

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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GLANEIFION Morfa Borth

On the beach side at the north end of Borth High Street. A master mariner's house rented by the author William Hope Hodgson, his mother and sister from 1904.



This was the smart end of Morfa Borth, close to the Railway Station opened to passengers in 1863, the Cambrian Terrace completed by 1870, and the imposing Cambrian Hotel (later Pantyfedwen, now gone). It was also close to the place where the main street runs alongside the beach with no buildings in the way (now with a promenade), and old postcards show that this area had bathing huts and was popular with holiday makers.

LEFT The house in 2009.

Glaneifion is a three storey, single fronted, terrace house under a gable roof shared with four other houses, it was the northernmost of the four. A roof light in the front and back and a small window in the gable wall light an attic floor. On the northern end of the roof is a red brick slab chimney with room for five chimney pots (flues).

The walls are rubble stone and rendered. The spacing of the front windows matches those of Hyfrydle and the Green Dolphin. Canted bay windows are on the south side of the front on the ground and first floor and they have a shallow hipped roof. All the windows are sash windows. This house has a plain front door with no decorative frame in the rendering around it. It opens directly on to the street.

BELOW LEFT The roof has an overhang supported by pairs of dentils (brackets), a characteristic of houses in this terrace. BELOW RIGHT The front door.





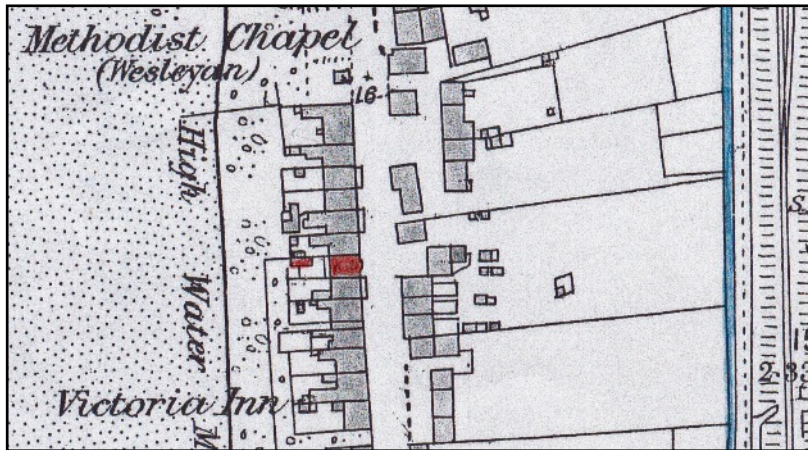
ABOVE The house from the beach in 2015. It is interesting that the rear has twelve light sash windows, Hyfrydle has these too, and so did Bibury in Cambrian Terrace and they may be original or good modern copies. None of the other houses though has a double height pair of these. In the yard are some single storey buildings on the south side, the one nearest the beach being rubble stone, and this one was there in 1886.

The ground for the 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 one tap with good spring water in the street outside the Cambrian Hotel.

In 1848 the site was still not built upon. (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 wide beach side plot (18k) was marked but no buildings were drawn on it, but it said 'sold' with 18h. This did have a building on it, which became eventually Chester House next to the Victoria Inn. In 1848 we do not

know who owned it - because buildings that side of the road with no gardens paid no tithe and so were not listed (1859 Map National Archives LRRO 1/3060).

When built, Glaneifion was part of a terrace of four houses, including 'Neptune' which was up and running as a 'baths' by 1868 (Slater's Directory). So it is likely the four were built in the 1860s. Who was there in the 1871 Census is not clear as there were empty houses nearby in the list. It is not possible to find the people there in the 1881 Census either. However it was on a map surveyed in 1886.

