

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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SYDNEY HOUSE and the ART SHOP Morfa Borth

On the beach side in the middle of Borth High Street. Home of a Richards family who enclosed the land in 1825, and on the site of their cottage. Still in Richards ownership in 1963. They also owned the cottage (Glan-y-môr) next door also on their ground by 1848.

Sydney House and the Art Shop in 2016.



Sydney House is a two storey house under a hipped roof parallel to the street. The front wall is red brick, the side wall is rendered. There is a yellow brick chimney on the south of the roof. The south side of the front and the upper floor on the north side has box bay windows their roofs extending from the main roof of the house. In between the bay windows are hung shaped red tiles. A front door for the house and a window above are alongside the bay windows. The shop front is built forward to match the bay windows and has its own door. Its roof fits around the upper bay window. The width of the front of the house sits in the footprint of an old cottage. The use of bay windows and the hipped roof suggest a date in the 1930s.

LEFT On the left is Glan-y-môr Cottage, it was also owned by the Richards family and was on their ground.



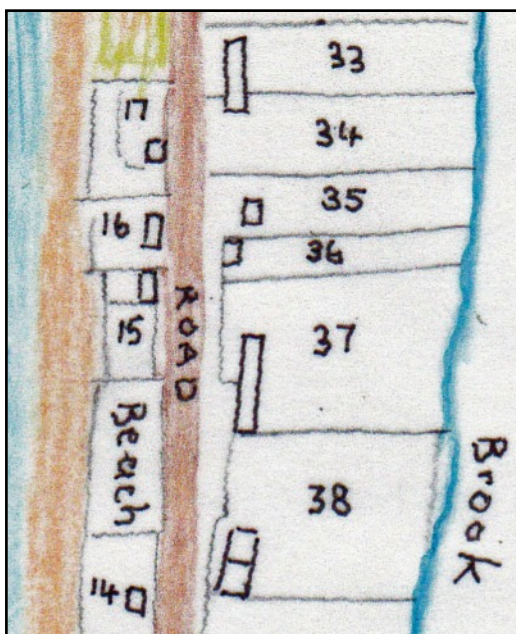


The rear of the house from the beach in 2015.

The back of the house has a two storey extension under a gable roof at right angles to the main house, and the walls are rendered. The upper floor has a picture window with a sliding door which opens on to a wooden staircase down to the yard. All the rear windows are modern. The tall side wall of the house next door provides one wall of the yard. The rear of the yard has a wall with a gateway to the beach. Outside it is a section walled by vertical sleepers filled with beach stones which would be a defence against the sea during storms. The width of the building is the same as the the Glan-y-môr Cottage next door suggesting that Sydney House was built in the footprint of the cottage on the site previously.

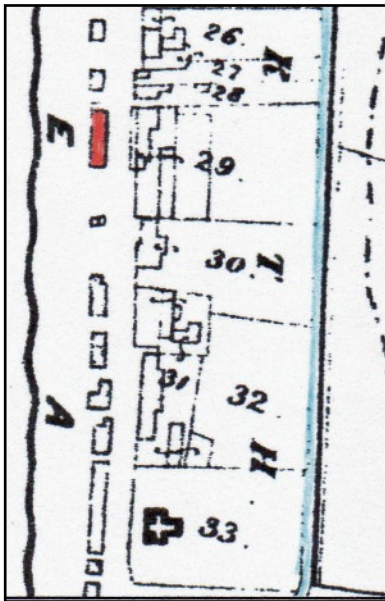
The ground for this house is the stone bank thrown up by the sea and called ‘waste’ by the Crown Manor Court who owned it as it was no use for farming. It was enclosed in 1825 by John Richards, and measured 25 perches. On a map of 1829 it is Number 15 and there was a cottage built on it. A rent of 16s a year had to be paid for the ground - and it could be

bought for two years rent. There was a fenced off southern section of this ground. (Map National Archives LRRO 1/3060)



The road had been there for centuries, it was used in the twelfth century 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 cottages and houses came from a brook behind the cottages and houses across the road.

LEFT A detail copied from the map of 1829. Number 15 was John Richards's plot. The cottages to the north we know as Cleveland and Tinsley. It is no clear why plot 15 was divided in two. Perhaps other cottages were planned on that section because that is what actually happened.

