

# 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 VILLA** Glanwern Village, Borth  
Built after 1848 but by 1886. Home of an Insurance Agent for the Prudential and then of Mr J. A. Herbert and his family.



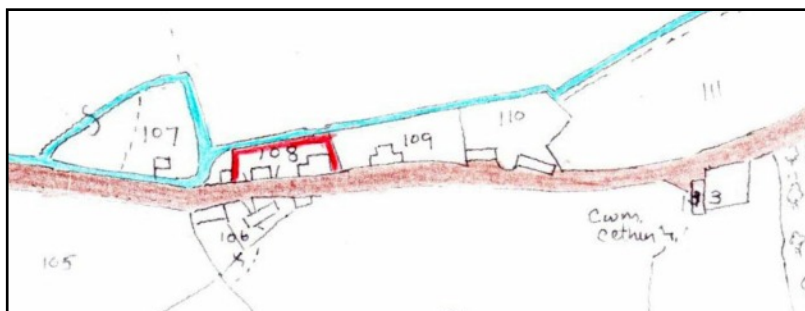
*Glasfryn Villa in 2013*

Glasfryn Villa is a full two storey, single fronted, detached house under a gable roof parallel to the road. There is one chimney on the west end of the roof and it is rendered brick. The walls are rendered with a pebble dash. The upper front windows are modern in the style of sash windows and the lower window is also modern. There is no decoration around the front door. That too is modern. A low wall with a face of pretend stone encloses the narrow front garden. On the east side of the house near the front is a ground floor modern window. At the rear is a single storey extension with a larger and smaller window. This side of the house has a drive to the garage. Two bold square gateposts edge the street end of the drive. The garden ends at the tailrace.



*ABOVE* The east side of the house with the extension on the back which is single storey. *LEFT* A detail of the stonework on the east side of the house. It is random rubble stone, and does not have rounded stones from the beach.

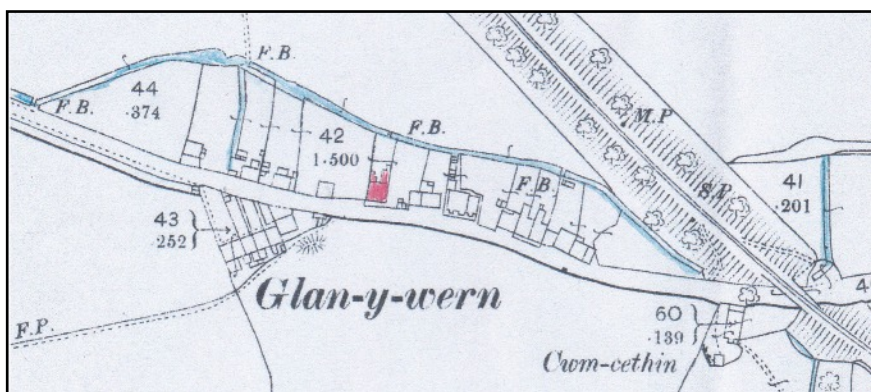
The reason a small settlement could grow up at Glanwern was the presence of the tailrace from the Felinwern water corn mill at Glanlerry, which was fresh water from the River Lerry. It was joined by a small stream down the valley behind Ty Gwyn, and it helped drain the marsh on the north. After passing Glanwern the tailrace ran seawards then turned along behind Borth High Street, providing a brook' with fresh water for the houses and cottages there. This 'brook' is marked on a map of 1829. Today the water flows out to sea from a pipe near the Lifeboat House. The western section of Glanwern Village was built on land considered 'waste' by the Crown Manor, a 1905, 25 inch map, coloured in in 1912 showed its 'waste' went as far as Glanwern House. To the north of Glanwern Village was the marsh whose old name was Wern Leri. (1859 and 1905 Crown Manor maps, National Archives LRRO 1/3060). There was already a settlement at Glanwern by 1806 when Elizabeth Davies said she was born there at the Census of 1851. The road was there too, it was shown on a map of 1829 and led down to three lime kilns beginning where the road opened on to the beach. Later another was built. Lime would be carried to farms inland and the road connected to an important road, as today, at Rhyd-y-pennau. The High Street road at Borth was very ancient as in Norman times it was a quick way to North Wales along the shingle bank and high sand dune area at Ynyslas and then across the River Dovey on a ferry to Aberdovey.



LEFT In 1848 on plot 108 of nearly a quarter of an acre outlined in red were cottages, the left hand one would become Rose Cottage. However, the arrangement of the other buildings suggests that Glasfryn was built on empty

ground somewhere between 108 and 109. The ground had been 'waste', but rents to the Manor were paid when cottages were built on it – with an option to buy. (A detail copied from the Tithe Apportionments Map for Llanfihangel Genau'r Glyn, Cyfoeth Township on-line at CYNEFIN)

