

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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RHÔS

Morfa Borth, Borth Marsh

In the northern section of the village with the beach over the road. Built by May 1928 on roadside ground formerly belonging to the Cambrian Hotel, later Pantyfedwen.



LEFT Rhôs in 2009.

Rhos is a bungalow under a deep gable roof parallel to the street. It is likely that this building is brick. There is a slender brick chimney on the south gable end of the bungalow. In the front of the roof is a sizeable bank of dormer windows – with a window opening on to a balcony. This would allow a view over the

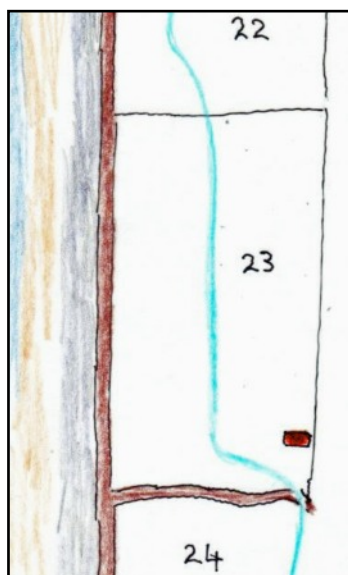
concrete defensive sea wall finished in 1956. It also lights a room or rooms in the roof. Below part of the balcony is an extension around the front door with an arch. There is a window on the north side of the arch which has one large light and two small ones above. The front wall is rendered. There is a hard standing drive leading to a gate. The bungalow is set back from the street allowing for a front garden which is edged by a low rendered wall. There is a green hedge just inside the northern section of this wall, and the boundary with Bodlondeb next door has a taller stone wall. The south wall of the house, also rendered has one ground floor and two upper floor windows. Alongside the south wall of the house is access to the rear by a hard standing drive plenty wide enough for a vehicle, with a garage beyond. This wall has a window for a room under the roof.



At the rear because of the sloping site Rhôs has two floors with a small extension and walls rendered with pebble dash. Above, in the roof the small chimney has two chimney pots (flues). The yard is enclosed by a breeze block wall which is not rendered. There is a wide gateway. Alongside is its garage opening on to the back lane with a very short driveway.

ABOVE The rear of Rhôs photographed in February 2016. The wide rear roof

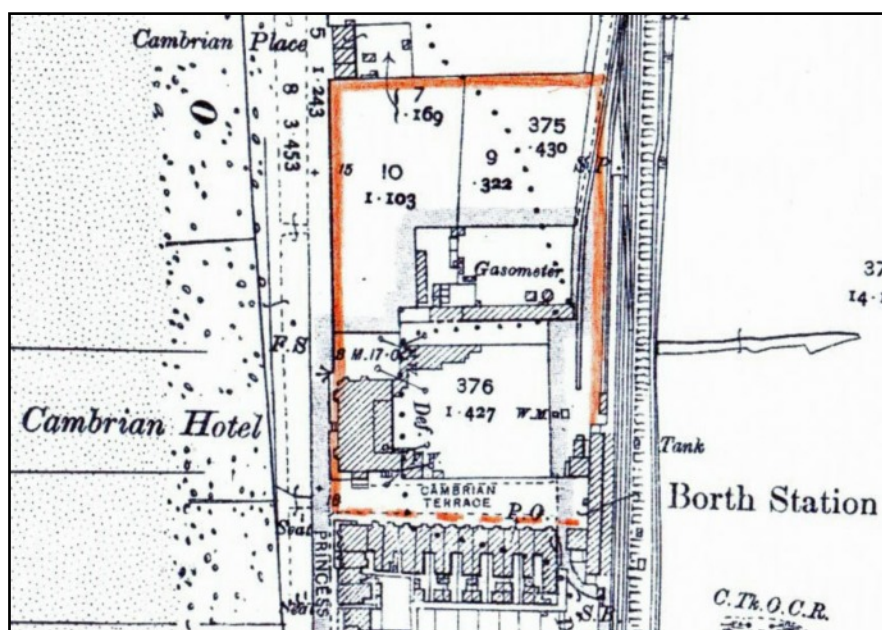
gives plenty of room at the back of this home which has a square ground plan. Its plot is wider than those of Trysordy and Erwau Glas.



