

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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THE FRIENDSHIP INN

Morfa Borth - the Marsh Harbour

High Street, Cors side. Formerly a terrace of cottages, built by 1848. An Inn by 1851. Bought by Captain David Hughes in 1861 who had the biggest cottage licensed to sell ale and spirits. It was later a nine bedroom hotel and today is a public house with upstairs antiques for sale and down stairs a bar, picture gallery and garden. In the ownership of the Pugh family for nearly a century.



ABOVE This photograph was taken in June 2009. The front remains cottage height but behind the building is a full two storeys high. Rounded stones from the beach often used in Borth's oldest cottages can be seen in the side wall.

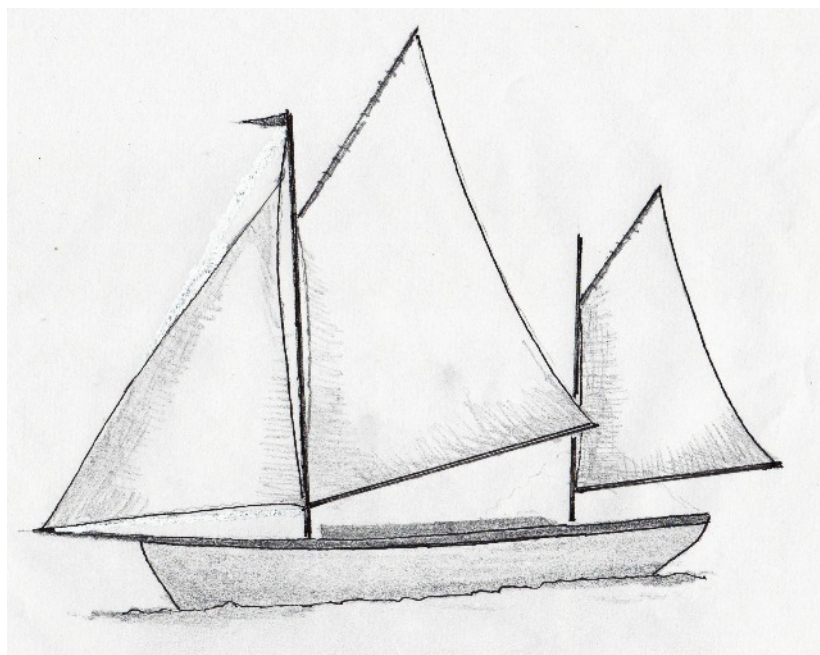
The Inn 'bar' today is contained within the cottage at the front of a block developed from older cottages and a stables. Behind the 'bar' are a series of rooms and a cellar, and at the end of the building is a small covered patio. The front cottage is two and half storeys high, under a gable roof parallel to the High Street. Attic rooms are lit by dormer windows. There is a brick chimney with two flues. The walls of the building are rubble stone with many rounded stones from the beach. The gabled wall on the north has two windows at the rear of

it. There is a central entrance porch with a slate roof. The upper and lower front windows are casement style. One has the sign on the glass for a Public Bar, the other for the Saloon. This building formerly had a central passage with a bar at the rear of it serving two rooms leading off the passage, a Public Bar and a Saloon.

RIGHT The rounded beach stones get larger towards the bottom of the wall.

The name of the Inn was in memory of a ketch owned by a ship's captain when he started selling drinks there in 1861. Captain David Hughes's ketch rigged 'Friendship' had a burden of 50 tons. She was built at Aberarth in 1826 and mainly carried slates to Ireland and came back with potatoes. She was overtaken by a squall off Pygen Rock at Bardsey Island in September 1858 and sank in 15 minutes. She was then abandoned. Her crew of John Hughes the master and Evan Hughes the mate survived (Shipping Register, Aberystwyth, Ceredigion Archives) The Inn had stables and so could have served travellers along the turnpike road from the ferry at Ynyslas. After Borth Station opened to passengers in 1863, the Inn would have profited from passengers from the trains.

RIGHT A ketch rigged sloop had two masts.



