

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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MARINE COURT

North Parade Terrace, Morfa Borth

At the northern end of the village, in a terrace facing the sea. Formerly Scranton Villa. Home of master mariner Captain Hugh James and his family and his stepson, Captain John Watkin Williams. Possibly built by 1891 after the Census was taken.



LEFT The house in 2015.

Marine Court is a two and a half storey single fronted terrace house, under a gable roof parallel with the road. The roof is slate coloured with decorative ridge tiles. A yellow brick slab chimney on the south end of the roof is shared with Picton House next door. There is room for six chimney pots for each house, so plenty of rooms were warmed. The walls are rendered so we cannot see if they are stone or brick. Rubble stone is likely at that date. The windows have the pattern of sash windows, but are modern. This house has kept some of the old decoration of the front. Bold string courses (lines of moulding) link the bays to the house wall and the house wall to the houses next door. In particular the front door is made very important by the entablature over it,

decorative brackets supporting it, the pilaster strips with inset panels either side of it, and a decorated keystone above the door. The window above has a frame with a keystone, and between the bay windows are mock columns. The house opens on to hard standing and the street.



ABOVE Marine Court from the lane at the rear. There is a narrow passage to the main house, and both a two storey and single storey extension. This has the back door. The dormer window does not match those in the front of the house as it has plain barge boards and no finial.

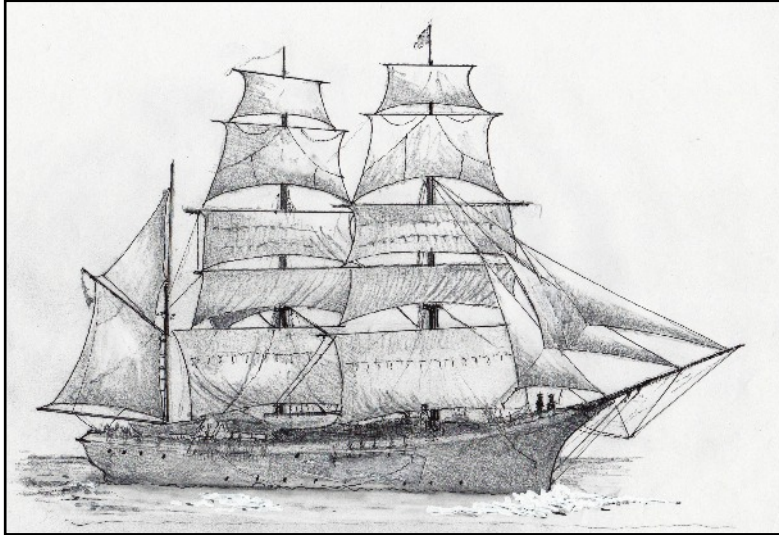


ABOVE The extension from the south side shows plenty of rooms. There are roof lights for the attic floor of the house, and another one for the extension. All the windows are modern.

For the early history of the ground on which the house is built and details of the architecture of the terrace please look at 'North Parade'.

In the newly built house at the Census of 1901 was master mariner Captain Hugh James, then aged 56. He was local, born in Borth about 1843. His wife Maggie was 50 and born in Merthyr about 1851 but was taken to America as a child. Also in the house was their son Hugh aged 20 already a mariner like his father, and in the merchant service. Also there was their other son Evan aged 14, and two daughters; Martha Helena James aged 18 and Annie Bertha James aged 8. They were all born in Borth. This family had a domestic servant in the house, Anne Evans, unmarried and 26. She too was local. They called their house 'Scranton Villa'. Captain James was the son of Captain David James of Gleanor. He met

his wife Maggie in San Francisco, and she was the widow of John Williams of Scranton in America, and that is why this house was called Scranton Villa. Her son John Watkin Williams was born in Scranton. (1881 Census) They married in 1877. The family had lived in Number 2 Picton Terrace on the beach side of the High Street (now Craiglee). By the 1891 Census Number Two was unoccupied or no-one was there. They would move to their new house on the terrace. They had ten children, five of whom were still alive in 1911 (Census)



LEFT This is a barque, an ocean going sailing ship. Captain Hugh James was the master of a barque called the "Hawarden Castle".

(Terry Davies, 'Borth A Maritime History' pages 106-7 where there is more of the story of Captain James and his wife Maggie).

In 1910 for a tax planned but not levied Scranton was valued at £750 - which was a valuable property in Borth at

that time. There would have been £21.13s.6d to pay, gross £25. Captain James owned the house, and also some land by Scranton - possibly out the back (Ceredigion Archives, T/DV/18 and Map at the National Library of Wales).

At the Census of 1911 Scranton had 14 rooms. The Captain had retired from the sea aged 66, and was there with his wife Maggie and their son Evan aged 24, who was a clerk at the Borth and Ynyslas Golf Club. Their eldest daughter Martha Helena James aged 28 had not married, and also there was their youngest daughter Bertha aged 18. Captain James died in 1916. In 1918 his stepson Captain John Watkin Williams 'used seamanlike skill and courage when master of the S.S. Benedict when it was attacked by an enemy submarine. He was voted one hundred guineas by the 'London War Risks Insurance Association' in recognition of his services' (Cambrian News, July 22nd).

In 1924 Mrs (Captain) James and Mrs James of Hazelmere gave money towards some silver water jugs for the Wesleyan Chapel in Morfa Borth High Street (Cambrian News February 1924).

Sometime after 1922 an 'Illustrated Borth Guide' advertised some furnished accommodation in the house to let, eight bedrooms with twelve beds and three sitting rooms (Aberystwyth public Library). In 1925 for the rates Maggie James had been the owner and occupier, but paying the rates that year was John Jones. He also paid in 1934 and 1938.

With votes for the house in the General Election of 1945 were George A. Fullwood and Doris Susanna Fullwood. Mr Fullwood paid the rates in 1949. .

The Aldridge Estates paid the rates in 1957 and 1963. No-one had a vote for the house that year (Electoral Registers and Rates, Ceredigion Archives). Its name was still Scranton.

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gan/by Beryl Lewis
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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-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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