

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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MANCHESTER HOUSE

Morfa Borth - the Marsh Harbour

On the east side of the northern end of the High Street. A late nineteenth century shop and house for a grocer. It was built in front of what had been Wellington Place, a terrace of old cottages set back from the street and it would absorb one of these.



LEFT The building in 2009.

The ground floor has a shop front with a private front door to the house on the northern side. The shop has its own door. In 2013 it was described as a disused retail shop plus a living room, kitchen, six bedrooms, a small bathroom, garage and cellar (Advertisement by Aled Ellis) At the rear is a generous extension along the north side of its site.



ABOVE Manchester House in 2013. It has since begun to be renovated.

The building is two storeys with further rooms under the roof. It is built of plain bricks which are rendered, and has its gable end to the High Street. There was no damp course. The wood of the gable has only a simple moulding around it and is otherwise plain. An unsatisfactory keystone at the apex is being replaced. The roof is of imitation slates. The shop front and door to the house are protected by a slate roof which juts out. This is linked to the walls and windows below by a wooden slanting board supported by brackets at either end - as is usual for having names on for shop fronts. There is a very prominent bay window on the first floor above the shop, with crenellated decoration beneath the lower windowsill. The sea can be seen from this. The windows, one on the first floor, and a small one in the gable



to light a room in the roof have frames modelled in plaster with decorated keystones. This modelling in the plaster is a characteristic of several Borth house fronts. There is modern glass in the windows with a single horizontal glazing bar.

LEFT The 'front door' to the house on the left is nicely panelled with three panels below, and two large panels above containing an oval shape with the words 'Manchester House' set in the top section. There is an identical door for the shop up wooden steps.

Inside the door to the house are decorative Victorian coloured tiles. An inner door also has 'Manchester House' written on it, and a further inner door has a glass panel with some colours and a shield upside down. The shop floor has good pitch pine floorboards, and the staircase is also of pitch pine. The wood is of good thickness and the stairs were built with carpentered joints.



There are linked cellars, one beneath the shop with a staircase down to it, and a second one behind entered from the side of the building. There is a third behind that. They are always dry. There is also a brick bread oven.

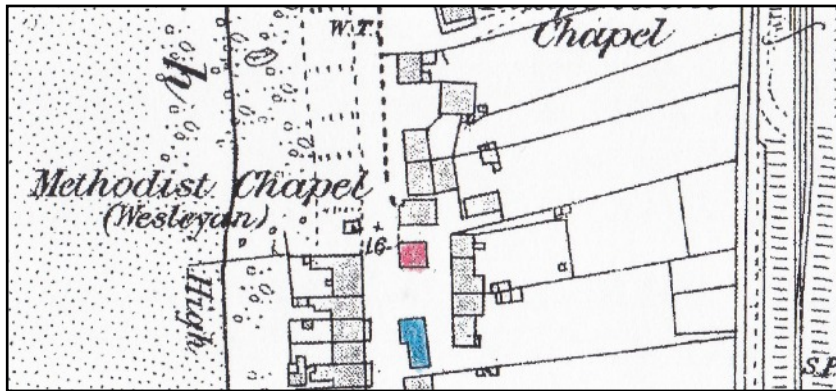
LEFT The rear of the building descends in two stages. The roof of the extension was

being repaired in 2104 when this photograph was taken. Interestingly there still is the back of an old cottage from the terrace on the north side of it. The section in the foreground seems to have garage doors. In 1961 the Council Planning Committee approved a a garage and kitchen for the house. (Council Minutes, Ceredigion Archives) To build this section the old cottage on the site had to be demolished.

In 1823 the ground on which Manchester House would be built was enclosed from the pebble bank which the Crown manor who owned it considered was 'waste' because it was no use for farming. It was the front ground by the road of a three quarters of an acre plot owned by a John Lewis on which stood two cottages set back from the road which would

develop into the row of old cottages behind Leronian House. (Plot Number 26 on a hand painted map of 1829, National Archives LRRO 1/3060)

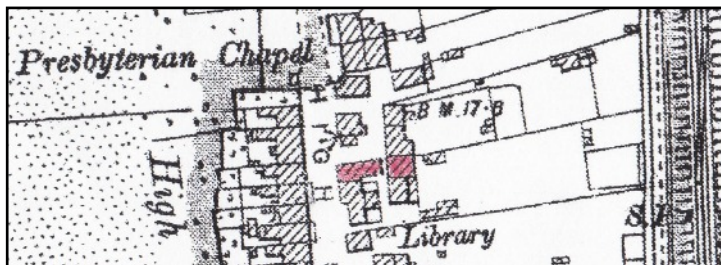
There was still open ground by the road in front of the cottages in 1848 (Number 14 on the Tithe Apportionments Map Llanfihangel Genau'r Glyn, Cyfoeth Township, on-line at CYNEFIN)



