

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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CHESTERTON Morfa Borth

At the middle of Borth High Street on the beach side. Formerly Lorne Villa. Being built in 1891 by Captain John Hughes 1835 - 1910. A stonemason involved was 40 year old James Jones born in Llangwryfron Cardiganshire.



Chesterton is on the left in this photograph. On the right is Gordon Villa..

Chesterton is a single fronted, semidetached house of two storeys under a gable roof parallel to the street. There are no chimneys. It is in a style very fashionable in the later part of the nineteenth century. The front wall is coursed rubble stone and today Chesterton's windows and front door have a smooth, rendered frame.



LEFT The original front was probably like that of Gordon Villa with the windows edged with yellow bricks. These probably came by train from North Wales, Flint for example. Red and yellow bricks and yellow bricks in a pattern of dentils decorate the eaves. The rubble stone is coursed.

The south wall is also smoothly rendered, and has two high windows to light an attic floor. A feature of the front is the square bay window on the ground floor. All the windows are modern, the upper ones in the style of the old sash windows. The front door is recessed, and two steps lead down to a hard standing platform beside the road. The south wall of the house is alongside a passage to the beach.

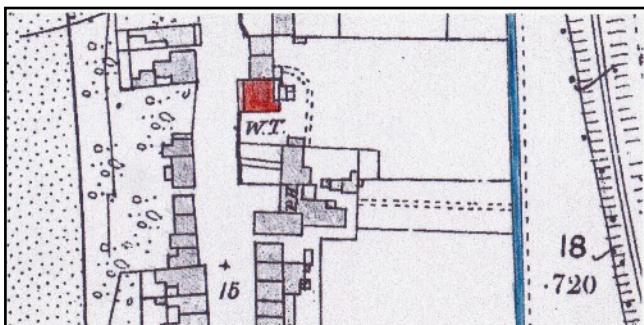


The back of Chesterton, and part of Gordon Villa in 2015 from the beach, to show how they share an extension.

At the rear the the two storey extension is under a gable roof at right angles to the main building - Chesterton's is not quite as wide, and today both have further extensions into the yard. Chesterton's upper floor has generous windows and a glazed door leading on to a balcony. There would be a fine view of the sea. The lower floor also has a good sized french window. At the end of the yard is a low sea defence wall of upright sleepers.

The ground for this house is the stone bank thrown up by the sea and called 'waste' by the Crown Manor Court who owned it as it was no use for farming. It was 'beach' in 1829 no-one had enclosed it to build a cottage. (Map National Archives 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 and was a quick way to North Wales.

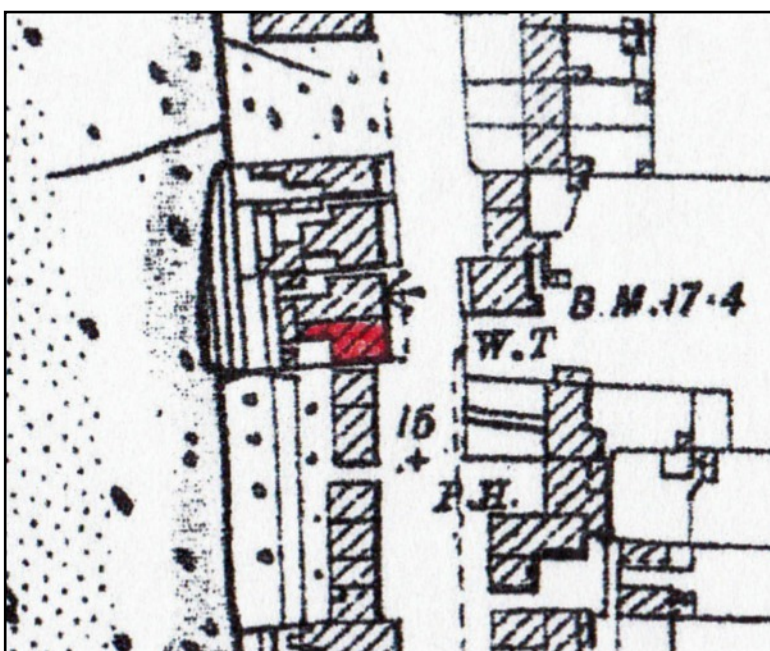
At the 1881 Census, the man who was going to build the pair of houses, Captain John Hughes then aged 46 was living over the road in Welfare with his wife Catherine, both of them were local, born in Borth, also there were their daughters Catherine aged 18 employed as a servant, and Margaret Elizabeth Hughes aged 5. The Captain was away.



Welfare is marked in red in this detail from a map of 1886. Across the road was open ground to be the site of Chesterton and Gordon Villa. (25 inch Ordnance Survey Map, surveyed in 1886, published in 1888, Cardiganshire III.10)

At the 1891 Census they were still living in Welfare with a stonemason lodger, James Jones aged 40 and born in Llangwyrfon, Cardiganshire. He would be a skilled builder by that age. Over the road were 'two houses in building'. They would be Lorne Villa and Gordon Villa no doubt built by his stonemason lodger for the Captain, who would own them both. His chose the house now Chesterton for his home and called it Lorne Villa after the schooner he had commanded and eventually owned. By 1897 he had moved into the new house as their son John Morgan Hughes died there that year aged 29, he had been ill for some time. He was a mariner like his father and had just passed his 'mates' examination (Cambrian News). The Captain had bought an existing cottage up the road for his daughter Mrs Catherine Williams, and he called that Lorne House. It is now Tynsley.

