

# 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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## TY GWYN Glanwern village. Borth.

Formerly called ‘Cwm-cethin’ – ‘Gethin’s Cwm’, a small holding of three and a quarter acres owned by the Glanlerry Estate. By 1806 the home of a ship’s carpenter, John Benjamin. Still in the Benjamin/Lloyd family in 1949. The front was widened between 1886 and 1904. The rear section may be part of the original farmhouse. It had lost its field, Cae Cwm Gethin by 1910.



*Ty Gwyn, Spring 2019. The front is parallel to the road, and almost faces north.*



The core of this house is old - there probably long before 1806. Today the front is one and a half storeys high with dormer windows. The cladding of the wall is in a re-constituted stone done about 1960. Beneath it was pebble dash, and it is likely that covers a central section of rubble stone wall, the front of a plain rectangular old house of 1886, and extensions either side were there by 1904. The



chimneys at each end belong with these additions. All the front windows are much bigger than old cottage or farmhouse windows. The front garden is planted and enclosed by a low stone wall, again possibly re-constituted stone.



*ABOVE This view of the back of the house shows a large stone chimney nearest the camera and now rendered which belonged with the old central part of the house. That too was one and a half storeys high. The lean-to in the foreground contains a modern kitchen.*

*BELOW The east side and rear of the house are rendered and the barge boards are all plain. The roof is slightly lower than the front section of the house and the pitch of both are suitable for slates. There is a garden area on the east side of the house sheltered from east winds by the very high railway embankment.*







*ABOVE The west wall of the house which opens in the foreground to a wide drive.*

*BELOW The view to the north up the 'cwm' (a valley ending in a curve of hillside). Water from its spring has been led under the lawn and under the road to join the tail race stream from the Glanleri mill (Melin-y-wern). After very heavy rains this has more water than the under the road pipe can carry which can cause some flooding at the back of the house.*

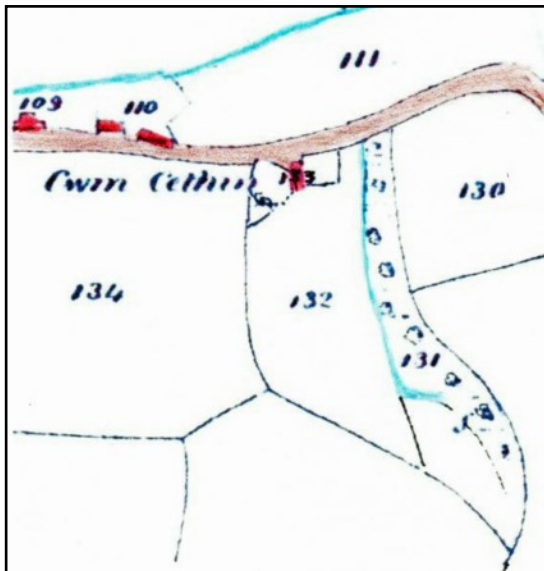




The position of this house is explained because there was fresh water from its own stream running along the foot of a wooded bank in the valley. It is possible that the former smallholding may be very old indeed, and it pre-dates the Glanwern settlement, built mostly on the Crown Manor's waste ground by 1804 when John Williams, a shoemaker, said he was born there for the Census of 1851. The road was there too, it was shown on a map of 1829 and led down to three lime kilns alongside the beach. Lime would be carried to farms inland and the road became a turnpike road in the 1770s, connected to the important road, as today, at Rhyd-y-pennau, and to Morfa Borth's High Street to the ferry Ynyslas to Aberdovey.

The place belonged to a Welshman, 'Gethin', who had his valley smallholding long before 1809 when twins, John and Ann of John Benjamin and his wife Elizabeth of Cwm-cethin were baptised at St Michael's Llandre (Parish Register, Ceredigion Archives). The Census of 1841 described John Benjamin as a seventy-year old joiner (a ship's carpenter) so he was born about 1771. His 72 year old wife Elizabeth was born about 1769. Also in the house was their 30 year old daughter Anne, and Elizabeth Morgan 10, and Mary Morgan 3, who were grandchildren.

For the 1845 Church Rate ending Easter 1845, John Benjamin paid £2.5s for Cwm-cethin in the Cyfoeth Township. This was a Rate to support the church and the parish poor long before County Councils were established.



