

# 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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## GLAN-Y-DON Morfa Borth

On the beach side in the northern part of Borth High Street. Home of master mariners. Built after 1859 but by 1871.



*LEFT Glan-y-don in 2016 is on the left of this pair of houses. BELOW The street front.*

This is a two storey, double fronted terrace house under a gable roof parallel to the street. There is also an attic floor lit by roof lights. The house seems to be a pair with Arfôr next door on the north with which it shares a rendered chimney of rubble stone, however it is a wider house than Arfôr. The walls too are likely to be rubble stone and they are rendered with a bold pattern of quoins both sides of the front. Below the sills of the upper windows is a pattern suggesting ashlar masonry. I would expect a string course (line of moulding) dividing the two as still exists next door on Arfôr. The windows have a shaped frame with a keystone at the top filled with a random pattern. The windows themselves are modern with a large pane below and do not have the pattern of the sash windows that were once there. The front door has a plain, flat topped pediment above it. The narrow front garden is enclosed by a low rendered wall with railings and is planted.





The house has no access to its yard from the street.



*The rear of the house from the beach in 2016. The roof overhangs and dentils (brackets) support it. The house has a single storey extension on the back containing a kitchen made a decent size by extending it into the main house, with openings knocked through. Also in the extension is a utility area. This extension's roof is almost flat, and the upper floor of the house has a central glass door which appears to open on to it. On the south of the yard the house has an extension with a single storey 'beach room'. This has a door into the yard and windows overlooking both the yard and the sea. They are all modern. This 'beach room' has a shower room in the extension between itself and the main house.*

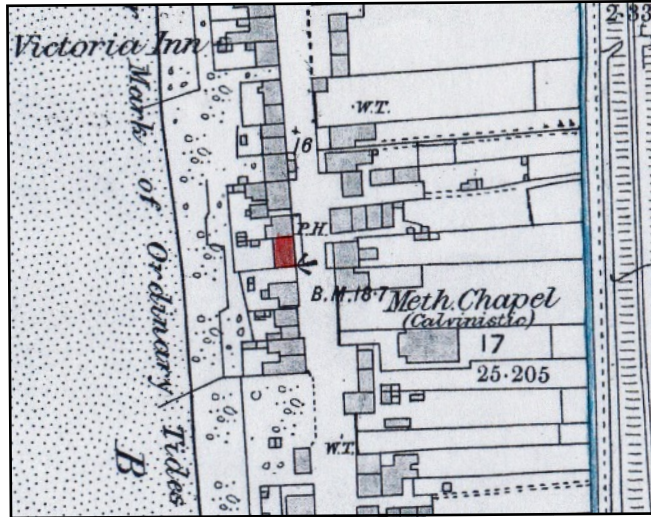
The front door of this house opens into a hall with a lounge on its left and a dining room on its right. The stairs are on the south side of the hall with its walls inset into the lounge. Directly ahead is the rear extension of the house with a utility room and on the right a kitchen. The upper floor and attic floor of the house are the rectangular shape of the old house. Three bedrooms and a bathroom fit into the first floor, and three in the attic floor. There was room for the family and holiday visitors. The floor boards are pine, and the upstairs fireplaces are hidden beneath plastered walling.

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 good spring water in a tap in the street close to the Cambrian Hotel (later Pantyfedwen, now gone).

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 ready for a house is marked but no house had been drawn on it. (Map National Archives LRRO 1/3060)

In 1871 the house was built and the Cambrian News listed three weeks when holiday visitors from Shrewsbury and Montgomery stayed there. There was room for a family with a nurse and another woman. Their landlord was Captain Davies.

In the 1881 Census the house had its name 'Glan-y-don' and in the house was Captain David

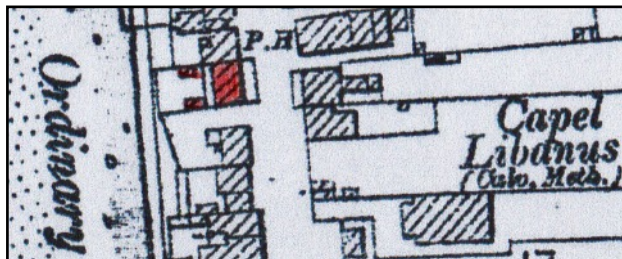


Davies, a master mariner. He was a local man born in Borth about 1839. Also in the house was his wife Jane, also from Borth and born in 1842, and also there was their daughter Ellen aged 8. They had lost two children, John died aged 3 in 1870 and Eleanor aged eighteen months in 1871. Also in the house was Jane's brother, John Williams, unmarried and a shoemaker born about 1834. Captain David Davies commanded a schooner called the 'Eleanor and Jane' named after his wife and his little daughter who died. (Terry Davies)

