

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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PEBBLES

Morfa Borth - the Marsh Harbour

A master mariner and ship owner's family home and later a private hotel. Formerly called Diana. Possibly built about 1880 but up and running in 1881.



Pebbles is a tall three story house under a hipped roof parallel to the road. Dormer windows light another floor under the roof. There is a rendered chimney on the north end of the roof. In the 1911 Census it was listed with fifteen main rooms suggesting it was built with holiday accommodation in mind. The north side of the house has a party wall with York House. The walls are rendered and it is likely they are of rubble stone. It presents a modern appearance, its windows are all modern as is its porch. There is a narrow front garden with a low wall, and on the south the house opens directly into the former lane to St Matthew's Church. There is an entrance for guests there.

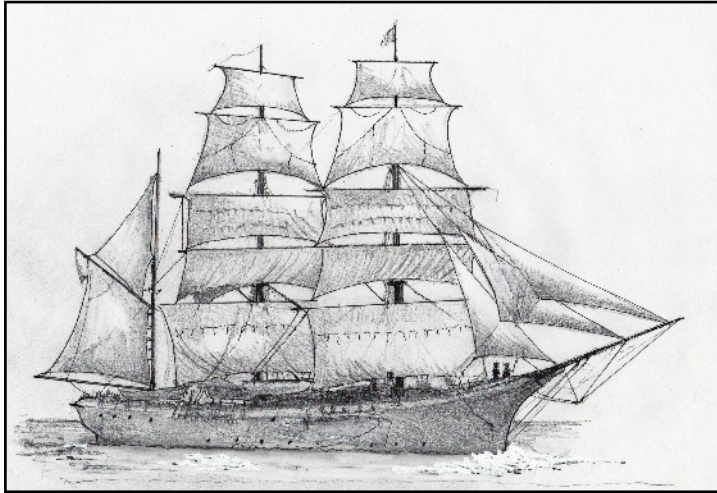


LEFT The rear of the house in 2017. The roof with its dormer window echoes that at the front of the house. A staircase for emergencies begins at an upper window and can be accessed from the first floor as well. The windows are interesting in that some of them have the small lights and design of old sash windows.

On the ground floor an extension has a porch leading into a small walled yard.

A garage for the hotel is a large breeze block building on the site of former Assembly Rooms and later a garage repair shop. A small lane runs between it and Pebbles yard.

Living in the house in 1881 was the family of master mariner Captain Jenkin Davies. He was the commander and eventual owner of the barque 'Diana' built in Devon in 1860, registered in Aberystwyth and wrecked at Freemantle Australia in July 1878. He called his house after her.

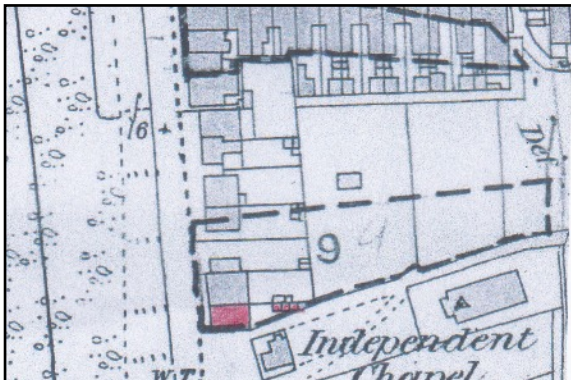


LEFT A barque which was an ocean going vessel which would have earned a good living for its commander.

Captain Davies was born at Llansaintffraed and was 48 in 1881. With him in Diana was his wife Margaret. She was local, born at Llancynfelin, and two sons; David James Davies 13, Owen Jenkin Davies 11 and two

daughters; Mary Eleanor Davies 9 and Margaret Catherine Jane Davies who was 1. As the two sons and eldest daughter were born at Llancynfelin it suggests the family had moved to

Borth by 1880. They employed a domestic servant Elizabeth Jones aged 21 and born at Bontgoch (Census). The Captain was still at the house in 1895 (Kelly's Directory Ceredigion Archives) But by 1901 he had died and his wife was using her house with many rooms and was listed as a 'lodging house keeper' (Census).



