

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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FAIRHOLME Morfa Borth

On the beach side in the northern part of Borth High Street. Formerly called Ocean View. A house that was a private home and had holiday visitors. Built after 1859 but by 1871.



Fairholme in 2009

Fairholme is a two storey terrace house with an attic floor in the roof and a basement which is rare in the row of beach side houses. It has a grey brick chimney with room for three chimney pots. This is a generously wide house. Its front door is not in the centre, but allows for larger rooms on the north side of the house. Although the height of the roof matches that of St Clare the spacing of the sash windows is completely different. Over the front door is a simple pediment

supported on shaped brackets and a flight of steps leads down to the road. The ground floor window on the south side is a canted bay window with a hipped roof. Sturdy walls and railings enclose the narrow front area, and below are the windows and an entrance to the basement which has its own gate in the front wall. The walls are rendered, and at a date of pre 1871 would be expected to be rubble stone. *BELOW The house in 2015.*





ABOVE The basement window on the south of the front door, and the entrance to the basement and its other window on the other side. The sash windows match those on the rest of the front of the house.



ABOVE The rear of the house in 2016 from the beach. Running along the back of the house is an extension of the ground floor like a sun room, but in this photograph it is protected from the sea in case of a bad storm. There are oriel canted bay windows above it and a small extension in the centre of the back.

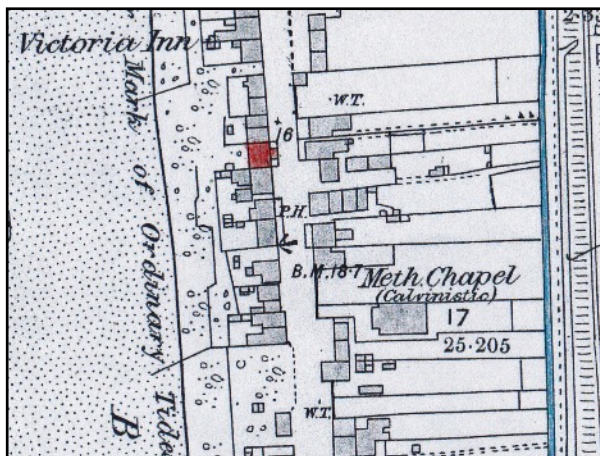
The ground for this house is the stone bank thrown up by the sea and called 'waste' by the Crown Manor who owned it as it was no use for farming. On a map of 1829 it was beach (National Archives LRRO 1/3060) The road had been there for centuries, it was used in the twelfth century and was a turnpike road by the 1770s. It led to a ferry from Ynyslas to Aberdovey and was a quick way to North Wales. Fresh water for the cottages and houses came from a brook behind the buildings on the other side of the road. By the time this house was built

there was a tap with good spring water in the street outside the Cambrian Hotel (later Pantyfedwen and now gone), and other taps by 1886.

In 1848 the site was still open ground. (Tithe Apportionments Map Llangihangel Genau'r Glyn, Cyfoeth Township - on line at CYNEFIN - National Library of Wales). However on a map of encroachments belonging to the Crown Manor in 1859 a plot of quite a good size, with a dotted line in the centre in case two houses could be built there is marked, but no house had been drawn on it. (Map National Archives LRRO 1/3060)

This house had plenty of space for holiday visitors. Called 'Ocean View' it was up and running by 1871 when the Cambrian News listed nine weeks of holiday visitors there. They came from as far away as Sutton Coldfield, Birmingham, Manchester, Ellesmere Port and some Welsh places. Their landlady was Mrs James, who in the 1871 Census was Jane James born about 1827, the wife of a mariner with two teenage daughters, Jane and Ann. It is likely all these visitors came on the train as Borth Station had opened in 1863.