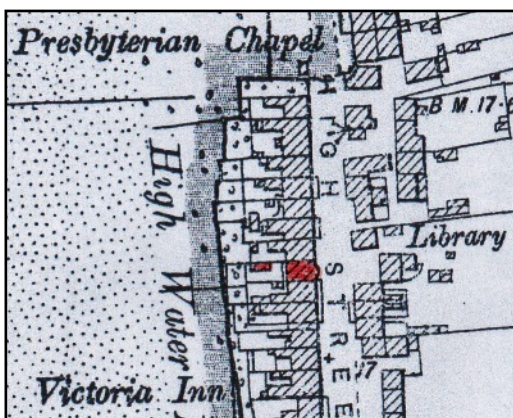


LEFT In 1886 the house, marked in red, opened on to the street, and had a bay window. It was much the same shape as it is today - with more depth than an old cottage. The building in the yard probably had its Ty Bach, outside lavatory. There were several enclosures within the yard, and a fence on the stones to protect it and its

neighbours from the sea during storms (A detail from the 25 inch Ordnance Survey Map surveyed in 1886 and published in 1888. Cardiganshire III.10)

In the house at the 1891 Census was a master mariner, ocean going, Captain John James Hughes. He was local, and 28 years old. His wife Ann E. Hughes was 25 and there was a two year old Ada L. Hughes. Also in the house was a widow and grandmother, Ann Jenkins aged 75. She had her 'own means'. The house had no name, it was just Number 7 High Street. In 1901 Anne Ellen Hughes moved away to Ardwyn Villa.

At the 1901 Census the house had its name Glaneifion and some English people were there Annie Harriet S. Taylor, aged 42, with her own means, and born in Shepton Mallet, and her 38 year old sister, Jane Marion Taylor, born in Somerset, and they were being visited by Elizabeth Christine Seaman aged 33 from Hopton, Suffolk. Annie Taylor died in 1899 aged 76. (Church Register)



LEFT The house in 1904. There were two fences at the back of the yard, the outer one with an area of beach stones. (A detail from the 25 inch Ordnance Survey Map revised in 1904 and published in 1905. Cardiganshire III.10)

In 1910 for a tax planned but not levied, the house was valued at £270 with £10.4s to pay, £12 gross. Anne Ellen Hughes, Captain Hughes's wife was the owner. The tenant's name had been changed to 'Hodgson'. The Hodgson family had been coming to Borth on holiday since the 1870s and 1880s. In

the 1911 Census the members of the Hodgson family in the house were Lissie Hodgson, a widow of 59, with private means, born in Chepstow, and her daughter, also Lissie, aged 24 and born in Wandsworth, London, and unmarried. This was mother and sister of William Hope Hodgson, the author with a powerful imagination who wrote novels featuring the

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supernatural and macabre. He was not in the house when the Census takers called, but he is said to have had a room at the back of the house facing the sea. He came to live in Borth in 1904, and was living with his mother and sister in relative poverty. His clergyman father had died many years before in 1882, and Hodgson had previously provided for the family away at sea. All his books except 'Nightland' were thought to have been written in Borth. He became engaged to a Borth girl but nothing came of it. The family moved away to a newly built house on the hillside at Glanwern now called Coedfryn, but then called Lisswood. Hodgson enlisted in the army in 1914 and died aged 40 in 1918 when a second lieutenant in the Royal Field Artillery. In 1911 Glaneifion had eight rooms.

An Edwards family came to live in Glaneifion. John Edwards and his wife and daughter, John was born in Aberystwyth and died in 1924 aged 56 (Cambrian News February 20th.) In 1925 and 1934 his wife Mrs Anne Jane Edwards was a tenant in the house, still owned by Anne Ellen Hughes. Mrs Edwards died in 1937 aged 72.

The house was put up for sale by auction on Wednesday June 8th. 1938. It was freehold, with four bedrooms, an attic, two reception rooms, a kitchen, and an outside lavatory. The yard had a back entrance leading to the seashore (House Sale, Cambrian News, Ceredigion Archives, ABY/B/16)

With a votes for the house in the General Election of 1945 were Annie M. Edwards and Alfred E. Williams (related to her by marriage). In 1949 and still in 1963 she was paying the rates, and in 1963 she also had a vote for the house (Electoral Registers and Rates, Ceredigion Archives). She was a committee member of Borth's branch of the NSPCC in 1949 (Borth Review, National Library of Wales).

An electricity supply came late to this house, not until the late 1980s (Courtesy of present owner).

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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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