The ground for this bungalow 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') could be reclaimed for pasture with drainage ditches. It was a field of 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. John Lewis had a cottage on it called Terfynau (boundaries) – where the railway station is today. There were no other cottages. On a map of 1829 it the ground was Number 23. A rent of £16s had to be paid every year to the Crown manor who owned the ground, but there was an option to buy it for twice that, and a note with the map said that John Lewis had bought it at a Manor Court Leet in 1809.

ABOVE A detail copied from the map of 1829. NALRRO 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. 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. However, by the time Rhos was built the homes had piped water and coal could come on the train.



John Lewis's land was sold to the developer Thomas Savin who brought the railway and built the Railway Station, the great Cambrian Hotel and Cambrian Terrace. The Hotel had large grounds 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

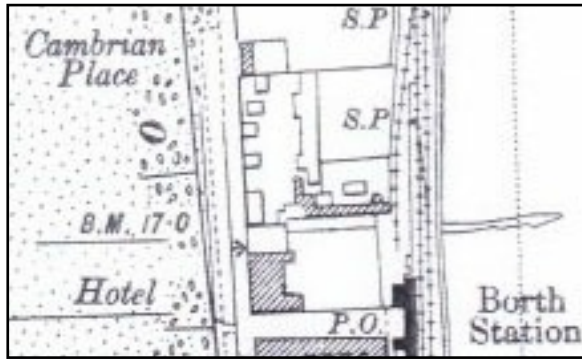
empty. Some land was sold off for building. The first time Rhôs appears in the Rates was in May 1928. The Misses James were the owners and occupiers.

In August 1934 Miss James of Rhos gave a recipe for Cheese Aigrettes for a recipe book published by the Cambrian News in aid of St Matthew's Church. (Ceredigion Archives)

Paying the Rates in 1938/9 were M. and E. James.

Francis H. James had a vote for the house in 1945.

Paying the Rates for Rhos in 1949 were F. H. and M. E. James. The bungalow was valued for Rates at £20.



LEFT This detail from an Ordnance Survey 6 inch map of 1945 shows how the hotel ground was divided up for the houses. Rhos is there at the top close to Bodlondeb of Cambrian Place. Also there are Tir-y-mor, Erwau Glas and Ebb Tide. Maesteg and Benfleet were drawn together. The strip for the homes behind is also marked, but not with individual houses or gardens.



LEFT A detail from a pre-1956 postcard called 'Sea View Terrace'. Rhôs is on the left, close beside Tir-y-mor. There was a dormer window in its roof and it had a tall slender chimney. In the foreground is the grassy, sandy beach. Erwau Glas is in the foreground.

The fronts of this row of houses might be vulnerable to storm damage from stones thrown up by the sea. However because they were set back from the road, another old photograph shows the stones did not reach the lower windows of the bungalows and houses.

The concrete sea wall and promenade was completed in May 1956, and in January 1957 the Aberystwyth Rural District Council charged the bungalows and houses because it now offered them protection from the sea. Rhôs and its garage was charged £75. This was more than houses in a terrace (£20), as this house's position on its plot would allow room for flooding. Many owners were angry about the 'unsightly sea wall' as their homes were less valuable as the ground floor could no longer see the sea - very important for seaside homes that could take in holiday makers or be retirement homes. (Ceredigion Archives ABR/HI/1/39, Correspondence) F.H. and M.E. James were paying the rates for the bungalow at that time and were probably living there.

Since the photograph above the front of the house has been altered to support an array of dormer windows opening on to a balcony for a view of the sea.

Francis H. James and Margaret Effie James had votes for the house in 1963 (Electoral Registers and Rates, Ceredigion Archives).

The name 'Rhos' is Welsh, and is a name found in the countryside for a moor, a heath or a plain.

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gan/by Beryl Lewis
[cyf/ref ADX/1629]

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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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