In the house at the 1901 Census was the Captain, by then 65 and his wife Catherine. Also there were two grandchildren, Mary Margaret Williams aged 10 and John Lewis Williams aged 7. The family spoke both Welsh and English.



LEFT Marked in red is Captain Hughes's Lorne Villa in 1904. The house had a narrow front garden. The detached building in the yard at the back was probably the Ty Bach, outside lavatory. Both the villas had rear extensions and at the back of the yard they shared some good sea defences with Tyrol and Richmond House, rows of sloping stakes hammered into the stone bank. There had been a seriously bad storm in 1896 with much damage. A man in Glasfôr lost his life. In 1898 Lorne was still in 'an awful

state after the storm', and Captain Hughes was in a list of flood victims. (Cambrian News October 9th - Detail from the 25 inch Ordnance Survey Map revised in 1904 and published in 1905. Cardiganshire III.10)



LEFT A glimpse of the side of the house from a photograph taken in 1914, and we can see it had a substantial chimney.

(Photograph courtesy of Mrs F. H. B. Renny)

In 1910 for at tax planned but not levied the villa was valued at £240. There would have been £10.4s to pay, £12 gross. This was a valuable house. In October that year the Captain died. His funeral was at the Penygarn Chapel in Bow Street and he was buried in its cemetery. The Cambrian News of October 10th. has the details of his funeral. His wife survived him.

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In Lorne Villa at the 1911 Census was the Captain's daughter Margaret, aged 35, then Mrs Jones. Her husband Edward David Jones was a carpenter and joiner born at Shisnilleth Montgomeryshire who was 45. They had only been married for a year and had no children. Lorne Villa was spacious with nine main rooms.

Sometime before 1924 a Mrs Redding had been living there and she had moved to St Omer France. A Mrs Jones was then living in Lorne. (Cambrian News, 3rd. October). Paying the rates in 1925, 1934 and 1938 was Margareta E. Jones as owner and occupier.

With votes for the house in the general election of 1945 was Samuel J. Jones and Elaine O. M. I. Jones. In 1949 the name of the house had been changed to Chesterton. Mr Jones was paying the rates. He was still there in 1963 and had a vote for the house. (Rates and Electoral Registers, Ceredigion Archives).

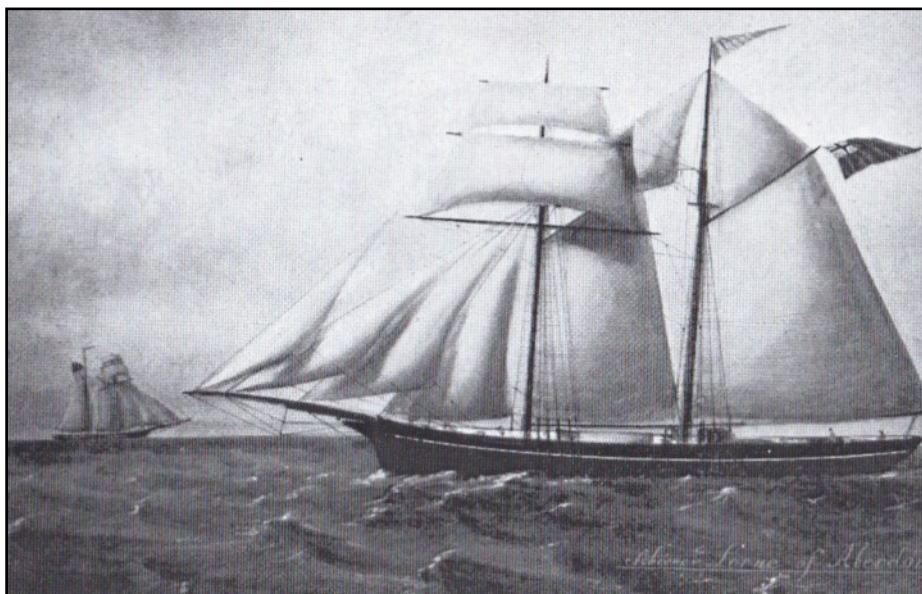
BELOW On the far left is Gordon Villa and we can see the old sash windows that Chesterton would also have had. The photograph is from a glass plate.