LEFT Marked in red is Diana in 1886. It was not as wide as York House next door which was probably built before it. This detail is from a map formerly owned by the Council and

someone has put in an enclosure with dashed lines marked 9. This was formerly the land of a lawyer John Lewis and it had no houses on it in 1848. By 1863 Lewis had sold it to Savin and it became part of the gardens of his 'Cambrian Terrace'. However, by then he had sold

some roadside land and some houses had been built there (Detail from the Ordnance Survey 25 inch Map, surveyed in 1886 and published in 1888, Cardiganshire III.10, Number 9 from the Tithe Apportionments Map of 1848 for Llanfihangel Genau'r Glyn, Cyfoeth Township - online at CYNEFIN)



LEFT This detail from a postcard shows a part of Diana on the right with its old porch with a finial, and its sash windows. There were iron railings on top of a low wall and the gate had been blocked against the sea. There had been a storm and stones had washed up over the road.



ABOVE Diana opened directly on to the beach. This detail from an old postcard shows the

side of the building (Picture courtesy of Aberystwyth Public Library).



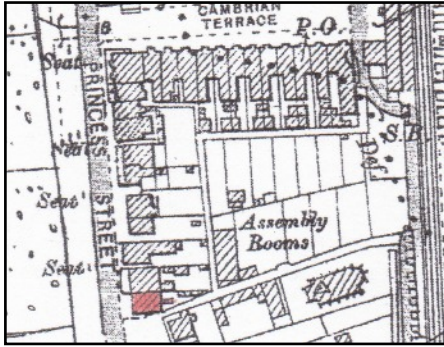
LEFT This was the Davies's Diana in 1915, a detail from a family photograph. The house is on the right. There were four tall chimneys, and two tall pointed roofs above the bay windows (Photograph courtesy of Mrs F. H. B. Renny)

For a tax in 1910 planned but not levied Diana was valued at £420 with £16.30 to pay and £19 gross. Mrs Margaret Davies and a daughter owned it and the site was valued at £38.

Sometime after 1922 furnished apartments with seven bedrooms and four

sitting rooms were advertised to let to holiday makers ('Illustrated Borth Guide', Aberystwyth Public Library).

In 1925 the owners were Captain Davies daughters, Mary and Margaret. In August 1939 one of them gave a recipe for a sponge cake for a booklet in aid of St Matthew's Church Bazaar published by the Cambrian News (Ceredigion Archives).



LEFT By 1904 the hotel had a porch at the back and opened on to the road. The Assembly Rooms - a public hall for dancing, suppers and card games - had been built behind it with a narrow track in between (Detail from the 25 inch Ordnance Survey Map revised in 1904 and published in 1905, Cardiganshire III.10)

But in 1945 there was another family at the hotel which was still called Diana. With votes for it at the General Election were Mr James and Miss Edith M. Harris and Joan D. Hallam. Mr Harris was elderly and died aged 85 in October 1947.

In 1949 Miss Edith Harris was the proprietor and advertised it as a private hotel with hot and cold in all bedrooms, five minutes from the Golf Club and with 'personal supervision'. It had a telephone, Borth 62.

In 1952 Mrs E. M. Castle was the proprietress and paid the rates. Had Miss Harris married perhaps?

In 1963 she paid the rates. That year with a vote for the hotel - still called Diana, was Jessie Adderley (Rates and Electoral Registers, Ceredigion Archives).

In 1968 it was still a hotel and the proprietor was J. Thompson and he had a table licence for a restaurant there.

Today it is still a hotel doing bed and breakfast. It has lost its four chimneys, pointed roofs above the bay windows and its old sash windows and now has a modern look and the name 'Pebbles'.

"DIANA" PRIVATE HOTEL



Established over half a century.

Directly on Front. Western Aspect.
Commanding an unrivalled view of
Cardigan Bay. Convenient for Golf,
Tennis, Station and P.O. Excellent
Cooking and Service. Personal Super-
vision. Moderate Inclusive Terms.