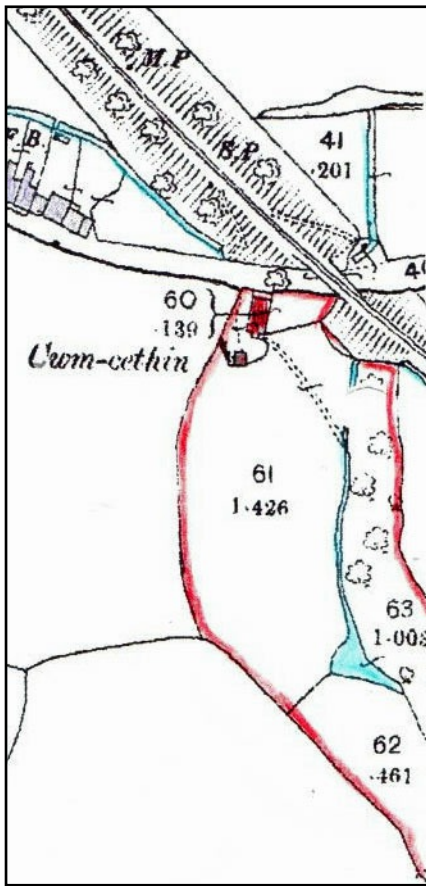
*LEFT In 1848 the house and its land was part of the Glanlerry Estate, the then owner was Captain Henry Edward Lewis Gwynne. The house, yard and garden was 28 perches, the place also had woodland measuring 1 acre, 1 rod, 21 perches, (nearly one and a half acres) beside its stream, and alongside was its field called Cae Cwm-cethin, which was part arable and part pasture. The total was 3 acres, 1 rod 14 perches (just over three and a quarter acres). All around were arable fields belonging to Glanlerry farm. (Tithe Apportionments Map for Llanfihangel Genau'r Glyn, Cyfoeth township- online at CYNEFIN).*

John Benjamin and Elizabeth in 1841 had in the house their married daughter Anne Morgan aged 30, and two Morgan children, Elizabeth aged 10 and Mary aged 3. The Benjamin family were to spread into Morfa Borth (Borth High Street etc.). John Benjamin probably helped his son John (also a carpenter and joiner) to enclose some of the shingle bank 'waste' and build a cottage for his family by the road, and by 1848 they had built other cottages there they could let.

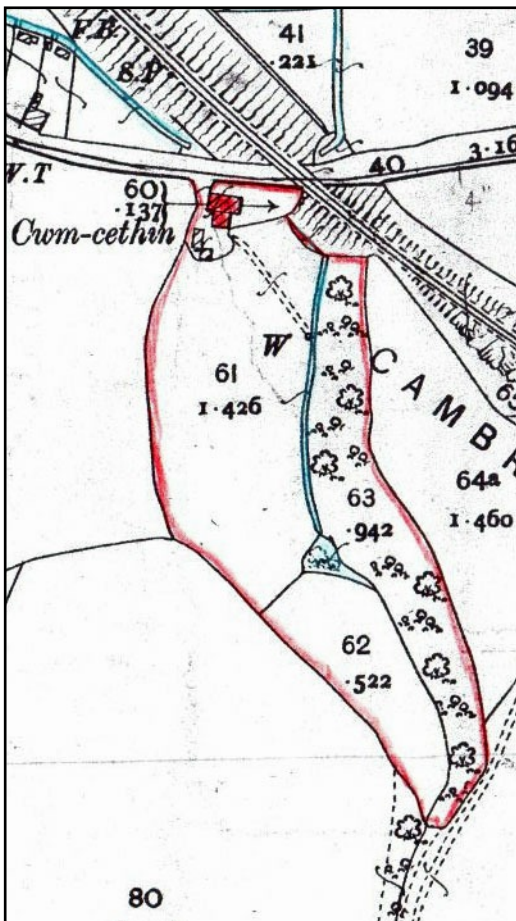
By 1851 Elizabeth Benjamin had died and John was a widower. Also in the house was his daughter Mary Evans (1805) who had married a sailor who became a master mariner. She was 47. With her were two of her children, Jane, 15, born about 1836, and Elizabeth, 12, born about 1839 (Census)

In 1863 the railway had reached Borth, and was extending towards Llandre. It needed a high embankment which was built to run very close to Cwmcethin's then farmhouse. It covered

a corner of the east end of the garden and completely covered the road end of its strip of woodland. However the railway builders did shape their embankment to allow room for the full length of Cwm-cethin's front garden only cutting off a small corner. The bridge was built wide in case it needed to carry two lines. Mary Evans would have been satisfied to be able to keep most of her garden. It is likely she grew vegetables and fruit for the house there, as the old maps do not show any other area enclosed for a garden. The embankment would however cast a deep shadow over the place in the mornings when the sun was in the east, but when it moved round to the south there would have been good light again. The Cwm-cethin stream also had to be tidied away safely to join the tailrace stream from the mill.



