

THE BUILDINGS OF MORFA 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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CELTIC Morfa Borth

Formerly 'Amity House', Number 1 of two 'Amity Place' houses. Built by 1881 replacing a small earlier cottage there in 1848. Home of a Davies family of mariners and their descendants, and named after the sloop 'Amity' they were masters of and had shares in. A boarding house in 1901.



Celtic in 2009

Celtic is a two storey house under a gable roof parallel to the street. It is the southernmost house in a terrace with Ynys View and Epworth House and shares their roof height. There are roof lights for an attic floor. The house has rendered, rough cast walls and is double fronted, but today the front door is on the north side of the front. The windows and door are modern, but the windows keep the pattern of the old sash windows. The ground floor windowsills are red tiles. Around the windows and door there is a smooth frame modelled in the rendering. Between the windows on the upper floor

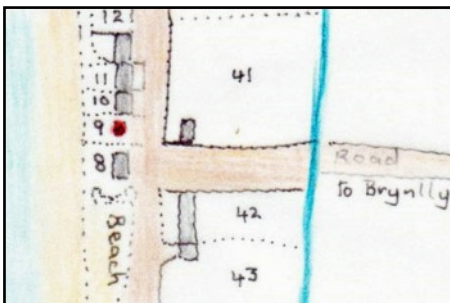
is a shield with, 'The Sloop Amity of Aberdyfi launched Derwenlas in 1802'. The house opens directly on to the street, with a line of moulding edging a plinth around the base. There is only a small step up from the street to the front door.



Celtic was formerly Number 1 Amity Place, and Ynys View beside it on the right was Number 2. The old maps suggest that these two houses were built on the site of one old cottage and garden belonging to John Davies in 1824, a master mariner and master of the Amity.

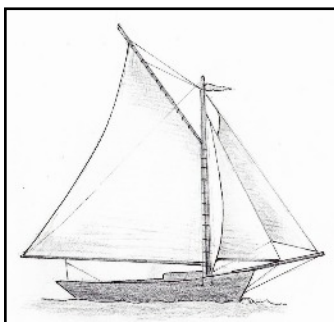
At the rear a wide dormer window gives sea views to the attic floor. On the south side of the back is a single storey extension under a gable roof at right angles to the main house which almost reaches the boundary fence, with generously large windows overlooking the beach and a glazed door to access the yard. All the rear windows are modern. There is a boarded fence for protection against the sea in storms, and a hard standing area until the Council's sea defensive wall of upright sleepers.

BELOW Celtic from the beach in 2015



A detail copied from the map of 1829. John Davies cottage is marked in red and was Number 9. Opposite was a small cottage belonging to the Vicar, and a school would be built on his ground, Number 41.

The ground for this house is the stone embankment thrown up by the sea and called 'waste' by the Crown Manor who owned it as it was no use for farming. A plot was enclosed in 1824 by John Davies for a very small cottage, the ground measured only 16 perches - a rod, a quarter of an acre, was 40 perches. A rent of 16s had to be paid every year, or paying twice that amount the Davies family could buy the plot (National Archive, map and details, 1829, LRRO 1/3060). The road had been there for centuries and was a turnpike road by the 1770s. It led to a ferry from Ynyslas to Aberdovey, a quick way to North Wales. Fresh water for the old cottages came from a 'brook' behind the cottages on the other side of the road, and for fuel the villagers could dig peat on the far side of the River Leri just north of Ynys Fergi.



John Davies was master of the Amity in 1825, 1838 and 1847. His son David Davies was also master of her. She was an 80 ton sloop, and built at Derwenlas in 1802, and was a wooden sailing vessel in the coastal trade, and sailed from Aberdovey harbour. John Davies had 16 of her 64 shares (Shipping Register, Aberystwyth, Ceredigion Archives). She traded with Ireland between 1803 and 1809 during the war in Europe and could carry as much as 98 tons of coal. She sailed to London three times in 1803 with slates from Carnarvon, and being a larger

A Sloop

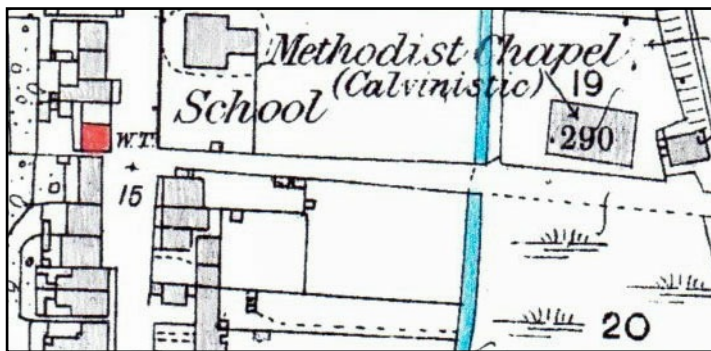
sloop could visit European ports. She also carried iron ore to Newport and Cardiff from Pilsford near Barrow in Furness Cumberland, and coal from Cardiff and the Dee, and oak bark from Chepstow to the Irish Tanneries (Lewis Lloyd, 'A Real Little Seaport, Aberdyfi, the Port and its People 1565 to 1930). John Davies's son John had 12 shares in the Amity by 1853, but in 1858 she was a total wreck when driven ashore at Mulloceek Bay, near Dolbycael, Ireland. John Davies the younger, also a master mariner owned all the shares in the sloop Venus, and shares in several other vessels (Shipping Register, Aberystwyth, Ceredigion Archives).



