

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 GREEN DOLPHIN Morfa Borth

On the beach side at the northern end of Borth High Street. Formerly called Ael-y-don House. Home of a timber merchant, a doctor, an architect's second home, and it became the Green Dolphin Cafe. Now a private house.



This was the smart end of Morfa Borth, close to the railway station, the Cambrian Terrace built by 1870 and the great Cambrian Hotel (later Pantyfedwen - now gone). It was also close to the place where the main street runs alongside the beach with no buildings in the way (now with a promenade), and old postcards show that this area had bathing huts and was popular with visitors.

LEFT The Green Dolphin in 2013.

This is a single fronted terrace house, one of four under a gable roof parallel to the street. It is at the south end of this. The walls are rubble stone, and rendered. At the south end of the roof is a rubble stone slab chimney, at the north end it shares a red brick slab chimney with Hyfrydle and has five chimney pots (flues), so this was a well heated house. The upper windows are sash windows with four panes, the ground floor has a canted bay window also with delicate frames. On the right of the front door is a passage through the building itself, which leads to the beach.



LEFT The front door is emphasized by a simple flat moulded pediment supported on carved brackets.

The ground for the house is the stone bank thrown up by the sea and called 'waste' by the Crown Manor who owned it as it was no use for farming. On a map of 1829 it was beach (National Archives LRRO 1/3060) The road had been there for centuries, it was used in the twelfth century 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 behind the buildings on the other side of the road. By the time

the house was built there was one tap with good spring water in the street outside the Cambrian Hotel.

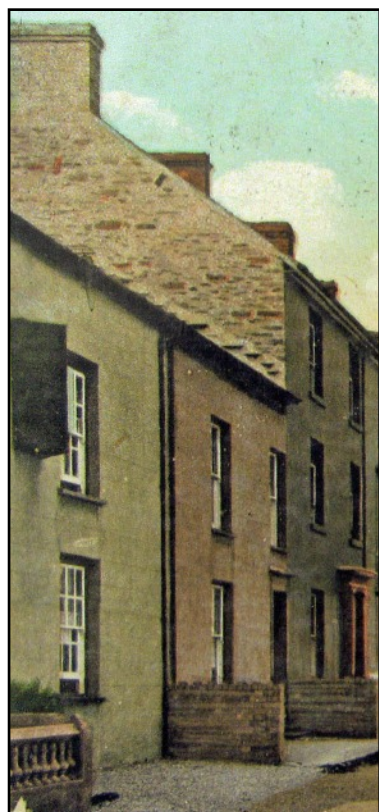
In 1848 the site was still not built upon. (Tithe Apportionments Map Llangihangel Genau'r Glyn, Cyfoeth Township - on line at CYNEFIN - National Library of Wales). However on a map of encroachments belonging to the Crown Manor in 1859 a wide beach side plot (18k) was marked but no buildings were drawn on it, but it said 'sold' with 18h. This did have a building on it, which became eventually Chester House next to the Victoria Inn. In 1848 we do not know who owned it - because buildings that side of the road with no gardens paid no tithe and so were not listed. (Map National Archives LRRO 1/3060)

When built, The Green Dolphin was part of a terrace of four houses, including 'Neptune' which was up and running as a 'baths' by 1868. So it is likely the four were built in the 1860s. The railway station opened to passengers in 1863, and it is clear that these houses were built to take in holiday visitors to the seaside. There was the example of Cambrian Terrace being built, and said to be completed by 1870.



LEFT Marked in red is the house in 1886. It opened on to the street, and at the back had an extension on the north side of its yard. There was an inner court yard, an outer yard, and one protective fence on the stony bank beyond.

The early name of the house, Ael-y-don meant in Welsh 'crest of the wave.'



It was not possible to trace this house in the 1871 Census - some of the terrace houses were empty. At the 1881 Census in the house was the son of a timber merchant, Ellis D. Jones, aged 20, unmarried and he was born in Welshpool. Looking after him was a domestic servant, Jane Richards, aged 26 and born in Shopshire. Ellis Jones, a 'man of business' was the timber merchant who in September 1880 was on the Borth Improvements Committee, and he offered to give £5 towards an 'Uppingham Footpath' (Cambrian News, September 24th.) In October 1883 he was at a meeting concerned with sea damage and flooding in Borth (Cambrian News, October 26th)

LEFT On the far right is the house in 1909. there was no bay window, and the front door had a much grander pediment with columns framing the door. The stonework is clearly seen on the gable end of rubble stone, some stones being rounded and probably from the beach. The front of the house opened on to the street as it does today.