*LEFT In 1886 the farmhouse was in the same position as on the 1848 map – probably the same building. It nearly reached the road, and it had depth, and an enclosed garden on the east and a yard behind. From the house a track led to its stream, which had apparently been put underground for a short distance. Further south up the valley the stream had been widened into a useful pond as the Cae Cethin field was in two parts and the pond spanned the dividing fence or hedge, and would have provided water for cattle either side. The stream was also used as a boundary for the woodland (A detail from the 25 inch Ordnance Survey Map of 1888, surveyed in 1886 Cardiganshire NW).*



*LEFT By 1904 the front of the house was widened, as it is today and there was an extra small building in the yard. A Ty Bach (outside lavatory) is likely there.*

By 1861 Mary Evans was a widow as her master mariner husband had died. With her was her daughter Elizabeth, 22 and unmarried. Also in the house was her father John Benjamin aged 91, then a 'retired ship's carpenter'.

Mary Evans was still there at the 1871 Census, and she called herself a 'farmer'. Also in the house was her daughter Elizabeth 32, who was now married, and also there was her husband Thomas Lloyd, a mariner aged 32 (1839) with three of their children, Evan L. Lloyd 3 (1868), Mary Lloyd (1870), and her niece Anne Lloyd who was 17 and was their general servant'. Mary was still there at the 1881 Census, still calling herself a 'farmer with three acres' though by then aged 77. Her daughter Elizabeth was there but her husband, then a master mariner and earning money for the household was at sea. Their children were in the house, Evan 13, Mary Ann 11, Jane 10, Elizabeth 7, and Thomas 3.

By the 1891 Census Mary was a widow aged 87 with her daughter Elizabeth Lloyd, and two of her children, Marian (MaryAnn) aged 21 (1870) and Thomas aged 13. These only spoke Welsh (Census)

By 1901 Elizabeth was a widow aged 62. Her daughter Ann aged 29 who had not married was also in the house (Census)

Living there in 1911 and in the house on her own was Marian (Mary Ann) Lloyd aged 41 and with 'private means'. She said she had been born at Cwm-cethin. The house had six main rooms (Census)

In 1910 for a valuation for a tax planned but not levied Cwm-cethin had two acres and 2 rods that is two and a half acres. The owner was Elizabeth Lloyd – and there is a blank for the occupier.

It looks as though the estate sold Cwm-cethin to the Lloyds. (Ceredigion Archives T/DV/18 and a NLW map). The land beside it was still owned by the Glanlerry Estate in 1910 (Miss Susan E. Lewis) and the tenant was John Owens.

Paying the Rates in 1932 for the 'Cwm-cethin Farmhouse' was John P. Benjamin.

In 1938 paying the Rates had been John Pugh and was then the Misses Benjamin.

With a vote for the house in the General Election of 1945 was Mary Benjamin, and she paid the Rates in 1949, for her 'house', £5 for the half year. (Ceredigion Archives)

In 1961 there were pigs kept in the field beside the stream. The house had cold water, and electricity.

In 1963 the house was still called Cwm-cethin. Paying the Rates had been J. O. Jones, but was then Mr Jenkins who paid £36. (Ceredigion Archives )

Inside the house are clues to its past. The modern kitchen is a light well glazed single storey narrow strip at the back. Behind it is the old kitchen with a fireplace, which once had a sink with cold water under the window now gone. Traces remain on the outer wall suggesting this kitchen was once only one storey high. Today its fireplace has a modern stove. This room is now a sitting room with a glass door to the garden. From this room a door opens to a narrow passage - with a cupboard under the stairs on the right. The corridor ends at the front hall, with the stairs, and going off it on either side are large rooms of the wider front of the building. The front door is central. The left hand door leads to a lounge, and the right hand door to a dining room. These are good sized rooms with high ceilings. And each has a fireplace. A porch with an outer door keeps the front of the house warm.





Above the old kitchen is a modern bedroom and a bathroom made out of a former bedroom. The wider front of the house also has bedrooms above it each once warmed by a fireplace. Today there are five bedrooms in all, one was made into two. There is a loft of a single room lit by windows high in the gable ends, and no cellar.



*LEFT The window of the dining room, like all the windows of the front section of the house is modern, but the latticed pattern on the glass and the casement opening reflects the old style windows.*



RIGHT The door to the dining room, both doors to the front rooms have not been altered and were there in 1961.

It is interesting to note that the present owner remembers people from the cottages at Glanwern coming to Ty Gwyn for fresh spring water from its stream.

The author would like to thank the present owner of Cwm Cethin for help with this account.



Archifdy Ceredigion Archives  
yn cyflwyno / presents  
**Tai'r Borth / Houses of Borth**  
gan/by Beryl Lewis  
[cyf/ref ADX/1629]

Mae **Tai'r Borth** yn cynnwys dros 350 hanes sy'n ymwneud ag adeiladau unigol ac mae'r hanesion wedi'u darlunio â chyfoeth o ffotograffau, mapiau a dogfennau. Mae'r ffeiliau ar gael ar ein gwefan: <https://www.archifdy-eredigion.org.uk/tairborth.php?lang=cy>

Hoffem ddiolch i Beryl am fod mor garedig â chaniatáu i ni rannu ei gwaith â'r gynulleidfa ehangaf bosibl.

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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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