

# 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

*This work is for research and educational purposes only.*

# GLOUCESTER COTTAGE

Morfa Borth - the Marsh Harbour

This is one of Borth's oldest cottages, it was built by 1848 and for many years was owned by Gloucester House now Caer Wyddno.



*LEFT This photograph was taken in 2006.*

This cottage is attached to the rear of Gloucester House in Princess Street at the northern part of the village. It is end on to the main street. The walls are rubble stone and like the older cottages in Borth it is built with many rounded stones from the beach. It is barely two storeys in height under a gable roof and its chimney is on

the eastern end of the roof, the base is rubble stone and there is brick above. There is a roof light for a loft under the roof. The doorway is not in the centre indicating its living room with a fireplace was in the larger downstairs room. There are stones of brick shape set

endways to make a very low arch above the front door. A passageway with a gate leads to an extension behind the cottage of one storey. In front there is an area of unfenced grass. The windows are small and modern. The angle of the cottage follows the angle of the old gardens.



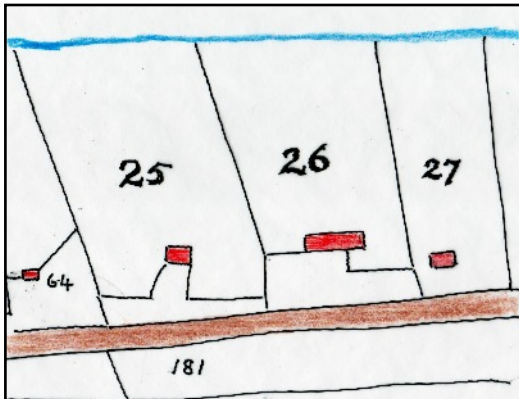
*LEFT This later photograph shows the modern replacement windows in Gloucester Cottage and a single storey annex on the east side of the cottage.*

*On the right is the end of Cantre Gwaelod's cottage which is the same age as Gloucester Cottage, both were there in 1848.*



*LEFT This is the east end of the cottage which has two extensions on it which are nearly all the width of CaerWyddno in the background. The grass garden extends all the way to the ditch close to Chapel Lane, once a stream of fresh water.*

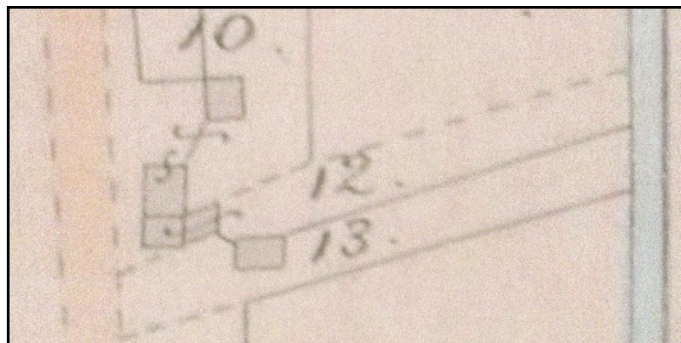
The ground on which the house stands was enclosed from the pebble bank which the Crown manor who owned it considered was 'waste' because it was no use for farming.

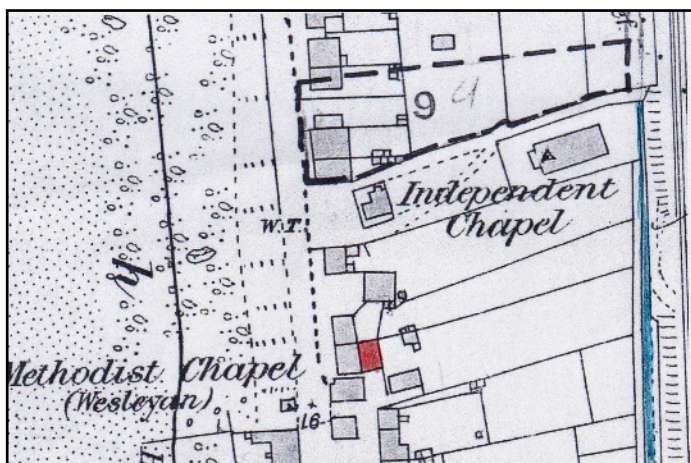


*LEFT It was Number 26 on this Crown Map of 1829 and on it were a terrace of two cottages set back from the road. It was three quarters of an acre owned by a lawyer John Lewis and enclosed in 1823. A note said he sold it in 1845.*

*However the roadside ground for Caer Wyddno and Gloucester Cottage was not yet built upon. The building on Number 25 is now Pant Gwyn (Detail from 1829 Map. National Archives LRRO 1/3060)*

