

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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GLANCERI

High Street. Cors side. Built after 1901 and before 1904. Originally a master mariner Hugh Davies's cottage and ground enclosed in 1824 - he owned a not very expensive sloop, and did not have very much ground. The cottage had become 1 Brookside Place, a substantial house by 1881. Possibly some of it remains in the present building?



Glanceri in 2009

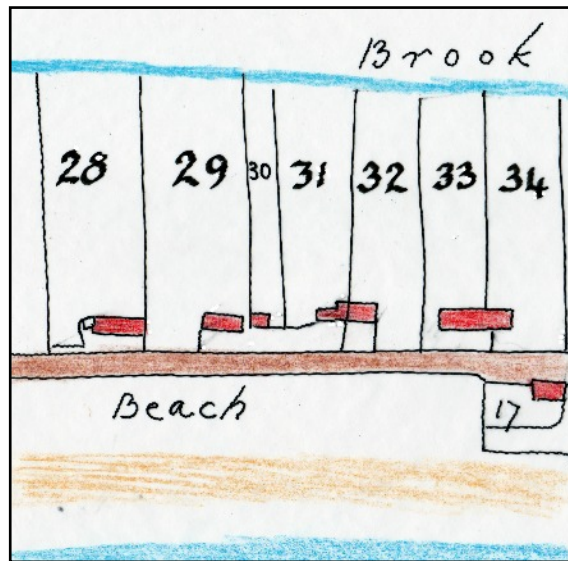
Today Glanceri is a home with one of the most handsome facades in Borth created from its plastered front. It is two and a half storeys high, with a gable roof parallel to the street and with two dormer windows in a gable facing the street to light an attic floor. The front door is on the left, with a decorative stained glass fanlight, surrounded by a decorative plastered arch with a keystone topped by a graceful pediment. There is a decorated pediment over the window above too, which has a shaped frame. On the south side of the front are casement style bay window, again with the design of columns and a plain architrave .

Between them are rectangular framed panels in the Italianate style favoured by Victorians. In the gable are a pair of arched sash windows with small glazing panes on the upper sections like those used on Morwylfa and Mor Lan on the beach side of the High Street. The decoration on the front of this building was the kind commonly used with a brick building - so the walls are most likely to be brick. There is a very narrow front garden with a wall topped by railings.

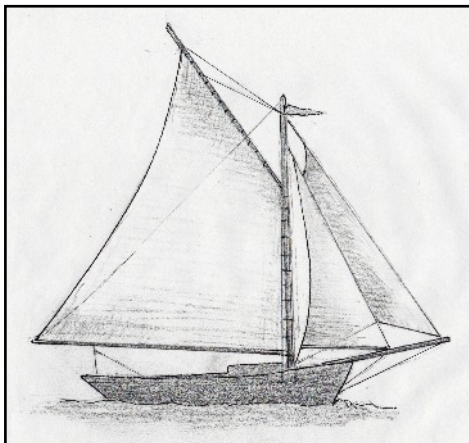


LEFT In this detail from an old postcard in the foreground is the Friendship Inn. Beyond is Glanceri, a finial topped its gable, and it had a substantial brick chimney with three chimney pots (three flues). The side of the building is rendered but there are traces of a pattern of quoins at the front edge. The lady is Mrs Audrey Knowler with her two children.

Glanceri stands on the pebble bank thrown up by the sea which the Crown Manor who owned it called 'waste' as it was no use for farming. In 1824 a strip of this of twenty nine and a half perches - about a sixteenth of an acre was enclosed by Hugh Davies.



RIGHT Number 30 on this detail from a map of 1829 was Hugh's strip, and on it he had a cottage set back a little from the road. At the top of his garden was a brook with fresh water (Detail after a Map, National Archives LRRO 1/3060)

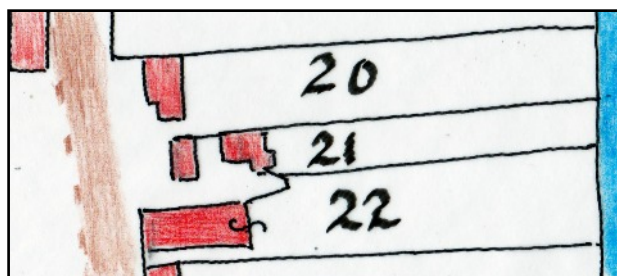


Hugh was born about 1786 He had been the Captain and owner of a 16 ton sloop called 'Mary' in 1824 which was built in Barmouth in 1805, and he had shares in other vessels. With his wife Jane he had at least four sons, and a daughter, and was already elderly in 1841, aged 55.

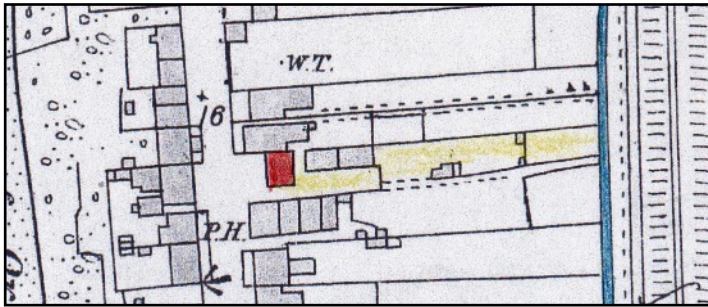
LEFT A Sloop. These were used for coastal voyages, rather than deep sea voyages.

