

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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GLASFRYN HOUSE Morfa Borth

A house on the beach side at the southern part of Borth High Street. Home of master mariner John Hughes and his family by 1881, and still in the ownership of his daughter Mary in 1935. Glasfryn translates as ‘Greenhill’.



The front of Glasfryn in 2015.

Glasfryn is a fully two storey house under a gable roof parallel to the street and a dormer window in both the front and back of the roof light an attic floor. The roof is tiled, and has an overhang supported by shaped dentil brackets, singly spaced. Glasfryn has one chimney which is rendered and on the southern end of its roof. It has the profile of a brick chimney. This is a double fronted house with rendered walls. The windows are all modern but in the casement style. The southern ground floor has a canted bay window, its lean to roof ending in a prominent moulded strip above



LEFT The front in 2009 had other strips with prominent moulding above and beneath its upper windows and linking the front door with the ground floor window.

BELOW The dentils supporting the overhang.





Six small lights in the top of the front door light the hall. Interestingly the front door is not central, the room on one side (with the bay window) is larger, like the living/room kitchen in Borth's old cottages.

the windows. This house has three steps down to the street, unlike the rebuilt old cottages such as Leander, with only one shallow one. The bay window is encased at the bottom by a neat low rendered wall, and this edges the walkway to the front door, and then is boxed in beneath the other ground floor window.

There is a public footpath to the beach along the north side wall of Glasfryn and this has a door into Glasfryn's back yard.

At the rear the house has extensions, on two levels, the upper section to allow a balcony accessed from an upstairs living room for fine views out to sea - curiously it has no railings. This upper floor also contains modern bathroom and toilet facilities. The balcony is boxed in below by more rooms and access to the yard. In the yard is a platform to see the beach over a low section of the rendered wall which is otherwise tall and built around the yard for privacy. Nearer the beach is a tall timber fence alongside the footpath, and this runs beside ground inside the vertical plank wall edging the beach - possibly some protection against the sea during storms.

BELOW The rear of the house from the beach in 2015

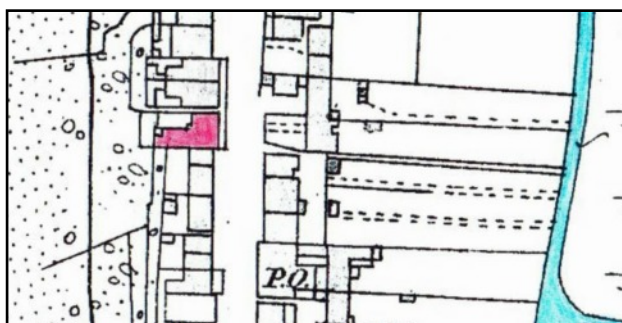


The ground for this house, a bank of stones thrown up by the sea, was still open ground in 1829 and called 'waste' by the Crown Manor who owned it as it was no use for farming (National Archive Crown Manor Map LRRO 1/3060). When a villager enclosed this plot to build on he would have either paid a rent for it, or bought it. The road was centuries old 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 on the other side of the road - the tailrace from the Glanlerry Corn Mill (Felinwern) plus two small streams. Taps in the street with spring water had arrived by 1883 (Cambrian News 9th November). For fuel villagers had their own area to dig peat on the other side of the River Leri just north of Ynys Fergi (Tithe Apportionments Map, Llanfihangel Genau'r Glyn, Henllys Township, on-line at CYNEFIN National Library of Wales).

There were no buildings on this site in 1829 or 1848 (Crown Manor Map, National Archive LRRO 1/3060, and Tithe Apportionments Map, Llanfihangel Genau'r Glyn, Cyfoeth Township).

Living somewhere in the street not far from Glasfryn in 1861 were Captain John Hughes, born in Borth about 1830, probably the son of a mariner John Hughes born about 1801 and his wife Mary born 1811. (1851 Census). The Captain's wife Jane, also from Borth, born about 1829, was the daughter of a mariner, David Thomas and they were married in 1853 at the church at Llandre when he was 24 and she was 23 (March 14th. Parish Register Llanfihangel Genau'r Glyn). In 1861 the Captain was away at sea, and Jane was in Morfa Borth with their sons David 4, and John 2. (Census). There were more children by the 1871 Census when John was 12, Jane 8, Liza 5, David 3 (the first David may have died) and Mary 1. Jane was 40, and once again the Captain was away at sea.

