

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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MINFÔR Morfa Borth

On the beach side in the northern part of Borth High Street. Built after 1859 but before 1871. Formerly called Number 2 Libanus Place. For many years owned jointly with Bel-air. Home of a mariner and general carrier and then a butcher.



Minfôr is a full height two storey, single fronted, terrace house. It is under a gable roof parallel to the street and shares a chimney with Bel-air, each with two chimney pots. There is an attic floor lit by a window high up in the north gable end. The walls are rendered, and it is likely this is a rubble stone house. The front wall is plain and the three windows are the same size. They are sash windows with twelve lights. The house opens on to an area of hard standing enclosed each side by a rendered and shaped wall.

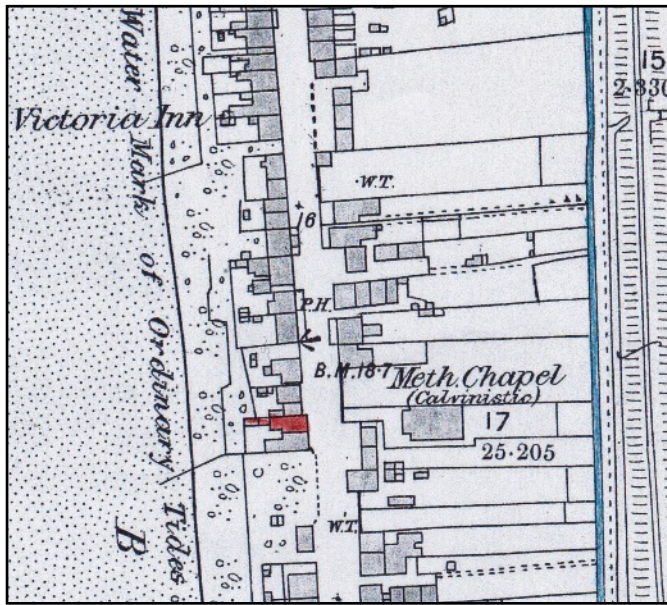
The ground for this house is the stone bank thrown up by the sea and called 'waste' by the Crown Manor who owned it as it was no use for farming. On a map of 1829 it was beach (National Archives LRRO 1/3060) The road had been there for centuries, it was used in the twelfth century and was a

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 this house was built there was a tap with spring water in the street close to the Cambrian Hotel (later Pantyfedwen now gone).

In 1848 the ground was still beach (Tithe Apportionments Map Llangihangel Genau'r Glyn, Cyfoeth Township - on line at CYNEFIN - National Library of Wales). However the ground had been divided off as an encroachment by the Crown Manor in 1859 but no house was drawn on the plot (Map 1859, National Archives LRRO 1/3060) It was Number 18a and a dotted line divided it up from 18 next to it as though both plots would be built on by the same owner.

By the 1871 Census Bel-air and Minfôr had been built. The Census did not have individual names for the houses, Bel-air was Number 1 Libanus Place and Minfôr was Number 2. They were named after the Calvinistic Methodist 'Libanus' Chapel (later the Gerlan) on the other side of the High Street which gave its name to a group of cottages and houses close to it on both sides of the street. Like Number 1 (Bel-air) it was taking in holiday visitors, the Cambrian News listed it as having visitors for nine weeks that summer. Their landlady was Mrs

