

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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MEIRION

Morfa Borth - the Marsh Harbour

Home of a mariner. For many years called Osprey House after a Jenkins family sloop, more recently Chequers, Velvoria and Heulwen. Probably built by 1873.



Meirion is set back from the main street called Princess Street, in the northern area of Borth. The back door gives access to Chapel Lane and the front door is on the southern side of the house through its small front garden.

Meirion is a two storey house of rubble stone, with rendered walls and a stone chimney with one chimney pot. The sash windows with twelve small panes suggest a Victorian date for the building. The façade is very plain. On the west gable end of the building two small windows give light to attic rooms, and there is one window near Chapel Lane on the second floor. There is a small lean to against part of this wall. The roof is a shallow pitch, and at the back its deeper pitch suggests an extension was made to the rear of the house at some time. On the east side the house butts up against a garage.



LEFT This side of the house used to open on to Chapel Lane which is in the foreground, though today the former door is blocked. There is a single story extension which is becoming a

bathroom and continues along this Chapel Lane wall of the house. Joining to it is a garage with a brick rear wall which lost its roof in a recent gale.



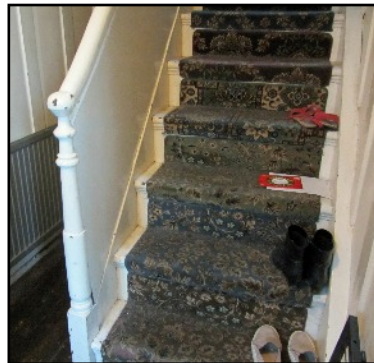
LEFT The former door on to Chapel Lane. This side of the house is an extension under the deeply sloping roof.

BELOW The narrow glazing bars of the sash window on the right of the photograph above are characteristic of the earlier Victorian buildings. The windows on the front of the house are the same. Very few buildings in Borth still have windows like this.



LEFT The walls of this house have quite large pieces of rubble stone in a random fashion. This walling has been exposed on the inside of the front of the house.

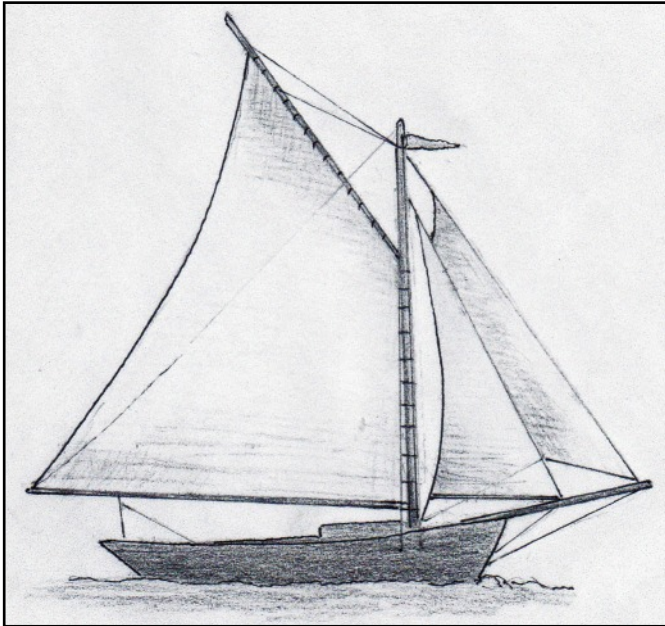
BELOW The banisters.



LEFT A door now inside the rear extension and a glimpse of the stone walling.

Osprey House was called after a ship - a sloop - registered in Aberystwyth and a common craft, part of a late eighteenth and nineteenth century coastal trade from Aberdyfi. Its master in 1847 and 1859 was David Jenkins who had 32 shares in the ship in 1847 and the full 64 in 1850. She foundered at sea off Milford on 12 September 1871 and two crew members were saved (Register of Shipping, Aberystwyth, Ceredigion Archives).