LEFT By 1886 there were four old cottages in the terrace. Leronian marked in red and Wellington House (now part is Ysbryd-y-gors) is marked in blue. There was nothing yet built in between them (Detail from the 25 inch Ordnance Survey Map surveyed in 1886 and published in 1888,

Cardiganshire NW III.10)

By 1891 Manchester House already had its the name and was a shop. When the Census takers called they found John Jones, aged 50 , a grocer, and his wife Mary, 47, brother in law Evan James and one servant, a Borth girl Jane Hughes, aged 26. John and Mary were also born in Borth and and all the household spoke Welsh. Mr Jones sold newspapers and on October 9th. 1896 they were delayed in arriving because of a storm. (Cambrian News) John Jones was still there in 1901, a grocer and employer, and Evan James, a widower then aged 50 was the ‘grocer’s assistant’.



LEFT Manchester House marked in red in 1904. The building almost extended as far as the cottage behind it. It owned this in 1910 and would therefore have had a share of the garden behind it too (Detail from the 25 inch Ordnance Survey Map revised in 1904 and published in 1905,

Cardiganshire NW III.10)

Interestingly in the 1910 valuation for a tax planned but not levied it was called a “Cottage and Premises”, and rated at gross £15.15s with £13.3s.6d to pay. John Jones was the owner, but the occupier was then Hugh James. The word ‘cottage’ is interesting, and it was not listed as a ‘shop’ - the only ‘shops’ listed were - Garibaldi - now The Premier Family Stores, £25 gross, and London House now the Borth Tandoori £24 gross. We know that Borth had more shops than that, some inside what looked like ordinary fronts of houses. However £15.15s was not the value of cottages in Borth but the value of substantial houses and the 1904 map shows a substantial building. I suggest there was a shop there, but we do not know if it had the present shop front (Ceredigion Archives T/DV/18 the map with all the houses numbered on it, is at the National Library of Wales)

In 1911 Hugh James too was a grocer, aged 30 and born at sea in the Indian Ocean, and his wife Mary Jane was 38. They had been married for 5 years, and had three children - Thomas

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Reginald James, Martha Jane James and Hugh Elsely James. There were also two step daughters from a Hughes family. The house then had eight main rooms.

At a Rates Valuation of 1925 it was clearly listed as a 'house and shop', but rated less than in 1911, at gross £15.10s with £13.3s.6d to pay. The owner was Margaret James, but the occupier was William Jones. (Ceredigion Archives)

In March 1926 it had become the 'Manchester House Tea Rooms' and Mr William Jones the proprietor was also a baker and confectioner. The café was advertised as having 'punctual attendance and very clean'. There were Apartments available too - apply to Mrs Williams. (*Trades Directory Wales, 1926 Aberystwyth Public Library. Mr Jones's bakery was where the 'Pine Centre' is now.*)

Also in 1926, at Manchester House was Lizzie Jones, Milliner. Upstairs perhaps? (Kelly's Directory of South Wales - Ceredigion Archives)

In 1934 it was a 'Milliners and Fancy Drapers' with a speciality in 'bathing outfits', the proprietor Miss L. Jones. (Guide Book to Borth, 19.3.1934, published by the Borth Ratepayers Association - Aberystwyth Public Library) In 1949 Miss Jones was on the Committee of the British Legion Women. (Borth Review, National Library of Wales)

Elizabeth Jones paid the rates in 1949.

After 1968 Manchester House was still a Drapers Shop, with Hosiery and Beachwear and by then it had a telephone, Borth 297. (Handbook and Guide to Borth by Borth Village Improvements Committee private collection)

Today there is no longer a terrace of cottages at the back, but it is open to an area of hard standing and has a generous sized garden leading down to the ditch - a former brook.

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

Mae **Tai'r Borth** yn cynnwys dros 350 hanes sy'n ymwneud ag adeiladau unigol ac mae'r hanesion wedi'u darlunio â chyfoeth o ffotograffau, mapiau a dogfennau. Mae'r ffeiliau ar gael ar ein gwefan: <https://www.archifdy-ceredigion.org.uk/tairborth.php?lang=cy>

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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