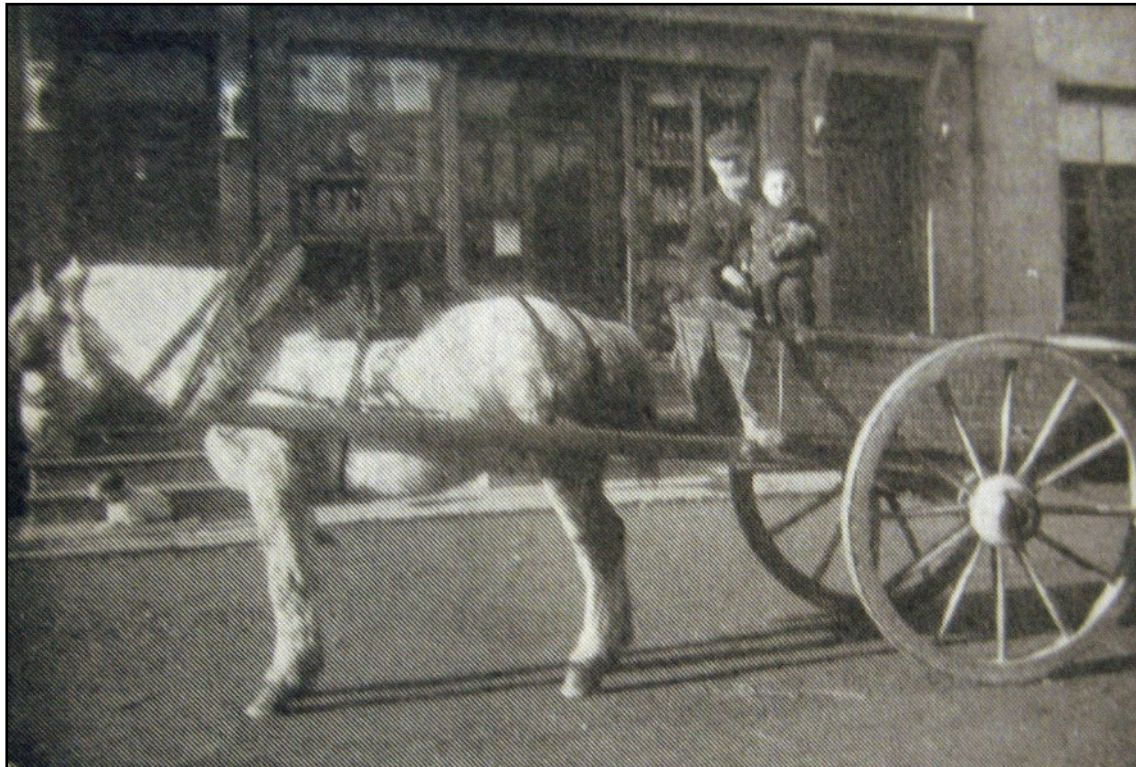
Williams. The visitors probably came on the train as Borth Station had opened in 1863. They came from as far away as Kidderminster, some from Gloucestershire, some from Montgomeryshire and many from Welsh places much closer such as Carno and Corris. Three families at once could be fitted in. This suggests the house we see now was built, not a small cottage. Mrs Williams was not in the 1871 Census as the house was empty so we do not know anything about her.



LEFT Marked in red is the Lewis's home in 1886. It had extensions all the way to the back fence or wall and shared the yard with Bel-air. The surveyor had noted they both had the same owner. The house opened on to the street, and was part of a terrace as it is today. Somewhere in the buildings

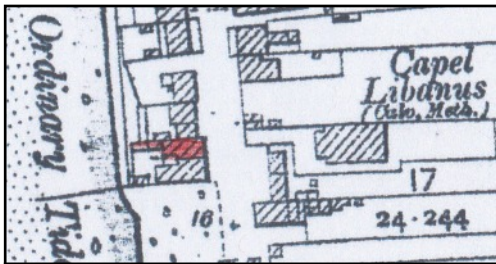
by the yard would have been its Ty Bach - outside lavatory. There was one sea defensive fence, probably rows of stakes driven into the stone bank, and shared with neighbours. (Detail from the 25 inch Ordnance Survey Map surveyed in 1886 and published in 1888. Cardiganshire III.10)

In 1880 Mrs R (Richard) Lewis was the landlady. Visitors came for ten weeks, some from as far away as London and Birmingham. In the 1881 Census living in Minfôr was a 35 year old mariner, Evan Lewis, he was local, born in Borth, and so was his wife Margaret. They had a daughter Anne, Mrs Griffiths. Evan Lewis was a successful man, by 1910 he owned

