

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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HIDE AWAY

Morfa Borth - the Marsh Harbour

This home is hiding from the High Street because it is built on the back of Gleaner.

It is described as a 'two bedroom cottage'. On the ground floor there is a lounge and kitchen with a door to the garden. The cottage has central heating but there is a chimney for an open fireplace in the lounge. Upstairs are two bedrooms and a bathroom. Access is from a path on the south side of Gleaner.



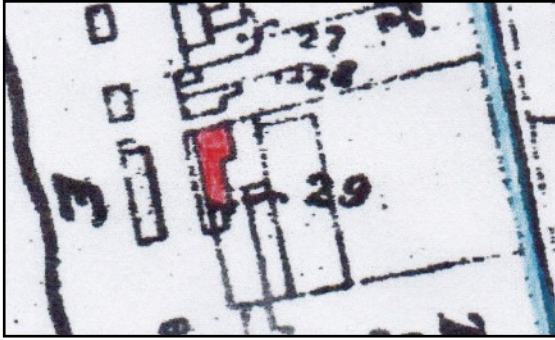
ABOVE At the top in the centre is the two storey house, called Hideaway. The walls are rendered and this part has one high west facing window and windows on the south side. The south side of the house beside the passage that leads from the High Street has an extension as a flat balcony with a storage area beneath it. Close to the camera is a further extension with sunroom windows and a door into the garden. Both this and the lower part of the house behind it have to be built up from the ground as the stone embankment built by the sea was ending and the ground became reclaimed marsh.

The garden ends on the same boundary line as Frolic next door, and behind is another building or house on a plot.

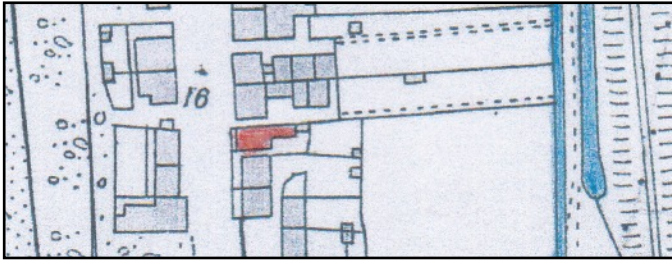


LEFT The tall section of Hideaway that joins on to the rear of Gleaner, seen from the passage from the High Street. This would be the front door.

This building stands on the rear of a substantial pebble embankment built up by the sea over many centuries, and alongside an ancient highway. Since early medieval times travellers to North Wales came along this highway on their way to cross the River Dovey by boat, later by ferry. By 1770 the highway was important enough to be a turnpike road. So access to a building beside it was easy, and the highway was especially convenient for fishermen to reach Aberleri when the River Leri spilled out into the sea where they could moor their vessels, and for mariners to reach the port at Aberdovey to join wooden sailing ships. The River Leri once flowed along the landward side of the embankment and beyond was the huge Cors Fochno peat bog. By 1790 the river had been re-routed further inland allowing drained pastures to be created. (National Library of Wales, Gogerddan Estate Map 232). A fresh water supply for the cottages and houses built on the embankment had been made by 1829 called 'The Brook' using the old route of the River Leri and with water from the corn mill at Glanlerry (now gone) and two other small streams (National Archives Map 1829, LRRO 1/3060). Its old route is still a deep ditch. The stone embankment on which the buildings stood was considered to be 'waste' by the manor of Llanfihangel Genau'r Glyn as it could not be used for farming. When a plot was enclosed to build a cottage on it - an encroachment - the Crown which owned the manor charged annual rent for it. In 1829 a plot could be bought for three years rent. On a map of 1829 there were no buildings where Gleaner stands today it was the northern part of a big plot enclosed in 1822 of three quarters of an acre, of master mariner John Hughes who had shares in ships. He could afford to buy the ground for £10. On it were built a row of cottages set back from the street. (National Archives Map 1829, LRRO 1/3060)



LEFT In 1848 the Tithe Map on 29 shows the row of old cottages marked in red, the northernmost one was larger and was on the site where Gleaner is today. The owner was Mary Hughes, the widow of master mariner Captain John Hughes (Tithe Apportionments Map for Llanfihangel Genau'r Glyn, Cyfoeth Township, No. 29 on-line at CYNEFIN).



