

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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THE GRAND HOTEL - UPPINGHAM HOUSE

Morfa Borth - the Marsh Harbour

Probably built to be a boarding house with nine main rooms.



The seafront of the Grand Hotel in 2016. The former Uppingham House is on the right, one bay window and a door wide. Its porch led into a bar and cafe.

The Terrace was a private venture by Mr Thomas Savin who with David Davies built the Railway. He wanted to make Borth a good seaside resort to encourage visitors to travel there on their Cambrian Railway trains. A water supply was put in for the Terrace from a reservoir especially built for the station, the trains and his large Cambrian Hotel. Beside the railway Savin built hotels in Aberystwyth and Aberdovey and developed a market garden with houses at Ynyslas. He eventually over-reached himself and became bankrupt by February 1866.

This is the southernmost part of the large building at the end of The Terrace built c. 1865 to 1870, possibly by W. H. Spaul of Oswestry, (Pevsner, Carmarthenshire and Ceredigion, p. 439). Its front faces the beach which is just across the road, but it is much narrower than the former Taliesin House next

door. It was three storey brick house, and was the same height and had the same canted bay windows and a basement as Taliesin House next door. The canted bay windows for the first floor and the second floor have no little iron columns like the rest of the Terrace, and exactly match those of Taliesin house. The front is plain and was built to be rendered. In the roof at the front was a gable window providing light for an attic room. The windows on the top floor are different sizes, the ones above the door being narrower. Because of the basement below the ground floor has steps up to it, and the door has a porch.



ABOVE LEFT There was a canted bay for the basement, with one small window each side and two small windows at the front. Railings on top of a whitewashed brick wall protect passers-by from the drop down to the basement.



LEFT The rear of the Grand Hotel with its two storey extension in 2016. There is a passage way to the very small yard at the back of the house from the small lane at the rear of the Terrace.

In 1871 the large Cambrian Hotel was in business across the road, and Number 14 The Terrace was also in business, listed in the Cambrian News with eleven weeks of visitors,

some from as far away as Newport Pagnell, Birmingham, Nantwich and Manchester. Miss Davies was the landlady. She was Margaret J. Davies, a 46 year old widow, born in Sedgley Staffordshire, and a lodging house keeper in the 1871 Census. She spoke both English and Welsh. Two families and eight other people were fitted into the house during the week of August 18th.



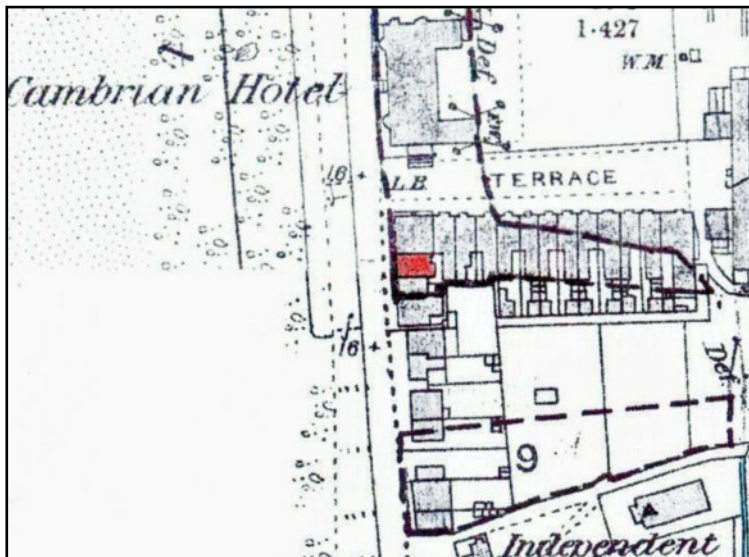
Uppingham House and Taliesin and nearest the camera in about 1876/7 not long after they were built, and they were rendered the same colour. All the houses of the Terrace had rights to use the promenade with seats beside a grassy area by the road. It was high above the beach protected from the sea by a wall of planks. The boys were from Uppingham School. (Photograph by courtesy of the Archives of Uppingham School)

It was quite an important event for Borth when the Uppingham Public School stayed there from Easter 1876 to April 1877, and no doubt boys and masters from the school stayed in Number 14 the Terrace because the house was called 'Uppingham House' in 1880 when the Cambrian News listed holiday visitors staying there for two weeks. These tall buildings had plenty of rooms as it was hoped that the railway (opened for passengers in 1863) would help Borth develop as an important seaside place to stay, and visitors would come on the trains. The house was listed with nine main rooms at the Census of 1911.