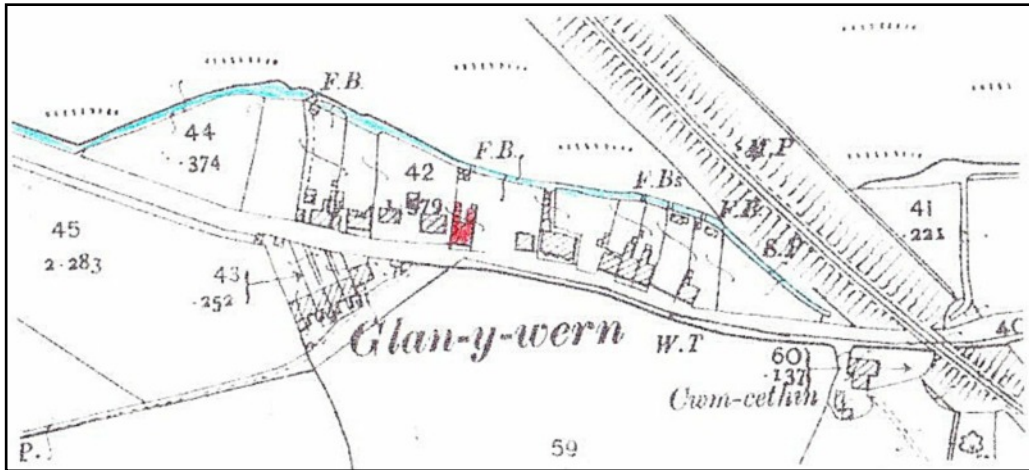
At the 1871 Census and the 1881 Census the houses did not have names and it is not possible to know where each family lived.



LEFT By 1886 Glasfryn House was there, marked in red. In blue is the tailrace from the Mill. This had been moved since 1848, to give larger gardens for the houses and cottages. Glasfryn was a sizeable house, with extensions on the back, and with an

enclosed back garden. At the top was a footbridge over the tailrace and beyond was common land. It is likely that Glasfryn had rights to run some stock on the common. The house had a narrow front garden. The surveyor has used S braces to indicate that it owned all the plots and cottages to the west of it and the adjoining plot on the east (a cottage was built on the corner, not owned by Glasfryn (Detail from the 25 inch Ordnance Survey Map surveyed in 1886 and published in 1888, Cardiganshire NW III.10).

At the 1891 Census in the house was Abraham Davies, then aged 48 and born in Borth about 1843. He was an Insurance Agent. His wife Mary was a little younger, born about 1846. She too was local. At the Census of 1901 the house was called Glasfryn Villa. Translated Glasfryn would be Greenhill in English. There was then a green hill with a field across the road. He and his wife Mary said they were Welsh speakers.



*ABOVE* In 1904 the house had two extensions at the back and a tiny building near the tailrace. The house shared a large garden area with a small cottage on the west. The 'S' marks (braces) show that Glasfryn House owned some of the ground and the cottage. The tailrace was included with access to the common by the footbridge. (F.B.) (Detail from the Ordnance Survey Map of 1905 revised in 1904)

In 1910 for a valuation for a tax planned but not levied Glasfryn was valued at £170. There would have been £6.7s.6d to pay, £7.10s gross. Abraham Davies both owned and occupied the house. (Ceredigion Archives T/DV/18 and a map at the National Library of Wales). At the 1911 Census the house had six main rooms, and Abraham Davies by then was 68. He was an Agent for the Prudential Insurance Company. Also in the house was his wife Mary, and they had been married for 40 years, being wed about 1871, when he would have been about 28, but they had no children. Mr Davies spoke both Welsh and English.



*ABOVE* This photograph taken possibly as early as 1885 shows Glasfryn second from the left. It had plenty of room beside it. There were two chimneys and it appears to have had pale bands of decoration across its front. (John Thomas photograph, the National library of Wales on line).

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*ABOVE Another early photograph. Glasfryn is on the far left. This would have been the house of Abraham Davies and his wife.*



*ABOVE Glasfryn House in the time of the Herbert family. The house was exposed rubble stone, its windows edged by pale coloured bricks, and with two broad bands of plaster, not common in Morfa Borth. There were sash windows, and they were open as it was summertime. There is a lady (Mrs Herbert?) with a little girl at the gate. The wall round the narrow front garden was topped by railings, and there were plants climbing up part of the front wall of the house (Y Tincer, 1998, Aberystwyth Public Library).*

By 1925 there was a new family in the house, Mr J. A. Herbert and his wife and children. He paid the rates in 1925 and was still there in 1949. Mrs Annie Herbert was remembered by the villagers. She had four daughters. Mr and Mrs Herbert had votes for the house at the General Election of 1945 (Electoral Registers and Rates Ceredigion Archives).

In 1963 paying the Rates had been Miss W. Nelson, but paying the Rates then were Salt and Sons, of 10 Belmond, Shrewsbury.

The style of the house in the oldest photographs of exposed rubble stone with brick decoration round the windows was popular in the later part of the nineteenth century.



*ABOVE* On a Judges postcard the house was quite smart, with rendered walls.



*ABOVE* The house in 2009 had lost its easternmost chimney and had a canted oriel bay window decorated at the top by a strip edged with small curves. A trellis porch over the front door was covered with creeper. The upper windows, as today were modern, larger and squarer than the old windows, but in the pattern of a sash window. The chimney was whitewashed brick. There was a trellis wall with panels enclosing the east end of the garden. The front door is on the east side of the front.

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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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