

# 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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## HYFRYDLE Morfa Borth

On the beach side at the north of Borth High Street. Built after 1859 and probably by 1871 for holiday visitors. Home of a Lloyd family, master mariner David Hughes, and Richard Williams and his family.



This was the smart end of Morfa Borth, close to the Railway Station opened to passengers in 1863, the Cambrian Terrace completed by 1870, and the imposing Cambrian Hotel (later Pantyfedwen, now gone). It was also close to the place where the main street runs alongside the beach with no buildings in the way (now with a promenade), and old postcards show that this area had bathing huts and was popular with holiday makers. *LEFT Hyfrydle in 2016.*

Hyfrydle is a three storey, single fronted terrace house part of a group of four under a gable roof parallel to the street. Dormer windows in the front and the back light an attic floor. The house has a red brick slab chimneys on the north side of its roof. This has four chimney pots, (four flues) so it was a well heated house. The spacing of the windows appears to have been a match with its neighbour Green Dolphin, but not of Neptune whose four light sash windows are at a different height, and the top two are larger. Hyfrydle's façade is good quality over which some care was taken. It is likely that the walls are rubble stone intended for rendering. The ground and first floors have canted bay windows. The ground floor wall rendering is patterned with incised lines in imitation of ashlar stonework.

*BELOW These are some of the most handsome railings in Morfa Borth.*



*ABOVE There are panels of decoration (pargetting) between the upper and lower bay window of plants in vases.*





*LEFT The front door is very handsome in the 'classical style', with a pediment supported by brackets decorated with dentils, and alongside the door are pilaster strips containing panels with lines of moulding. The front door has a plain rectangular light over it to light the hall, and the door has four nicely proportioned panels. There are steps up to the door, and railings run along the top of the small wall that encloses a narrow strip of garden. In 1886 the house opened on to the street, but by 1904 it had the present narrow garden.*

*BELOW Details of the top of the door in 2016.*





*LEFT The rear of the house from the beach in 2016.*

*The twelve light windows may be original, or copies of the original sash windows. Similar windows are at the back of Glaneifion, and were once on the back of Bibury in the Cambrian Terrace. There is a two storey extension on the north side of the yard. This was there in 1886. Today the upper window has a fine view of the sea and a balcony from which steps lead down into the yard.*



*LEFT On this detail from a post-card Hyfrydle is the second tall house from the right. It had no rear dormer window. On the extension was a tall chimney with two chimney pots (flues) suggesting the kitchen was below with a warm room above it. That too is similar to the Cambrian Terrace houses except that they shared their extension with their neighbour.*

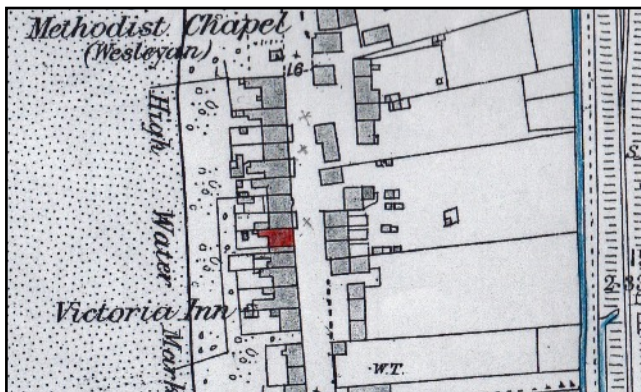
*Hyfrydle had its own. The rows of wooden stakes driven into the stone bank were sea defences easily replaced after bad storms (William's 'Borth Woods' private collection).*

The ground for the 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 the time the house was built there was one tap with good spring water in the street outside the Cambrian Hotel.

In 1848 the site was still not built upon. (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 a wide beach side plot (18k) was marked but no buildings were drawn on it, but it said 'sold' with 18h. This did have a building on it, which became eventually Chester House next to the Victoria Inn. In 1848 we do not

know who owned it - because buildings that side of the road with no gardens paid no tithe and so were not listed. (1859 Map National Archives LRRO 1/3060)

