

# 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

*This work is for research and educational purposes only.*

## MAES ARFOR

A house at the northern end of the village facing the beach. Formerly called Sea View House. It was built for Captain David Jones and his family in 1861 on ground formerly a field enclosed in 1826 by David Williams, a farmer. The house has been considerably altered.

*Maes Arfor in November 2008.*



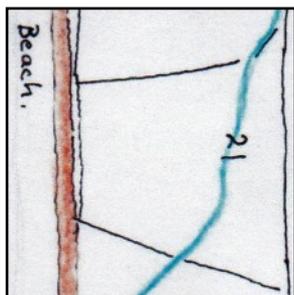
The front section of the house is just two storeys high under a gable roof parallel to the road and with a chimney at the northern end of the roof. The section at the back is quite large, with a gable roof at right angles to the road and is slightly taller. There is plenty of room on its plot for the house, with access from both the north and south sides,



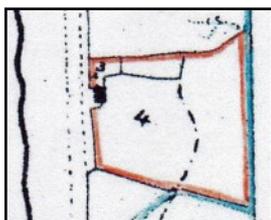
however the main entrance is at the south side of the building and has a glazed porch. Above it the roof has a dormer window and a set of solar panels. Access to the garage and garden is along a drive on the south side of the house. The road to the Cae Gwylan Estate runs near this side of the house, and a row of its bungalows are across the rear of the garden.

*ABOVE Maes Arfor in 2015 from the south.*

The ground on which Maes Arfor stands was enclosed in 1826 by David Williams from the shingle bank thrown up by the sea and drained bog land, and was called 'waste' by the Crown Manor who owned it. David Williams had two acres and two rods (two and a half acres) which extended to a brook. It was pasture and he paid £1 12s rent for it, with the option to buy it for £8, which he did. The road had been there for centuries and by the 1770s was a turnpike road. It led to a ferry at Ynyslas to Aberdovey which was a quick way to North Wales. The brook was then the old route of the River Leri still with some water in it, and was useful for David Williams if he had cows or horses on his land.



*FAR LEFT On a map of 1829 it was number 21 with no cottages on it, and it stopped short of the road. (National Archives Map LRRO 1/3060)*



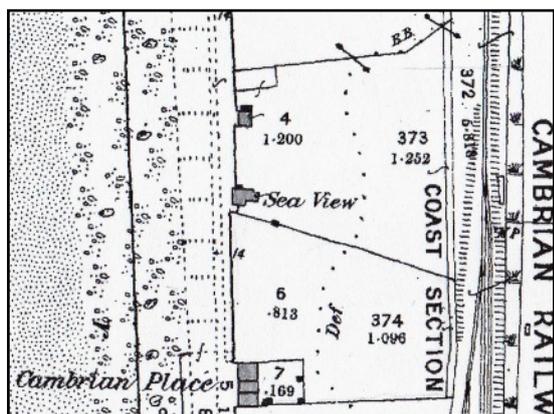
*LEFT On this map of 1848 the land was Number 4, and interestingly there was a brook running along the eastern boundary of the field. This was the tailrace from the corn mill at Glanlerry (now gone) plus a couple of little streams. This had been diverted to run*

*northwards along the back of Morfa Borth for fresh water for the cottagers. The dashed line was the old route of the River Leri which was also the boundary between the townships of Cyfoeth-y-brenin and Henllys. A cottage had been built on the north of the land with a garden, Number 3, Edward Jones owned it and he rented the field from David Williams. (A detail from the Tithe Map of Llanfihangel Genau'r Glyn, Henllys Township).*

By the 1851 Census, David Williams, by then a retired farmer of 76, was living with Edward Jones in his cottage. Edward Jones himself was a 50 year old labourer, born in Troed-y-rhiw. His wife Margaret aged 48 was local and had been born at a small holding called Ty Simnai (Chimney House, along the road to Llandre). They had a family of daughters; May 18, Jane 13, Anne 11, Eliza 7 and Margaret 5. The eldest was born in Penybont. Fuel for this cottage would have come from a patch dug for peat belonging to the villagers just to the north of Ynys Fergi.

In the 1861 Census Maes Arfor, then to be called 'Sea View' was 'in building'. In the 1871 Census it did not have a name - but neither did most other homes at that time. In the house was Anne Jones, aged 35 and the wife of the master mariner Captain David Jones. With her was their sons; David aged 8 probably born in their new house, Edward aged 6 and John aged 3.

In 1871 in the house was Anne Jones aged 35, the wife of mariner Captain David Jones, with their son David aged 8 probably born in the new house, and Edward aged 6 and John aged 3.