RIGHT The north side of the building in 2018. The passage beside it allows windows for the rooms behind the bar but access is from the other side.

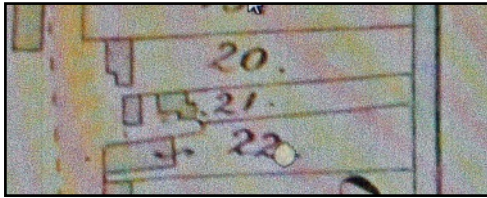


LEFT The south side of the building is two storeys in height. There is access through a single door.

BELOW There is a sun room and balcony on the east end of the building and in the foreground a sheltered garden for customers.



The ground on which the Inn is built is the pebble bank built up by the sea. It was owned by the Crown Manor who considered it 'waste' as it was no use for farming. The ground, a strip of twenty and a half perches (an eighth of an acre) was Number 31 on a map of 1829, with one small cottage on it set back from the road. It had been enclosed in 1821, and was rented from the Crown. We do not know who had it as the owner's name has faded and is illegible (National Archives, LRRO 1/3060)



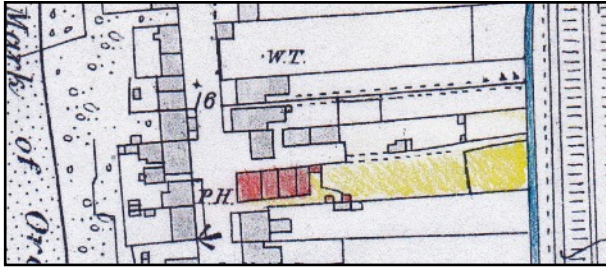
LEFT The strip of land in 1848 was number 22 on this detail from a map. A block of cottages had been built and they began right beside the street. Interestingly the line of buildings was not at a right angle to the main street as the Friendship buildings still are today. The owner of plot number 22 was Mary Hughes. They were called 'Houses and garden' suggesting these homes were of good quality, so possibly they were stone built and not clom (mud). The ground, measuring 1 rod and 3 perches, just over a quarter of an acre extended to a brook of fresh water. The garden area had access from the High Street on the south side and the main entrances of the houses or cottages were probably that side as they are today (Detail from the Llanfihangel Genau'r Glyn parish, Cyfoeth Township, Tithe Apportionments Map on-line at CYNEFIN))

Mary Hughes, born at Tymawr, Cardiganshire about 1805 was a widow, she had lost her master mariner husband John by January 1846. He had commanded the sloop *Betsey*, and also had shares in other ships including 52 out of 64 shares in a sloop called *Friendship*, though he had to mortgage them in 1844. (Custom's House Aberystwyth, Register of Shipping, Ceredigion Archives) Terry Davies writes that Mary Hughes lost her husband John and two sons when they drowned in 1845 while on the '*Betsy*'. This left her with five other children to raise. ('Borth, A Seaborn Village' page 100) There was the example of the *White Lion Inn* operating down the road, also run by a family of master mariners, so by the 1851 Census she was running an inn herself, aged 46, Also in the house was her daughter Mary aged then 2 who had wed David James, born about 1827, a mariner aged 24, also there were Mary Hughes's three younger daughters, Margaret, 13, Anne 10 and Kitty 7. By the 1861 Census her daughter Mary James had become a widow and had a small son David. There was another daughter, Catherine, aged 17, and a boarder John Evans. In the 1851 and 1861 Census's she is listed as a Public House Keeper, but there is no name for her Inn.

