

# 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.*

## GWENDON Morfa Borth

The building is on the beach side in the middle of Borth High Street. 10 St David's Place in 1881 and a grocery shop in the possession of Hugh Hughes and his family. The shop leased to a chemist in 1924 and still there in 1963. Used by Barclay's Bank in the 1920s.



This is now a two and a half storey terrace house, once having had three storeys. It has a tiled gable roof parallel to the street. The walls are rubble stone and rendered, and there is a rubble stone chimney at both ends of the roof. It is sandwiched between Picton Terrace with which it shares a front line, and the row of former Maglona Terrace cottages set back further from the street. Today the house is curiously overlapped both front and back by Hafod Heli on the south. There are two homes in the building, so there are two front doors. They open directly on to the street. Walls either side of the front of the building

enclose an area of hard standing. The tall windows on the first floor are sash windows with twelve lights. The other windows are modern.

*ABOVE The house in 2015'*



*LEFT The house in October 2010. The name of the house is written on the doorway on the right. The second floor window on the left has the delicate frame of a sash window, the window on the right, in the same style is modern, probably plastic framed and this has to be thicker to hold the glass. The ground floor arrangement of windows and doors were matching. The top windows have safety railings should children be in those rooms. The rendering had no decoration. Sandbags were ready by a door in case of a storm.*

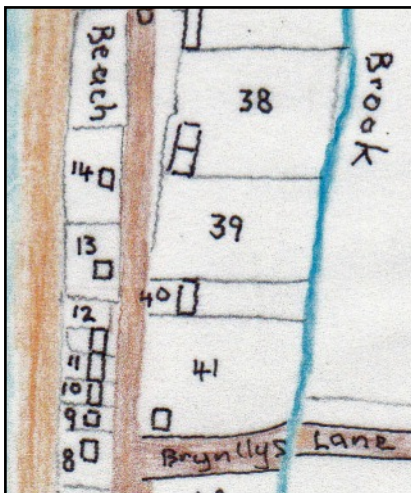


*The back of the house from the beach in 2015.*



There is a single storey wing on the north side of the yard - the house in 1886 had a wing there too. A door with an adjacent window opens on to its flat roof, and there were railings there. It would give a fine view across the beach. The position of some of the windows may be original, but one is enlarged and another added. The wing has additional buildings adjoining it, and all these are rendered. Walling made of stones from the beach protects the end of the yard and there are steps down to the beach and a gateway blocked from seawater during storms by planks.

The ground for this house was enclosed in 1824 by Evan Evans from the stone bank thrown up by the sea and called 'waste' by the Crown Manor Court who owned it as it was no use for farming. His ground measured 24 perches and a map of 1829 shows a cottage built on it, described as 'cottage and beach'. Evan Evans was a master mariner who owned shares in the sloop 'Liverpool Trader'. The road had been there for centuries 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.



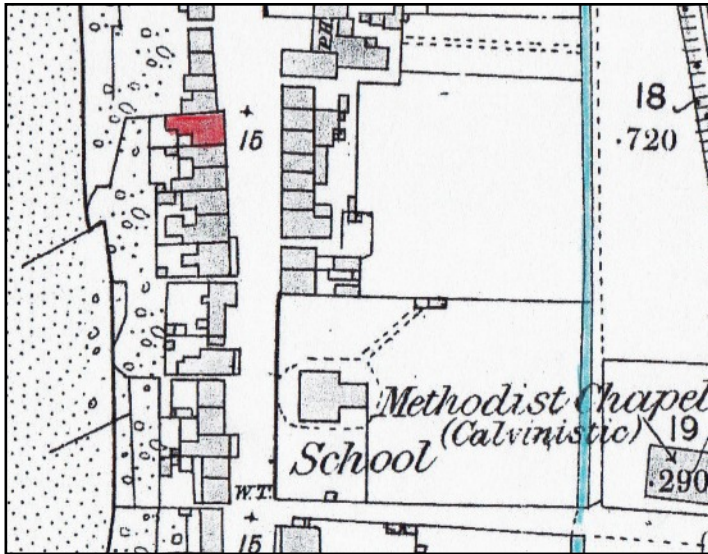
*A detail copied from the map of 1829. Evan Evan's plot was Number 13 and he had plenty of ground around his cottage. (National Archives LRRO 1/3060) Five houses would eventually be fitted into his road frontage, now Aberceldŷ to Gwendon.*

By 1848 another cottage had been joined on to the old one on the site of Aberceldŷ, but there were no cottages where Gwendon now stands. (Tithe Apportionments Map, Llanfihangel Genau'r

Glyn, Cyfoeth Township, on-line at CYNEFIN.) We do not know what happened to these old cottages at present.

It is not possible to trace the house in earlier Census's, but by 1880 it was built and called Liverpool House because the Cambrian News listed holiday visitors staying there for five weeks during the summer. There was room for a family and two other people at the same time, so this suggests a good sized house. Their landlord was Mr H. Hughes. In the 1881 Census Hugh Hughes was at home, he was a master mariner born about 1827, and his wife Mary, born in Borth about 1831 was running a grocery shop there. She was the shopkeeper, and the holiday visitors would have added nicely to the family income. The Census takers

listed the house as 10 St David's Place.