*RIGHT By 1848 Number 12 by the street has become Caer Wyddno and the building behind at the same angle as the long narrow garden is Gloucester Cottage. They had the same owner at that time. (Number 13 is now the Cantre Gwaelod cottage. Lewis Morgan, a mariner 'occupied' both Number 12 dwellings. (Detail from the Tithe Apportionments Map for Llanfihangel Genau'r Glyn, Cyfoeth Township, on-line at CYNEFIN)*



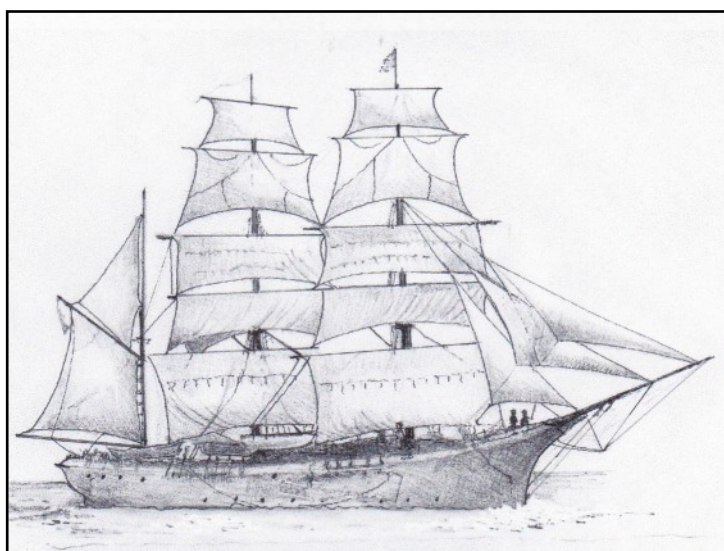


*LEFT* By 1876 the present Caer Wyddno had been enlarged and Gloucester Cottage at its rear was the same width. It shared the large garden stretching back to a stream of fresh water now a ditch with the Cantre Gwaelod Cottage. One small detached building stood there, possibly a Ty Bach, outside lavatory with

perhaps a pig sty or fuel store. Out the front a Methodist Chapel had been built very close by leaving a small unfenced open area in front of Gloucester Cottage (Detail from the 25 inch Ordnance Survey Map surveyed in 1886 and published in 1888, Cardiganshire NW III.10)

John Ellis whose aunt had lived in the village for most of the nineteenth century and whose forebear Ellis the shoemaker who lived in Gloucester House writing in 1929 said that Gloucester House had an inn called the 'Prince of Wales' (Translated from the Welsh by Terry Davies and on-line) In 1868 Thomas Nurse was the innkeeper. An Aberystwyth ship owner called Thomas Jones was said to own it (Maritime Wales, published 1995, pp 28 - 53). In the 1871 Census the 'Prince of Wales Inn' is listed. Edward Lloyd Jones was the innkeeper, he was 40, a Welshman born in Llangunllo, Radnorshire, and his wife Mary aged 47 was from Clun, and their son Pendry aged 23 born in Morfa Borth was a butcher (not necessarily working at home). Was this the cottage perhaps? Inns were often small cottages at that time. It was not Gloucester House because that same year 1871 the Cambrian Times listed a 'Gloucester House' putting up holiday visitors for ten weeks during the Summer. Their landlord was Captain David Rees, and we know he owned Gloucester Cottage in 1888 as well as

Gloucester Cottage and another house when they were put up for sale. (Amgueddfa Ceredigion Museum poster, Aberystwyth).



Captain David was the owner and the master of a barque called Drusus which was an ocean going vessel rather than just serving the coastal trade (Terry Davies, Borth a Seaborne Village, page 86). There used to be a painting of her at Gloucester House.

*LEFT* A barque.

In 1881 visitors stayed for four weeks at Gloucester House. Mrs Elizabeth Rees was then their landlady - Captain David had died, his gravestone says he was buried on the 12<sup>th</sup>. December 1880. He was only 56 years old. Once again in the Census the Prince of Wales Inn was listed separately and still in business with landlord Samuel Bluck who had a wife and small children, the five year old eldest was born in Borth.