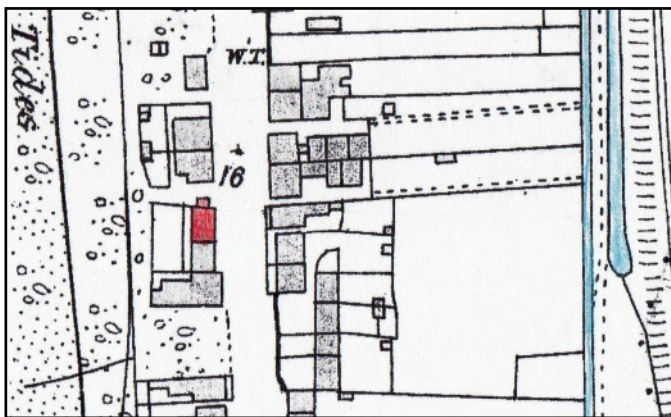


LEFT In 1848 there was a block of cottages on this land and it is marked in red. Because they had no gardens these cottages paid no tithe and so we do not know how many cottages or who lived there. (Tithe Apportionments Map Llangihangel Genau'r Glyn, Cyfoeth Township - on line at CYNEFIN - National Library of Wales).

The Census of 1851 lists a master mariner John Richards born about 1798 in Pant-yr-onen, probably the man who enclosed the ground and had the cottage on Number 15 which has become Sydney House. He was 53, also there was his wife Anne who was local, born in Borth about 1795. He would have enclosed the land and built the cottage for his family when he was 29 years old. They had two lodgers, a mariner's wife, Margaret Richards aged 34 and a possible grandson, eleven months old Evan Richards. John Richards was still there in the 1861 Census.

In the 1871 Census in the cottage was a younger John Richards, also a master mariner, and a widower. He was born about 1813.

In the 1881 Census the cottage had its name Sydney House. In the cottage was a mariner's wife, Jane Richards, aged 38, born in Llanbryn-mair Montgomeryshire about 1848, with her daughter Lizzie Jane Richards aged 8 and born in Borth. Her husband was Thomas Richards who had gone to sea as a boy and was making it his career and was probably away at sea.



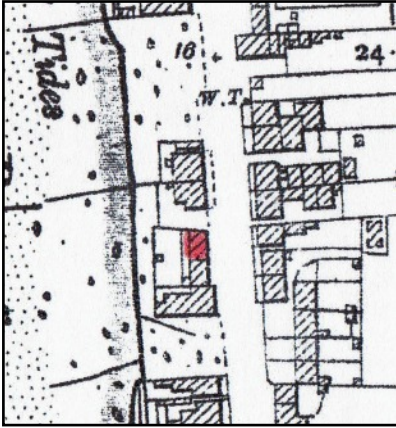
In 1886 Sydney House, marked in red, shared its rear yard with the cottage next door (Glan-y-môr) the surveyor noting that they were both in the same ownership. There was a small porch or extension on the north where there was some waste ground. The house opened directly on to the street, and a single fence protected it from the sea at the back. The blacker line was the high tide line and the little dots marked the sand. (Detail from the 25 inch Ordnance Survey Map

surveyed in 1886 and published in 1888, Cardiganshire III.10)

In the 1891 Census in Sydney House was an accountant, William D. Jones aged 35 and born in ~Arthog, Merionethshire. His wife Emily also 35 was born in Borth, and with them were their children; Dorothy Jones 12, Evan G. C. Jones 8 and Hugh Jones 6. Either they were related or they were tenants of the Richards family.

In 1901 in Sydney House was the Jane Richards of the 1881 Census with a 16 year old daughter Mary Anne born in Ammonford, Carmarthenshire, and her son Tommy aged 12 born in Bow Street. Also there was a two year old relative born in London, Thomas Morris Parry.