Proprietresses :

THE MISSES DAVIES

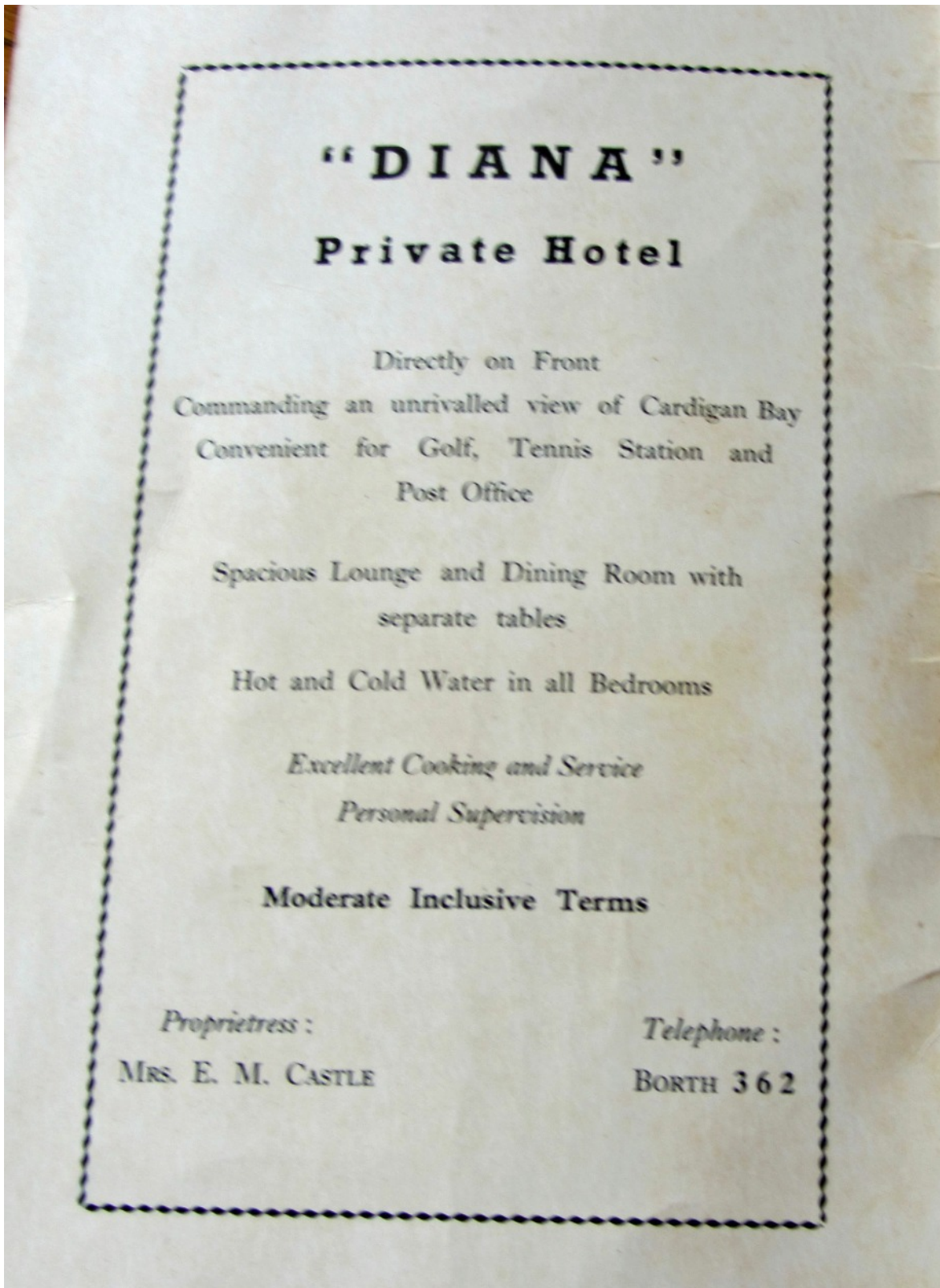
ABOVE An advertisement for the hotel of Miss Mary and Miss Margaret Davies who were running it by 1925 and until 1945. It had sash windows and directly across the road was the beach. It may not yet have had a telephone as no number was given. The name of the hotel on the south wall was very prominent.



LEFT A photograph of 'Diana'. There was a tall chimney on both sides of the roof at the front, and on the north side is another dormer window, and a chimney at the rear. There would have been plenty of coal fires and warmth for the rooms. Today all the chimneys have gone (Ceredigion Archives).

BELOW This building is on the site of the Assembly Rooms - and a similar size- when it was a former repair shop for a garage on the High Street. Today it is a garage for Pebbles. The rendered stone walls on the left edge the Pebbles yard and contain many rounded stones from the beach. This is a composite of two photographs to get all the building in the picture which was taken in 2009.





An advertisement for 'Diana' in 1962 from a guide to 'Borth Ceredigion' 1s. 6d.
(Private Collection)

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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