According to a history of the *Friendship Inn* written in 1951 by J. H. Williams, a retired master mariner, he wrote that in 1860 it had a new owner. It had been bought by Captain David Hughes. David Hughes had commanded a sloop called *Friendship* in 1844 and 1846. The vessel was quite elderly, built in 1788, but it could carry 45 tonnes. It traded until 1848. A smaller *Friendship* was registered after the death of John Hughes, the ketch on the sign board, and continued to sail until 1858 and Captain David Hughes owned her. He bought the three cottages on the strip of land and got an ale and spirits licence for the largest one. He named it *The Friendship Inn* after his ship.' (J. T. Williams was his nephew. *Borth Review* 1951, National Library of Wales) . In 1868 Mary Hughes was running the inn (*Slater's Directory*)

In 1871 David Hughes was the landlord when the *Cambrian News* listed people staying there for 9 weeks during the summer. Two were from as far afield as Scotland, one from London, and the rest from Welshpool, Bala, Llanidloes and Presteigne. Mr and Mrs Newell from Presteigne had an ironmonger's shop in Broad Street, Presteigne and they had brought a servant with them. The Census listed David Hughes as 47 years old, born about 1824 in Borth. His wife Martha was born in 1831 in Pembroke. In 1880 the *Cambrian News* listed people there for only two weeks, an American clergyman from New York and a man and his

son from Manchester. In the 1881 Census the Hughes's niece 28 year old, unmarried Mary Ann James was acting as a 'general servant' at the inn. It is possible there was a tenant in a cottage at the back, then called 'Friendship Court'. In 1874 the Aberystwyth Customs Register listed another 'Friendship' sloop, this one commanded by the brothers David and John Hughes.

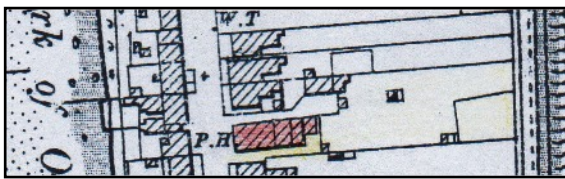


LEFT In 1886 the building was divided into four with a small outbuilding at the far end. The inn, opening directly on to the High Street and marked PH was larger than the others. J. T. Williams wrote that Captain Hughes had bought only three cottages making the largest the inn. However there were also stables (pulled down in 1929-

1930) which may explain the fourth division (Detail from the 25 inch Ordnance Survey Map of 1888 surveyed in 1886, Cardiganshire NW III.10)

In the 1891 Census the Hughes's were now elderly, in their sixties. Mary Ann James, still single, was listed as their 'housekeeper' and also helping were two nieces, Mary E. Williams and Mary E. Roberts, aged 18 and 17.

Martha Hughes died in 1893 aged 62 and in 1901 Mary F. James was the 'manageress' and Mary Williams was still working there. Captain David Hughes died in 1904 aged 80. A photograph of him can be found in Terry Davies's 'Borth: A Maritime History' page 183.



LEFT By the 25 inch Ordnance Survey Map of 1905 surveyed in 1904 the inn is larger, only three of the original four divisions remained.

In 1911 there is a new innkeeper, Mrs Mary Ann Blackwell. She was a forty six year old widow born in Borth about 1865, possibly the daughter of John Davies, a labourer and his wife Mary. J.H. William said Mary Ann had bought the inn and was a cousin of David Hughes. The Census listed it with eight main rooms. In 1910 for a tax planned but not levied, the inn, listed as a 'cottage and garden' was valued at £400, with £8.1s 6d to pay, £9.10s gross. The site was valued at £97. Mary Ann Blackwell was probably living in the cottage behind it. This had a very low rate to pay of £1.12s and £2 gross and was still a very humble cottage. Until 1914 the inn had a seven day licence so it could sell ale and spirits to 'bone fide travellers' on Sundays.

RIGHT A glimpse of the Inn from a postcard sent in 1921. It had no dormer windows then.

THE INN UNDER THE PUGH FAMILY

J. T. Williams wrote that in 1921 the inn was bought by James Pugh. It was listed as a 'house and inn' in the 1925 Rates and James Pugh was living there. Mr Pugh made extensive alterations. He pulled down cottages and stables and replaced them with a modern hotel with nine bedrooms. He died in 1930. There were more alterations.