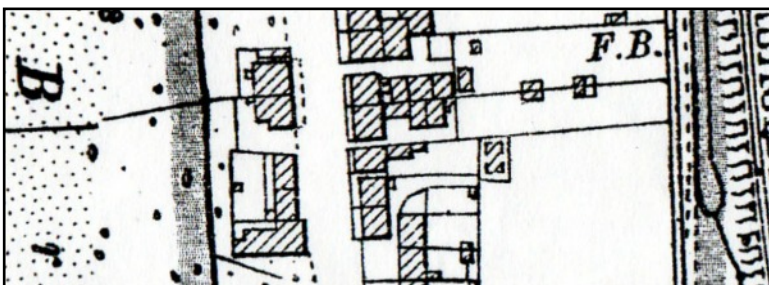
LEFT In 1886 a map showed three buildings in the block - two cottages and marked in red is Gleaner which had been built, probably replacing or rebuilding the cottage on the site. The house had a tiny front garden, a back yard and a garden beyond, and one of

the tiny buildings would have been the Ty Bach - the outside lavatory of the house. There was quite a big wing on the back of the house which may have had its kitchen. (Detail from the 25 inch Ordnance Survey Map, surveyed in 1886 and published in 1888, Cardiganshire NW III.10)

Gleaner was built by the James family who date back to master mariner Enoch James and his father, also a master mariner, who ran the White Lion Inn (now Mayfield) just up the road. Enoch junior's son James wed a Hughes girl, Martha Hughes in 1842, one of the daughters of master mariner John Hughes. This I suspect is how the site of Gleaner came into the James family. David and Martha's son Captain Hugh James, born in 1844, and his family moved from 2 Picton Terrace (now Ty Canol) on the beach side of the High Street into a newly built or re-built 'Gleaner'. Hugh had wed a girl born in Merthry Tydfil, known as Maggie. They had five sons and one daughter Martha. Their eldest son John Watkin James was born abroad, son Hugh was born at sea, and there were sons David, Evan and Charles.

In 1891 the family employed a 30 year old woman servant. In 1894 Captain James was a useful member of the community and chosen to be one of the Jurors on Tuesday September 25th and Thursday October 4th at the Inquest on the death of Mary Davies who was murdered.

At Gleaner when the Census takers called in 1901 was a Williams family likely to be related to the Hughes by marriage. The husband was away from home, but Jane Williams was 42 and in the house were a daughter Maggie, and sons David, John, Abraham, Richard and Edward, aged from 20 to 6, and a twelve year old Hughes niece. They were all born in Borth.



LEFT On the 1905 Map the yard has gone, and over the fence or wall at the back of the garden was another building.

(Detail from the 25 inch Ordnance Survey Map, revised in 1904 and published in 1905, Cardiganshire NW III.10)

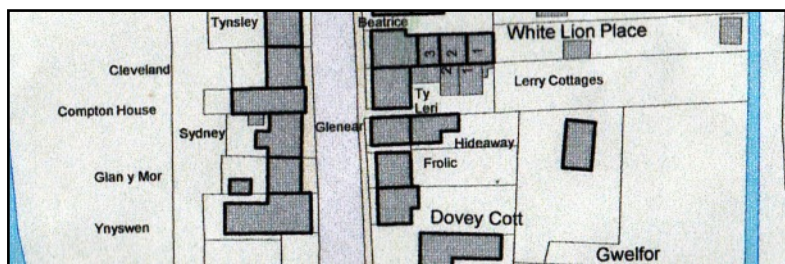
In 1910 at a valuation for a tax planned but never levied this was a valuable 'house and garden' of £405, with £15.16s to pay and £18 gross - valued as much as the three storey Numbers 11 and 12 Cambrian Terrace. The owner was Hugh James and there was a tenant, Thomas Richards, a Borth man. He was a stone mason, in particular a 'monumental mason'. His wife Catherine was born in Taliesin. Married in 1903 they had a baby daughter. There was no mention of a home at the back of it.

Sometime after 1922 Gleaner was advertised for holiday visitors with 6 bedrooms and 2 sitting rooms. In November 1924 Hugh Stanley Jones was living there when he stood as a labour candidate in a Mock Election at the Libanus Literary and Debating Society. In 1925 Maggie James owned the house, and Hugh Stanley Jones was her tenant. He was still there in 1934.

In 1944 on January 7th. there was a Sale of Modern Furniture by auction at Gleaner.

By 1949 with votes for Gleaner and paying the rates were Thomas Rowley Morris and Jane Morris and their children. They were still there in 1963. There is no mention of another home at the back (Rates and Electoral Registers Ceredigion Archives).

On a Crown Map map of 1975 there is the square shape of the tall section of Hideaway attached to the back of Gleaner (Historical Maps online).



LEFT This detail from a modern Council Map shows the shape of Hideaway today, and the un-named house or building on the plot at the back (Map courtesy of Councillor Ray Quant who provided it for research for a village event).

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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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