

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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THE RAILWAY INN

Morfa Borth - the Marsh Harbour

Previously 'Dart House' and the 'Railway Villa' with modern extensions. Today a public bar, a restaurant, and a home.



ABOVE The Railway Inn in 2009



LEFT The old Railway Inn was once next door at Brookfield on the left in this photograph. Captain David Hughes who had set it up by 1865 handed it over to his daughter Catherine and her husband John Hughes. The tall Railway Inn goes back quite a way on its plot with a three storey extension on the rear.

Today the Railway Inn is a three storey building under a hipped roof parallel to the street. It has a chimney in the centre of the roof with room for six flues and two have chimney pots. This is a building in two halves that do not match as they were built at different times. It has single storey extensions along the front and another on the south side, and they open into the street.



ABOVE The back of the Railway Inn in 2018. Above the public bar and restaurant is a home.

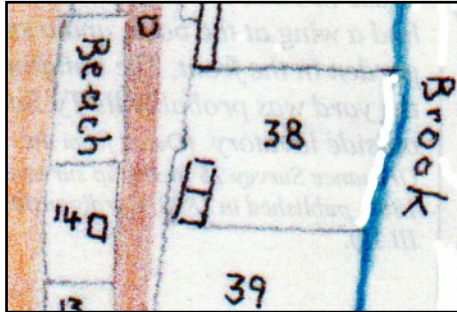
RIGHT The three storey extension butts so closely up to Brookfield that the chimney that they share is embedded in it.



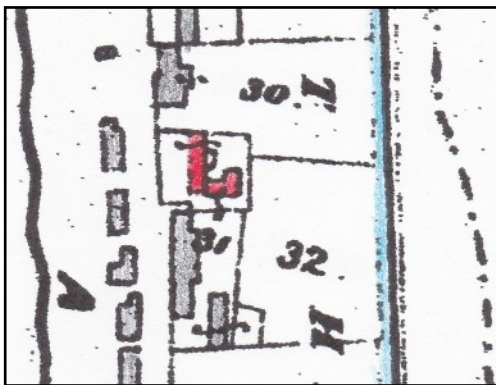
BELOW There is a long single storey extension on the south of the building. The area nearest the street is a modern well lit dining room for the restaurant.



The ground on which the Inn stands is the stone embankment built up by the sea and today beneath the floor is sand. The road was centuries old, a quick way to North Wales using a ferry across the River Dovey, and it had become a turnpike road by the 1770s. The stone bank was considered to be 'waste' by the Crown Manor who owned it, and when plots were enclosed (encroachments) to build cottages the manor charged rent or would sell them.



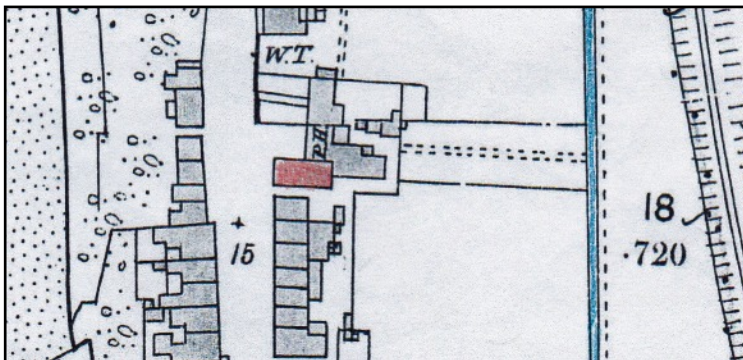
LEFT In 1829 the plot on which the Railway Inn stands was Number 38. This was sold to David Daniel, a master mariner, and ship owner by the manor court of Llanfihangel in 1821. On it were two cottages or houses (Detail after a watercolour map, National Archives LRRO 1/3060).



LEFT By 1848 David Daniel had built himself a sizeable new house on the street edge of his plot - Welfare House stands there today - and the 1829 block of buildings marked in red, had been enclosed and sold to David Hughes (born 1797 or 1798) next door, another master mariner. (Tithe Apportionments Map, Llanfihangel Genau'r Glyn, Cyfoeth Township National Library of Wales)

This would become Saxatile on the north and Brookfield on the south. Brookfield was the original Railway Inn, and there were buildings behind it -

stables and a brew house could be expected.



LEFT In 1886 there was a new building fitted up against Brookfield, and it was called Dart House (Detail from the 25 inch Ordnance Survey Map surveyed in 1886 and published in 1888, Cardiganshire NW III.10).

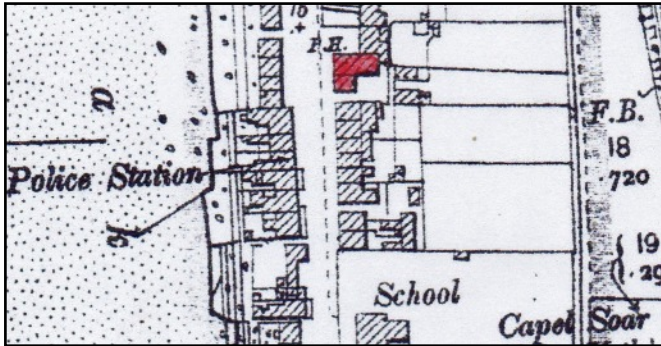
In 1871 the Cambrian News reported holiday visitors staying there. The retired master mari-

ner Captain David Hughes and his son in law who were running the Inn at Brookfield had enough money to build Dart House. Captain Hughes and his wife Catherine lived there until their deaths. It has become the left hand side of the tall front of the Railway Inn.