*Mr Hughes's house is marked in red on this detail from a map of 1886. It is a big building with a wide frontage, as wide as Aberceldy, and it had a wide wing at the back. The front opened directly on to the street. Detail from the 25 inch Ordnance Survey Map, surveyed in 1886 and published in 1888, Cardiganshire III.10)*

*BELOW We have a view of the shop, second from the right, on this old postcard. The house had a full three storeys, with a central front door into the shop. The*



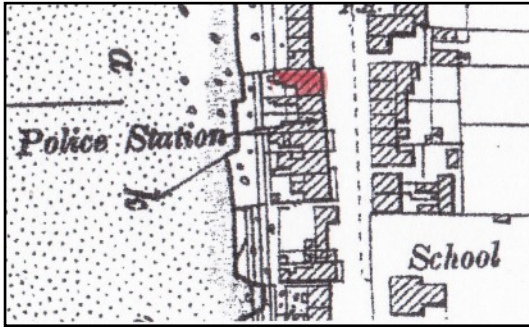
*front was rendered, but the side was rubble stone. Today this is rendered, but the pattern of the rubble stones can be seen.*

*(Postcard courtesy of the Amgueddfa Ceredigion Museum)*

Hugh Hughes and his wife Mary were both

were both at home in the 1891 Census, and also there were their children Catherine (Kate) 30, and Mary 27, and both had been born in Aberystwyth which suggests that was where the family moved from. Kelly's Directory of 1895 listed Hugh Hughes as a naval seaman, a chief petty officer as well as a grocer. The family spoke Welsh and English.

By 1901 Mary Hughes was a 71 year old widow, still running the grocery shop. Also there was her daughter Mary who had not married.



*In 1904 the wing at the back seems to be longer and there were two fences at the back protecting the building from the sea. These were usually rows of stakes hammered into the stone bank, and another one edged the sand - shown as little dots. There had been a bad storm in 1896. (25 inch Map revised in 1904, published in 1905. Cardiganshire III.10)*

In 1910 for a tax planned but not levied, Liverpool House was valued at £353. There would have been £8.10s to pay, £10 gross. The two Hughes daughters, Kate and Mary were the owners and occupiers. In 1911 at the Census they were still running their grocery shop, Kate was 50 and Mary 46. The house had ten main rooms, not counting the shop.



*ABOVE On the left behind the couple on holiday at the seaside is the shop. There is a glimpse of a pattern of quoins in the rendering marking the edge of the front wall. On the right is a photograph taken in 1914 of Hafod Heli - and again there is a glimpse of the quoins, and also of the shop window.*

*Photographs courtesy of Mrs F. H. B. Renny - the people in the pictures are members of her Jordan family who had rented Hafod Heli)*

Mr Owen Williams was the next owner of the house. The Cambrian News of June 23<sup>rd</sup> 1916 wrote of a Borth 'promotion', his son was in the navy and was promoted to Chief Petty Officer. This was war time.

In 1924 Mr Williams was leasing the shop which was a dispensing chemists, with drugs and photographic equipment. In September a petrol lamp exploded in the shop, part of the counter was burnt and many articles destroyed. The damage was estimated at £50. Mr R. O. Jones

was the chemist. (Cambrian News, September 19<sup>th</sup>, and South Wales Trade Directory 1926). Mr Williams paid the rates in 1925 as owner and occupier. He also leased some space to Barclay's Bank which opened from 9.30 to 11.30 one morning a week in winter, and two mornings in July and August (Rates, Ceredigion Archives).

Isaac Pritchard replaced Mr Williams as paying the rates and the occupier was Jane Pritchard. Mr Pritchard paid the rates in 1934 and 1938 and the house had become 'Gwendon' possibly meaning in Welsh 'white wave'. With votes for the house in 1945 were Alice M. Pritchard, Catherine H. Pritchard and Isaac Pritchard, and Mr Pritchard paid the rates in 1949. In 1950 Mrs Pritchard was advertising accommodation to let of five bedrooms, two sitting rooms and a bathroom (Guide to Borth, of the Borth Improvements Committee, Aberystwyth Public Library).

In 1963 D. Croft who had been paying the rates for the house, shop and premises had died. Mr H. M. Roberts of Barclay's Bank paid the rates for their use of the building. That year with votes for Gwendon were Charles Reginald Croft and Hilda Mary Croft. There was still a shop.

In 1970 a new 'access scupper' was put in the sea defences behind Gwendon (Aberystwyth Rural Council).

There have been considerable changes to the front, as the old shop front has gone.

*In 2010 the ground floor front doors and windows matched.*

*By 2105 the northernmost window was replaced by a tiny cloakroom type window.*



*This was Picton Terrace in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, Aberceldy is in the foreground, and at the far end is Liverpool House. The shop front was quite wide. The windows show a full three storey house. Beyond the Maglona Terrace began, developed from a row of old cottages. (John Thomas photograph, on-line, National Library of Wales)*

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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>

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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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