Friendship Inn

BORTH

Fully Licensed



ELECTRIC LIGHT THROUGHOUT
RUNNING HOT AND COLD WATER IN
BEDROOMS
CONVENIENTLY SITUATED.
NEAR RAILWAY STATION.
CLOSE TO TENNIS COURTS and GOLF LINKS

Terms Moderate

Write for Tariff. Proprietor: J. PUGH

Telephone: BORTH 13

LEFT An Advertisement for Mr J. Pugh's Inn, The look of an old cottage was not wanted, far from it, the front was rendered with bold rusticated masonry, the windows with frames and the lower ones with keystones. The door too was framed. We can see that the building had a chimney at either end of the roof, and the house behind also had a chimney The side was rendered concealing the beach stones in the wall There were sash windows. (Ceredigion Archives.

With votes for the inn in 1945 were Ellen S. Pugh, John Lloyd Pugh and Ellen K. Smith.



In the 1949 Rates Ellen Sophia Pugh was the owner and it was listed as the 'Friendship Hotel'. Mrs Pugh died in 1949. In 1951 her son Fred Pugh held the licence. It had already been in their family for 30 years. (Borth Review National Library of Wales)

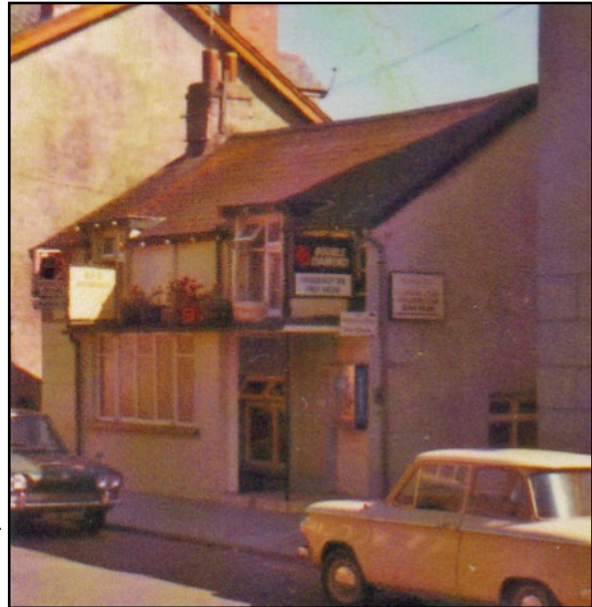
Paying the rates for the Friendship Hotel in 1957 were the Messrs Pugh.

Mr Frederick Pugh paid them in 1963 and he also paid the rates for the Cambrian Villa next door. Mr Pugh and Mrs Elizabeth Pugh had votes for the Inn (Electoral Registers and Rates, Ceredigion Archives)

Today the Inn has a cool cellar to store barrels of beer.

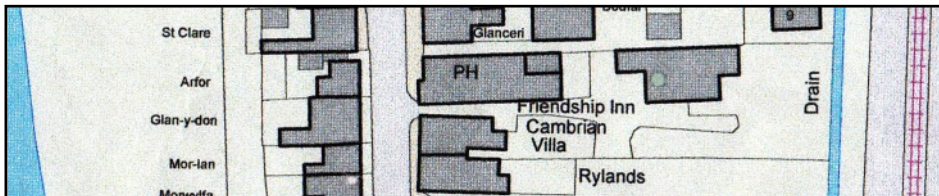
ABOVE This detail from a postcard sent in 1955 shows the upper windows had been enlarged with dormers. There was no porch and the walls were still rendered. The sign outside said 'Ansell's Ales'.

RIGHT A photograph taken by the Alsop family from Tinsley over the road shows the Friendship in 1972. The front and side, still rendered had altered again with a wide porch. (Photograph courtesy of Mrs F. H. B. Renny)



By 1975 a large building had been added at the rear and the Inn shared the ground to the ditch with Cambrian Villa.

BELOW A detail from a modern Council Map shows the large building, and the small garden at the rear of the Inn (Map courtesy of Councillor Ray Quant).



LEFT The large building at the rear in 2018.

The author would like to thank the present owner for his help with this article.



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

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

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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