

# 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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## WATERFRONT Morfa Borth

A cottage at the southern end of Borth High Street on the beach side. Formerly one of two Ocean Cottages also called Ocean Villa and Nyth Fach. A cottage probably built for or by David Daniel, a mariner born in Gwastad Borth. His daughter Harriet Lewis inherited it and was still the owner in 1925.



*Waterfront in 2009.*

Waterfront is in a terrace, and is the southernmost of a pair of cottages built of rubble stone containing many rounded beach stones. It is a bare two storeys high and under a gable roof parallel to the road. On the south side of the roof is a rubble stone chimney, now rendered and shared with Ocean Cottage next door. The cottage is single fronted with its front door on the south. The door and windows have shallow arches above them in brick shaped stones. The windows are still the old sash windows with wooden frames. Today partitions make a passage from the front door. The living room leading off on the right has a low ceiling and the fireplace is stone. Today fitted with a modern wood burning stove under a brick arch. Bricks are also used to edge the hearth. The passage from the front door ends with the stairs to the upper floor.

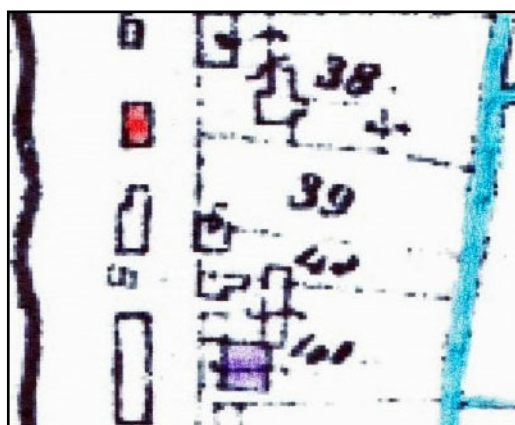
*The living room fireplace.*



At the rear beyond the thick stone old cottage rear wall is a kitchen and bathroom in a modern extension which has a back door opening into the yard.

In 1829 the ground for this house was still open ground called 'beach' on the wide bank of stones thrown up by the sea. It was called 'waste' by the Crown Manor who owned it because it was no good for farming. (Crown Manor Map, National Archive LRRO 1/3060. The road had been there for centuries and was a turnpike road by the

1770s. It led to a ferry from Ynyslas to Aberdovey, a quick way to North Wales. Fresh water for the cottages came from a 'brook', the tailrace from the corn mill (Felinwern) at Glanlerry now gone, plus two small streams. Villagers had their own site to dig peat on the other side of the River Leri just north of Ynys Fergi.



*LEFT* By 1848 there was a building on the site, marked in red, probably both of the cottages. Because they had no gardens they paid no tithe so we do not know who lived in them. There was open ground on either side of them. Marked in purple is the chapel, then much smaller.

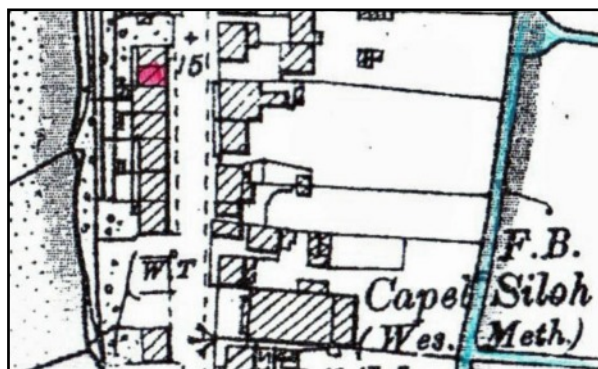
*(Tithe Apportionments Map, Llanfihangel Genau'r Glyn, Cyfoeth Township).*

However we can trace the occupants back to the 1841 using the Census. In the cottage was a mariner, David Daniel, born in Gwastad about 1808, his wife Elizabeth born in Borth about 1811, and their children; Mary baptised in 1832, John in 1833, David in 1839 and Catherine (Kitty) in 1841. At the 1851 Census in the cottage was David, Kitty, a son Thomas baptised in 1842, Elizabeth 1845 and Harriet 1847. All were baptised at the church at Llandre. By the 1861 Census Elizabeth Daniel was 51 and her husband was away - probably at sea. Her daughters Elizabeth and Harriet were there and another small daughter, Rosina, baptised in 1857. By the 1871 Census all the children had gone, but David aged 66 and Elizabeth 64 were there. By the 1881 Census David had retired from the sea, he and Elizabeth were in the cottage.



*This was David and Elizabeth Hughes's cottage in 1886, marked in red, and by then part of a terrace called Britannia Place after Britannia House over the road coloured purple. It is likely both cottages had the same owner, and behind them are two rows of sea defences, usually sloping brushwood bundles anchored into the stone bank. (Detail from the 25 inch Ordnance Survey Map surveyed in 1886, published in 1888. Cardiganshire III.10). 1905 Map below, revised in 1904.*

By the 1891 Census David had died and Elizabeth was a widow of 81. With her in the cottage was her daughter Harriet who had married a Lewis. Sadly he had died, and she was a widow aged just 42. Harriet had no occupation and with her was a small daughter Rebecca, aged 4 and born in 1882. Harriet was in the cottage at the 1901 Census.



*LEFT* Harriet's cottage in 1904. The map maker marked rough ground behind the cottages, and the owner owned the rough ground to the north of them too. The small building at the back was probably the Ty Bach (outside lavatory).

In 1910 for a tax planned but not levied the cottage then one of two Ocean Villas was

valued at £85. There would have been £2. 8s to pay, £3 gross. Harriet was both the owner and the occupier. (Ceredigion Archives T/DV/18 and map at the National Library of Wales). This valuation suggests a good quality home, Borth's poorest cottages were £30 or £40. In 1911 the cottage was not listed in the Census.

Paying the rates in 1925 was Harriet Lewis, by then aged 78.

In 1934 paying the rates had been Hattie Footitt as owner and occupier, but it was then Miss Mansell and she had named the cottage 'Nyth Bach' (little nest). By 1928 the name had changed to 'Waterfront' and paying the rates was Lilian Gozo. Lilian J. Cross paid the rates in 1949.

In 1963 paying the rates had been C Lea but was then Sidney Woodward. There was no one on the electoral register for the cottage.



*The rear of the cottage from the beach in 2015. The single storey extension with a boarded side and the kitchen and bathroom inside, is on the right. A raised platform for the yard was some protection from the sea during storms.*



*The pair of cottages. The spacing of some of the ground floor windows and the doors suggest they may have been built at the same time.*

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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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