*ABOVE* Captain Davies house in 1886 is marked in red. It had a narrow front garden, and one of the tiny buildings in the yard was probably its Ty Bach - outside lavatory. (Detail from the 25 inch Ordnance Survey Map surveyed in 1886 and published in 1888. Cardiganshire III.10)

In 1891 in the house were Jane Davies and her daughter Ellen. Jane was a Welsh speaker, Ellen, by then 18, could speak both Welsh and English. There was mention of this house when it was 'in an awful state' after a storm and flood in 1896. The house was at risk because the large Morwylyfa and Morlan had not yet been built and there was some open ground between it and the Mariner's Cottage to the south of it. It was a seriously bad storm and a man in a cottage further down the street had lost his life. (Cambrian News Article, October 9<sup>th</sup>. 1898)

In the house at the 1901 Census was Jane Davies, by then a widow. With her was her niece Bertha Davies aged 12.



*LEFT* The house in 1904. The yard had lost the two small buildings - storm damage probably. There were two more one each side of the yard but closer to the house. (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 £245, with £6.16s to pay, £8 gross. That was a good house. The owner and occupier was Evan Morgan Lewis. The house was not in the 1911 Census possibly there was no one there to fill in the form. We do not know how many main rooms it had - Picton House (Arfôr) next door had eight. Evan Morgan Lewis was also a master mariner and he worked for the 'Coast Lines Shipping' (Terry Davies, 'Borth a Maritime History', p. 46).

At the house in 1917 was another master mariner Captain John Enos. Terry Davies discovered that he had received a letter there telling him his brother Captain J. Owen Enos had been





captured by a German submarine and was being held as a prisoner at Karlsruhe Germany ('Borth a Maritime History', p. 91)

Sometime after 1922 furnished rooms of five bedrooms and two sitting rooms were to let to holiday makers (Illustrated Borth Guide Aberystwyth Public Library).

*LEFT On the left is Glan-y-mor in 1921, a detail from a postcard of the High Street. The front was rendered (Postcard Private Collection).*

In July 1924 Mrs Davies was helping at a Women's Institute Sale of work at the National School, by having a stall (Cambrian News).

Paying the rates in 1925 as owner and occupier was Captain Evan Morgan Lewis. The entry was the altered to Ellen Lewis (his daughter). She paid the rates in 1934, 1938 and 1949.

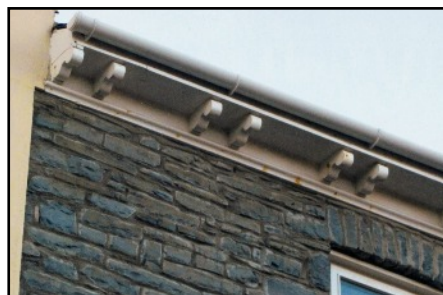
In 1950 Glan-y-don, was advertised with accommodation to let of 'four bedrooms and two sitting rooms, with mod. cons, and on the seafront' - apply to Miss Griffiths. The mod cons suggest that by this time it had hot and cold running water, but there was no mention of a telephone.

Mary A. Griffiths paid the rates in 1963 but she did not have a vote for the house (Rates and Electoral Registers, Ceredigion Archives)

*LEFT Glan-y-mor in about 1955. This shows some interesting features, first of all there are pairs of dentils (brackets) supporting the overhang of the roof. Secondly we can see the stone chimney was topped by a smaller brick chimney. Today there are still dentils in pairs under the eaves on both the front and the rear of the house.*



*LEFT Pairs of dentils on Glan-y-don in 2016 - they are hard to photograph as it is very dark under the eaves. Arfôr has them also.*



*LEFT Pairs of dentils on Bradford House at the top of the High Street to show that they are brackets and they support the roof.*

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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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