

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 VICTORIA Inn Morfa Borth

On the beach side in the northern part of Borth High Street. Up and running by 1871. The southern section, once Chester House, was added by 1934.

This was the smart end of Morfa Borth, not far from the Railway Station opened in 1863, and the Cambrian Terrace and the great Cambrian Hotel, built by 1870. It was also not far from the place where the main street runs alongside the beach (now with a promenade) and old postcards show this area was popular with holiday visitors and had bathing huts.



ABOVE and BELOW LEFT The front of the Inn in 2016. BELOW RIGHT In 2009

The Inn is a two storey end of terrace building, its tall section larger than the southern part which was a rebuild of an old cottage by a railway platelayer called George Dutton for his family, and as he came from Chester he called it Chester House. Both sections have gable





roofs parallel to the street. The roof of the taller part has an overhang supported by dentils (brackets), and dormer windows light an attic floor. The walls are rubble stone including round stones from the beach. There are shaped stones over the tops of the windows, and together with the dentils at the eaves this is very like Bradford House in the terrace to the north of the Inn though that does not have rounded stones in the front wall.



ABOVE There is a rubble stone chimney on the north end of the roof of the tall section of the Inn. The brick section on the right belongs to Glen Rosa.

LEFT This section of the wall on the south of the building shows the stones on Chester House were coursed, as they also are on the front of the taller building.



ABOVE The rear of the Inn from the beach in 2016. The former Chester House on the right with its chimney has wide dormer window at the back which allows a dining room to have a range of windows and door to a balcony overlooking the sea. The tall section of Inn rendered in pale blue also has a prominent dormer window and the rubble stone chimney has room for four chimney pots (flues). On the ground floor is a wide single storey extension with more balcony on its roof accessed from the second floor of the main house. It ends with two large windows protected by wooden screens. A wooden platform floors the yard. There are two sheltered areas and the Inn's picnic tables fill the ground spaces. The wooden building contains a small kitchen which serves food to guests at tables in the yard and along the top of the beach.



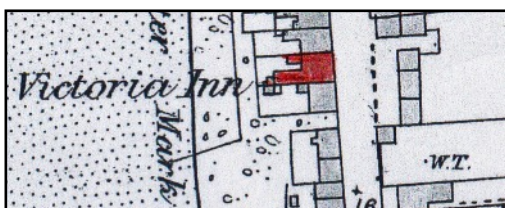
ABOVE This view taken in 2015 shows more of the yard.

The ground for the Inn is the stone bank thrown up by the sea and called ‘waste’ by the Crown Manor who owned it as it was no use for farming. On a map of 1829 it was still beach. (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 buildings on the other side of the road. By the time the Inn was built there was one tap with good spring water in the street outside the Cambrian Hotel (later Pantyfedwen and now gone).

In 1848 the site still had no buildings (Tithe Apportionments Map Llangihangel Genau'r Glyn, Cyfoeth Township - on line at CYNEFIN - National Library of Wales). However on a map of 1859 a plot (18i) was marked off where it would stand, but no building was drawn on this, though the cottage that became Chester House was drawn in. (Map National Archives LRRO 1/3060)

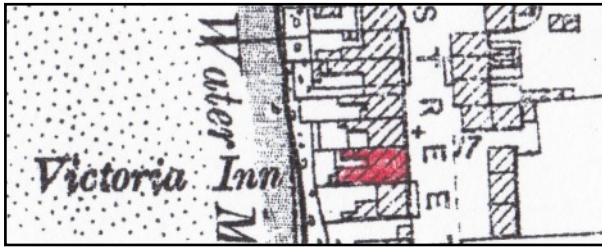
The Inn was not listed in Slater's Directory of 1868 with Borth's other inns. It was however up and running in 1871 when the Cambrian News of Friday July 4th wrote that it had supplied breakfast for children from the Caersws Workhouse who were having an outing to Borth. Also in that year holiday visitors stayed in the Inn for eight weeks during the summer. The Cambrian News listed people from Llanidloes, Tettenhall near Wolverhampton, Montgomery and Newtown. There was room for three families at the same time. Their landlady was a widow, Margaret Jones, born about 1817, so in her fifties. People were able to come there by train.

In 1880 Mr David Hughes was their landlord when when visitors stayed there for two weeks in the summer, one was a clergyman from America, and other people came from Manchester and Llangurig. At the 1881 Census Margaret Jones was in the Inn with her son David born about 1843. He died on April 1st aged only 45. Margaret died in 1889 aged 72. They were buried in the churchyard at Llandre.



LEFT Marked in red is the Inn in 1886. It opened directly into the street, and on the back were two extensions. One probably had a chimney and had the kitchen. The tiny extension may have been the Ty Bach - outside lavatory. One fence protected the rear of the Inn from the sea. Chester House is alongside (Detail from the 25 inch Ordnance Survey Map surveyed in 1886 and published in 1888, Cardiganshire III.10)

In 1891 and 1901 at the Census there was another 'Jones' as the Innkeeper, a single woman Anne Jones, born in Clarach about 1851, and the Census listed her as only speaking Welsh - which is surprising for an Innkeeper who had English visitors coming to stay on the train. In 1901 she was still there with a domestic servant, Elizabeth Thomas to help her.



LEFT In 1904 the narrow wing at the back was longer, but otherwise little had changed. (A detail from the 25 inch Ordnance Survey Map revised in 1904 and published in 1905. Cardiganshire III.10)



ABOVE LEFT Our earliest view of the Inn with a very unassuming notice board between the upper windows. The front was rendered though rendering was coming off its gable end. The Inn opened on to the street. The Lichfield Brewery owned it then. Chester House nearer the camera had a smart front garden wall and gateposts. (Detail from a postcard courtesy of the Amgueddfa Ceredigion Museum).

