

# 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.*

## NUMBER EIGHT CAMBRIAN TERRACE

A 'lodging house', used for tenants, but also a well-bred lady's retirement home, a lodging of the Uppingham School headmaster and his family in 1880 - they also stayed at Number 7 that year - and the home of a master mariner and eventually flats. Like all the houses in The Terrace it had rights to enjoy a piece or parcel of the foreshore between the High Street and the sea. From an old painting in the Borth Railway Museum this looked like a strip of grass and a gravel 'esplanade' with seats raised up from the beach and supported by a stone wall. No.8 also had rights to use the small lane behind the the Terrace.



*Number 8 in 2014. Like many houses in the Terrace it has a dormer window added in the roof for an attic floor. It shares the slab brick chimney with Number 9.*

This house is part of the terrace built when the railway had arrived in Borth, it opened to passengers in 1863. The Terrace was a private venture by Mr Thomas Savin who with David Davies built the Railway. He wanted to make Borth a good seaside resort to encourage visitors to travel there on their Cambrian Railway trains. A water supply was put in for the Terrace from a reservoir especially built for the station, the trains and his large Cambrian Hotel. Beside the railway Savin built hotels in Aberystwyth and Aberdovey and developed a market garden with houses at Ynyslas. He eventually over-reached himself and became bankrupt by February 1866. There is evidence all the rooms Savin had provided for Borth in his great hotel were not filled when Uppingham School was moved to Borth from 1876 to 1877, and there were also plenty of rooms available for the school to use in The Terrace.

The Cambrian Terrace houses were built about 1865 to 1870. The architect was possibly W. H. Spaul of Oswestry. (Pevsner Architectural Guides, the Buildings of Wales, Carmarthenshire and Ceredigion, 2006) A beginning date of 1864 has also been suggested. The houses were originally red brick with cream coloured sandstone details and matched the railway station. A good example is the side of Rutland House (Number 1) now in 2014 - it having been cleaned. The columns framing and supporting the bay windows are iron, and in the Gothic style. The houses

were probably owned by the Railway Company to begin with, and let to tenants.

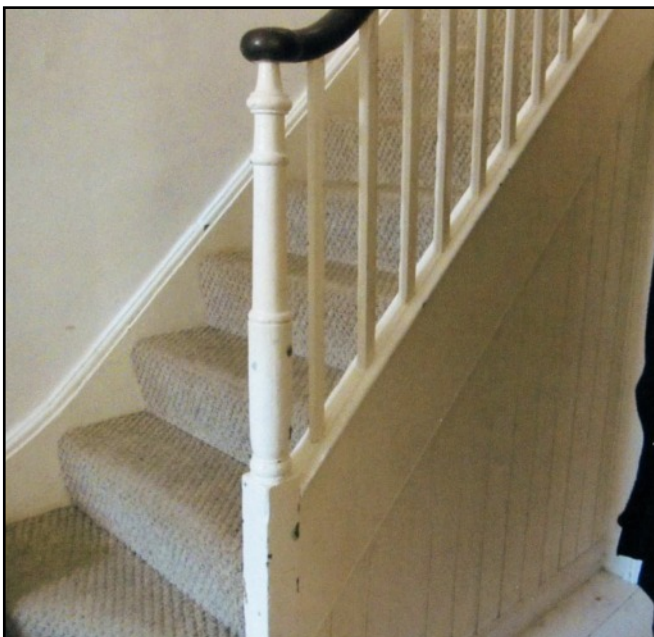
No 8 was still part of an estate called the Cambrian Hotel Estate in 1888 when on Thursday September 20th it was sold by auction. A coloured Plan in the Borth Railway Museum shows the estate. There was a 'garden' for the house behind The Terrace which it still had in 1910.



