

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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TREE COTTAGE Glanwern Village, Borth.

The western end of a terrace of three houses, replacing old cottages built by 1848. The present building was there by 1886. Possibly built by master mariner John Francis of Glanwern House, on the family's ground, to provide income from tenants.



Tree Cottage is a single fronted, two storey end of terrace house, under a gable roof parallel with the road. The roof is slate colour and there are two slab chimneys. The east one had one chimney pot in 2009, a tree was growing out of the other. The chimneys were rendered. They have the shape expected for a brick chimney. Tree House has random rubble stone walls with some rounded stones that could have come from the beach. The front door is on the west side and today has a porch under a sloping lean to slate coloured roof. It has a door to the street on the west. The front windows of the house are all modern. There is no front garden and the porch and house open on to the street with some hard standing.



ABOVE The house front in 2015.

BELOW The west side of the house in 2009 showing the rounded beach stones in the walls.

The ground floor has a passage from the front door with a hall with stairs, and two rooms opening off it. At the rear is an 'L' shaped kitchen and also a utility room. Upstairs two bedrooms look out to the front, and one to the back, and there is a bathroom. A third floor is provided by an attic divided into two rooms. When the house was being sold in 2014 it had gated access to the marshland on the north, which was common land. Alongside the

house, on the west, set back from the road, is an extension to the ground floor, opening into a single garage. There is hard standing in front of it.

The back garden extends to the railway embankment. The old leat runs across it but today is piped underground, but has a right of way alongside it for council workers to maintain the leat. This needed gates both sides of the garden.



LEFT The lower random rubble stonework on the ground floor of the front has many rounded beach stones.

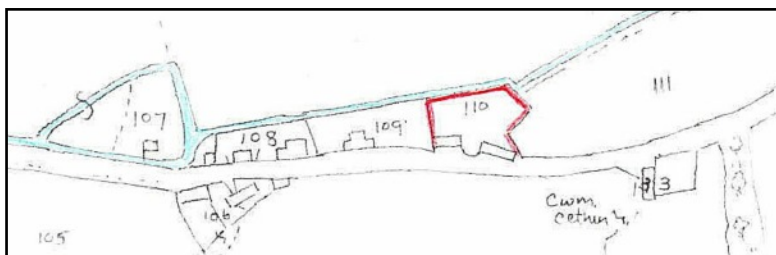
BELOW The upper half of the front has very few if any rounded stones - which suggests an old cottage front that has been heightened.



You would perhaps expect the ground for this house was once roadside 'waste' between the tailrace from the corn mill 'Felinwern' (now gone) at Glanleri, whose water came from the River Lerry, and the road. After use by the mill the stream ran seawards then turned along behind Borth High Street, providing a brook' with fresh water for the houses and cottages there. This 'brook' is marked on a map of 1829. However, maps of the manor's 'waste' clearly show that the 'waste' ended at the western boundary of Glanwern House. Along the north of the of the Glanwern village was the marsh whose old name was Wern Leri. (1859 Crown Manor map National Archives LRRO 1/3060). The reason a small settlement could grow up at Glanwern was the presence of this fresh water. Adding to it was a stream coming down the valley behind Ty Gwyn, once called Cwm Cethin. The settlement was already there in 1806 when Elizabeth Davies was born there in the Census of 1851. The road was there too, it was shown on a map of 1829 and led down to four lime kilns beginning where the road opened on to the beach. Lime would be carried to farms inland and the road connected to an

old and important road at Rhyd-y-pennau. The High Street road at Borth was very ancient as in Norman times it was used to reach Aberdovey using a ferry, a quick way to north Wales along the shingle bank and high sand dune area at Ynyslas.

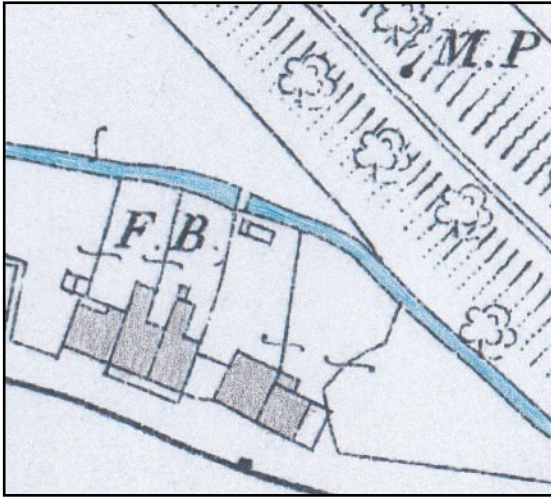
On a map of 1848 the ground for the now terrace of houses was part of plot 110 which had cottage and gardens with several owners, but only the name of Richard Francis was mentioned. On the west side



ABOVE A detail from the Tithe Apportionments Map of Llanfihangel Genau'r Glyn, Cyfoeth-y-brenin township - on-line at CYNEFIN)

was the row of cottages where the present terrace stands. In three of these lived the Francis family who would later own both Tree Cottage and Glanwern House, and according to the Ordnance Survey 25 inch maps of 1886 and 1905 they owned all the houses on this 1848 ground. The Francis family were

already there by the 1841 Census. Three families had cottages, Richard and John were farm workers, William was a mariner.



LEFT This was the terrace of three houses in 1886. Tree Cottage is the left hand one. the house was open to the street. It was a simple rectangle shape, and shared the side and rear of the extension behind Bushbury. Its garden ended at the tailrace stream. There was a tiny enclosure behind the rear of the house on the west. The 'S' shaped 'braces' indicate the terrace houses were owned with Captain John Francis's Glanwern House. It is possible that as a master mariner he could have afford to improve the cottages in the terrace, making them taller, and the rents would have been a useful source of income for him

(Detail from the 25 inch Ordnance Survey Map for Cardiganshire of 1888, surveyed in 1886).



*ABOVE On this old Judges postcard the terrace is on the right. Tree Cottage had exposed stonework and old sash windows with small lights. It may have shared its eastern chimney with Bushbury next door.
Amgueddfa Ceredigion Museum*

On the 25 inch Ordnance Survey Map of 1905 revised in 1904 the house is the same.

By 1910 Captain John Francis, the son of the mariner William Francis, was living at Glanwern House. He was a retired master mariner aged 71 and was looked after by his daughter Ellen who had not married. He had a tenant in Tree Cottage, W. Ety Potter. For a tax planned that year but not levied, Tree Cottage was valued at £160 a little more than Bushbury or Haulfryn, possibly because it had a bigger garden. These were the values of the houses we see today, not of old cottages. John Francis's own home, Glanwern House was much more valuable at £240. For Tree House there would have been £5.19s. to pay, £7 gross. His tenant, Miss Ety Potter was actually living in Haulfryn. The terrace houses had no names then. At the 1911 Census the house, was not listed possibly because there was no one living there to fill in the form. We do not know how many main rooms it had, Bushbury next door had five main rooms, and Haulfryn six.

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In the Rates of 1925 Tree Cottage was not listed

Paying the Rates in 1938/9 was Thomas Jones, (£5) and in 1932 John Jones. The house still had no name.

In 1949 the house had its name Tree Cottage, and paying the Rates was R. D. Hetherington – with a very English sounding name. He paid £5 – the same as Bushbury next door. He could have been using it as a holiday home as he was not on the list of voters for the General Election of 1945.

Paying the Rates in 1963 was Mrs Nelson (£27)



ABOVE In 2015 the terrace was leaning backwards as a result of drainage operations on the marsh at the rear.

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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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