

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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HAFOD HELI Morfa Borth

A terrace house in the middle of Borth High Street on the beach side. Formerly called Ocean Wave, and Ocean Wave House, then Number 5 Picton Terrace. Owned with Ton-y-môr by Captain John Lewis and the two houses used for his family. The two houses were still in the same ownership in 1910.



Hafod Heli in 2015

Hafod Heli's name is Welsh meaning summer dwelling by the sea. It is a single fronted two storey house with an attic floor lit by dormer windows. The gable roof is parallel to the street, and has a substantial rendered rubble stone chimney shared with Ton-y-môr. Each house has three chimney pots. The plan of this house on an early map shows it was one of a pair with Ton-y-môr, and its mirror image. An old photograph shows the front door was originally on the north side. This is a stone house, probably rubble stone, and the walls are rendered with a pebble dash finish. The front is plain with a string course (line of moulding) below the upper windows. On the ground floor is a square bay with a window and front door alongside. This has modern windows as does the dormer. The other three windows are sash windows.



LEFT This photograph was taken in 1914. The house already had its bay window, but the front door was on the other side. The house then had a narrow front garden enclosed by a low wall with railings. This would have matched Ton-y-môr's next door. It was summer time and hot as even the dormer windows were open - and perhaps the lines of small white objects inside the windows had been put to dry? The house on the right was then called Liverpool House and was a shop. (Photograph courtesy of Mrs F. H. B.Renny)



The house from the beach in 2015.

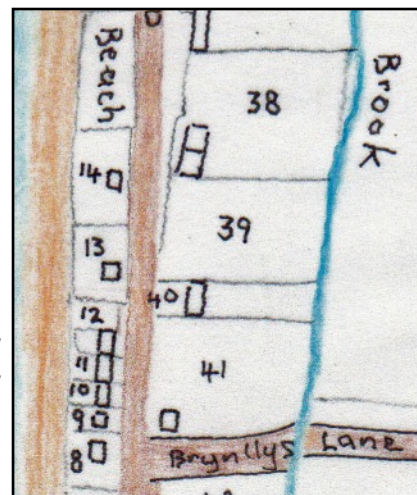


At the back of the house is a two storey wing, with a modern window looking out over the beach. The dormer window would also have a fine view of the sea. There is an inner and an outer yard, its walls and fences giving some protection from the sea during storms. There is a gateway to access the beach.

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 show 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.

RIGHT 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 Aberceldy to Gwendon.



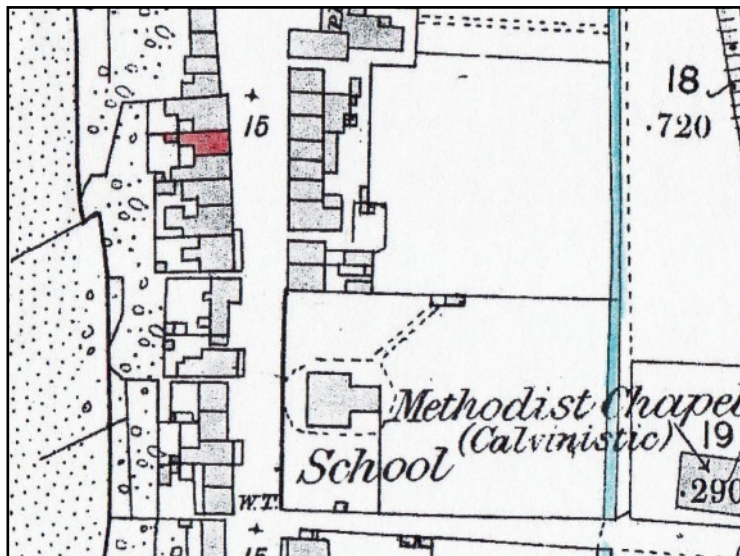
By 1848 another cottage had been joined on to the old one on the site of Aberceldŷ, but there were no cottages where Hafod Heli now stands. (Tithe Apportionments Map, Llanfihangel Genau'r Glyn, Cyfoeth Township, on-line at CYNEFIN.)

It is not possible to trace the occupants of the old cottages, or the date of the building of the present house at this time. The house was built by a master mariner who could afford to build not one but two good quality homes for his family. He was Captain John Lewis, and he and his family are in the Borth census's in 1851 and 1861, in about the right place in the lists, but at that time houses did not have names so we do not know if these houses had been built. The house was certainly there in 1871 as next door was there and had a name, Ocean Wave. It had holiday visitors for seven weeks during the summer, with room for three sets of visitors at the same time, single and families (Cambrian News). The Captain had been born in London and was 62. His wife Mary was local, born in the parish. Their daughter Catherine aged 26 had married another master mariner, Captain William Arter (Census) This Arter family would make their home in the Captain's house next door which is now Hafod Heli.

