

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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Y GRAGEN

Morfa Borth - the Marsh Harbour

This is one of Morfa Borth's oldest surviving cottages, built after 1829 and by 1841. The cottage is on the east side of the High Street, part of a terrace close to the former Wesleyan Chapel at the southern end of the village. It was eventually owned by Captain John Williams and his wife Anne at Auckland next door on the south, and used for tenants.



LEFT Y Gragen in 2015

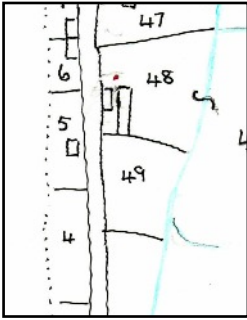
This is a single storey cottage, double fronted, with a gable roof parallel to the street. On the southern side of the front of the roof is a roof light to light a loft. The cottage shares a chimney with Carreg Wen on the north. This has a rubble stone base and bricks above and a cowl on top. The front wall is rendered. The window frames are modern and the front door is also modern. There is a narrow front garden enclosed by a low rubble stone wall.

At the back is a very narrow garden which widens out at the far end. It reaches as far as the end of the

Warehouse/Chapel. Part of the rear of the cottage is blocked by Auckland House built immediately behind it and already there by 1886.

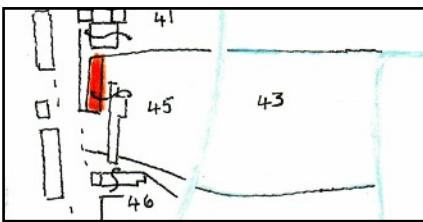


LEFT Y Gragen is the cottage next to the tall Auckland House. This photograph shows the terrace once four cottages; Derwen now a house and just seen with a yellow rendering at the left of this photograph, then Carreg Wen and Y Gragen and tall Auckland House was once a fourth cottage.



LEFT The ground for this cottage, number 48, was enclosed in 1809 by John Jones, a farm worker, from the pebble embankment thrown up by the sea, and called 'waste' because it was no use for farming. The ground measured 2 rods and 4 perches, that is about half an acre, and extended to a brook. The curlicue shows he also had land across the brook. It was the last enclosure of Morfa Borth on the east side with cottages before a gap and then three lime kilns (Detail copied from a map in the National Archives, LRRO 1/3060)

A rent of £3 had to be paid every year to the Crown manor who owned the ground. On the map of 1829 it is shown with some cottages but the terrace of cottages with Y Gragen was not built yet. The road was centuries old being a quick way to North Wales via a ferry to Aberdovey. It was a turnpike road by the 1770s.



LEFT By 1848 we can see the terrace of cottages had been built beside the street, marked in red, and some of the old cottages were still there behind them. There were two owners of the ground and cottages, John Benjamin a carpenter from Glanwern, of Ty Gwyn then Cwm Cethin and John Jones. Also living in the cottages were John Evans and Margaret Davies. Over the brook at the end of his garden John Jones

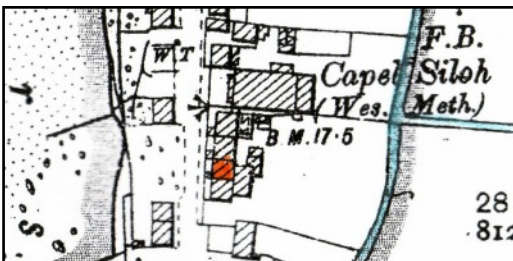
also had an enclosure, number 43, which was probably pasture. (The Tithe Apportionments Map for Llanfihangel Genau'r Glyn, Cyfoeth Township on-line at CYNEFIN)

It is not clear who lived in y Gragen in earlier Census's.

In the Census of 1881 in the cottage were a mariner's wife, Elizabeth Jenkins aged 29, born in borth about 1852 with a baby son John, one month old and her sister Jane Hughes Jenkins aged 12. The cottage was not mentioned in the 1891 Census, nor in 1901, nor in the 1911.

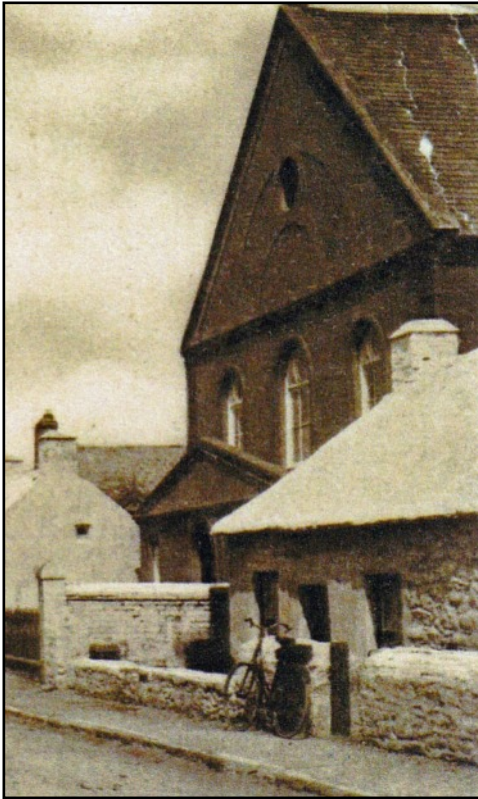


LEFT This was Elizabeth Jenkins' cottage in 1886, a simple square shape and with buildings behind it. However, Y Gragen had access to a big area of garden leading down to a brook which it shared with the other cottages.

