

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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ON THE FORMER PANTYFEDWEN SITE.

Morfa Borth – The Marsh Harbour

Plans agreed for re-development of the site, 21 January 1976. Built after Pantyfedwen was demolished in 1978/79



Numbers 1, 2 and 3 Morlan Terrace, February 2016

MORLAN TERRACE

Five terraced single fronted houses on the main road (Princess Street). The Welsh name means ‘Sea Bank’. Number 1 is on the north end of the row. These are two storey houses under a gable roof of a slate colour parallel with the main street. Each house has an upper window under the eaves and one below and these are canted bay windows set under an overhang of the roof. They are double glazed and the larger front windows are in two lights on the pattern of old bay windows. The upper windows will have a view over the



bay. Each house shares a slate coloured lean-to roof over its front door with its neighbour, supported by simple brackets.

At the rear this is a sloping site at the rear of the pebble

embankment. Each house has its own back door with a window alongside and steps lead down to the ground. The houses have small back garden areas enclosed by wooden fencing with gates into Pantyfedwen Clos. A householder is impressed how well insulated the houses are – they keep warm in the coldest winter. There are no garages with these houses but they have a marked parking space on the roadway at the back.



FLATS AND A FORMER TOURIST OFFICE.

This stands on the corner of the main street (Princess Street) and the Cambrian Terrace, and is a detached three storey building with a further attic floor under the roof. The roof is hipped with two prominent dormer windows facing the main street, and one on the east side. The walls are rendered. There are passages on either side of it to access Pantfyfedwen Clos at the rear. Facing the main street are flats with one entrance at the flat on the northern end. A kind of strip like a string course is used above the lowest flat, and this continues round the corner of the building. There is a high window on the northern side of the building. Beneath the building is the pebble bank built up by the sea, and the base will have been strengthened by the very large Cambrian Hotel (Grand Hotel) which formerly stood there. An angle was been created as the building turns from the main street into Cambrian Terrace. A glass door now gone opened into the Council's Tourist Information Office on the ground floor. Today (2016) two front doors to flats have replaced this. They open on to the street with no steps.

Flats continue above it each with two windows. Running from the front door a low fence protects the ground floor of this side of the building. On the south side of the building overlooking Cambrian Terrace are six flats each with two windows. The ground floor on the east side has the remains of a front door that appears to be acting as a window as the



light in the top opens. Around the base of the walls is a strip of very dark brick. This is alongside hard standing. On the east side of the roof the dormer window will have a good view across to the hills beyond the Cors Fochno

bog. It is obvious that the architect has carefully matched the height and style of this building with the end of the Cambrian Terrace opposite - Taliesin House and Uppingham House. They too are three storey with dormer windows.

TY PANTYFEDWEN

Along the north side of the Cambrian Terrace are eight terraced houses, Numbers 13 to 20, number 13 is on the west end of the row. Numbers 19 and 20 are set back further from the



Pantyfedwen Terrace in March 2016. The row leads down nearly to Borth Railway Station, a contrast in red brick.

posts reach the ground. The first four houses from the west, sea end, have six solar panels on their roofs. The windows have the pattern of casements. The front doors are modern plastic. There are no steps down to the street, and the base of the walls have a small dark strip. There are no garages but parking outside on the street on a generous area provided of hard standing pavement.

road. Porches are above their front doors which are grouped in pairs. The westernmost has a gable roof of a slate colour at right angles to the houses filled in as a plain shape at the top. It is supported on posts. This is similar to those on the Pantyfedwen Clos houses. The next pair of houses have a lean-to slate coloured roof for their porch. The

CLOS PANTYFEDWEN

This was built on land behind Ty Pantyfedwen and the Morlan Terrace, on the former garden of the Cambrian Hotel which by 1888 was a bowling green.



The rear of the Pantyfedwen Terrace in March 2016. Each house has a private yard enclosed by a wooden fence, opening with a gate into the passage behind. A back door leads out into this yard, and at intervals are very solidly built and roofed outbuildings, their walls rendered. On the right are the rears of houses on the north side of the Pantyfedwen Clos, also with private yards.