(Photograph courtesy of Peter Fleming)

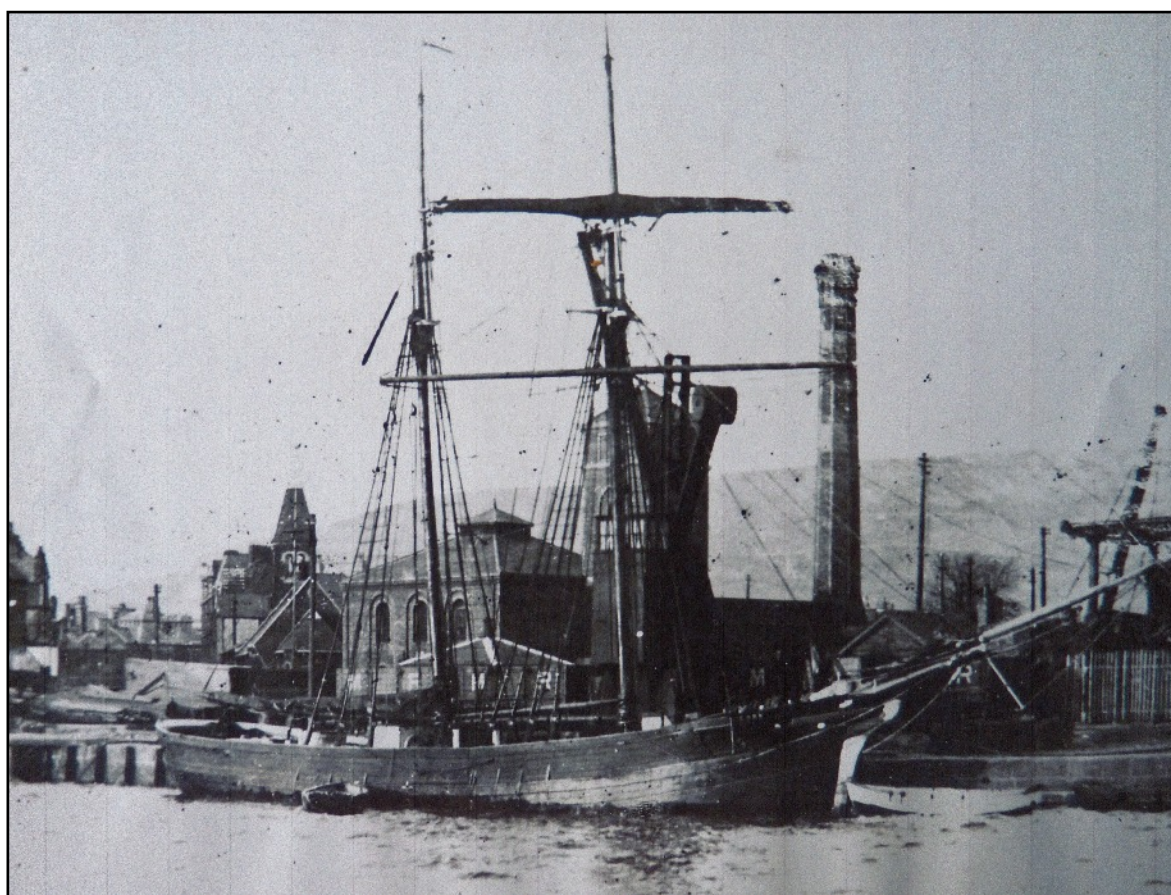


This house was called after the schooner, Lorne of 74 tons by Captain John Hughes who was her master from 1875 when he was 40 years old. He became the owner in 1877. In December 1887 John M. Hughes became the master, then his father Captain John Hughes resumed command in May 1888. In a voyage of 1776 Borth men were prominent in the crew of four. In 1890 the master was William Hughes for one voyage. Then Captain John Hughes was master again until 1896. Then the ownership was transferred to David Davies of Aberystwyth and the Borth connection ended. (Dr Terry Davies 'Borth; A Seaborne Village')

Captain Davies must have been a good seaman, making a good profit with his voyages to be able to afford to build the Gordon and Lorne Villas in 1891 when he was aged about 56. He may have been considering having a good house to retire to.



The Schooner Lorne, Captain John Hughes



The Lorne in Swansea Harbour.

Pictures by courtesy of Dr Terry Davies.

The inside of this villa is interesting.

BELOW The tiled hall floor extends all the way to the entrance to the kitchen.



ABOVE The stairs are quite wide, and the banisters continue up to the top floor under the roof.



ABOVE LEFT A detail of the banisters. ABOVE RIGHT Over the hall just past the entrance to the front room is a division made in the plaster moulding - not an arch but with a richly carved bracket each side.



LEFT This is the large bay window in the front room, and there is a high ceiling.



LEFT This the a built in cupboard in the front room

RIGHT This door is to an attic room, but all the doors in the villa are of this design.

The original fireplace between the front and rear rooms has gone being replaced by a fireplace astride the join between the former two rooms.

BELOW These are the pine boards at the join between the two rooms. Good quality pine from Newfoundland was brought to Aberdovey Harbour by the sailing ships.





ABOVE On the final flight of stairs some of the wall has been left to show the stonework. . It is interesting that this rubble stone does not include rounded stones from the beach, but this was intended to be plastered and is not 'coursed' carefully like the stone on the front of the villa. *BELOW* One of the attic rooms, which has a generous head height.



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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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