David Jenkins and his wife Ann in 1848 lived in a cottage on the site of the present Carron House. A tombstone in the Llandre Churchyard records that buried there were Thomas the son of David and Ann Jenkins of Osprey House buried in 1847, and their daughter Mary who was



A Sloop

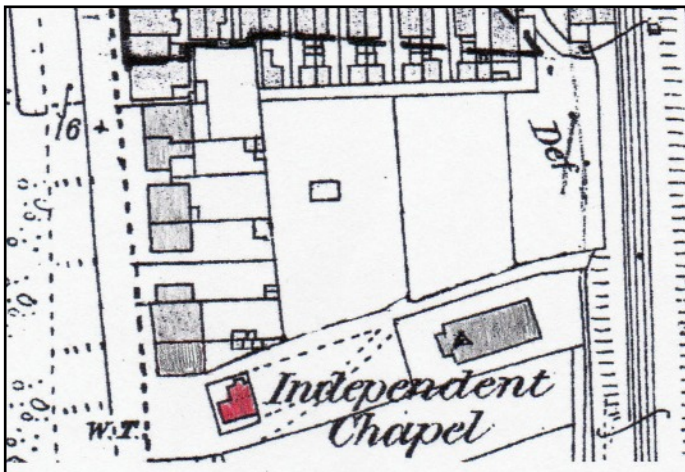
buried in 1850 aged three, David's father was a mariner and he had wed Ann Jones of Borth (Upper Borth) on December 29th. 1837. Her father was also a mariner. It is likely that he called his cottage Osprey House after his ship. (Number 3 on the Tithe Apportionments Map, Llanfihangel Genau'r Glyn, Cyfoeth Township, online at CYNEFIN).

He had a son called Lewis born in 1839 in Borth. In 1853 he was a 'boy' on his Dad's sloop, by 1857 he was a master mariner in command of the Osprey, and in 1860 was on the snow Ocean Belle and in 1861 on the schooner Jane Owens (Records of Welsh Mariners on-line)

In 1848 there was no building where Meirion stands today - it was part of the garden round a cottage owned by Margaret Morgan which stood on almost half an acre, with another half acre 'garden' behind it. (Tithe Apportionments Map Llanfihangel Genau'r Glyn, Cyfoeth Township - on line at CYNEFIN).

However in 1873 David and Anne's son, by then Captain Lewis Jenkins mortgaged a parcel of land for £20 which he had bought from Mary Jones, and in 1878 he was the owner of an Osprey House which he sold to Thomas and David Jones as he moved away to London (Deeds to Meirion private collection). It is possible Lewis Jenkins built the house on the £20 plot of land. His father David did not own this new Osprey House and Census records show he later lived elsewhere and was living with his daughter Anne at 1 Alma Place in 1905 when he died aged 90 (Parish Register).

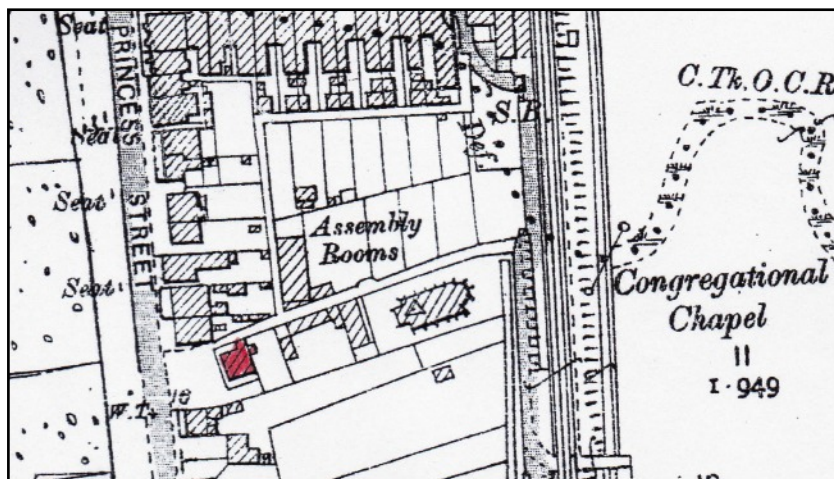
Osprey House was taking in holiday visitors in 1880. The Cambrian News lists a family from Wolverhampton staying for two weeks in July. Mrs Pierce was their landlady. In the 1881 Census Susannah Pierce was a mariners wife, born in Bosbury Herefordshire about 1847. A small niece, Bessy Cox aged 4 from Cheltenham was staying with her. Her husband William who was born in Borth about 1848 is listed as a tailor in the 1891 Census. As a mariner, sewing was necessary on ships with sails. His parents, Thomas Pierce, a labourer and his wife Mary had moved to live in Borth by 1852 but not in this area of the village.



