

# THE BUILDINGS OF MORFA 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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# GROSVENOR HOUSE

North Parade Morfa Borth

At the northern end of the village with the beach over the road. Built after 1891 and by 1899. Also called Grosvenor Villa. Its fourteen rooms allowed for plenty of rooms to let to visitors. Probably built by the speculative builder Gregson.



*LEFT The house in 2015.*

Grosvenor House is two and a half storeys, single fronted, and under a roof parallel with the street. A yellow brick slab chimney with red brick stripes on the north side of the roof is shared with Bardsey. There is room for five chimney pots for each house so plenty of rooms were warmed. The decorative dormer windows have the curving barge boards and finials that match the rest of the terrace, and the bold string courses (lines of moulding) link up with neighbouring houses. There are a pair of canted bay windows. All the windows are modern. The walls at the front of the house are rendered, and plain. There is no indication whether the house is rubble stone or brick - rubble stone with

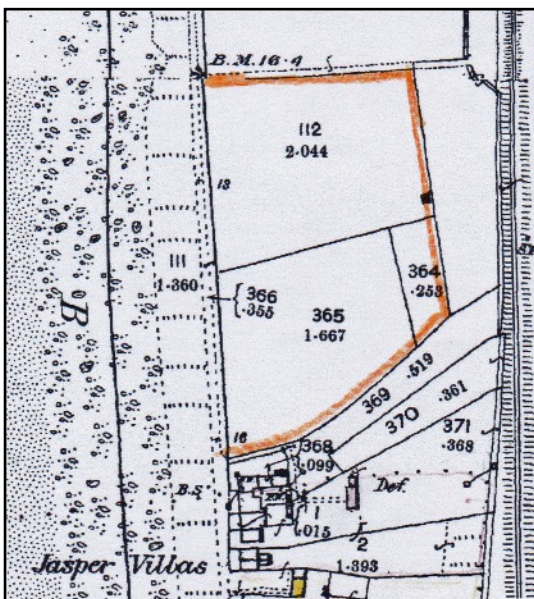
yellow brick edges today can be seen at the rear of Bardsey next door. The house is likely to be a pair with Neuadd Wen (then called Sandmarsh) its neighbour on the south side, as that house also was probably built by Gregson. In 1954 that was described as having stone and brick walls. On the ground floor was a tiled entrance hall, a lounge with the bay window, a dining room, a kitchen, scullery, pantry, lavatory and wash house. Upstairs were four bedrooms, a bathroom and lavatory, and above that two attic store rooms. (Ceredigion Archives, ABY/B/16)





*The rear of the house from the lane or track behind the terrace. The dormer window has curving ends to its barge boards, and like the front all the windows are modern but with the pattern of the old sash windows. The extension on the south side of the house is one and a half storeys and has a lean to roof - as if to join to a similar roof as happens in some of the other houses. However this one does not. The top floor has one dormer window, and interestingly the yellow and red brick chimney survives on the roof. The extension ends with a conservatory with a door opening into the garden. The yard close to the house is paved, and the paving continues to the lane. This garden, and the garden of Neuadd Wen is longer than*

*those of the rest of the terrace, and they do not have the lane behind them.*

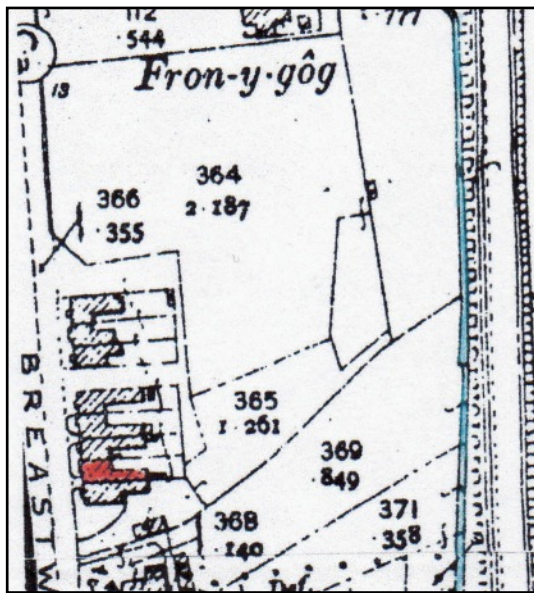


The ground for this house is the pebble embankment thrown up by the sea, and called 'waste' by the Crown Manor who owned it as it was no use for farming. The garden was enclosed and drained from the Cors Fochno bog, and was pasture in 1790 owned by the Gogerddan Estate (Estate Map, T. Lewis, National Library of Wales). In 1848 it was part of an 'allotment' of five acres and 30 perches, and Pryse Pryse of Gogerddan sold some of this to a surgeon John Harden (Deeds to Morlais - private collection).