In 1910 for a tax planned but not levied, the house was valued at £100. This was not the value of a cottage, but a house. There was £4 to pay, £5 gross. The owner and occupier was Thomas Richards. (Richard Richards owned Madeira now Glan-y-môr next door which was still a cottage valued at £45). (Ceredigion Archives, T/DV/18 and map at the National Library of Wales)



LEFT This was Sydney House in 1904, almost the same, still in the same ownership as next door. However the little building at the back of their yard was probably the Ty Bach, outside lavatory. (Detail from the 25 inch Ordnance Survey Map revised in 1904 and published in 1905. Cardiganshire. III.10)

By the 1911 Census, in Sydney House was Mrs Richards aged 63, and Mary Anne who had married a Griffiths and was there with three small sons, Edward John Griffiths 4, Thomas Reginald Griffiths 3 and David Lynan Griffiths 2. They had a boarder, a boot maker and dealer, 23 years old Richard Humphreys. The house had seven rooms. It was certainly no longer a cottage. The Census takers listed another Richards family there. That was David John Richards aged 28, a wood sawyer and carpenter, a local man, born in Borth, and his wife Sarah Elizabeth Richards aged 25 who was English, born in Shorth Heath, Stafford. She had wed under age and there were no children. There had to be rooms for all of these - suggesting that the back extension had been added.



This is from a poor black and white photocopy of a coloured painting. From the right the first cottage was Tinsley with a sign board, the second was Temperance House also with a signboard and the next house was Sydney. It was a little taller and had two floors, a sizeable chimney and dormer windows. The front seems to be rendered. That I think was the £100 value house of 1910 and Thomas and Jane Richard's home. Next door was the small cottage Glan-y-môr hard to see, and then the tall Beach Grove House (Ynyswen), the less tall Tyrol, and then there are the two tall dark stone villas, Gordon and Chesterton, and as these date from 1891 the painting was after that time.

The painting was originally in the possession of Mrs Fielding.

Thomas Richards had spent his life at sea, and died age 67 at Sydney House on October 19th. 1917 three weeks after getting home. He left a widow and a son in the army, a son in the navy and his daughter was a munitions worker (Borth; The Fallen, David H. Williams).

In 1925 Mrs Jane Richards paid the rates as the owner and occupier. The rate was unchanged since 1910 £4 and £5.

Paying the rates in 1934 and 1938 was David J. Richards (probably David John Richards the carpenter and sawyer). The rates had increased to £10 and £17 and it is possible that was then the house was given a new taller red brick front with a new hipped roof.

With votes for the house in the General Election of 1945 were Glenville Richards, Rex Richards and Sarah E. Richards. Glenville Richards supplied and sold milk (Y Tincer March 1987). In 1949 and in 1963 Sarah was paying the rates and had a vote for the house.

This is a rare house in Morfa Borth probably on the site where the Richards family who enclosed the land in 1825 had a cottage, and later a cottage next to it, and a Richards family were still living in a rebuilt and improved Sydney House on their ground in the 1960s.

In January 2019 major rebuilding work was turning the two adjacent properties, Sydney and The Art House into one house and it was possible to see what remained of the early cottages



The party wall on the south side of Sydney with Glan-y-mor Cottage was clom (mud) except for the chimney which was lined with discoloured bricks. The footing for the mud walling was large stones at floor level..



ABOVE A close up of the mud wall in Sydney with just a glimpse of the stones in the base as building work had disturbed the footing. The rear wall of this cottage had rounded stones from the beach. The ceiling is low for a room above.



ABOVE The front wall of Sydney and its bay window were brick.

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LEFT The front door of Sydney House, and on the left a brick wall had divided it from The Art House next door.

BELOW There was an extension on the rear with a stone outer wall, not with noticeably rounded stones from the beach, and the floor was gravel and sand. The doorway had been edged with red bricks.





LEFT The north and rear wall of The Art Shop was stone with rounded stones from the beach and its chimney in the centre of the picture was also stone.

Like Sydney it too had a low ceiling for a floor above.



LEFT There had been replacement walling on the front section of this wall, perhaps there had been a door there? The bay window extension for the Art Shop was red brick



ABOVE This window at the rear of the Art Shop had been edged with bricks and could have been added. Old cottages on the beach side often had a solid back wall to protect them from the sea.



LEFT Below the floors was sand and gravel and the sill to support floorboards can be seen on the right. This left an air space to prevent damp.

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yn cyflwyno / presents
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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