LEFT This was Mrs Pierce's 'Osprey House' in 1886, it is marked in red. Osprey was built tightly enclosed inside its plot of land. The house was 'L' shaped, and had what looks like a porch on the north side, and it looks as though access to the house was there. Behind the house was some open land, crossed by an unfenced paths from the main street. Beyond was the Welsh Independent Chapel, opened in 1869 (Welsh Newspapers Online) What is especially interesting about the site of the house is that the

house lies at the same angle as the 1848 angles of fencing of the plots of land which continued southwards as far as the Dudley House cottage - now part of Cantre Gwaelod. This is rare in Borth as most other houses were built at right angles, to the main street despite the angle of their back gardens. It may have been because the Chapel was already built and access paths to it had to be left open and their land did not belong to the house (Detail from the 25 inch Ordnance Survey Map surveyed in 1886 but published in 1888, Cardiganshire III.10)

By the 1901 Census there was a new family in the house. Thomas Jones aged 38, who was a 'signal porter' on the railway. He was born about 1863 in Pennal, Merionethshire (on the banks of the River Dovey, and where sailing ships were built). His wife Anne was born in Llantrisant, and there was a son James Redvers Jones, aged one and born in Borth.



LEFT In 1904 Thomas Jones's Osprey House had a square shape, it had been extended on the Chapel Lane side where there was a porch. There was another porch or small building on the east side. Its Ty Bach (outside lavatory) perhaps. On the ground alongside are buildings that will become the repair shop and garages for an 'Osprey

Garage', with a caban coed (wooden cabin) for the garage boss to live in. The empty ground in front 18 feet by 86 feet was then the property of a butcher, William Hughes Ody of Glan Nant (At the end of the terrace on the south of the Railway Inn.) After his death in 1927 it was sold and the brick fronted Osprey Garage with petrol pump(s) would be built on it. (Ceredigion Archives ADX 376/8).

In 1910 for a tax planned but not levied, Osprey House was valued at £210, with £8.18.6d to pay, and £10.10s gross. The site was valued at £27. The owner and occupier was still Thomas Jones. The house had eight main rooms in 1911 and by then Thomas Jones had another son, Lewis Clifford Jones. The couple had been married for fourteen years (since 1897), and one of their three children had died (Census). Thomas Jones died in 1922 aged 55, and his wife Elizabeth Eliza Jones was buried in 1925 aged 34.

In 1921 Osprey House was to have new owners and another name - Velvoria from a sixth century stone with Irish Ogham lettering in the tower at Llandysul Church. It commemorated a woman called Velvor. A Reverend John Morgan of that church and a Henry John Morgan Vicar of Beaumaris owned the house.

Sometime after 1922, in the Illustrated Borth Guide, Osprey offered furnished accommodation of six bedrooms and two sitting rooms. This adds up to eight rooms so the kitchen may not have been listed in the 1911 Census when the inhabitants had to fill in the form themselves.

It is likely that a Miss Garland was living in the house in 1925 when the Council were not sure of details of the house for their Rates Jones was listed as the owner, but also written in pencil was the name C.M. Garland under the 'occupier'. They still called it 'Osprey House'. By then Joseph Musgrave's Osprey Garage was up and running.



LEFT Osprey in 1926 between Diana now Pebbles and Murmur-y-môr. It had two or possibly three chimneys, the left hand one over the rear extension would have been for its kitchen. It is not possible to see if Joseph Musgrave's Osprey Garage was being built in front of it. Timbers driven into the stone bank protected the houses from the sea. The present wall and promenade would not be built until 1956 (Detail from a panorama by Howard Lloyd Roberts, Ceredigion Archives).

In 1934 the house was called Chequers, it had a garage, and the rates were paid by (Miss) C. M. Garland. (By 1938 there was another Osprey - Osprey Cottage/Osprey Bwthyn, near Auckland House (now gone) at first a workshop and then a cottage. Eben Ellis paid the rates).

In 1937 Daniel Arthur Thomas of Llandysul sold the house to David William Elthelbert Jones and Mr Jones was to call it 'Heulwen' (sunshine in Welsh).

In 1945 with votes for the house were T.R. Jones and Miss C. M. Garland. The house had been sold to T.R. Jones and he and A. E. Davies paid the rates in 1949.

In 1957 Mr Jones had been paying the rates, but there was a change and a new owner, and Jesse Richard Floyd paid the rates and was living there. The house then had a new name, 'Meirion'. Jesse Richard Floyd and Gladys Floyd had a vote for it in 1963. Rates were still being paid for the Osprey Garage (Electoral Registers and Rates Ceredigion Archives, and details of Sales from Deeds privately owned).

Today Meirion is a family home and the land with blocks of garages behind the house does not belong to it. The former Osprey Garage brick building between the house and the main road, severely damaged in a storm was sold and is now an 'Amusements'.

The author would like to thank the present owners for their kind help with this article.

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Tai'r Borth / Houses of Borth
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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