

# 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

*This work is for research and educational purposes only.*

# THE STATION MASTER'S HOUSE

## BORTH STATION

Borth Railway Station was opened to passengers on 1st. July 1863. It was a terminal at first until the line to Aberystwyth was completed. For twelve months an old wooden farm building was used as the station. The brick station was built in 1864, and a second line and two long sidings were added and the station was made a passing place for trains by 7 June 1864. There was also a shed big enough for three steam engines. It was owned and operated by the Cambrian Railways Company founded in 1864. (The Coast Lines of the Cambrian Railways, by C. C. Green. Wild Swan, 1993 p. 129)



*ABOVE The Stationmaster's House in August 2017 from the front of the Station.*

*LEFT It has a hipped roof.*

The Stationmaster's House has two storeys, it is built of brick with sandstone facings and is part of the station building. From the front of the station it forms a matching wing with the Refreshment Rooms. It was supplied with piped, fresh spring water from a reservoir that was built to supply water for the trains, the Cambrian Hotel and the Terrace and its gardens.

Unfortunately the stationmaster's house was not listed in the 1911 Census, so we do not know how many main rooms it had then, but unlike the Refreshment Rooms in 1868 it does not have a cellar, but still has three bedrooms, however the interior was gutted in the twentieth century and altered. The outer thick brick wall remains but can be damp.





*Two windows of the ground floor of the Stationmaster's house open on to the platform. These are still the old sash windows with four panes. There are nicely carved sandstone dressings around them.*

The stationmaster's house today is a private home. and has a private enclosed area with its front door on the south face of the building, the old doorway is boarded up, and a picture window



with a glazed door alongside is today's entrance.

*LEFT Inside the red fence is the yard belonging to the house. The old door is boarded up and the new large window and door can be seen behind the wall.*

*BELOW The entrance to the yard which has hard standing. A tall brick wall gives it privacy from Platform House. However both have had the same owner and inside the Stationmaster's House is a doorway into Platform House.*



The ground for the station formerly belonged to John Lewis, a local lawyer and was part of his 3 acres he had enclosed in 1803 from the shingle strip and the marsh alongside which with drainage ditches had become pasture. He bought the ground from the Crown who owned the manor as this ground was part of their 'waste'. His home, called 'Terfynau' (boundaries) was very



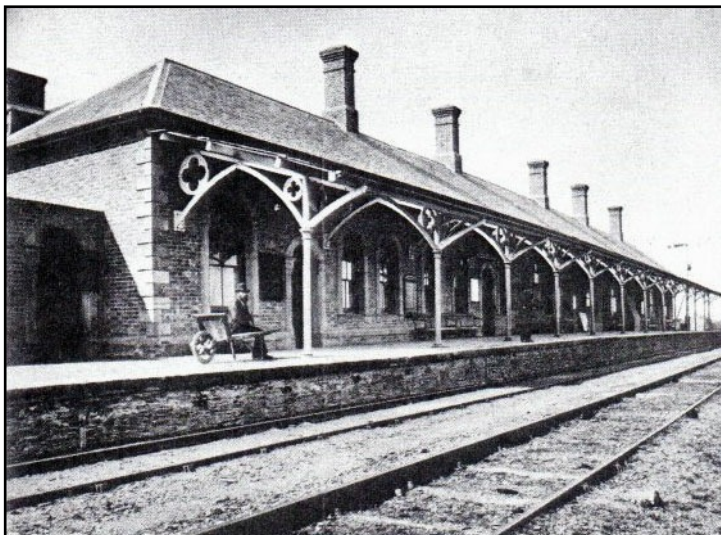


close to the present site of the station, he was a smallholder, and his house was used as an impromptu railway station when the line first reached Borth. A freshwater stream ran across the ground – previously the course of the River Leri. However when the station was built the ‘brook’ of fresh water that the villagers had used was diverted to the other side of the railway lines.

*LEFT The brickwork and sandstone details Today the room inside has a lower floor and is separate from the modern kitchen. This is*

*alongside the living room which now extends right across the house, with a large sash window at the station entrance end, and the large modern window and glazed door at the other.*

*RIGHT The house has one of the five tall chimneys. It has two chimney pots, so had two flues.*



*LEFT This is the station as it was originally. There was a canopy above the windows of the Stationmaster's House. The end nearest in the photograph was a waiting room with a door to the platform. The door has gone as it is now part of Platform House.*

Thomas Roberts was the first stationmaster, he and his wife Elizabeth had a small daughter, Harriet Anne who died aged 1 year and 7 months and was buried on 4 June 1866. He and his wife Elizabeth were both Welsh. He was born in Whitford, Flint in 1833, his wife in Llanbrynmair, Montgomeryshire. They were the same age. They had come from Wolverhampton, where their son Edward aged 9 was born about 1862. They had two

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other sons, Thomas and Arthur and a daughter Margaret J. all born in Borth. Mr Roberts spoke English, and taught villagers to speak some English. He was still there on Nov. 10 1871 when John Williams and his wife Margaret of Portland Street Aberystwyth apologised to Mr Roberts for slandering him and calling him a rogue and thief. (Cambrian News) In 1871 Mr Roberts was 38 years old (Census)

In July 1876 the stationmaster was Mr Robinson. (The Coast Lines of the Cambrian Railways, by C. C. Green. Vol. 1, Wild Swan, 1993 Page 130)

By 1881 Henry Stinchcombe was the stationmaster. He was an Englishman born in Hawkesbury, Upton, Gloucestershire in 1849. His wife Elizabeth was from the same place and she was four years older than her husband. They had a son Walter, born in Borth in 1887. They had come from Dyffryn in Merionethshire where their son John was born in 1875. They had a daughter Lucy born in Borth in 1882. (Census)

In July 1902 the station master was considered to be unsatisfactory by the Company but there was no way of removing him. (The Coast Lines of the Cambrian Railways, by C. C. Green. Wild Swan, 1993 Page 135)

In 1926 the Rates book simply said the Great Western Railway paid the rates for the Station House. The stationmaster did not pay the rates himself so we do not have his name.

In 1934 the Station House paid Rates of £5, £8 gross.

In 1936 electric light was put in. (The Coast Lines of the Cambrian Railways, by C. C. Green. Wild Swan, 1993 Page 136)

The rate in 1938/9 was still £5 and paid by the GWR.

With votes for the house at the General Election of 1945 were Joseph H. Jonson, Elsie Johnson, Joan Johnson, Sheila B. Rigden and Evan M. Williams. Mr Johnson is likely to have been the stationmaster.

In the 1950s Bill Owen was the last stationmaster. Bill Owen who had worked on the station said that the previous stationmaster (Mr Johnson) lived in the station house and his wife and mother (mother in law Mrs Rigden?) were always quarrelling and could be heard by people on the station. He would be working at his desk and have to go round to the house to shut them up as the house did not open on to the platform (The Coast Lines of the Cambrian Railways, by C. C. Green. Wild Swan, 1993, Vol. 1, Page 137)

The house was not in the list of rates in 1963 nor was anyone on the Electoral Register for it.

In 2016 it is a private house.

The geologist Dr Tim Palmer has discovered that the good quality sandstone edging the walls and windows came from a quarry at Cefn Mawr. This is now filled in. The quarry was owned by Savin.

The author would like to thank one of the present occupiers of the house for her help.

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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-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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