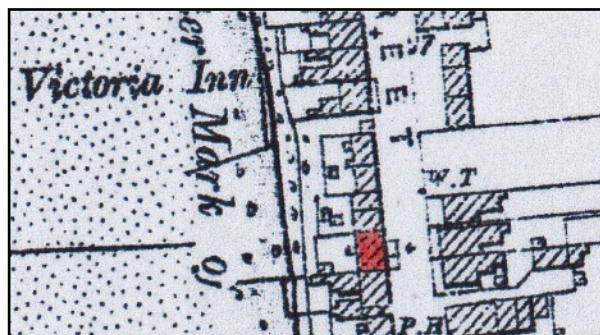
In 1880 there were eight weeks of visitors, from as far away as Lincolnshire, London, Shrewsbury and Bristol. Their landlady was Mrs Airey, and she could take in two families at the same time. We have no information about her, as at the 1881 Census the house was unoccupied, either it was between owners or the occupiers were away.



LEFT Marked in red is Ocean View (Fairholme) in 1886. The bridge in front for the steps from the front door was there, so the basement was already built. At the back was rough ground, there was no yard. (A detail from the 25 inch Ordnance Survey Map surveyed in 1886 and published in 1888. Cardiganshire III.10)

In 1891 at the Census in the house was a single lady, Ann Watkin, 37 years old and born far away in Whitehaven Cumberland. She was a school teacher. Despite her birthplace she could speak both Welsh and

English. In Kelly's Directory of 1895 she was listed as a 'private resident' rather than a 'commercial' one.



LEFT The house in 1910 had a tiny building or porch? at the back, and a yard. Its Ty Bach - outside lavatory - was probably the building in the corner of the yard. There was a fence, shared with its neighbours, probably rows of stakes at an angle to protect them from the sea during storms. The house did not have the present day extension across the back (Ordnance Survey Map as before, revised in 1904 and published in 1905).

In 1910 the house was still called 'Ocean View' and for a tax planned but not levied, it was valued at £300 with £8.18s to pay, £10.10s gross. The owner and occupier was W. E. Watkin Phillips. This was a valuable house, paying just a little less than St Clare next door. Anne E. Watkin Phillips owned a new house in Borth called Glyn-y-werdd, but had put a tenant in it.

At the 1911 Census the house had ten main rooms. In the house was William Patterson aged 36 and a greengrocer working from home. He was Irish - born in Londonderry and spoke English but not Welsh. His wife Anne was Welsh, aged 40 and born in Machynlleth. They had been married for seven years and had one child who was not in the house. Patterson was a fruiterer and florist, and also advertised in the Illustrated Borth Guide with furnished accommodation of four bedrooms and two sitting rooms to let (Aberystwyth Public Library).

In November 1924 the house was up for sale (Cambrian News, November 21st.)

By 1925 the house had its name 'Fairholme'. Paying the rates had been E. Wilkinson but this was altered to Cordelia B.(Beatrice) Plimmer. Cordelia Plimmer advertised furnished accommodation to let of two single and four double bedrooms, a large lounge, a dining room and a kitchen. The bathroom had hot and cold water and there was 'outside sanitation' probably a Ty Bach - outside lavatory - in the yard. The advertisement said apply to Mrs Plimmer of Broxton, Kingsland, Shrewsbury, or to Neptune House, Borth (Aberystwyth Public Library).



LEFT Fairholme is the third house from the left in this detail from a postcard of the 1920s. It had an overhanging roof with two dormer windows then. The overhanging roof would have needed to be supported by dentils (brackets) as we can see today in Bradford House on the beach side further north along the High Street. It suggests this is a rubble stone house underneath the smooth rendering.

Cordelia Plimmer had been paying the rates in 1938, but this was altered to A. M. Perry who also paid the rates in 1949. With a vote for the house in the General Election of 1945 was Enoch J. Pugh. Possibly he was a tenant.

Mrs F. E. Perry paid the rates in 1963, and with votes for the house were Albert Norman Perry and Florence E. Perry - so a Perry family were living there then.

LEFT Another view of that overhanging roof and the two dormer windows. It is the fourth house from the left, partly hidden by the bay windows of St Clare.



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Hoffem ddiolch i Beryl am fod mor garedig â chaniatáu i ni rannu ei gwaith â'r gynulleidfa ehangaf bosibl.

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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-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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