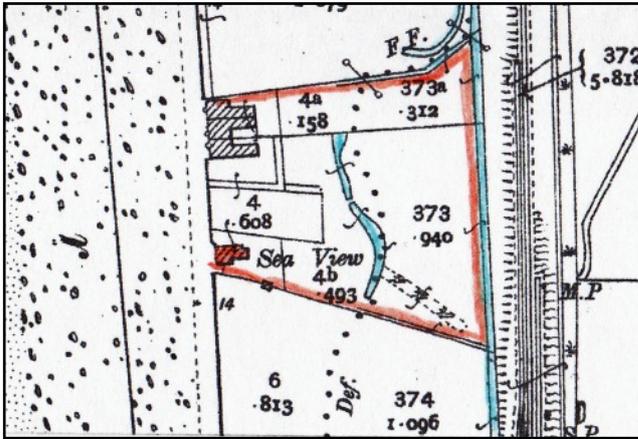


*LEFT In 1886 David Jones, a master mariner owned the ground and had built himself a house on the south of the Jones's land now Maes Arfor but then called Sea View. It owned all the land, and the old cottage was still there. (Detail from the 25 inch Ordnance Survey Map surveyed in 1886 but published in 1888. Cardiganshire III.10)*

In 1881 at the Census the house had its very English name 'Sea View House' despite the Captain's wife and children being Welsh speakers. The Captain would have spoken English as this was the language of shipping. The Captain's wife Anne Jones was there with their sons Edward, then 17 and John 13. They had both become mariners. Morgan H. Jones was 9 and Hugh Jones was 6.

In the house at the 1891 Census were Anne by then aged 55 and her son Hugh aged 16. The Captain had died in 1891 at Briton Ferry aged only 54, supposedly of exhaustion. Anne died in 1899.

In Sea View at the 1901 Census, by herself, was Susannah Jones, aged 29, the wife of Captain David and his wife Anne's eldest son Captain David Hugh Jones. She was born about 1872 in Creigdyn, Llanvihangel (Llandre).



LEFT In 1904 the house was quite sizeable, it opened directly on to the road, and had a wing on the north side of the back. It still owned a large area of ground. The three villas Carron, Glanmor and Glendower had been built on the north of the site. The enclosure drawn in will become the site of Surrey to be the home of Captain David's brother, Captain Hugh Jones.



This was Sea View House before Surrey was built next door. Susannah is there with her husband Captain David Hugh Jones and their three children, David Idwal Jones, Doris Jones and John Morgan Jones. The house had two stone chimneys, a rendered front and sash windows. The front garden was neatly enclosed by low rendered walls. The front door with its porch was not central, as in the old cottages the room on one side was larger, in this case the southernmost ground floor room, and this would possible have been a living room. However it is likely that the kitchen of this little villa was in the wing at the back. (Photograph courtesy of David and Celia Matthews, who had it from a descendant of the Jones family)



*LEFT This detail from an old postcard shows the front of the Captain and Susannah's house with its porch. Surrey had been built next door showing that the villa was not very tall, only barely two floors. (Postcard courtesy of David and Celia Matthews)*

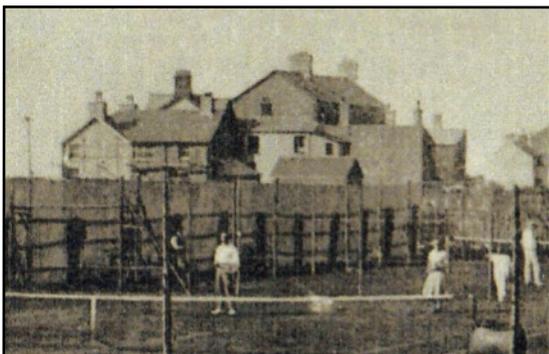


*ABOVE Another old postcard shows the side of the house, and the section at the back, lower than the main house. It had a chimney on the east end probably for the kitchen, and a back door with one window and above was the small window for a room under the roof. The road was very rough and almost undermined by the sea. (Postcard courtesy of David and Celia Matthews)*

In 1910 for a tax planned but not levied, the house was owned by Captain David Hugh Jones, and was valued at £340 with £5. 19s to pay, £7 gross. At the 1911 Census the house had seven main rooms. Susannah Jones was at home with David Idwal aged 9, Doris aged 7 and John Morgan aged 4. She had been married since 1901, all her three children had survived, and the family spoke both Welsh and English. By this time Surrey had been built next door.

About 1920 Captain Hugh Jones moved his family to 8 Cambrian Terrace and living in Sea View were Mr and Mrs Own Morris whose son Private D. Morris of the South Wales Welsh borderers was home on leave from Ireland (Cambrian News Feb. 6th). Sometime after 1922 holiday accommodation of four bedrooms and two sitting rooms was offered at Sea View House (The Illustrated Borth Guide, price 6d. Aberystwyth Public Library).

