

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-WEN

Morfa Borth

The house is at the northern end of the village with the beach across the road. It was close to the boundary of the Cyfoeth-y-brenin and Henllys Townships. Formerly called Penmount. Home of a Thomas family. Built after 1859 and possibly by 1861, and enlarged in 1904. Used as a lodging house. Today with a much altered front.



Hafan Wen in 2015.

This house is a full two storeys high, an end of terrace house, double fronted and under a gable roof parallel with the road. The walls are rendered. There is a red brick slab chimney at the northern end of the roof. A row of three dormer windows spread across most of the front of the house to light an attic floor. There are square bay windows either side of the front door, the first floor having a single pane of glass as this is where there will be a good view of the beach and the sea. All the

windows are modern. The front door has a porch facing the street. A low wall encloses the front garden.

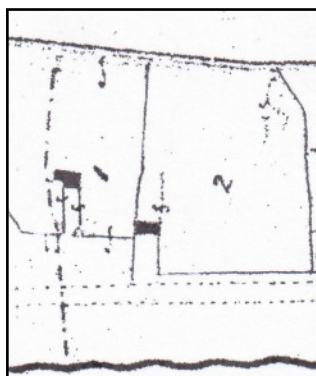
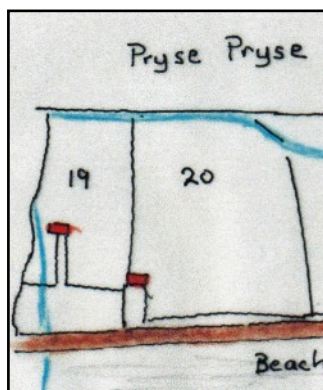


The back of the house in 2015.

The back has an extension two storeys high on the north side with a further single storey extension at its foot, this joins to a conservatory and these have a flat roof. There is also a caravan and a wooden shed in the back garden.

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. It was enclosed in 1826 by William Thomas, and his ground measured over an acre and extended

from the road to a brook. On a map of 1829 it is shown with one cottage on it set back a long way from the road. Where Hafan-wen stands today was not built upon. Mr Thomas rented the ground from the Crown Manor and had the option to buy it. 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. Fresh water for the old cottages came from the brook, now a ditch, the tail race from the Glanlerry Corn Mill plus other small streams. For fuel the cottagers had their own area where they could dig peat on the far side of the River Leri near Ynys Fergi.

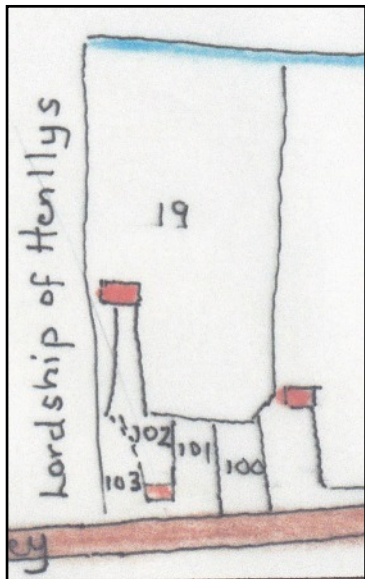


FAR LEFT William Thomas's cottage and land was Number 19 in this detail from a map of 1839. At that time the Cyfoeth/Henllys boundary had a water course along it (Map National Archive LRRO 1/3060)

LEFT In 1848 there were still no houses by the road. Number 1 was Mary Thomas's cottage and land and Number 2 was Hopewell (Tithe

Apportionments Map, Llanfihangel Genau'r Glyn, Cyfoeth Township and 1841 Census).

Mary Thomas, a mariner's wife was living in the cottage in the 1841 Census, when she was 35 years old. In the house were her young children, Margaret (born 1836), David (1832), Jane (1829) Anne (1838) and Mary (1840).



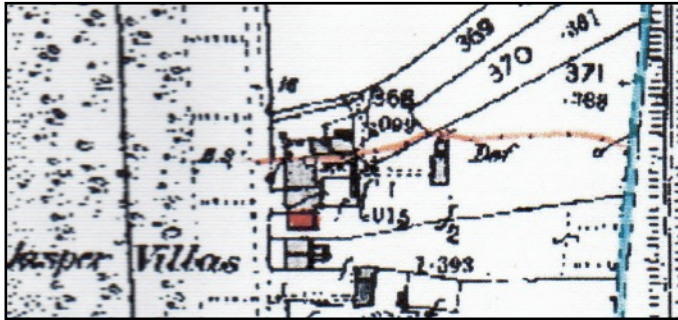
LEFT In 1859 the Crown still owned the ground, and plots by the road had been marked out for houses. Caerffynnon was already there, built on plot 302 which was at the end of, and belonging with the Thomas's cottage. Plot 101 is the site where Hafan-wen would be built. This detail is copied from the Crown Manor's map (National Archive, Map 1859, LRRO 1/3060).