*The front of the house in 2016.*

In 1871 the Cambrian News listed visitors staying in the house for eight weeks that summer. They were from Aberystwyth, Oswestry, Birmingham and Shrewsbury and no doubt came by train. Their landlady was Mrs Margaret Hughes. She was a widow, born in Newport, Monmouthshire, a 'lodging house keeper said the 1871 Census, and she had two sons and three daughters. She also kept a middle aged servant, Margaret Jones, an unmarried lady born in the parish.

In 1880 Mrs Hughes had visitors staying for five weeks, and they were the Rev. E. Thring and his family and three maids. The name is familiar, because this was the Headmaster of Uppingham School which had come to stay in Borth from 1876 to 1877. He came back.



However in the 1881 Census the house was unoccupied, or the family were away.

On the 24th of December 1888 the National Provincial Bank sold No. 8 to Margareta Maria James. She was the wife of a Vicar from Pant Robert Rectory near Welshpool, and their son David Hartwell James was to become a Vicar

*The graceful staircase in 2014.*

too, he was at Aberfan near Merthyr in 1900. Mrs James probably never lived in No 8, but let it to tenants. She had to raise money in 1889 and 1895 by mortgaging the house, for £100, £20 and £80. Holders of the mortgages were Sarah Gammon, Miss Florence Edith Gammon of Ascupant House Aberystwyth and Joseph Davies. Eventually Miss Florence Gammon held all the mortgages.

In 1890 Mrs James gave the house to her sister May when she married the Rev. J. Daniel Timothy of Llangwm in Pembrokeshire.

By 1891 living in No 8 was Miss Catherine Emily Jones. She was 58, with her 'own means'. She was local, having been born in Gwynfryn, Llancynfelin about 1833. Gwynfryn was the home of an important Jones family that produced the last Archbishop of Wales. It is set inland from the sea - this middle aged lady may have wanted to enjoy some seaside air.

In 1900 No 8 was empty when the owner of the house, Mrs James died on May 9th 1900. Her husband, son and sister and the holders of the mortgages sold No 8 on 13 September 1900 to Jane Rees, for £380. She was the wife of Llewellyn Rees of Taliesin House on the seafront corner of The Terrace (a boarding house then, but it would become the Grand Hotel.) Mrs Jane Rees was busy running her boarding house, and did not live in No. 8. She was to own No.8 for 21 years.

In the 1901 Census tenants in the house were a farm worker and his family Edward Evan Davies, aged 36. With him was his wife Margaret Anne, two sons and two daughters. They were all born in the parish, and they all spoke both Welsh and English.

For a tax planned but not levied in 1910 the house was valued at £445, and the site at £25. There would be £17.17s to pay, £21 gross. Miss Catherine Jones was still the tenant. Llewellyn Rees at Taliesin House was listed as the owner (for Jane!) He also owned Number Five The Terrace. (Ceredigion Archives) In the 1911 Census Miss Catherine Jones was very elderly, aged 78, and with her was a general domestic servant, a widow of 62 called Harriet Lewis. No.8 was listed with 10 rooms.

On May 23rd 1921 Mrs Rees sold No.8 for £550 to David Hughes Jones, a mariner and his wife Susannah. They lived there and had moved there from Sea View now Maes Arfor. He was from an old Borth family of seafarers and was the First Officer on the Steam Ship Surrey and had become a Captain by 1920. However the Captain's income, for some reason was not enough. The Jones's needed money, and two years later, on 13 April 1923, they mortgaged the house for £500 and interest to Jesse Matthews, who was the butcher at Leronian House and his wife Mary Susannah. In 1923 £36 more was raised from Mr Matthews (13 April)

Sometime in 1920s the Jones's were using the house to raise income by advertising furnished apartments with 6 bedrooms and 2 sitting rooms to let at No.8. There would probably be just enough room to live there themselves ('The Illustrated Borth Guide' Aberystwyth Public Library).

In 1923 the owner was Mr Jesse Matthews, the butcher. The Jones's were still not managing in 1923. Jesse Matthews took them to Court probably for not keeping up with the interest payments on the mortgage - and he became the owner of No.8 with sole possession. He never lived in No.8.

