

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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HAFAN Morfa Borth

On the beach side in the northern part of Borth High Street. A home built for the Simon family of master mariners. Formerly Number 4 Adelaide Place. There was a house on this site in 1886.



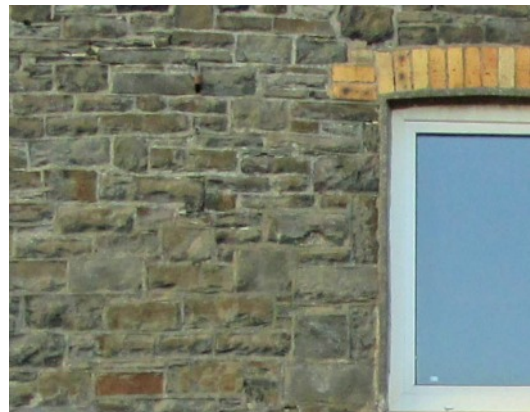
LEFT *Hafan in 2016.*

Hafan is a two storey, single fronted, terrace house under a gable roof parallel with the street. It also has an attic floor lit in the front and back by dormer windows. The house is a pair with Glan Ynys next door, and they share a brick chimney with bricks of various colours. Each house has three flues. Coloured bricks make a low arch over the upper window. The bay window and front door are modern. The base of the bay window may be brick like GlanYnys's next door. The house opens on to the street.



ABOVE RIGHT *The pair of houses.*

RIGHT Though the rubble is random, some of the stones are nicely squared up and coursed. This was a house in which the stones, and the coloured bricks were meant to be exposed. This had come into fashion in the later part of the nineteenth century, as for example in Chesterton and Gordon Villa further south along the street. Bricks at this time were not made locally and would have come on the train, probably from North Wales. The dormer windows were not there on a photograph for a postcard of 1921, nor on a postcard dated 1968. .



The Welsh name 'Hafan' means haven or harbour.



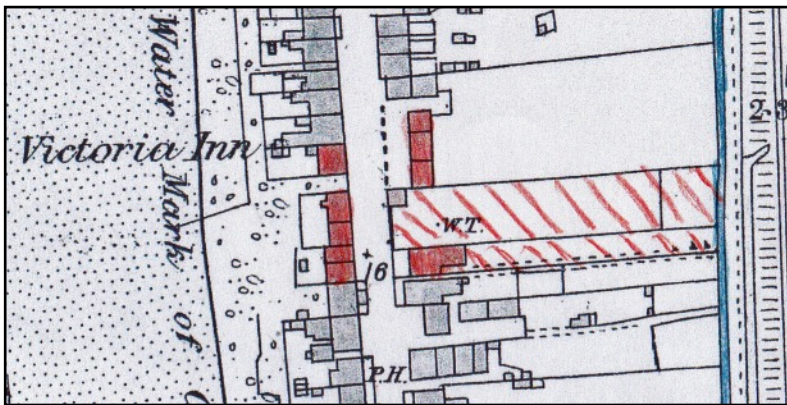
The house from the beach in 2016. An extension on the south side has spread far out into the yard. Its flat roof has enabled a balcony accessed from the second floor to have fine views of the beach, and end with a ground floor sitting room with a wide window and door out into the yard. A platform in the outer yard allows views of the beach, and there is a gateway to the beach in the rear fence. The inner yard is protected by a tall fence and gate.

The ground for this 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 1886 there were taps in the streets.

On the other side of the street in 1824 Margaret Simon, a widow, had an encroachment of 2 rods and 16 perches (nearly three quarters of an acre). By 1829 this had a cottage on it (Map National Archives LRRO 1/3060). A map of 1848 shows a garden beside the building which

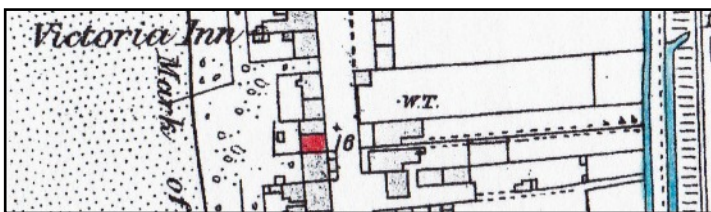
was quite a sizeable house. However there were no buildings as yet on the beach side of the road (Numbers 19 and 20, Tithe Apportionments Map Llangihangel Genau'r Glyn, Cyfoeth Township - on line at CYNEFIN - National Library of Wales). However on a map of encroachments belonging to the Crown Manor in 1859, plots on the beach side ready for cottages are marked, but no buildings were drawn on the plots opposite the Simon's house where Hafan stands today, however some cottages had been built just to the north of it and two of them survived until the 1960s. (Plot 18f, Map, National Archives LRRO 1/3060)

Captain John Simon 1807 - 1881 the master mariner son of Margaret Simon had commanded the sloop Rebus, but it was lost in 1855. He then commanded the schooner Adelaide in 1861, and named his home 'Adelaide' after her so the nearby cottages were called 'Adelaide Place'. He owned many of them and must have bought the marked out beach side plots from the Crown. His wife Mary was born about 1816.



LEFT There were nine cottages called Adelaide Place at the Census of 1881 and we can see them on the 1886 map. At the 1881 Census Mary Simon (probably John's widow) was living in the one on the beach side, now gone, opposite the Simon's garden ground (red

striped) and next to the gap in the row. It was the biggest and best of the row of five listed in the 1881 Census. Over the road Bryngwyn had replaced the Simon's old house.



