

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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NATHANIEL HOUSE

Morfa Borth - the Marsh harbour

At the south end of Borth High Street on the east side. Home of master mariner Captain Thomas Davies, an enterprising and successful seaman who had a bakery business and built a bakery next to his house. The house replaced a small cottage there in 1848 tenanted by a John Davies.



Nathaniel House is two storeys, and double fronted. It goes back quite a long way making a substantial home. The walls are exposed rubble stone. In the front is a single storey porch with a hipped roof with a door on its north side. It is modern and rendered. The dark brick chimney is on the north side of the roof and is rendered and has two chimney pots.



LEFT Rounded stones from the beach are in these walls, with some large squared stones on the outside edge. Above the windows are dark coloured bricks. All the windows are modern and do not have the pattern of old sash windows with a central bar.

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The front garden is small and enclosed by a low wall topped with slate. The house originally had a brass strip outside but this has gone.



LEFT Some of the rubble stonework is quite random



LEFT If compared with The Limit next door the upper windows are set lower, suggesting it may not have been built at the same time.

The ground for this house is on the pebble embankment thrown up by the sea, and called 'waste' because it was no use for farming. The Crown manor owned the ground. In 1829 there was nothing on this site - just unoccupied 'beach' (National Archives Map of the Crown Manor's 'waste' LRRO 1/3060). The road had been there for centuries 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.



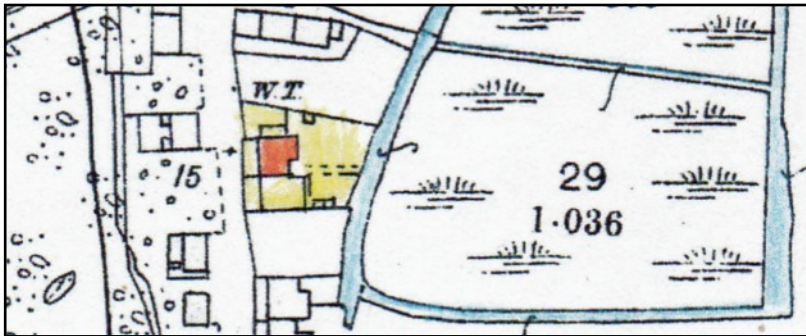
LEFT By 1848 there was a cottage and garden on this site, Number 47, of John Davies. His ground measured one rod - a quarter of an acre. The owner of the ground was John Benjamin, a carpenter from a family at Glanwern, at Ty Gwyn (formerly Cwm Cethin). The cottage was set back from the street, and opposite was the beach. It was the southernmost cottage on that side of the street (Detail copied from a photocopy of the Tithes Apportionment Map for Llanfihangel Genau'r Glyn, Cyfoeth Township on-line at CYNEFIN)

At that time there was a John Davies, a master mariner with shares in ships, and the commander of ships - but we do not know if this was him. A Captain Davies family was not in the list in the 1841 Census. In later Census's there were many Davies families in Morfa Borth and it is not possible to find which one lived in the cottage in 1851 or 1861 as none of the cottages had names at that time,

In the 1871 Census there was a Davies family living in right place in the list. A mariner's daughter Mary Davies aged 25, and sister in law of the place's owner, and Mary, John and Sarah Davies were the nephews and nieces of the owner. However as yet these are not a certain link to the Captain.

In 1879 Terry Davies writes that Captain Davies bought a 110 ton schooner, the Nathaniel for £360 with the help of a loan from the Ivorites. She was built in Caernarvon by William Griffiths. (Borth, A Seaborn Village). Nathaniel House is named after her. In the 1881 Census this was the house of Captain Thomas Davies, a master mariner. He was 30 years old so born about 1851, and he had lost his wife. There was a small baby daughter Kate Mary with a nursemaid, Jane Jones aged 26 his sister in law. His brother, another master mariner Richard Davies was in the house and Jane Davies his sister was visiting him. The address in the census was Number 2 Cambridge

Place (Shipping Register, Ceredigion Archives).



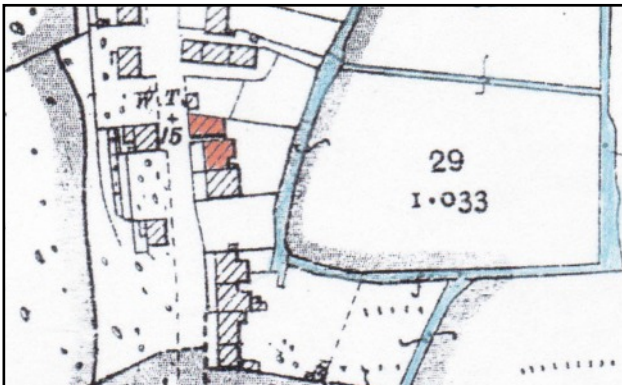
LEFT In 1886 Nathaniel was a substantial house.- with an extension on the back. There was a small addition on the north side of the house too, and a tiny building in the garden. One of these was

probably the Ty Bach - outside lavatory. The garden stretched down to the brook, a footpath is marked and interestingly the garden was shared with the house next door, now The Limit as both had the same owner. The curlicues explained that the pasture over the brook and the one to the south of it also belonged with these houses (Detail from the 25 inch Ordnance Survey Map surveyed in 1886 and published in 1888. Cardiganshire NW III.10).

