpleasant stains on the rendering. The front door is modern



RIGHT A column from the ground floor of Bibury - Number 2 standing on its sandstone base.



LEFT A column on Number 4. These were in the Gothic Style, and their central ring matches the centre of the sash windows. They had to be made in two sizes as the ground floor windows were taller.

RIGHT This is a window of a house in Queen's road Aberystwyth in 2014 which also has Gothic columns and carved stone dressing beneath its rendering. Gothic columns are also found in Savin's Castle Hotel of 1864/1865 now part of the University.





There are classical details in some of the houses. On the left is a door in the parlour of the front ground floor living room of Number 6. On the right Number 8 has an attractive staircase in the style of the early nineteenth century. The floors are good quality pine. There are no basements or cellars for Numbers 1 to 12. Below the air gap under the good quality pine floorboards in Number 6 were pieces of slate.



LEFT It is not possible to say if this wooden fireplace in the front ground floor living room of Number 6 is original, but the soot stained bricks in the fireplace probably are.

Two houses have basements, Taliesin House and Uppingham House (Number 14). These were built on the shingle bank which allowed this - though the ground floor on both has to be raised and therefore is up some steps. The Cambrian Hotel also had a basement. Taliesin House was designed as a hotel, with a place for a kitchen, a cellar and servants in the basement, and with its own access door for tradesmen and servants.



ABOVE The Terrace in 2012. Houses were rendered in various colours and six of the large slab chimneys were still there. Numbers 2 to 11 had an enclosed front garden. The shadows from the string course moulding still gave continuity to the row.

BELOW The rear of the houses in 2014. Four slab chimneys remained.



The number of main rooms in the houses at the 1911 Census were as follows; Rutland House (Number 1) had most, with 14 rooms, Bibury (Number 2) had 8 rooms, Number 3 in 1924 had 12 rooms, Number 4 in 1911 had 9 rooms, Heulwen Number 5 was not listed nor was Number 6. Numbers 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11 had 10 rooms, Number 12 was not listed. Taliesin House had 12 rooms and Uppingham House (Number 14) had 9 rooms.

The Terrace had an outfall to the sea, and in March 1964 the Aberystwyth Rural District Council deferred repairs to it until the effluent had been analysed (Meeting 23rd May, Ceredigion Archives). At the end of 1965 Borth's sewage system was being set up - for example a 4 inch sewer pipe was to be laid beneath the railway good's yard and under the line (A.R.D.C Meeting 29th. November 1965, Ceredigion Archives) The Council ordered that that existing homes had to be connected to the sewage system and this would have included The Terrace.

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.

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