In the 1881 Census the house was unoccupied.

Until 1888 the house was rented from a Cambrian Hotel Estate. The Cambrian News commented that "even though Borth had grown considerably since the railway was made -- the idea of converting Borth into a large and prosperous watering place has not been realised." So by 1888 the Cambrian hotel Estate was heavily mortgaged, and the mortgagees sold off the Cambrian Hotel and the houses in the Terrace. They were in individual lots so houses could be individually owned. Uppingham House and Taliesin House were together in Lot 13, and it included a garden at the rear. The plan in the Borth Railway Museum shows an extension at the back of Uppingham House. Today it is still there, two storeys high.

With the house came the right to use the small lane behind the yards of the houses in the Terrace.



In 1891 at the Census Uppingham House was a boarding house looked after by a single lady, Catherine Owen, aged 60. She was not from Borth, but was an in-comer, born in Llanfyllin, Montgomeryshire.

The house in 1886 marked in red. (A detail from the 25 inch Ordnance Survey Map surveyed in 1886 and published in 1888. Cardiganshire III.10)



The gardens belonging to the houses at the Sale in 1888. Taliesin House was also in Lot 13. Uppingham House is marked in red.



This is a detail from a postcard of about 1906, and Miss Owen's Uppingham House boarding house is on the right with darker rendering. (Postcard Private Collection)

In 1898 there was a fierce storm and the Cambrian Terrace was under three feet of water. The railings in front of the house and Taliesin House were damaged, and stones were thrown into the basement. (Cambrian News October 9th 1898)

Miss Owen was still there in 1911 aged 76. For a valuation for a tax in 1910 the house was valued at £350 with £13.12s. to pay, the gross was £16. Uppingham House was the least valuable of the houses Numbers 2 to 12. Miss Owen was the owner of the house. She died in 1919 and was the sister of Harry Evans of Bronllwyn, Aberystwyth. Her gravestone is in the churchyard of St Matthew's Church, Borth. Sometime after 1922 the house was advertised in an 'Illustrated Borth Guide' with five bedrooms and three sitting rooms to let. (Aberystwyth Library)

The house was up for Sale in 1924 together with Taliesin House (then a private hotel). The Cambrian News reported that it was to be sold by Auction on Monday August 25th. at the Lion Royal Hotel Aberystwyth, and it was freehold. The solicitors were W. P. Owen of Baker Street, Aberystwyth.

In 1925 Edward Owen paid the Rates for the house, still called Uppingham House, he owned it and there was a tenant, William Patterson. Next door was the Taliesin Private and Commercial Hotel

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which had been set up by Captain Llewellyn Rees, a master mariner by 1910 and after the Sale of 1924 it was run by Jane Rees.

The Rates of 1934 and 1938 have no mention of Uppingham House - just the Taliesin Hotel under Jane Rees, which suggests it had been bought to enlarge the Hotel next door.

The huge Cambrian Hotel became a Conference Centre in 1947 for the Urdd Cymru, and called Pantyfedwen, and so by 1949 The Taliesin Private Hotel (including Uppingham house) could be called The Grand Hotel by George Bennett who then owned it. It was rated at £105 and it included Number 12 the Terrace bought by Mrs Bennett.

Local people say there was a doorway from the Grand Hotel (ie the Uppingham House part of it) into the upper floor of Garibaldi (now the Premier Stores) which at that time was a café.

Since then there have been other businesses in the building including a Seahorse Inn, until in 2014 another Grand Hotel with a licensed bar and cafe with WiFi opened there. It is closed and has recently been up for sale.

For the history of the ground on which this was built see the 'Introduction to the Terrace'.

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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-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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