On the south side, Numbers 1 and 2, and Numbers 3 and 4, are slightly larger than the others. On the north side there was room for three semi-detached buildings; Numbers 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10. They have rendered walls but no garages. Each has a drive in which to park a car. The front garden area is open to the street. Access is a roadway to Cambrian Terrace emerging near the front of Borth Station. Foot access from the main street is by passages either side of the large corner building.



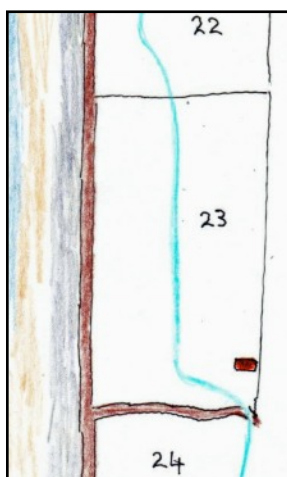
LEFT These are the semi-detached houses on the south side of the Clos. The front gardens are open plan, and some have grass and flowers. There are no garages with these houses.

Numbers 5,6,7 and 8 each have six solar panels on their roof. They have gable roofs parallel with the street. Each has an upper window reaching the eaves in the casement pattern and there are larger windows below. The modern front doors are grouped together under a gable roof of a slate colour at right angles to the houses. Over the doors the gable end is plain but the barge boards end in a decorative way. These roofs are supported by brackets. The front doors open with no steps which would allow wheelchair access, and are modern and of white plastic and match those of all the other houses in the estate. The the gable ends of the houses have a small upstairs window.



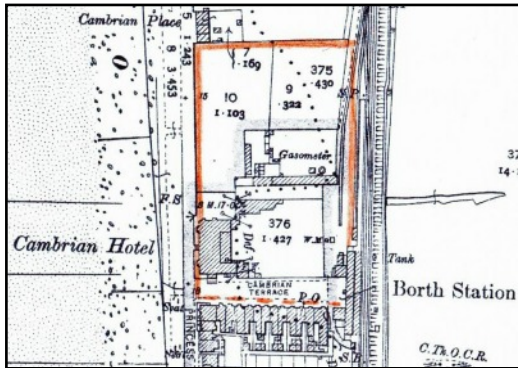
There are six semi-detached houses on the north side of the Clos. Though they do not have garages there is plenty of hard standing to park cars on. The front gardens are open plan.

The ground for these houses was enclosed in 1809 by a local lawyer called Big John (John Lewis) from the pebble embankment thrown up by the sea, and called ‘waste’ because it was no use for farming, and the marsh ground beside it (also called ‘waste’) which was reclaimed for pasture with drainage ditches. Lewis’s ground measured 4 acres, 3 rods and 20 perches, that is almost five acres, and across it ran a brook on the old course of the River Leri. He had a cottage on it called Terfynau (boundaries) – where the railway station is today. There were no other cottages. On a map of 1829 the ground was Number 23. A rent of £16 had to be paid every year to the Crown manor who owned the ground, but there was an option to buy for twice that, and a note with the map said that John Lewis had bought it at a Manor Court Leet in 1809. 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. Fresh water for the old cottages and houses came from the brook and for fuel villagers could dig peat on the far side of the River Leri near Ynys Fergi.



John Lewis’s land was sold to the developer Thomas Savin who brought the railway and built the Railway Station opened to passengers in 1863, and the great Cambrian Hotel and Cambrian Terrace. The Hotel had large grounds (nearly two acres) for tennis,

croquet, pleasure gardens, a bowling green, and possibly a walled garden. However, the Hotel did not do well, it had a hundred rooms, but often many were empty. The owner in the 1920s needed to raise money by selling off land in its northern garden beyond the long range of buildings (coach house and garages etc.) for bungalows and houses. In 1930 he called himself a Hotel and Land Development Company Ltd. The first back lane bungalows and roadside homes were built by 1927.



