

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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HENDRE

Morfa Borth - the Marsh Harbour

Part of St David's Place in 1881, then called the Railway Terrace after the Railway Inn in 1891. Owned by the mariner David Hughes in 1848 and by his descendants. Used for tenants including two boot and shoe makers.



LEFT This was Hendre in 2014 before restoration.

Hendre is part of a terrace on the Cors side of the High Street, and it is the second of four cottages on the south side of the Railway Inn. It shares a roof height and makes a reflected pair with the end cottage, Hendre's front door being on the north side. It shares a chimney with Roseland on the south, but today the Roseland is taller. The lower section of the chimney is rendered, but looks like rubble stone. The old walls of this two storey cottage show that it had a depth of six and a half yards - 5.9436 metres. The walls were built of clom (mud) on a rubble stone base, and of rubble stone for the wall of the hearth, the front, and part of the party wall with the next door cottage on the north. The front is rendered and plain. The windows are modern but in the casement style. These in 2014 exactly matched those of the cottage next door on the north suggesting they have had the same owner at some time. The wooden front door is tongue and groove. The door would have opened directly into a living room/kitchen.

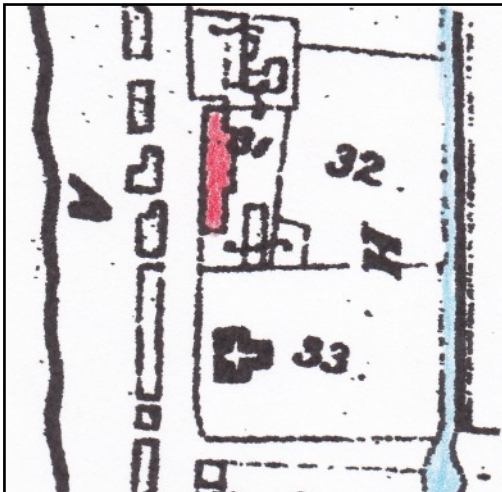


LEFT This photograph shows the terrace in 2009. The first pair are the lowest in height of the four. All open directly into the street.



ABOVE LEFT Hendre may have had an upper floor but the size of the people show it it is still not very tall. ABOVE RIGHT In 2014 there were few old doors of this kind left on Borth High Street. It was not a stable door and has since been replaced.

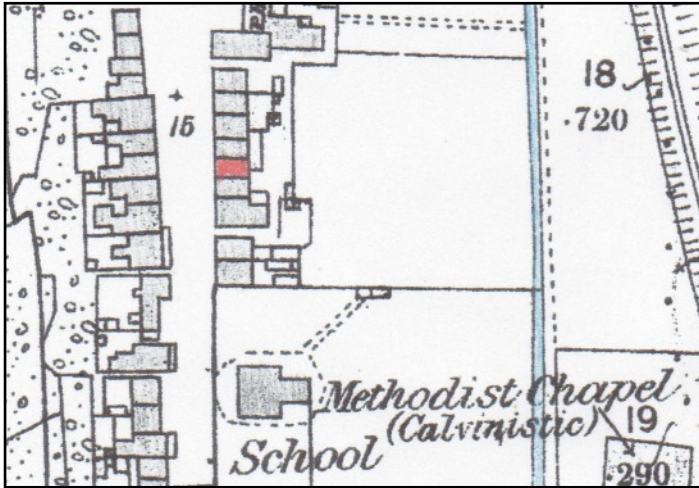
The ground on which the cottage was built was the stone embankment built up by the sea. The road was very old and a quick way to North Wales via a ferry across the River Dovey. It was a turnpike road by the 1770s. A three quarter acre plot on the stone embankment owned by the Crown Manor had been enclosed by 1818. The person's name on their map sadly is illegible. There were no cottages on it in 1829 (Detail from a Crown Manor Map of 1829, National Archives LRRO 1/3060)



LEFT By 1848 a terrace of cottages, marked in red, was on that site and the owner was David Hughes, a mariner. They had been built after 1832, and stood on half an acre of ground. David Hughes also had nearly three quarters of an acre of 'garden' (2 rods, 38 perches). (Tithe Apportionments Map, Llanfidhangel Genau'r Glyn, Cyfoeth Township. On-line at Cynefin).

The name for the row of cottages was once St David's Terrace. The Diocese of St David owned the big site 33 close by, and had a Church (National School) there by 1842. John Ellis, writing a history of Borth in 1930, and whose great aunt was born in Borth in 1809 and lived there all her life must have supplied him with some information, wrote that the southernmost cottage now Glan Nant was the shop of William Hughes Ody, a butcher, and all the remaining cottages belonged to an enterprising mariner David Hughes. In 1846 he had built a ship, the 'Catherine and Ellen' on the beach across the road. His family set up the Railway Inn which began in 'Brookfield' and eventually moved next door and expanded, so the history of Hendre is connected to this family.

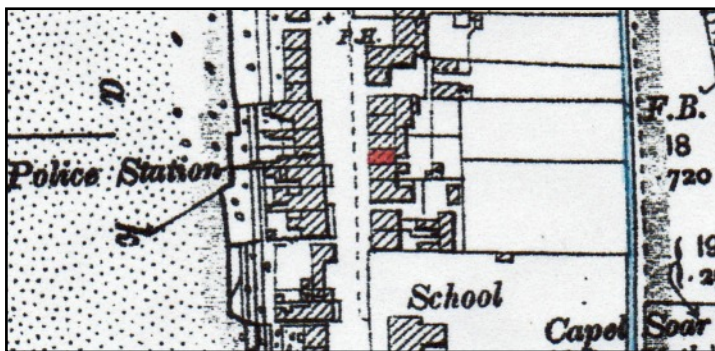
It is not possible to find the occupants of the cottage in the early census but in the cottage in 1881 at the Census was John Ayles, a 35 year old game keeper, an Englishman from Dorset, with a wife-from Warwickshire, Martha Jane, and three children, John G. 10, Walter Thomas, 6, and William 4. None were born in Borth.



