

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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DERWEN

Morfa Borth - the Marsh Harbour

Also called Number 1 Wesleyan Place. Built between 1829 and 1848. Home of a Williams family of mariners by 1851 and still in the family in 1925. A humble cottage in 1910 it was rebuilt as a two storey house.



ABOVE Derwen in 2015.

Derwen is on the east side of the High Street, and close to the Wesleyan Chapel, at the southern end of Morfa Borth . It is two storeys high, under a gable roof and is double fronted and has no chimneys. It is semi-detached and is the northernmost building of a terrace of three. On the north side is a single storey extension with a window facing the High Street. The walls are rendered and plain with no decoration. The window frames are modern in the style of sash windows. The front door too is modern. A low, rendered wall encloses a narrow front garden. Today the ground floor has an open plan living room and kitchen, and upstairs are three bedrooms and a bathroom.

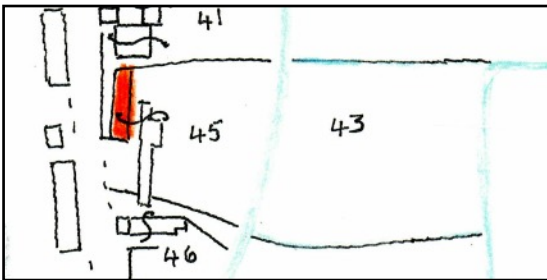
There is an extension on the back of the house, and the garden reaches as far as the end of the Warehouse/Chapel. This garden is shared with Carreg Wen, the cottage on the south. At the back is a paved yard.

The name 'Derwen' is Welsh and means Oaks.

The ground for this house was enclosed in 1809 by John Jones from the pebble embankment thrown up by the sea, and called 'waste' because it was no use for farming. The ground measured 2 rods and 4 perches, that is about half an acre, and extended to a brook.



LEFT On a map of 1829 Number 48 had some cottages, but none were on the site of Derwen. Ground across the brook also belonged with it. A rent of £3 had to be paid every year to the Crown manor who owned the ground. It was the last enclosure of Morfa Borth on the east side with cottages before a gap and then three lime kilns. (Copy from a map, National Archives LRRO 1/3060)

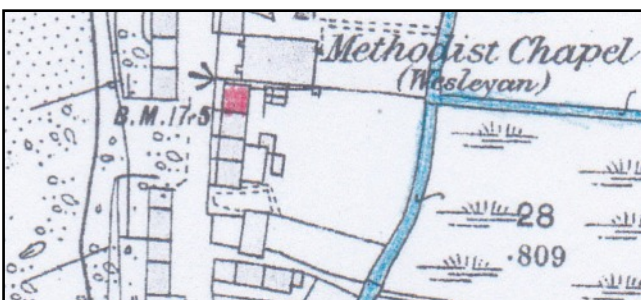


LEFT By 1848 we can see the terrace of cottages with Derwen had been built beside the street. They are marked in red. The square building just over the boundary was the Chapel. Some of the old cottages were still there but not immediately behind Derwen. There were two owners of the ground and cottages, John Benjamin a carpenter from Ty Gwyn, (then Cwm Cethin, Glanwern) and John Jones. (A detail copied from the Tithe Apportionments Map of 1845 for

Llanfihangel Genau'r Glyn, Cyfoeth Townsship on-line at CYNEFIN)

Living in the cottages were John Evans and Margaret Davies and Lewis Williams who would eventually move into the Derwen cottage (1841 Census) He was an agricultural labourer, born in Llanbadarn Fawr about 1814, and had a wife Anne. By the 1851 Census Lewis Williams was earning his living as a miner He was to have a family of sons - William born about 1838, Thomas 1847, Lewis 1845, John 1840, David 1850 and Richard 1853. All were born in Morfa Borth. This was a Welsh speaking family.

By the 1881 Census Lewis Williams had retired as a miner. Visiting them was their son John, by then a master mariner and a 33 year old daughter in law, Anne Williams the wife of a master mariner, and her son John Lewis Williams aged 3 born at Llanilar and Anne Granville Williams, a baby.