*LEFT Marked in red is the 'allotment' in 1886 (Detail from the 25 inch Ordnance Survey Map surveyed in 1886 and published in 1888.*

Later some was in the possession of the Roberts family of Garibaldi (now the Premier Stores). The terrace was built on the roadside of this land. The road had been there for centuries and was a turnpike road by the 1770s. It led to a ferry at Ynyslas to Aberdovey which was a quick way to North Wales. It is not clear whether there was a piped water supply for the house. A letter to the Cambrian News said in 1896 that the Council had already provided a reservoir (October 16<sup>th</sup>). Fuel at this date would be coal brought to coal merchants at Borth.

The house was there in October 1899 when Miss Davies of Grosvenor Villa had a gramophone which people enjoyed listening to at a Social Evening at St Matthew's Church (Cambrian News 20<sup>th</sup> October).



In the house at the 1901 Census were a 33 year old 'daughter' (Miss) Margaretta Davies, her brothers John aged 28 a master mariner, and Evan aged 21 a student. A coal and lime merchant, Griffith Rogers was boarding in the house. He had his own business.

*LEFT Grosvenor House is marked in red in 1904 when the Davies family lived there (detail from the 25 inch Ordnance Survey Map, revised in 1904 and published in 1905).*

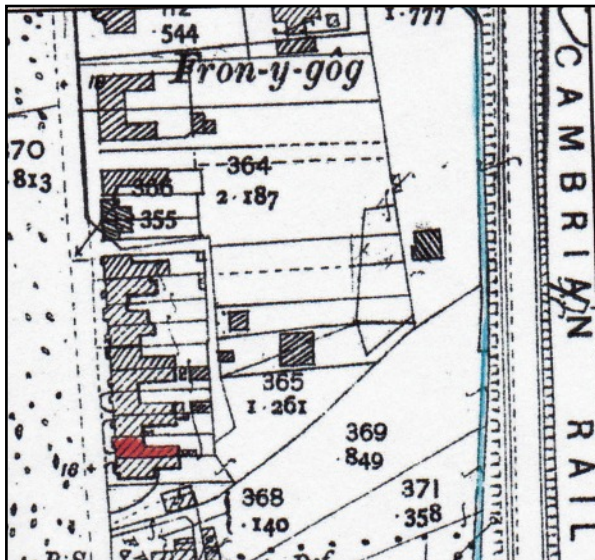
In 1910 for a valuation for a tax planned, but not levied, the house was valued at £650 which was the rate for a good house at that time. There would have been £21.5s to pay, £25 gross. The owners were the executors of Gregson, a speculative builder who owned farms and land at Ynyslas and part of a brickyard, and built some villas there. - and had great plans for the place - not completed (Coloured plan at the Royal Commission for Historic Monuments, Wales) He had also owned Sandmarsh (Neuadd Wen) and these houses seem to be designed to run as boarding houses and he leased them to tenants. Grosvenor had 14 rooms at the 1911 Census. In the house then was an elderly widow, Margaret Davies, aged 69 and born at Llanfihangel y Creudyn. She had been married since 1867. Margaretta her daughter, as yet unmarried was acting as housekeeper. She was then 43 and had been born in Ysbyty Ystwyth. Mrs Davies had had three other children, all still alive. Her husband had been a master mariner, Thomas Davies who died in 1911. She herself lived to be 91 and died in 1933 (They are buried at Llandre Church). Terry Davies writes that her husband's brother, Enoch Davies 1876 - 1923 had lived at Grosvenor House. He went to Aberystwyth Foundry to learn to be a blacksmith and became a ship's engineer (Borth' A Maritime History page 37)

Sometime after 1922 to let in the house were seven bedrooms and three sitting rooms - all furnished (Illustrated Borth Guide, Aberystwyth Public Library).

In 1925 Margaretta Davies both owned and occupied Grosvenor House, and paid the rates. She died in 1932 aged 65 (She is buried at Llandre).

In August 1934 there was a new lady living in the house, a Mrs Olga M. Langley. She gave a recipe for Veal Mould in a booklet in aid of the St Matthew's Church Bazaar. She called the house 'The Grosvenor'. She was a tenant of Margaretta Davies. She paid the rates in





1938 and 1949. With votes for the house in the General Election of 1945 were Mrs Langley and Agnes Pope.

*LEFT The Council drew in newly built houses on their copy of the 1905 Map, and the terrace had become ten houses. Brockhill had been built at the roadside in the garden of Fron-y-gog, which dates this map to at least 1935.*

In 1957 there was a change of owner. M. Munes Baxter and Rae.

J. W. Nelson paid the rates in 1963, and with votes for the house were Clifford and Bronwen Atkins.

In 1968 in a Handbook and Guide to Borth Mrs Bromley advertised 'bed and breakfast' and had eight bedrooms, and would provide an evening meal. She had a telephone - Borth 459 (Ceredigion Archives).

In the 1990s Grosvenor was a Guest House with a licensed bar (Tourist Association Guide, Ceredigion Archives)

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**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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