Captain Hugh sold Sea View House to Samuel Jones, a minister of the gospel from Cardiff. He paid the rates in 1925 as owner and occupier. Some improvements had been made as the old rate had been crossed out, £9.10s had become £11.5s, and £11 gross to £13. The Rev. Jones also paid a rate for the ground around the house, and for a garage for which he paid £2. He would have been quite well off to afford a car at that time. He also paid the rates in 1938. Holiday accommodation was still advertised, with three sitting rooms with the four bedrooms.



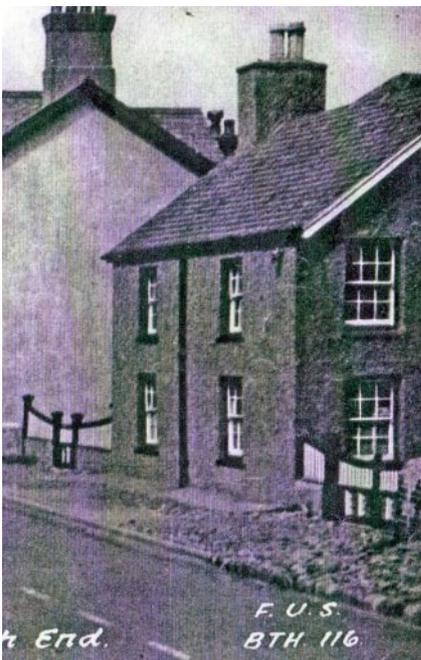
*LEFT The side and back of Maes Arfor in the 1920. It had a single storey lean-to addition at the rear of the back section, and we can see its first garage. The hard court tennis was set up in 1924 and run by the enterprising Robert's family of Robert's Stores (a drapers) (Detail from a Robert's postcard - Amgueddfa Ceredigion Museum)*



*LEFT This rather faded detail show the house after a bad storm, possibly in 1928. Stones had been thrown all over the road.*

A widow, possibly his widow, Mrs Mary Elizabeth Jones living at Llandre sold the house in August 1945 to a company director from Wolverhampton, George Malcolm Thompson and his wife Hilda. A plan of the house from that sale showed that parts of the rear of the house had been filled in, and that the house had a long garden. The advertisement listed four bedrooms, a bathroom with hot and cold water, a lavatory, an entrance hall, two reception rooms, a kitchen, scullery, larder, coal house, a ground floor indoor lavatory and a large garage. (Ceredigion Archives, ABY/B/16).

On 13<sup>th</sup>. June 1951 the Thompsons sold the house to John Iswyn Morgan, a



Wolverhampton greengrocer for £2,600. He mortgaged it, and did not keep it for long. It was sold to a local man, an insurance inspector, William Trevor Jones of Springfield Borth for £2,400. He mortgaged it for £2,000 to the Halifax, and gave the house the name Maes Arfor (possibly field near the marsh or by the sea).

*LEFT This detail from a postcard of Borth's 'West End' shows a major alteration to the front of the house. The front door has gone, allowing a larger room inside. The house then opened directly on to the street, but there are smart walls and gates at the sides of the house.*

The concrete sea defensive wall with the promenade on top was completed in May 1956 and in November 1956 the Council decided to charge all the houses behind it because of the protection it provided from flooding during storms. The payments had to be made within six months. Many householders complained bitterly about their homes being of less value as they had lost their view

of the beach, their open and easy access to it, and they thought that the wall was 'unsightly'. The charge for Maes Arfor was £80 - the highest of all, and Mr Trevor Jones complained, sending many letters of appeal and refused to pay. The charge was probably high because at that time there was open ground around Maes Arfor (where now the Cae



Gwylan Estate has been built) which the Council probably thought would have been at risk from flooding. Eventually the charge was reduced to £70. The Aberystwyth Rural District Council had to threaten legal proceedings, and on the 26th July 1961 Mr Jones paid (Borth Sea Defences, Ceredigion Archives, ABR/HI/6/40).

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Mr Trevor Jones was living at Eglyws Fach when he sold the house in 1961 to Doctor Arthur Maude for £4500. Dr Maude paid the rates in 1963. With votes for the house were Aylmer, Derwent, Nora and Prescott Maude (Rates and Electoral Registers, Ceredigion Archives).



*LEFT This was Dr Maude's Maes Arfor in 1968. The old rear wing of the house had now been extended to the full width of the building. Dormer windows had been added to the roof on the south side, and the house still had all its chimneys which had been rendered. The south side of the front section still had its old sash windows. On the north a wall and door gave a private way to the then front door.*



*LEFT Compare the above photograph with the present appearance of the side of the house.*

*BELOW The rear of the house in 2017.*



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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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