BELOW In 1848 another another home had been added on Hugh's strip, Number 21 (Tithe Apportionments Map for Llanfihangel Genau'r Glyn, Cyfoeth Township, on-line at CYNEFIN)

These homes in 1848 were called 'houses' rather than cottages, and the owner was John Davies, the son of Hugh Davies, and a master mariner, captain of the sloop 'Mary' in 1834. The occupier was in 1848 was Mary Davies, born about 1818 and a widow by 1848. When he married Mary



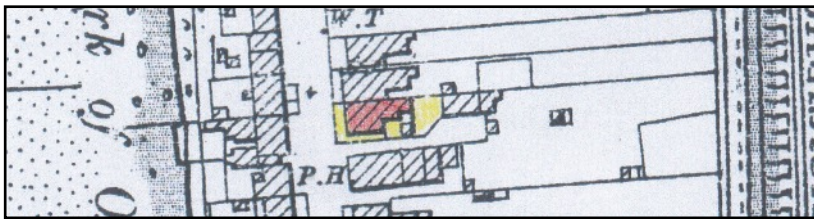
the daughter of a mariner David Jenkins in December 31 1840, his address was 'Morfa Borth' so he was already living somewhere else on the embankment of pebbles. Mary was Welsh speaking, and John and Mary lived in the house near the street, but it was set back further than today's Glanceri and was full of their children; Hugh - who became a mariner - Jane, John, Mary, William, Lewis and Thomas. From 1861 to 1881 Mary Davies gave a home to her brother in law David Davies, an invalid, and retired master mariner. By 1881 at the Census there was just her son Thomas with her, and two grandsons, John and James Williams born in America. The address was then 1 Brookside Place.



LEFT Mary Davies's house is marked in red on this detail from a map surveyed in 1886. There were two buildings at the back also owned by Mary. Next door marked P. H. Public House, was the Friendship Inn (Detail from the Ordnance Survey 25 inch Map published in 1888, Cqrdiganshire NW III.10)

By 1891 Mary was no longer there, in her place was another Mary Davies, born about 1825 in Llandre who had been living in the third of the Brookside (Place) Cottages. She was the widow of a mariner, and was Welsh speaking and had three children.

In 1901 there is no mention of a Brookside House, or the other cottage, only of Bodfor, then called Bodfor House. It is likely that some building was planned or going on.



LEFT The Glanceri we know today had been built on this map of 1905 revised in 1904. It is marked in red, and had a tiny front garden, a substantial wing at the rear, a tiny yard and

a yard or garden. Unlike the cottage it replaced Glanceri was built alongside the street. The cottage behind now Bodfor had its own entrance. The very small building in the rear and the ground leading to the brook belonged to the Friendship Inn (Details from a coloured version of this map for the Valuation for Tax of 1910, National Library of Wales).

In 1910 for a Valuation for a tax planned but not levied, Number 255 'Glanceri' was valued at £504, and was described as a 'cottage and garden', but despite the 'cottage' name, this was the value of some Borth villas, with £12.15s, gross £15 to pay. The owner and occupier in 1910 was John Henry Williams. Census's suggest he is likely to have been related to John and Mary Davies. The 1911 Census tells us the house had 9 rooms. This would not include any bathroom, cellar or scullery. In 1911 at the Census, in the house was Jane Williams, a sailor's wife, aged 52, born about 1859 in Borth. She had been married for 30 years, and had had six children, one of whom had died. With her was her son David Henry Williams, a ministerial student. Her other children, not there were; Maggie, David born in 1886, John H. Williams, born about 1891 who was the owner of Glanceri, and sons Abraham and Richard. These children were all born in Borth, and the family spoke both Welsh and English. They had moved there from Gleaner House further south along the High Street where they were living in 1901.

In 1925 when John Williams paid the Rates for Glanceri he had a tenant there called George William Meddins. In 1924 a 'Miss Meddins had helped run a sweet stall at a Women's Institute Sale of Work at the National School (the Meddgyfa is there now). Sometime in the 1920s a 'furnished apartment with three bedrooms and two sitting rooms' in Glanceri was rented out to holiday visitors. (The Illustrated Borth Guide, price 6d. Aberystwyth Public Library).

With votes for the house at the election of 1945 was Albert Davies, Margaret D. Davies and Margaret E. Davies. (Ceredigion Archives)

In 1949 Albert Davies paid the Rates as owner of the house. He was an elder of the Libanus Chapel and was on the Borth Improvements Committee and his wife was a teacher at the Chapel. Mr Davies was a coal merchant. (Borth Review National Library of Wales). In a Borth Guide Book of about 1950 Mrs Davies was letting the place, and 'mod.cons' had been added to the advertisement - hot and cold running water no doubt. In 1962 the three bedrooms and two sitting rooms were still being rented out.

In the late sixties villagers remember a Gentleman's Hairdresser, Leonard Knowler there. At that time Mrs Audrey Knowler was running a bed and breakfast for 5 persons with an evening meal, and the house had six bedrooms. There was no telephone yet. (Handbook and Guide to Borth. Private Collection). Mr and Mrs Knowler moved to Aberystwyth in the mid 70s, but are buried in the churchyard of Borth's St Mathews Church.

In 1975 Glanceri did not then have an enclosed front garden. The building behind shown joined to the main house on this map is a single storey wooden chalet, with lapped wooden walls and a corner with stone walls for a stove. It stands on wooden decking.



Today the house has three bedrooms and a bathroom on its attic floor, on the second floor a master bedroom and another, plus a bathroom, and on the ground floor a long living room and long kitchen with a small room adjacent with the back door to the garden, and there is a utility room at the end of the extension. From the earlier house the hall has a floor of patterned and coloured tiles, and some coving.

LEFT The rear of the house has a dormer window for its top floor with a view across the railway and bog to the hills. A balcony for the window below also has a view. There is a generous two storey wing in the foreground with a lean-to below. The small coloured wooden building is the chalet.

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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-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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