The Cambrian Hotel in 1904 John Lewis's land is outlined in red. On the site of the hotel building and its back garden (a bowling green by 1888) is the Pantyfedwen estate. Detail from the 25 inch Ordnance Survey Map published in 1905, Cardiganshire III.10)

In 1947 the hotel became a Conference Centre for the Urdd Gobaith Cymru. Mr M. D. J. James, a Cardiganshire man in London bought the hotel and gave it to them. He was a pioneer of the cinema, a philanthropist and was eventually knighted. He set up a trust to support Wales named after the moorland farm he came from, describing a valley with a birch tree in Welsh. (Sir Ifor A. E. Owen, Borth Review, National Library of Wales)



LEFT There were no buildings behind the great hotel - the Terrace and the station are on the far left. (A detail from a watercolour courtesy of the Borth Station Museum).



The Cambrian Hotel as Pantyfedwen

(Amgueddfa Ceredigion Museum)

In 1962 called Pantyfedwen Hall it was a conference centre, with hot and cold in all bedrooms, spacious lounges, three dining rooms, a games room, tennis courts, garages and free parking. Manager M. W. Jones. (Guide to Borth, Ceredigion Archives)

The end of Pantyfedwen came when the building was too big and expensive to maintain and had become run down. In 1971 there were plans to make some of the garages into flats, and provide a shop and launderette. However by January 1975 plans had been put forward to re-develop the site (Planning applications, County Council Minutes, Ceredigion Archives). The great building was taken down and

in January 1979 just the porch was left standing, and the outer wall with its railings (Cambrian News, 2.2.1979).



Last to be demolished was the corner of the hotel at the entrance to Cambrian Terrace, with a convenient grand main entrance not far from the station for guests arriving by train. Photograph by courtesy of Y Tincer.

However by January 1975 the Council Planning Department were aware that the Pantyfedwen building was to be demolished, and the site re-developed. In January 1976 a developer had submitted a layout plan which was approved though the developer had to display a plaque in an appropriate position (County Council Planning Department Minutes, Ceredigion Archives). Today

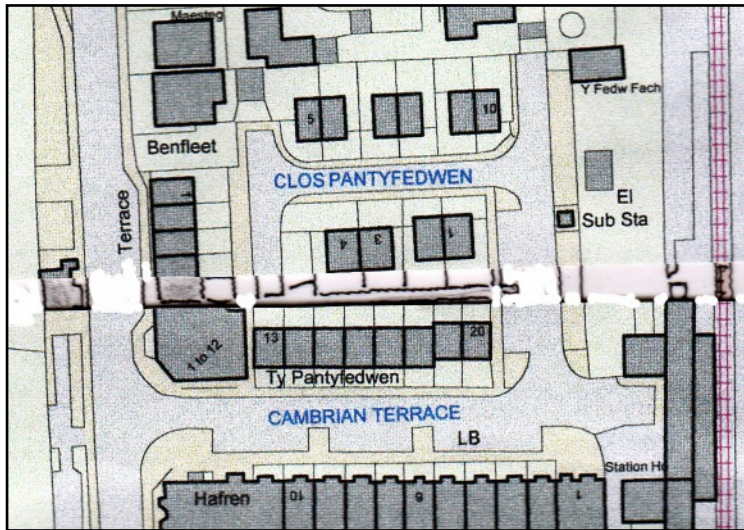


there are three plaques. All three are on the face of the tall corner building. It is possible that the Uppngham School plaque came from the old Cambrian Hotel (later the Grand Hotel and Pantyfedwen) because that is where many masters and pupils and their servants stayed and where the pupils were fed. The school used some outbuildings, and built a large wooden 'classroom' close to the Hotel. An outbreak of typhoid in their home in Rutland had obliged the headmaster to re-locate the school to a healthier place.



LEFT Pupils of the school outside the back of the Cambrian Hotel, and on the right the wooden building put up for classrooms.

(Photograph by courtesy of the Archivist of Uppingham School).



LEFT The layout of the estate on a modern Council Map.

(Map courtesy of Councillor Ray Quant who provided it for research for a village event. When making a copy two sheets had to be fitted together causing some hand drawn lines in the centre, apologies for this).

These plaques were mounted on the wall of the tall corner building when it was a tourist centre. The bottom one explains the financial support of the project.



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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