LEFT This was Hafan in 1886, then Number 4 Adelaide Place and marked in red. Hafan was then wider than Glan Ynys, and the shared yard meant the Simon family there owned both. The small

building in the yard was probably their Ty Bach - outside lavatory. The Simon family still owned the ground marked WT (Wireless Telegraph) - the 1848 'garden'. (Detail from the 25 inch Ordnance Survey Map surveyed in 1886 and published in 1888. Cardiganshire III.10)

At the 1891 Census the widow Mary Simon, then 55 was in the same cottage or house further along the row. In the house that is now Hafan was a master mariner's wife Jane Simon aged 32, born in Borth, a Welsh speaker, and with her was a baby daughter, Elfrida of five months. By the 1901 Census she had two more children; John D. Simon 7 and Lizzie Simon 4. Her husband was likely to be Captain John Simon, a son of John and Mary Simon, but he was always away at sea during the Census.

In 1910 for a tax planned but not levied, Hafan still called Number 4 Adelaide Place, was valued at £114 - and this should be the house we see today. Glan Ynys next door was valued the same. John Simon was the owner and occupier. He owned all four of the row, and still owned the ground over the road next to Bryngwym the Simon family's garden. The two remaining Adelaide Place cottages in the row were valued at £22 and £35, still old cottages, and Mary Simon the widow was no longer there, Eliza Hughes lived in her cottage, and David Jenkins a mariner in the merchant service had the other one.

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At the 1911 Census we learn that Hafan, still called Adelaide Place, had six main rooms and Jane Simon was there, by then aged 47. No husband or children were at home. Glan Ynys and cottage Number 4 were not listed - probably no-one was there to fill in the form.

Paying the rates in 1925 was John Simon and the house was still 'Adelaide Place.

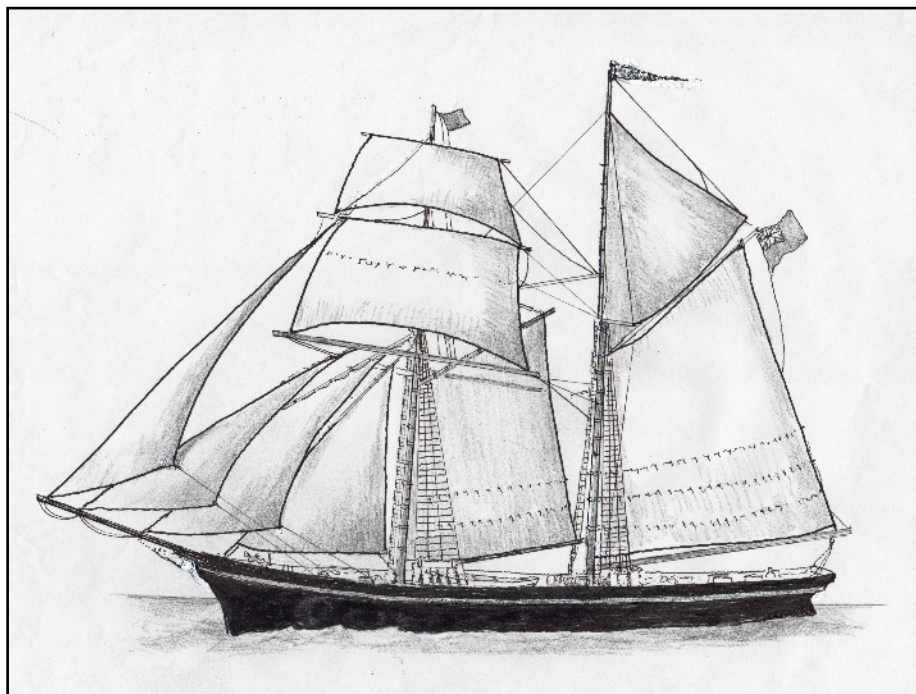
In 1934 the house had its name 'Hafan' and at that time Jane Simon owned both Hafan and Glan Ynys (still called Adelaide Place) next door. Paying the rates for Hafan in 1934 and 1938 was Rebecca Footitt. Her husband Arthur Footitt, a former policeman, had died in WWI in 1916 aged 31 and was with the Yorkshire Regiment. His family came from Derbyshire. He had wed a Borth girl, Rebecca Lewis of Ocean House. ('Borth, The Fallen,' David H. Williams, page 6).

In 1949 and 1963 Hettie Davies, the only daughter of Mr Footitt paid the rates of Hafan. She had wed D. J. Davies (John Davies) who was on the parish council (1949 Borth Review, National Library of Wales) In 1963 she had a vote for the house and so probably was living there (Electoral Registers and Rates, Ceredigion Archives). In 1950 and 1962 Mrs Davies advertised bed and breakfast at Hafan, with two bedrooms and two sitting rooms.



LEFT A detail from a postcard of the 1920s. Hafan is the fourth house from the left and had no dormer windows.

BELOW Captain John Simon's Adelaide was a schooner. She was 45 tonnes and built in Aberystwyth in 1835 and sailed until 1873 when she was broken up at Newquay. (Shipping Register, Aberystwyth, Ceredigion Archives) These wooden sailing ships carried plenty of sails and could cross the Atlantic. (The drawing is based on another Borth schooner, the Dovey Belle).



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Tai'r Borth / Houses of Borth
gan/by Beryl Lewis
[cyf/ref ADX/1629]

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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-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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