We learn some useful information about the two houses in 1880. There was to be a Sale of property at the Friendship Inn on Friday 20th October. For Sale were,

“a substantially built and commodious freehold dwelling house known as Ocean Wave in the main street of Borth in the occupation of Captain Thomas Lewis (son of Captain John) containing a parlour, kitchen, back kitchen, cellar and six bedrooms. Also the adjacent house occupied by Captain William Arter and containing precisely the same accommodation with the exception of one bedroom. Also small yards and gardens at the back communicating with the Sea Beach. Also two plots of garden ground at present held with the houses, each measuring about 20 yards by 11 yards, and situate at the back of the house of Captain John Lewis (Cambrian Villa - and another son of the Captain) and formerly known as the Nag's Head.”

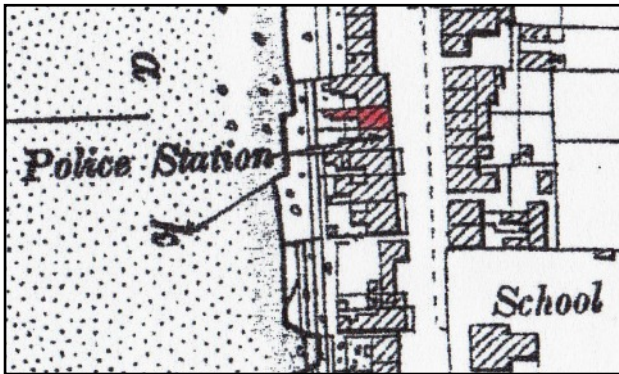
Did they sell? Members of the Lewis family were still there at the Census of 1881. Both houses were called Ocean Wave, Ton-y-môr was Number 1 and in the house was Captain Thomas Lewis and his wife. Captain John Lewis by then a retired mariner of 77 was living next door at Number 2 (Hafod Heli) with his wife. He had one less bedroom - but there was plenty of room for this elderly couple.



This was the house in 1886, marked in red. The two houses shared an inner and outer back yard, and both opened on to the street. The small buildings in the yard probably had their Ty Bach - outside lavatory. There were two sea defensive fences on the stone bank - probably rows of stakes. The sand began at the small dots. (Detail from the 25 inch Ordnance Survey Map surveyed in 1886 and published in 1888. Cardiganshire III.10)

There was another family in the house by the Census of 1891. The house was still called Ocean Wave (next door had become Number 4 Picton Terrace). In the house was another

master mariner, Captain Thomas Williams, aged 42 and born in Borth about 1849 and his wife Margaret born in Borth about 1850. With them was their son Morgan H. Williams who was 12. This was a Welsh speaking family. Mrs Williams was alone in the house at the Census of 1901.



In 1904 the houses were separate, with a wall or fence between. Next door was the Police Station of Constable Davies. (Detail from the 25 inch Ordnance Survey Map revised in 1904 and published in 1905. Cardiganshire III.10)

In 1910 for a tax planned but not levied, the house was valued at £300. There would have been £6.7s 6d to pay, £7.10s gross. The owner and occupier was A. C. de Boinville. He owned and 'occupied' both of the houses. The 1911 Census called the one he lived in (now Hafod Heli) Ocean House. Alexander Chester de Boinville was French but naturalised British in 1875. He was 59 and a retired 'commercial agent' who spoke English. His wife Melinda Maud was 53, and English, born in Cheltenham. They had been married for 21 years but had no children. They had a general servant, Emma Jane Thompson, born in West Bromwich, and aged 28. In 1915 during the First World War 'Ocean House' was where the young men went to sign on for Kitchener's Army (Cardiganshire and Tivyside Advertiser, Ceredigion Archives).

In 1925 paying the Rates for the house was Ruth Cochrane - and the house was listed as Number 2 Ocean Wave. She was the owner and occupier and was still there in 1949.

In 1963 Doctor Grant paid the rates for the house - and interestingly there was a Doctor Clarke living next door too. (Dr?) Gregor Hugh Grant had a vote for the house that year too.

BELOW In this photograph by John Thomas taken in the last quarter of the nineteenth century (certainly before 1905) Hafod Heli is the fifth house from the left. It already had its dormer windows, but no bay window on the ground floor. It opened on to the street, and there was a wall between its front and the shop. (National Library of Wales on-line)



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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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