

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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YORK HOUSE

Morfa Borth - the Marsh Harbour

In Princess Street. Built after 1848. By 1891 a family home with a servant belonging to master mariner Richard Hughes and later to his son Dick Hughes when it offered holiday accommodation.



York House has its back to enclosed former reclaimed marsh with a large garage and modern bungalows, and over the road in front is the promenade and the sea. This is a two storey building under a gable roof parallel with the road. Dormer windows in the roof add an extra floor. It is built of rubble stone including many rounded beach stones. There is a stone chimney at the north end of the roof with two chimney pots. The walls are rendered, but not so thickly as to hide the shapes of the stones. On the south the house is joined to the taller 'Pebbles'. The front door is central, and there is a slate roofed porch. Either side are two floors with

canted bay windows. Above the porch is a window with a single light. The dormer windows are decorated with a finial, and have two lights in the style of a sash window. However these are all modern windows.

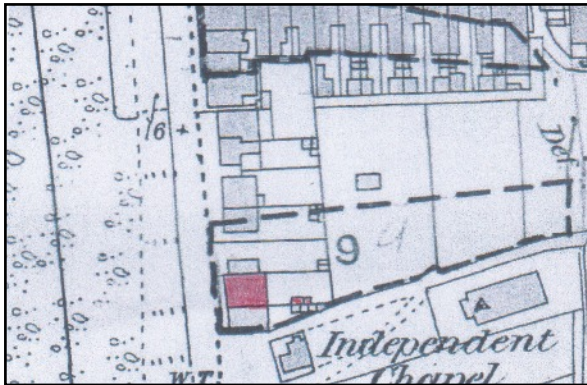
The front door has a modern decorative stained glass design including the name York House. The name is also enclosed in decorative shapes on the rendering between the bay windows. Great care has been taken to make this façade attractive. There is a narrow front garden, enclosed by a low stone wall topped with railings on three sides, and by a solid wall on the southern side. Shrubs and flowers grow in this garden.



LEFT and ABOVE York House in 2012. The present owner had rebuilt the porch.



LEFT The back of the house has a three storey section in the centre, and six and eight light windows in the old sash style, but they are modern. On the ground floor is a conservatory. There are roof lights. In the foreground is a rubble stone outbuilding possibly on the 1904 map. It includes rounded stones from the beach.



LEFT Marked in red is York House in 1886. It is considerably deeper than an old cottage, so there was extra room built on to the back. The tiny buildings in the garden probably had a Ty Bach - outside lavatory, and pigs and chickens were often kept in Morfa Borth back gardens. This detail is from a map once owned by the Council - and someone had drawn in the dashed shape marked 9 showing land originally owned by a lawyer and small holder, John Lewis, who enclosed it in

1809 and bought it from the 'waste' owned by the Crown Manor on the pebble bank. (Map Detail Ceredigion Archives, Ordnance Survey 25 inch, surveyed in 1886 published in 1888, Cardiganshire III.10, and John Lewis land from the Enclosure Map 1829 National Archive LRRO/1/3060 and Number 9 from the Tithe Apportionments Map for Llanfihangel Geuau'r Glyn, Cyfoeth Township).



LEFT The house walls contain rounded stones from the beach. The prevalence of round stones from the beach suggest this was one of Morfa Borth's older buildings.

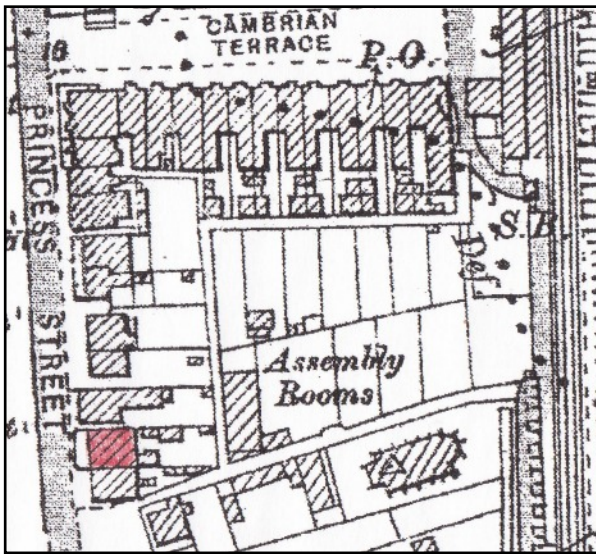
There were no buildings on this site in 1848, and John Lewis sold his piece of land to Savin who brought the railway to Borth and had built the Terrace which with its back gardens at the top of this map by 1870. A garden area of the Terrace was then behind the site of York House. However his gardens stopped short of the site of York House which suggests it was already there. The remains of a window exists on the south wall of the building showing that it was also there before Pebbles next door was built.

In 1891 this had become the home of a master mariner, Richard Hughes, born about 1841 in Borth, and his wife Margaret, ten years younger than her husband and born in Aberystwyth. Richard was the son of a shoemaker also called Richard Hughes, who had been living in Borth with his family since in 1841. His sons went to sea. However it is not possible to

say where Richard lived. In 1891 Richard Hughes was away at sea. Richard and Margaret

had one child, Richard, who was a chemist's assistant by 1901, and in 1911, unmarried, was a wood sawyer and joiner, working at home. There were always servant girls in the house, Ada Davies, aged 24 born in Liverpool in 1891, Ann Edwards from Pen-nal in 1901 and Kate Luke, aged 20 and born in Aberystwyth in 1911. This was a Welsh speaking family.

LEFT By the 1904 map there were more small buildings in the yard, and a narrow lane at the back of the house. An Assembly Rooms (a Public Hall with a ballroom, card games and late suppers) had been built on the land behind The Terrace.



LEFT A glimpse of Richard Hughes's York House in 1915, the front walls in between the bay windows were white.

For a tax planned in 1910 but not levied the house, was valued at £450, with £14.9s to pay, and £17 gross. This despite its small height was considered a valuable house, suggesting Richard Hughes the owner had made improvements.

BELOW On the left is York House in 1905. The porch was square, and there are decorative panels in a dark colour between the bay windows. The house had sash windows then.

By 1911 Richard Hughes aged 70 had retired from the sea and the Census lists eleven main rooms in the house.

The Hughes family continued to live in the house, and holiday visitors were to earn an income in the summer for the family. In about 1922 furnished accommodation of seven bedrooms and two sitting rooms were advertised in The Illustrated Borth Guide, and in about 1950, and 1962 five bedrooms and 2 sitting rooms were advertised. The landlady was Mrs Hughes, who would have been the wife of Richard (Dick



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Hughes). There is a cartoon of him in the Borth Review, 1950, in the National Library of Wales. Mrs Hughes was on the Committee of the women's branch of the Borth British Legion.

In 1945 with votes for the house at the General Election were Dick Hughes and Elizabeth and Rosaline M. Hughes.

Today the building has modern improvements and is a guest house. The Assembly Rooms rebuilt in breeze blocks, is now a garage, but is the same size as the old Assembly Rooms.

BELOW Since 1956 a concrete sea wall has protected York House. Previously during storms it was open to the beach, and the sea threw stones across the road, and sloping barriers of timbers had to be used to protect it. Pebbles then Diana is in the foreground.



LEFT This photograph taken in 2014 shows the porch which had been rebuilt by the present owner. There is a date of 1840, on the light above the front door. As it would have had to pay tithe the surveyor of the map published in 1848 had to include all the houses, and he did not draw this one. However it is possible that the house was built not long afterwards.

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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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