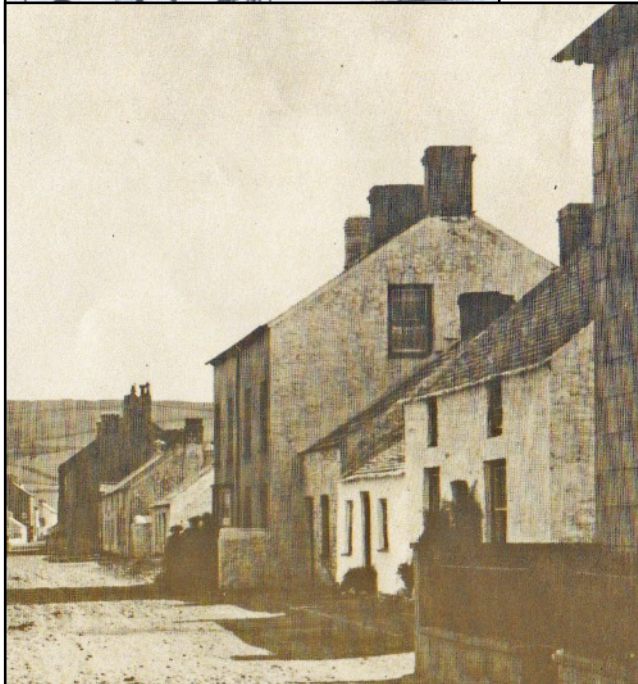


Evan Lewis outside Boston House (then a shop) with his 'carrier's cart'. (Picture courtesy of Y Tincer, April 1980 - it had been sent in by a reader).

not only Minfôr but Libanus Cottage which had useful pasture for his horse and two other cottages on the other side of the street. He was then a 'general carrier' and was 65 years old having retired from the sea.



LEFT Little had changed in 1904, despite the bad storm in 1896, the buildings in the yard were still there, and the yard was shared again, though there was then a very small enclosed inner yard. (Ordnance Survey Map as before, revised 1904, published 1905)



LEFT This is a detail from a postcard dated about 1895. Minfôr is the fourth from the right, with a simple front as it has today. However it had two chimneys so it had plenty of warm rooms. The dark shapes outside are people that I think the photographer moved off the road. (Postcard Private Collection)

In 1910 for a tax planned but not levied, the house was valued at £170 - a little less than Bel-air at £210. There would have been £5.10s.6d. to pay £6 gross. Evan Lewis's daughter Anne's husband was a sailor, and in the 1911 Census he was away. She was then 40 years old and in the house with two children; Jenan Morgan Griffiths aged 3 and Mary Aldyth Griffiths aged 1.



Another early postcard shows the second chimney which was brick and the sash windows. (Postcard private collection)

Sometime about 1922 the 'Illustrated Borth Guide' advertised furnished apartments to let, and Minfôr offered two bedrooms and two sitting rooms (Aberystwyth Public Libaray). In 1925 Evan Lewis was still the owner and occupier of the house and paid the rates.

In 1934 and 1938 Evan B. Lewis paid the rates.

With a vote for the house in the General Election of 1945 was Francis Trefor Humphreys. In 1949 he paid the rates. Mrs

Humphreys was the treasurer of the Borth Music Lovers, and on the committee of the Borth Women's Institute. Mr Humphreys was on the committee of the Football Club, and on the parish council (Borth Review, National Library of Wales). He was still paying the rates in 1963, and had a vote for the house together with his wife Sybil. Mr Humphreys had a butcher's

shop in the High Street, he had been a butcher for 46 years and he retired in 1974 (Y Tincer, May 1986).

The house name, Minfôr is Welsh and means 'edge of the sea'.



The pair of houses in 2009. The present owner has noticed that the party wall with Bel-air is very insubstantial which probably indicates this pair of houses were built at the same time and by the same owner. They share a chimney, and the spacing of the upper windows is the same. In 1886 when they were both in the same ownership, in Bel-air was the wool manufacturer and weaver, Thomas Gough Thomas and in Minfôr was the mariner, later carrier, Evan Lewis.



LEFT The rear of the house from the beach. It had an extension on its north side in 1886, and there is one there today, a full two storeys high nearest the main house. This has a picture window which has a fine view of the sea. There is a small dormer window for the attic floor of the house, and a small modern window below the eaves. There is a narrow passageway to the house beside the extension, and a high fence or wall gives it privacy. Wooden panels protect the ground floor windows of the extension from the sea.



LEFT The ground floor at the end of the extension is wider than the upper floor.

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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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