LEFT Marked in red is Lewis William's cottage in 1886. The cottage was about the same size as the cottage next door - the northernmost one of a terrace of four cottages. They shared the ground at the back leading down to the brook - which suggests one owner for all of them. There was a small building at the back which may have been a Ty Bach. All the cottages

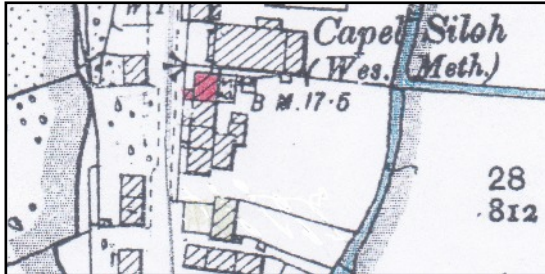
had their own narrow front gardens (Detail from the 25 inch Ordnance Survey Map of 1888, surveyed in 1886, Cardiganshire NW III.10)

The address in 1891 was Auckland Place and Lewis Williams and his wife were still living there. Their son William would be in the cottage by 1910. In the Census of 1901 the cottage was not listed - possibly the family were away or the old miner and his wife had died and his master mariner eldest son William was away at sea.

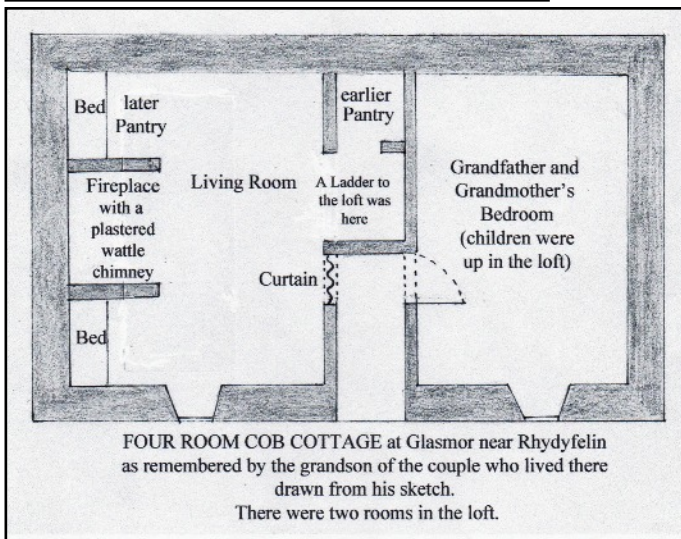
In 1910 for a valuation for a tax planned but not levied this was not a house, but still a cottage and garden and was valued at only £36 - a humble cottage, and called Wesleyan Place. There

would have been £1.16s to pay, £2. 5s gross. The owner was William Williams and he was living there. (Ceredigion Archives T/DV/18 and map at the National Library of Wales).

The Census of 1911 listed William Williams as a retired master mariner. He was 72, born in Borth in 1839 the son of a labourer Lewis Williams and his wife Ann of Morfa Borth. His wife Mary was from Eglwysfach. They had only been married for seven years and there were no children. The cottage had three main rooms.