In 1910 Mr Jones's son Ellis D. Jones had moved away to Welshpool but he owned the house. For a tax planned but not levied the house was valued at £306, with £13.3s.6d to pay, £15.10s gross. There was a tenant, Dr R. D. Thomas (Ceredigion Archives, T/DV/18 and map at the National Library of Wales).

At the 1911 Census the house was either empty or no-one was there to fill in the form.

By 1925 Dr Thomas had moved along the street to Raglan (now Hafod). Paying the rates for Ael-y-don was Henry E. Farmer, and he owned the house. Henry Edward Farmer F.R.I.B.A. and M.P.D.I. was an architect with a home at 57 Colmore Road, Birmingham. (Trades Directory of Wales 1926, Ceredigion Archives). The Council added the name Misses Hunt to their list.

In 1934 Henry Farmer was still the owner, and Miss R. C. Hunt and Miss H. M. Hunt were the occupiers. They paid the rates in 1938 and the house was still called Ael-y-don.

With votes for the house in 1945 at the General Election were Emily L. Jackson, Doreen Jones, Susannah Jones, John M. Jones and Alice E. Kempster.

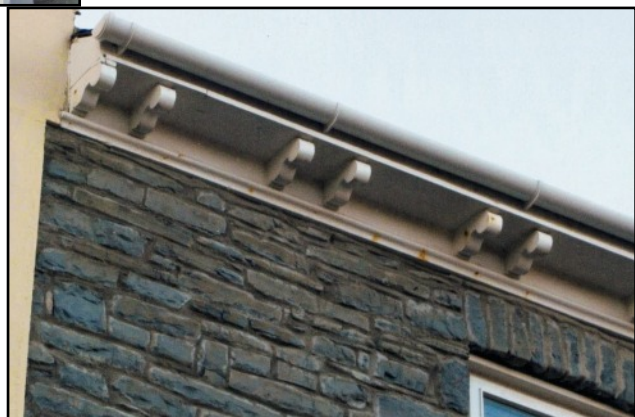
In 1949 the house had become the Green Dolphin, and paying the rates were J. C. Jones and M. Rees. They paid the same as Hyfrydle next door. A café had been made there, advertised as, 'if you enjoy eating home made cakes in delightful surroundings then you should take your morning coffee and tea at the Green Dolphin. Suppers served on Sundays, Tuesdays and Thursdays' (Borth Review, National Library of Wales). This was also the editorial address of the Borth Review in 1949 as the editor was Chris Jones.



In 1950 Mrs Jones was advertising accommodation of a flat with room for six people, and with hot and cold running water. She also advertised the café with 'morning coffee, fish and snacks served with chips'. (Borth Guide Book, Aberystwyth Public Library). The café was remembered for its coffee (Y Tincer, Chwefror 1979 No. 16)

LEFT The roof of the Green Dolphin, like many of the terrace houses has an overhang. This is supported by dentils (brackets) in this case singly.

RIGHT These are the dentils on Bradford House further along the terrace to the north, which were in pairs. It also shows the kind of stones used as a flattened arch over the windows, and larger stones to support to edges of the window. Interestingly the tops of the Green Dolphin windows appear to have no arches.



The Green Dolphin Page 4

Paying the rates in 1963 was Jean Annie Scott, for a café and house. She had a vote for the house that year and so did John Seymour.

Today the house no longer has a café.



ABOVE The house on the left is the back of the Green Dolphin with a sloping roof over its extension, and a chimney on it, suggesting the kitchen may have been there. It had an oriel window overlooking the beach (Detail from a 'Williams' post card, undated, private collection).

ABOVE and LEFT This explains the curious position and size of the left hand windows of the back of the Green Dolphin today. The extension has been rebuilt single storey. There are additional smaller extensions on the back of the main building.



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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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