By 1949 Catherine J. Weldon was the owner of No.8 - probably by holding a mortgage which the Matthews family had needed.

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It looks as though Susannah Jones was still at No.8 when she died on 23 August 1956. probably she had been able to stay on as a tenant of the Matthews. Jesse Matthews was then a 'retired' butcher living at 'Heathfield' the house at the back of Leronian, and he sold No. 8 for £700 on 21 June 1956 to Cornelius Alphonse Nolan a builder and building contractor, and his wife Jennie. They had already moved into No.8. The Nolans needed to raise money, probably to help buy No.8, and they took out a mortgage of £300 from Jesse Matthews the next day. The interest was £5.10s per year, and the mortgage for a 3,000 year term.

When Jesse Matthews died on 24 September 1957, his wife was already dead (23 April 1956), and the mortgage he held on No.8 went to his two sons, Leslie, carrying on the business at Leronian, his Vicar son, the Rev. Jesse Cecil Matthews at Martletwy in Pembrokeshire near Narberth, and to his daughter Margaret who had wed the Rev. John Alexander Thomson of Kenilworth.

In 1963 the Nolans are still living in No.8 and appear to be paying off their mortgage to a Bank at Cardiff, Julian Hodge & Co. They agreed to pay £9 per month for 60 months to raise £540

Mr Nolan died the following year, aged 63 on 14 November 1964, at No.8.

In 1965 Mrs Nolan had moved away to 138 Clifford Street, Lozelles Birmingham. She sold No.8 for £1.600 to James Pryce Jones of Robert's Stores, now the Premier Family Stores, and his wife Florence.

By the late 1960s the house had become two furnished flats in the care of Mrs Jones. The Jones's were to own the house for thirteen years.

In 1978 Mr Jones and his wife Florence were living at Llettygwyn, Ynyslas, and sold No.8 for £12,000 to John William Davies and his wife Sandra Elizabeth. They were from the Midlands, 2 Church Cottages Dunston, Staffordshire. No.8 still had rights over the foreshore, and to use the little lane behind The Terrac

Possibly Mr and Mrs Jones never lived at No.8 (they probably had tenants in the two flats?) Two years later, living in Stafford, they sold No.8 for a good profit, for £16.500 to Michael Richard Potter and his wife Noreen Ann. The Potters were local, living at Pinewoods, Llanafan, Aberystwyth. They borrowed money, £11,500. 25p, by a mortgage from the Abbey National Building Society

In 1982 the Potters sold No.8 to Mrs Linda Mary Leonard from London - 20 Athenaeum Court, Highbury, N5. In June 1982 she needed a mortgage from the Abbey National of 317,98 25p. The monthly interest was 13.5%, her first payment being £200 82p. Mrs Leonard came to live in No.8. In August 1983 there was also a Mrs Decima Muriel Leonard living at No.8.

Six years later, on 30 November 1988 Mrs Linda Mary Leonard sold No.8 for £30,000 to a couple of men living along the road in No.10 - Gerald Arthur Castle and Philip Jeffrey Alan Jones. Mr Castle and Mr Jones needed a mortgage of £25.000 from the Cheltenham and Gloucester Building Society.

In 1995 on 13<sup>th</sup> October the Council Planning Authority was asked permission to create three flats in No.8. It was granted, but had to be done within 5 years, and there was some soundproofing too to be done.

In November 1997 the Ceredigion County Council enquired about the right of way along the small lane at the back of the Terrace.

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Today the house has a stained glass window on the ground floor, with a simple looping pattern. It has a garage at the back of the property opening into the small lane.

The author would like to thank the present owners of Number 8 for their help with this history. Details of the sales and mortgages on the house are from their Deeds. (2014)

*(For some comments and details of the original design of the houses in the Terrace, please see the General Introduction)*

*BELOW The yard of the house which though it is narrow has enough light for plants.*



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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-eredigion.org.uk/tairborth.php?lang=cy>

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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-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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