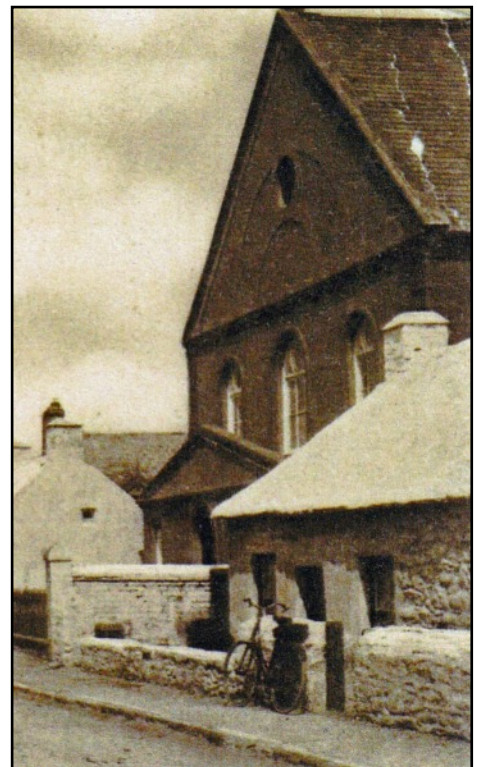


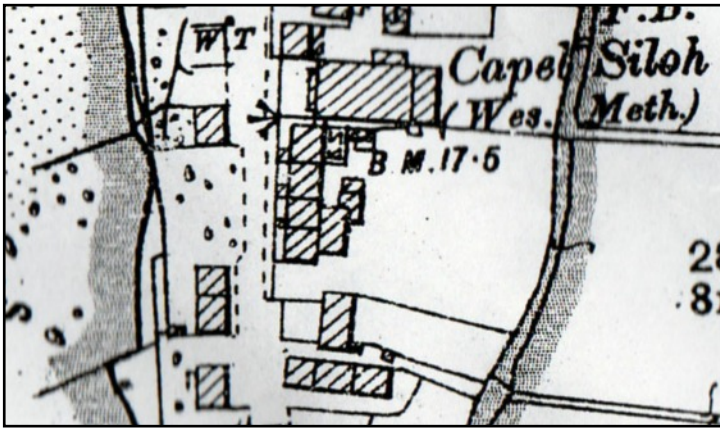
LEFT In 1904 the cottage looked the same, but there were more small buildings at the back. Cottagers at that time kept pigs and chickens. There were still four cottages all sharing the ground at the back (Detail from the 25 inch Ordnance Survey Map of 1905 revised in 1904, Cardiganshire NW III.10)



LEFT How such cottages were organized - two rooms downstairs and a loft in the roof.

BELOW The cottage before it was rebuilt and became 'Derwen'. The front was rubble stone with some round pebbles from the beach. The windows had small panes of glass, and there is a small window in the gable end to light the loft. The roof was steep enough to have had reed thatch at one time (Right hand detail from a postcard in the Ceredigion Archives, Left hand detail with rendered walls from a photograph taken before 1905).





LEFT In 1904 all the cottages and Auckland on the end of the row had the same owner. The small piece on the rear of Derwen was not striped like part of a house (Detail from the 25 inch Ordnance survey Map revised in 1904 and printed in 1905. Cardiganshire NW).

Paying the Rates in 1925 was Mary Williams (his widow?) who was living there.

In 1934 Mary Williams was the owner. James Jenkins had been the tenant but then it was John Edwards, and the Council had written the name 'Derwen' instead of 'Wesleyan Place' and it was listed as a 'house'.

By 1945 there were new occupants. With a votes for the house in the General Election were Henry A. Hallam, Edith L. Nichols and Albert Walford.

Paying the Rates for Derwen in 1949 was Elizabeth A. Edwards. The amount to pay was more than for a small cottage and suggests that the present house had been built.



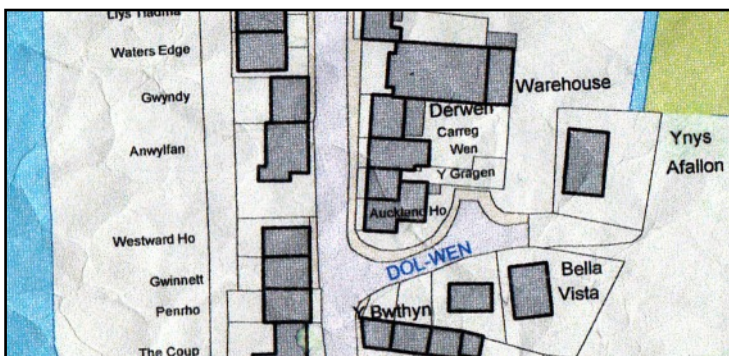
Frederick C. Beacham paid the rates in 1957 and 1963, and in 1963 Alice Eleanor Beacham had a vote for the house.

LEFT Derwen standing next to the Chapel before it became a warehouse. The other cottages in the row and Wesley Cottage in the foreground remained as cottages. Derwen had different windows then.

At the end of the row is Auckland who owned many of the cottages.

(Picture courtesy of the Aberystwyth Public Library)

The house in 1975 had a section on the rear. It shared the garden with the other cottages suggesting the same owner (Historical Maps On-line).



LEFT This detail from a modern Council Map shows Derwen sharing ground at the back with Carreg Wen suggesting they had the same owner. Their gardens are small and there is the new house, Ynys Afallon at the back (Map courtesy of Councillor Ray Quant who provided it for research for a village event).

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

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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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