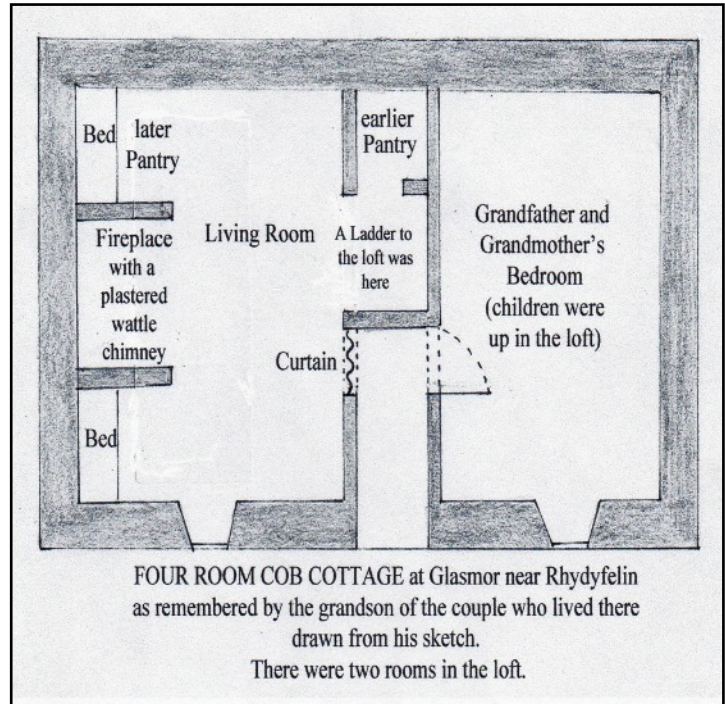


LEFT By the 1905 Map it was unchanged. The small buildings will have had a Ty Bach - outside lavatory- and probably a pig sty.

In 1910 for a valuation for a tax planned but not levied the cottage was valued at £31 like Carreg Wen next door. There was £1.16s to pay, £2.5s gross. The owner was Anne Williams of Auckland House next door on the south and living there was Mary Owens. This is about the same valuation as Borth's old clom (cob) cottages - would we find that perhaps in party walls under the plaster? The chimney wall however would have been to have been of rubble stone. (Ceredigion Archives T/DV/18 and map at the National Library of Wales).



LEFT We do not have a picture of the old cottage so far. However this was Derwen before it was rebuilt as a house. It had a rubble stone front and a thin slate roof. The stone chimney shared by Carreg Wen and Y Gragen also was stone, but today has a brick section at the top. The pitch of these roof suggest they could once have been thatched, reeds from the Cors Fochno bog were close by.



RIGHT A plan of an old Ceredigion Cottage.

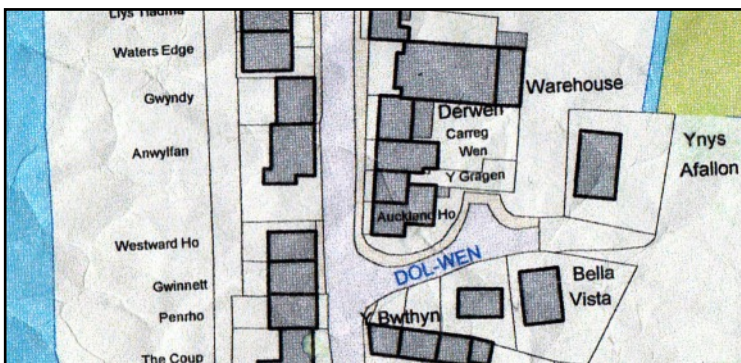
In 1925 the cottage did not have a name, just having a 'Wesleyan Place' address. Anne Williams of Auckland was the owner and her tenant was Archibald MorganRees.

In 1934 the tenant had been Mr Rees but was then Olive Mary Nuthall. The cottage was given the name Y Gragen while she lived there. In Welsh this is 'The Shell' (from cragen)

With a vote for the cottage in the General Election of 1945 was Constance Powell.

Paying the Rates for the cottage in 1949 and still in 1963 was Olive M. Nuthall. She had a vote for the cottage in 1963 (Electoral Registers and Rates, Ceredigion Archives).

In 1975 the surveyor drew Carreg Wen, Y Gragen together, and the cottage then Auckland all in the same ownership. The small buildings were still behind it. Y Gragen did not have its own garden (Historical Maps online).



LEFT On a more modern Council map the smaller buildings have gone though the larger one remains which is part of Auckland House. Y Gragen has its own garden, narrow and then wider on the eastern end. The garden ends continuing the line of the boundary of the Warehouse/Chapel. Beyond, Ynys Afallon has been built.

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yn cyflwyno / presents
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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