By 1891 it was the grocer's shop of a widow, Mary Jones. Living there too were her unmarried daughters Ann 24 and Mary 22 and her son David 19, a mariner. It is likely she was a tenant of the Hughes family (Census).

RIGHT Some of the stone wall of Dart House has been uncovered behind the main bar - and it has many rounded beach stones, some are surprisingly large.





LEFT By 1904 an additional building had been added - one of the cottages in the row to the south had been demolished to make way for it. Mrs Jones had taken her shop away to Boston House and the Hughes family decided to open a bigger Railway Inn (Detail from the 25 inch Ordnance Survey Map revised in 1904 and published in 1905, Cardiganshire NW III.10)



This happened after Catherine's death, and they called it the Railway Inn or Railway Hotel (Borth Review National Library of Wales). The 1901 Census listed a young licensed victualler at the newly set up Railway Inn called William Richards. He was aged 23 and from Penygroes Carnarvonshire, with a wife from Yorkshire called Letitia, also 23. The new not so tall building next door was called Railway Villa and living there was a widower from Carmarthenshire, James Phillips aged 57 and of 'independent means'. Also there were his two sons Samuel 11 and Maurice 9, a daughter Ann Jane Phillips and a 38 year old housekeeper also from Carmarthen. A descendant of the Hughes family writing in 1951 for the Borth Review said that 'Tom Phillips was the first landlord of the (new) Railway Inn. Was James's preferred name 'Tom'? Living next door it would be easy to keep an eye on the Inn.

LEFT The Railway Villa, with a very plain front (Amgueddfa Ceredigion Museum)

RIGHT The new Hotel up and running in 1901 beside it.

An advertisement on the side of the Railway Villa told visitors they would find a garage and a garden. There were six chimney pots for the tall Hotel - plenty of warmth for the customers staying there. This was a detail from a postcard and is much later in date than the photograph with the Railway Villa which is nearer 1900 (Private Collection).



In 1910 for a tax planned but not levied both the buildings were part of the Railway Hotel. They were valued at £690 and owned by Alsopp's Brewery and Co. John Davies was the landlord living there at the 1911 Census, and the place had nine main rooms. Under the Dart House was a cellar, but that was not counted in the rooms.

In 1925 Frederick Henry Wills Moore paid the rates for the premises, described as a 'house and an Inn'. He was the landlord of the Inn and had a garage and a garden at the back. There were still six Railway Cottages in the Terrace to the south.

In 1945 with votes for the house were George, Dorothy and Laura Sidgwick. Mrs Sidgwick ran the Inn.

In 1951 the account in the Borth Review describes an international ex-motorbike racing landlord called Mr H. C. Uzzell who was 'managing in the old tradition'. Good beer perhaps?

Mr Shanley paid the rates for the Railway Hotel, house and garden in 1957.

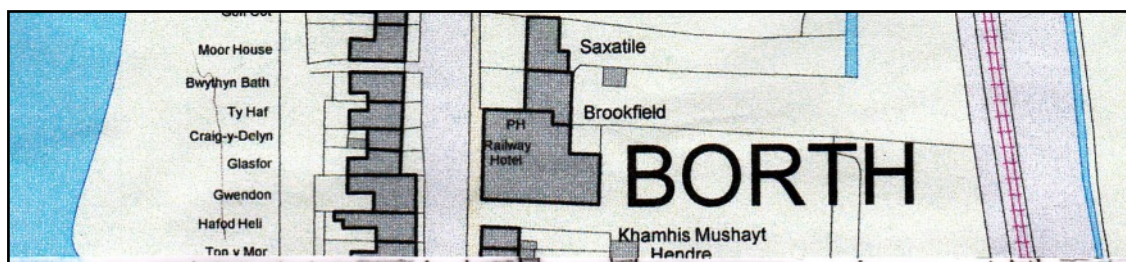
Miles, Dorothy, John Morris and Beatrice Lily Shanley had votes for it in 1963 (Electoral Registers and Rates, Ceredigion Archives).

In 1975 there was an annexe at the back and a garage. There was a terrace of other buildings along the northern boundary reaching almost to the old ditch. Beside the street was possibly one of the old terrace of cottages still remaining, the next door cottage had gone to allow a driveway to the rear of the Hotel. (Historical Maps On-line)

Considerable changes have happened since then. At some time the Railway Villa now part of the Inn downstairs was heightened to match the height of the old Dart House and its upper windows seem to be the same shape with modern windows for the new section above. The slab chimney is still there but with only two chimney pots remaining from the six. Only four of the terrace of six cottages remain - another one had gone.

The rear of the Inn has a roofed terrace for customers and a good sized car park nearly extending to the ditch. It is no longer a Hotel but has a public bar and a restaurant and upstairs is a home. One old feature that can only be seen in certain light is the remains of an advertisement on the Inn which has the word 'stables'. The Inn would have needed them. In 1865 long before cars, people, especially travellers coming from the ferry at Ynylas on horseback or in a horse drawn carriage, or local people coming into the village from farms would have been on horseback. The Friendship still had stables in 1910 (Aberystwyth Observer, 10th February).

BELOW A detail from a modern Council Map shows the present layout of the Hotel and its car park area. The buildings once along the northern boundary have gone (Map courtesy of Councillor Ray Quant)



The author would like to thank the present landlord for his 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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