ABOVE RIGHT The taller part of the Inn nearest the camera in 1909. It had sash windows with twelve panes. In the bottom left hand corner is a glimpse of the balustrade fence of Chester House. (Detail from a hand coloured postcard, Private Collection).

In 1910 for a tax planned but not levied, the Inn was valued at £570 with £12, 15s to pay, £15 gross - so it was probably doing satisfactory business. We can compare that with the 'Friendship' valued at £400 and the Railway Hotel, much more valuable at £690. The Victoria Inn was still owned by the Lichfield Brewery and Anne Jones was the Innkeeper.



LEFT The Inn is on the far right in this detail from a postcard by 'Williams'. There were no rear dormer windows. The extension appears to be stone, and was on its boundary with Chester House. It had a substantial tall chimney with one chimneypot, probably for a kitchen below. The rows of stakes were the defences against the sea, each building responsible for their own. (Postcard Private Collection)

At the Census of 1911 the Inn was listed with nine main rooms. The Innkeeper was William Watkin Phillips, an Englishman from Church Stretton, Shropshire, and he was aged 30. The

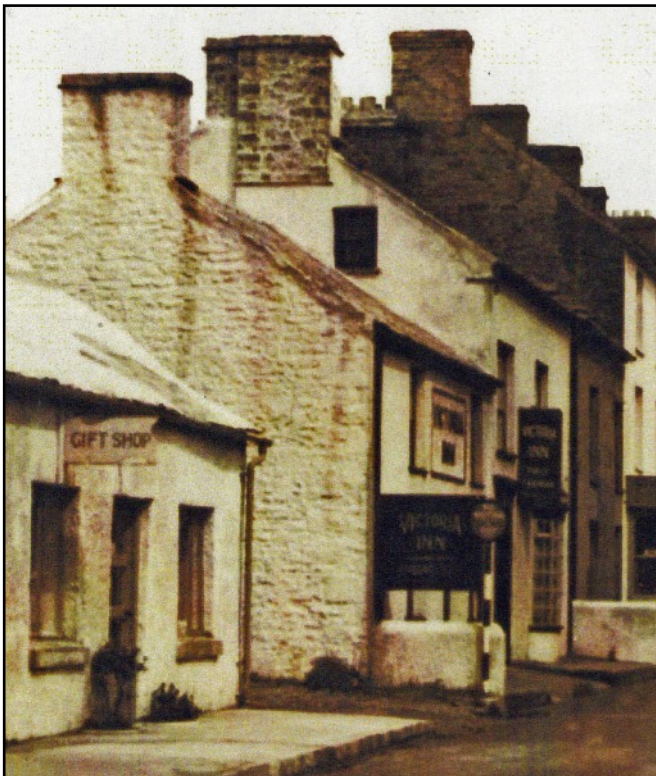
year before he had wed a local girl, Elizabeth, nineteen years older than him. In Chester House next door was George Dutton, then aged 72 and a widower. His son George was a bricklayer and daughter Mary Jane was his housekeeper. Another son went away to Canada and became a distinguished passenger ship captain.

Paying the rates in 1925 for the Victoria Inn's 'house and garden' had been Thomas Humphreys tenant of the Lichfield Brewery. There was no increase in the rates. Mary Humphreys took over after him.

Paying the rates in 1938 was still Mary Humphreys and Chester House was still separate, paying its rates was John Jones

However when E. Woodhouse took over, the rates for the Victoria Inn increased, £18 to £25 to pay, £25 to £33 gross, and he paid for Chester House too which had been £5 to pay, £8 gross. This had become part of the Victoria Inn. An article in the Borth Review said that it was in 1945 that Chester House became part of the Inn which was enlarged and modernised.

A fine new bar was made in the addition, the old bar was 'a little crude' said the article .



In 1949 M. M. Banham had succeeded Edward K. Woodhouse who had been paying the rates for the Victoria Inn and Chester House. By 1950 the old bar had been made into a 'bright modern lounge seen through the little panes of the fine bow window'. (Borth Review, National Library of Wales 1950)

LEFT The 'fine bow window' was quite tall. Today it has gone. This dates from after 1950, and the old Chester House front had been given an inn sign. A low wall was left from its front garden. Its gable wall shows rounded stones from the beach. (Detail from a postcard, Private Collection)

The Victoria Inn Page 6

In 1963 paying the rates for the Inn was Mr Lathwood for Messrs Hancocks (brewery), and Edward Michael Lathwood and Dorothy Helen Lathwood had votes for the Inn.



LEFT This was the Inn in 1968 with the tall 'bow' window, and a new hanging inn sign (Detail from a postcard posted in 1968, author's collection)

I have not found any mention so far of stables for this Inn, and being in a terrace there was no access from the street to its yard. It seems to have catered for visitors arriving by train, and local residents who could walk to it along the High Street. The tall building, the original Inn, was a good looking, two storey single fronted town house, with sash windows with twelve panes and a bold pediment above its front door. It was deeper than an old cottage, but extensions at the back were not there in 1886 but had been added by 1904 perhaps under ownership by the Lichfield Brewery and giving the nine rooms mentioned in the 1911 Census. Naming the Inn after the Queen was probably good for attracting visitors.

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-ceredigion.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.

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.

Beryl Lewis retains the copyright in her work and the histories are made available for private use and research only.



Cyngor Sir
CEREDIGION
County Council



Archifdy
Ceredigion
Archives