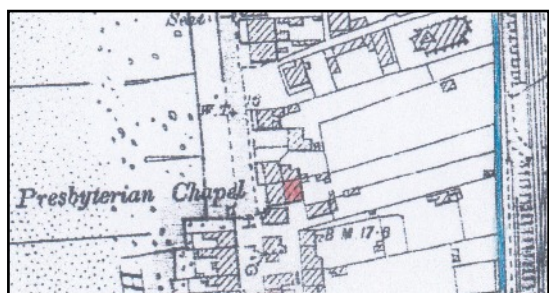
In 1883 the Captain's widow Elizabeth Rees had to sell the 'Drusus'. She died on 29 September 1888, aged 63. Gloucester House and Gloucester Cottage were put up for Sale. Either Elizabeth or both of them had been in need of money, as their houses had been mortgaged. The poster listed Gloucester House and then read as follows;

"Borth. Cardiganshire. Desirable Freehold Properties for Sale. Mr J. J. Griffiths has been instructed by the mortgagee to offer for Sale by Public Auction at the Friendship Inn Borth Cardiganshire, on Friday September 14th 1888 at the hour of one o'clock in the afternoon, subject to Conditions of Sale to be then read or produced the following desirable Freehold Messuages Dwelling Houses and Gardens.

Lot 1 All that messuage and dwelling house situated at Borth aforesaid, called GLOUCESTER HOUSE together with the MESSUAGE OR DWELLING HOUSE situate ADJOINING THE SAME, both of which are now in the occupation of Mrs Elizabeth Rees. And also all that Garden or Piece of land situate at the back of the said two messuages or dwelling houses, and containing in length from east to west 254 feet or thereabouts, and in breadth on the east side thereof 28 feet or thereabouts and on the west side thereof 33 feet or thereabouts being part of the Garden now held by Mrs Rees with Gloucester House aforesaid" (Poster with these details courtesy of the Amgueddfa Ceredigion Museum) There was no mention there of a 'former inn'.

In the 1891 Census the cottage had a name - 'Gloucester Cottage' and was unoccupied.

In 1901 in the cottage was a widow Mary James aged 59 born at Llanbadarn Fawr and William Williams aged 17, a railway clerk. They could speak both Welsh and English (Census)



*LEFT IN 1904 there was a very small addition on the back of the cottage (Detail from the 25 inch Ordnance Survey Map revised in 1904 and published in 1905, Cardiganshire NW III.10)*



*LEFT Princess Street pre 1911 showing the Chapel beside Gloucester House (Photograph from a glass plate courtesy of Peter Fleming)*

In 1910 for a valuation for a tax planned but not levied the cottage was valued at £8, with £1.16s to pay, and £2.5s gross. The owner was Captain Thomas Davies the owner of Gloucester House, and he is listed as the occupier as well.

By the 1925 Rates there was a new occupier, ..... Walden. The Council did not know his Christian name. The rates were the same as in 1910 and the cottage was still owned by Captain Thomas Davies

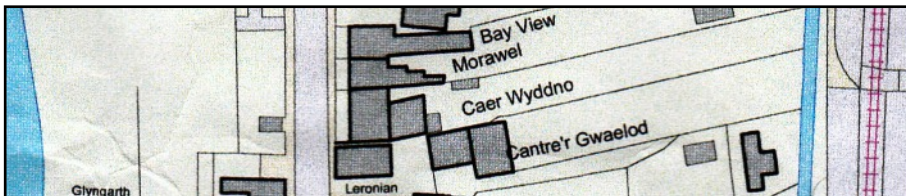
By 1934 M. Jones occupied the cottage which was still owned by the Captain.

In 1939 Muriel Jones paid the rates for both Gloucester House and Gloucester Cottage.

By the 1949 rates, the owner and occupier was Jane Lansing, and it was still rated as a small cottage. It was now separate from Gloucester House. She still paid the rates for in in 1957.

Mrs Pearce paid the rates for it in 1963 (Rates Ceredigion Archives) A gravestone records a couple living there; Robert Pearce, 1895 to 1979 and his wife Margaret, 1896 to 1979.

The cottage in 1975 had an extension on the back. It still shared the long garden with Caer Wyddno (Detail from a Historical Map) on-line).



*ABOVE A detail from a Council Map show the depth of the cottage, with extensions on the back and the east side (Map courtesy of Councillor Ray Quant who provided it to help with research for an event in the village).*



*LEFT The east end and rear of the cottage from the garden on Môr Awel in 2018. There are roof lights and a small window for the upper floor.*

Today the cottage has a hall and large living room on the ground floor, with an inner hall, a bathroom and the kitchen which runs across the rear of the old cottage. Upstairs are two bedrooms. The garden still extends down to the old ditch and is grass.

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**Tai'r Borth / Houses of Borth**  
gan/by Beryl Lewis  
[cyf/ref ADX/1629]

Mae **Tai'r Borth** yn cynnwys dros 350 hanes sy'n ymwneud ag adeiladau unigol ac mae'r hanesion wedi'u darlunio â chyfoeth o ffotograffau, mapiau a dogfennau. Mae'r ffeiliau ar gael ar ein gwefan: <https://www.archifdy-ceredigion.org.uk/tairborth.php?lang=cy>

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-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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