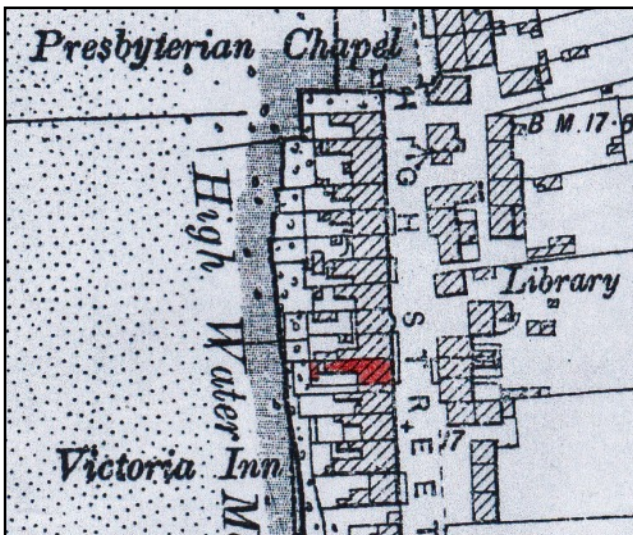
When built, Hyfrydle was part of a terrace of four houses, including 'Neptune' which was up and running as a 'baths' by 1868 (Slater's Directory). So it is likely the four were built in the 1860s. Who was there in the 1871 Census is not clear as there were empty houses nearby in the list. Possibly in the house was a 56 year old, widowed shoemaker called John Lloyd and his daughter Martha, but it is not certain. In 1880 holiday visitors stayed in the house, then called 7 High Street, for five weeks from the week of July 23 to the week of September 3. Mrs Mary Lloyd looked after them. They came on the railway from Machynlleth, Newtown and Welshpool, but also from Newport, Monmouthshire, Liverpool and London. Two families with children and an adult could be put up at the same time.



LEFT Mrs Lloyd's house in 1886 is marked in red. There was a small extension, and the small building was probably its Ty Bach - outside lavatory (Detail from the 25 inch Ordnance survey Map surveyed in 1886 and published in 1888, Cardiganshire III.10)

The 1891 Census misses the house out, possibly the occupiers were away. Kelly's Directory of 1895 lists Evan Lloyd was living there, and the house address was then 9 High Street. Evan Lloyd was the owner of the house in 1910.

In 1901 the house had its name 'Hyfrydle', meaning in Welsh a 'pleasant place', and living there was David Hughes, aged 45, a master mariner born about 1856 in Borth. His wife Ann was also born in Borth the same year. They spoke both Welsh and English.



LEFT The house is 1904, with a longer extension and another small building in the yard. (Detail from the 25 inch Ordnance survey Map revised in 1904 and published in 1905, Cardiganshire III.10)

In 1910, for Rates, the house was valued at £280 - a little dearer than Neptune and Glaneifion next door at £270. There was £12.15s to pay, and £15 gross. The occupier was still David Hughes. It was not listed in the 1911 Census possibly because either the people were away, or it was unoccupied.

Curiously the Cambrian News of 3 October 1924 reported that 'house furnishing was removed from Hyfrydle and sold at the Osprey Garage by order of Howard Llewellyn Roberts Esq.' Possibly Mr Roberts had just bought the house, because in 1925 when the house was listed for the Rates the owner was Howard Llewellyn Roberts. He put a tenant in the house, Richard Williams. Mr Roberts was an important man in Borth. He began as a draper's assistant at Garibaldi House now the Premier Stores, where his family lived, but eventually owned other property in Borth. He continued to run a 'Robert's Stores' and to be involved in Borth activities, he was the Hon. Treasurer of Borth's Library (now the Oriel Gallery) founded some tennis courts on land behind the

Cambrian Hotel, later Pantyfedwen, and helped with the Carnival. Some cartoons he did when serving as 'Corporal Roberts' in the trenches in WW1 were used in a souvenir book of the Welsh Division, published in 1919 by the Western Mail, and according to one writer, brought credit on himself and on Borth'. (Lewis Jenkins, "A Real Little Seaport. The Port of Aberdyfi and its People 1565 to 1920.")

Richard Williams was a member of the Borth Literary and Debating Society. In November 1924 he seconded the Conservative Candidate in a mock election at the Libanus Chapel (Cambrian News, November 21<sup>st</sup>). In 1934 Mrs Martha Roberts was the owner, and Richard Williams was still the tenant.

Mr Williams paid the rates in 1938. He died in 1939 aged 67, his wife Mary died in 1945 aged 66. (Parish Register).

With votes for the house in the 1945 General Election were Victor H. Williams, Joan M. Williams and Margaret Eirlys Williams. She paid the rates in 1949.

Richard Elvin Williams paid the rates in 1963 and Mr Williams and Mavis E. Williams had a vote for the house. and were probably living there (Electoral Registers and Rates at the Ceredigion Archives)

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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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