In the 1891 Census just one daughter was in the house, Katie Davies aged 13, and the Census address was not Nathaniel, but still Cambridge Place. In 1892 Captain Davies was the master of the schooner Cecil Brindley, and he owned the schooner Pluvier as well as being master of the schooner Nathaniel of Aberystwyth, and he took his wife on a coastal voyage on the ship. (Terry Davies, Borth; A Maritime History). He would have made a good living.

In the 1901 Census the Captain was not there, possibly away at sea. His wife was there with three of their children. In 1902 he was the uncle of Elizabeth Jones of Cambridge Place and gave her away at her wedding (Cambrian News Feb. 21)

By 1904 he had become a retired mariner and set up a bakery, building the bakery beside Nathaniel and it had to be close to the house to fit on to his ground.



LEFT This was the house and bakery in 1904. They are marked in red. The garden is still shared by both houses, often a sign that the same person owned both. In 1907 the Captain advertised himself as a 'Baker and Confectioner' (Detail from the 25 inch Ordnance Survey Map revised in 1904 and published in 1905, Cardiganshire NW III.10 and Guide Book To Borth, Aberystwth Public Library



ABOVE Nathaniel and The Bakery by then the Bakery Flats in 2015.

In 1910 for a valuation for a tax planned but not levied Nathaniel was valued at £153. There would have been £5.10s 6d to pay, £6.10s gross. That would be the house there today. Captain Thomas Davies owned it and lived there. He also had his bakehouse next door valued at £270, with his coach house on the other side of the street, a stable at the street end of the cottages with Myfanwy with an employee living in it, (now Y Bwthyn) and a breadshop at Wellington Place now near Manchester House (Ceredigion Archives T/DV/18 and map at the National Library of Wales).

In the 1911 Census Captain Thomas called himself a ‘master baker’ and employer who worked at home (i.e. in his bakery adjacent to his house.) He wed his second wife Mary Jane in 1887, She was born in Talybont and was eleven years younger than him. He was born in Borth about 1846 to 1848, and so were their children, Katie J. Davies born in 1881, from his first marriage, John James Davies born in 1888, Bertha M. Davies born in 1890, Thomas L. Davies born in 1895 and aged 16 working in the bakery, and David Gwilym Davies born in 1897.

The Captain was still paying the Rates in 1925 and 1934 as the owner of Nathaniel and the bakery employing a baker and in 1926 it was still in business (Trades Directory South Wales, Ceredigion Archives)

Terry Davies was told by Jac Richards that the Captain read lessons in Chapel, possibly the Libanus as he was at the funeral of its minister the Rev. J. C. Evans in April 1924 (Cambrian News). He was adored by the ladies, and adored them too, and was a good seaman and sailed his dinghy up and down Borth Bay in his eighties.

By 1925 paying the Rates for the Bakehouse next door was John M. Evans, and it became ‘Evans Bakery’ until 1959. Thomas Davies still had his coach house.

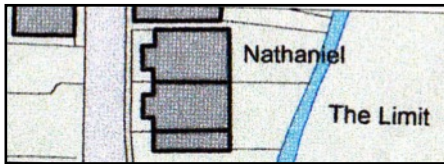
Paying the Rates for the house in 1949 and 1957 was Catherine (Katie) J. Davies (Ceredigion Archives).

After 1959 the two Davies ladies living in Nathaniel allowed Clifford Evans of Cliff’s Bakery next door to use part of their garden. One was Miss Kate Davies, Auntie Katie to the baker’s

three girls. She was very strict and wore a white bonnet and an apron - having aprons of various colours according to her occupations round the house. She was a Wesleyan Methodist of Borth's Shiloh Chapel and one of the girls remembers seeing her dining room laid out when the Minister was coming to lunch. Normally visiting children were only allowed in the scullery. Miss Kate Davies did not marry but her sister had married a butcher. Miss Davies still liked to visit the Bakery even though she did not own it. (Courtesy of Mrs Gwyneth Dickinson)

Mr Lewis paid the rates for Nathaniel in 1963. There was no one with a vote for the house that year (Electoral Registers and Rates Ceredigion Archives).

By 1975 Nathaniel House had a substantial section added on the rear, as did The Limit next door. The former brook - by then a ditch - was close to the houses and limited their amount of garden. Each house had its own garden by then (Historic Maps On-line)



LEFT Nathaniel House on a modern Council Map. It is very close to its northern boundary where the 'Bakery

Flats' were built and is the full width of its site (Detail from a map courtesy of Councillor Ray Quant who provided it for research for a village event).



LEFT It is the centre house in this photograph of 2019. Its first floor has been considerably extended and there is a lean-to of a single storey. Interestingly on the roof is a chimney.

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Tai'r Borth / Houses of Borth
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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