LEFT John Ayles Cottage in 1886 is marked in red. It was then one of seven cottages. Hendre had part of a shared a backyard, and there was still the large garden area at the back leading down to the 'brook' water-course which was fresh water for the families. It came from a leat from the River Lerry for a mill at Glanlerry added to by streams from Ty Gwyn and Bryn Owen (Detail from the 25 inch Ordnance survey Map surveyed in 1886 and published in 1888, Cardiganshire NW III.10)

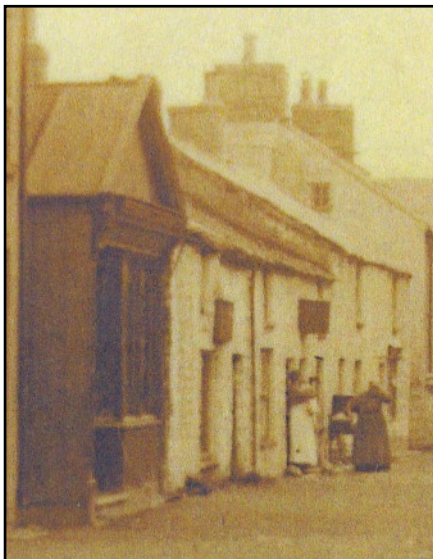
In the 1891 Census a 51 year old widower, John F. Jones, a general labourer, born in Tre'r ddol was in the cottage with a laundress neighbour on one side, and a washerwoman neighbour Margaret Hughes on the other.

In the 1901 Census it seems likely there was a 69 year old shoemaker called John Jenkins selling his boots and shoes from the cottage, with his wife Elizabeth, also 69. They were Welsh speakers.



LEFT There were still six cottages in the terrace in 1904. Captain Hugh Hughes of the Railway Inn used Hendre and the cottages either side of it for his three daughters and a back garden had been enclosed for them. The buildings at the back of the cottages will have contained one or more privies, a place to store peat, and probably a place for chickens and a pig. The very large garden at the rear had been divided. (Detail from the 25 inch Ordnance survey Map revised in 1886 and published in 1905, Cardiganshire NW III.10)

In 1910 for a tax planned but not levied, the cottage had no name, and was valued at £45. Roseland was £70 and the one on the other side was £51. The owner was Ellen Davies, and the occupier was Isaac Pritchard. Terry Davies has found out that Ellen Davies was the grand daughter of Captain Hugh Hughes, born in 1827, a commander of a sloop and schooners and he owned three cottages in the terrace, Hendre being the middle one, and he left them to his three daughters. (Maritime History p. 34)



LEFT A glimpse from an old postcard of a business (Isaac Pritchard's ?) in Hendre needing a sign hung outside. The front door was then the other side (Amgueddfa Ceredigion Museum)

In 1911 at the Census Isaac Pritchard was described as a 28 year old master bootmaker and dealer working for himself and selling his boots and shoes from his cottage. He was born in Bow Street. His wife Alicia May was born in Shrewsbury. They had four small children - Mary Gertrude Ethel age 5, Catherine Ellen aged 4, John Austin aged 2 and baby William Henry aged 6 months. The eldest daughter had been born in Bangor, Carmarthenshire, so the family probably had moved to Borth from there. The remaining

Hendre Page 4

three children were born in Borth and this family spoke both Welsh and English.

In 1925 Isaac Pritchard was still there with his boots and shoes.

By 1934 the cottage had a new name, Morfa changed to Hendre and the owner and occupier was Ellen Davies.

M. Davies paid the rates in 1949 and was still paying then in 1957.

By 1975 Hendre had its own garden and an extension at the back with a bath which was still there in 2014 (Detail from Crown Plan, Historic Maps Online)

In 2014 the cottage was being repaired and where possible restored and modernised for use to let. It allowed a chance to photograph and the author would like to thank the owner for his kindness. The repairs were in progress when the pictures were taken.



ABOVE The southern fireplace wall turning (left) into the rear wall with the clom (mud) and its base of rounded beach stones. This was the entire height to the beam of the ceiling. There is no evidence that the clom was used in blocks. The stones were about knee high.



ABOVE Once the wall had turned the corner a doorway had been cut into it, and the width of the clom can be seen on the left.



LEFT There were some holes in the mud - this was part of the rear wall. The white is remains of the plaster which had been stripped off but there were also small pieces of plaster embedded in the mud. The width of the mud wall can be seen in this photograph.



LEFT The fireplace in the party wall with Roseland was built with rubble stone walling. The small bread oven was edged with big bricks.

The beam above the fireplace was new, the old one had to be replaced.

BELOW The front wall by the door was stone, and there was an inset rubble stone section on the north wall. Many of the stones were rounded from the beach. The joists were thin and cheap.





LEFT The original beam above the fireplace was badly burnt in places.



LEFT There was an upper floor window at the rear and below it a back door. On the right an extension with a bathroom had been added. Part of the wall of this showed an older rubble stone building had been incorporated into the extension. This will all be rebuilt during the restoration work.

RIGHT Walling of the old section of the bathroom extension also has rounded beach stones.

Today the narrow garden of the cottage ends at a fence and beyond is an area of grassland.



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

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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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