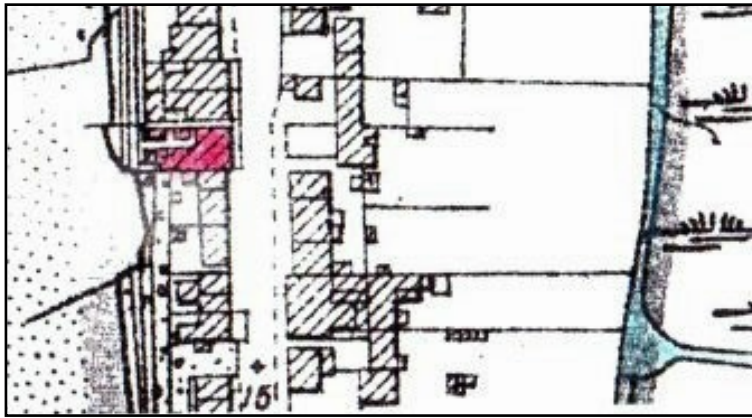
At the 1881 Census it is certain that Glasfryn was built from its position in the Census list. The Captain was again away, his wife was there, and their daughters Jane then 19 and Lizzie 17 were earning a living as dressmakers. The Captain was the owner of a 73 ton schooner called the 'Lizzie Jones'. In 1886 its master was John Simon and he had a crew of three. Terry Davies tells the story of the ramming of his schooner by another ship and the consequences in his, 'Borth A Seaborn Village' page 79.



LEFT This was Captain Hughes's house in 1886. It was a substantial house, with a rear wing on the south side extending to the first boundary wall or fence. In front of the house was a narrow garden, and along the north wall of the house was the footpath that is there today. (Detail from the 25 inch Ordnance Survey Map, surveyed in 1886 and published in 1888. Cardiganshire III.10)

In the 1891 Census the Captain was at home at Glasfryn, aged 60 and retired from the sea. His son David, also there, had become a mariner like his father. Their daughter Lizzie had married and become a Mrs Jones, and she was at Glasfryn in 1901 too. Another daughter Mary was 21. Yet another daughter had wed a Simon, and with them was a small grand-daughter, Mary Simon aged 3.

By the 1901 Census the Captain was 71 and his wife Jane 72. With them were their daughter Mary Jones and her baby son Wilfrid who had been born in London. Their grand-daughter Mary Ethel Simon was also in the house.



LEFT In 1904 there are buildings on the north side of the yard too, and several sea defensive fences which were usually stakes driven into the stone bank. Each householder was responsible for his own. (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, Glasfryn was valued at £178. There would have been £6.16s to pay, £8 gross. It is likely that the Captain had died as (Mrs) Jane Hughes was the owner and occupier. At the 1911 Census she was indeed a widow, and 80 years old and with 'private means'. Keeping house for her was her grand-daughter Mary Ethel Simon aged 22 as yet not married, and also there was Lizzy Adeline Simon aged 14.

Paying the rates in 1925 was Mary Jones the Captain's daughter, as owner and occupier.

In 1934 the house had briefly been called Whitearth, the owner and occupier being Fred White. This was altered to Horace Hipkiss and the house name became Glasfryn again. Mr Hipkiss paid the rates in 1938 and 1949. He and Elsie Hipkiss had a vote for the house in 1945 as did Joan E. Jones. Paying the rates in 1963 was P. Fowler. There was no one with a vote for the house that year (Rates and Electoral Registers Ceredigion Archives).



There is a glimpse of Glasfryn on this old postcard, the photograph taken when a trench was being dug in the road. Glasfryn is the sixth from the left, easy to see from its overhanging roof. It had some substantial chimneys. The walls were rendered, the side wall in a pale colour. The windows were smaller and the ground floor did not have a bay window. On the right is the tall London House with its shop. (Postcard courtesy of the Amgueddfa Ceredigion Museum).

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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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