It is possible there was a house built on site 101 by 1861. At the Census it was the home of David Williams, a coal yard labourer aged 31 and his sister in law Frances Thomas aged 36. They had a young merchant seaman boarder, William Thomas aged 16, and two tiny children boarders, Owen Rees aged 3 and William Rees aged 1, both born in Aberystwyth. Penmount was mentioned to the Census takers as the birthplace of William Thomas who was born about 1830, and it is likely this was the old William Thomas Cottage as map evidence shows that Penmount/Hafan-wen had not then been built.

In the 1871 Census William Thomas and his wife Elizabeth were in the house with two lodgers; John Jones from Dudley Staffordshire 24, and Henry Hodgkiss 23, both 'drainers' probably working on the reclaimed marshland around the edge of the Cors Fochno.

In 1880 the Cambrian News listed a Mrs Thomas with a week of holiday makers staying in the house who were a Mrs Davies and her daughter from Oswestry. At the 1881 Census Mrs Jane Thomas was 34 and her husband, not at home, was a mariner. Also in the house were

their sons John David Thomas 5, and William Thomas 9 months, and daughters Margaret Jane Thomas 2 and Anne Elizabeth Thomas 7. All of the family was born in Borth, and they all spoke both Welsh and English.



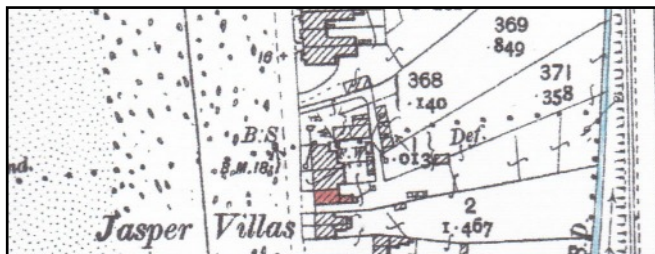
LEFT Marked in red is the Thomas family's house in 1886, it was smaller than Awelon and Caerffynnon and 'S' shaped braces on the map show that it had the same owner as the old Thomas cottage and Caerffynnon and shared their garden. Today the old Thomas Cottage has a wall with a fireplace in the hedge between

Caerffynnon and Hafan-wen, but the rest of it has gone but would have been in Caerffynnon's garden (Detail from the 25 inch Ordnance Survey Map surveyed in 1886 and published in 1888, Cardiganshire III.10)

In 1891 the same family were in the house and Anne Elizabeth was working as a dressmaker.

In September 1899 Miss Margaret J. Thomas was an exhibitor at the Welsh Industries Exhibition of 6 and 7 September (Ceredigion Archives Acc 3311 previously Amgueddfa Ceredigion Museum 354).

In the house in the 1901 Census was a mariner Edward John Jones 1878 - 1945, then aged 22 and single. He became a master mariner and an OBE. He was living at Penmount with his Aunt Jane. Terry Davies writes about his war service and that he retired from the sea in 1942 (Borth, A Maritime History, page 120).



LEFT In 1904 the house is marked in red and had an extension on the back. It still had the same owner as Caerffynnon but had its own garden at the back. A track led to it along the back of Awelon and Caerffynnon. It did not have a front garden (Detail from the 25 inch Ordnance Survey Map revised in 1904 and

published in 1905, Cardiganshire III.10)



LEFT In this detail from a postcard dated about 1904 Penmount is on the right. The front was open to the street and there were no bay windows. The wall looks very dark and was probably exposed stone with shaped stones above the windows. They were sash windows.

In 1910 for a valuation for a tax planned but not levied Penmount was valued at £250. There would have been £7.13s to pay, £9 gross. Jane Thomas was the owner and occupier. By 1910 she did not own Caerffynnon.

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At the 1911 Census the house was listed with twelve rooms, and was a lodging house kept by Jane Thomas, then 64 and a widow. She had help from her two unmarried daughters; Anne Elizabeth and Margaret Jane.

In February 1918 a Miss Thomas was living at Penmount (22 February, Cambrian News; she was at the funeral of Hannah the wife of Captain Thomas Jones).

Sometime after 1922 the house was advertised with six bedrooms and three sitting rooms of let for holiday makers (The Illustrated Borth Guide, Aberystwyth Public Library).

Jane Thomas paid the rates in 1925 as the owner, and living there was Anne Elizabeth Thomas, who paid the rates in 1934, 1938 and 1949.

In 1963 the house was still called Penmount and paying the rates was Mrs Nash. With votes for the house that year were Winifred Dutton, and Mrs Margaret Jane Nash (Electoral Registers and Rates, Ceredigion Archives).



ABOVE This old photograph shows Elton house as it was then. On the far left is the Thomas's cottage, and partly hidden by Elton is Hopewell. Today the Thomas cottage would be in Caerffynnon's garden with one wall on Hafan Wen's boundary adjoining its shed.

(Photograph courtesy of Mr and Mrs David Matthews).

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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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