The Davies's small cottage was drawn on the Tithe Apportionments Map of 1848. By then the National School was built over the road (Map Llanfihangel Genau'r Glyn, Cyfoeth Township, on-line at CYNEFIN, National Library of Wales).

It is not possible to find the families in the earlier Census, but in 1871 in the cottage was John Davies widow, Margaret aged 75, born in the parish about 1776, and her widowed daughter Mary Richards aged 45, also local, with her two children, Jane Richards 13 and Margaret Richards 9.

At the 1881 Census their home had an address, Number 1 Amity Place. The Davies family had called their home 'Amity' and that gave the name to the one beside it. Living in Number 1 in 1881 was David Davies, 51, (baptised 18th January 1828), another mariner, and the son of John and Margaret Davies. He had not married. With him was his sister Margaret earning a living as a laundress, and she had not married either. His sister Mrs Mary Richards was there too.



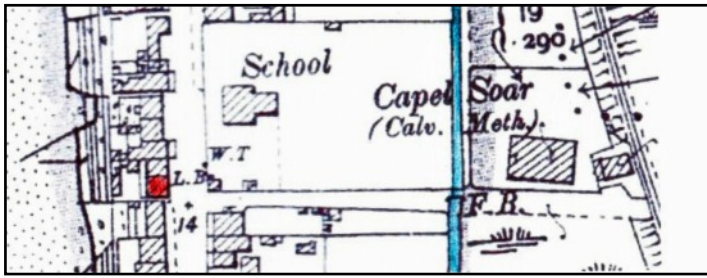
The Davies's home in 1886 is coloured in red, and was no longer a tiny cottage. It was the southern end of a terrace of 5 buildings. It shared a yard with its neighbour on the north, indicating they had the same owner. Among the small buildings at the back was probably the Ty Bach (outside lavatory). There was a

passage beside Amity from the High Street to its back yard. At the 1891 Census David Davies had retired from sea and had become a coal merchant and his sister Margaret was his housekeeper. Also in the house was a 49 year old mariner's wife Jane Edwards, born in Borth. Jane was the daughter of John the master mariner of Morfa Borth and Margaret Davies, and was baptised April 18th. 1840. (Llanfihangel Genau'r Glyn Church, parish register). The household were monoglot Welsh speakers.

At the 1901 Census Jane Edwards, by then aged 60 and a widow, was running a boarding house in Number 1 Amity Place.

In 1910 for a tax planned but not levied, the house was called 'Amity House' and valued at £170. There would have been £4.16s to pay, £6 gross. Jane Edwards owned the house (Ceredigion Archives, T/DV/18 and map at the National Library of Wales). She was there at the 1911 Census aged 70 and with 'private means'.





In 1904 the yard was still shared, and there was an enlargement of the building at the end of it. A line of four sea defensive fences had been added - these were usually rows of stakes driven into the stone bank. Each house was responsible for their own section.



On this postcard dated 1907 in the foreground are Break House and Tara, then some Florence Place cottages, and then Amity (Celtic). We can see the chimneys - probably two for Amity the far one shared with Ynys View, and the front door was then in the centre of the house. There was a very small window in the gable end for an attic. The side of the house was rendered, and the front is very dark and was possibly rubble stone as there are glimpses of pale coloured bricks (probably yellow) round the windows and doors like we can see on the houses in the foreground. One of those, Tara, is dated 1874.

(From 'Breezy Borth', a Guide Book in the Aberystwyth Public Library)

Living at Amity in 1906 with Mrs Edwards was Sally Jones, who died that year aged 72 (Parish Register). At the 1911 Census Mrs Edwards had seven main rooms.

By 1925 the house had a new name, 'Celtic', and the owner and paying the rates was A, A, Cockle. Living there was another of John and Margaret Davies's family, their son Evan (baptised 23rd February 1830 at Llandre).

Paying the rates in 1934 was Florence A. Cockle, and she also owned Glasfor further north along the road. Evan Davies was still there as her tenant and in 1938 he paid the rates.

In 1949 paying the rates was George Bryan.

Margaret Anne Davies was in Celtic at her death aged 79 and was buried in 14th March 1953. The family had been in the cottage and then the house on that site for 129 years.

Rose Annie Woolf had a vote for the house in 1963 and G. Lawrence paid the rates (Rates and Electoral Registers, Ceredigion Archives).

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

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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-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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