

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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YSTWYTH Morfa Borth

On the beach side in the northern part of Borth High Street. A replacement of one of Morfa Borth's oldest cottages the home of a Davies family. Built after 1925 but by 1934 as a house and shop.



This is a narrow two and a half storey house. The gable roof is at right angles to the road and there are no chimneys. The walls are rendered and are likely to be brick. It has an interesting front, with a canted oriel bay window with a nearly flat roof, and on the ground floor a very large window and door adapted from the former shop. The windows and especially the ex shop window with its cut off top corners and arrangement of lights have a thirties look. The building has a narrow front garden enclosed by a wall and the entrance is at the north side. There are passages to its yard on both sides of the house.

The ground for this house 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 beach (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.



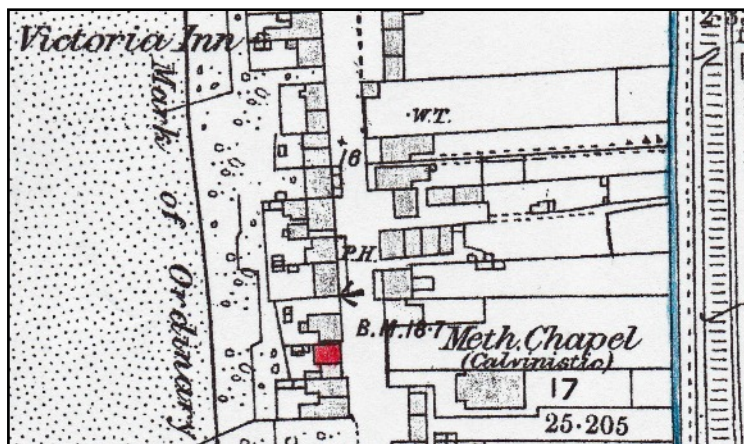
LEFT By 1848 someone had built a cottage on the ground though there was still beach on either side of it. Because it had no garden it paid no tithe so we have no details about it though the surveyor drew it in on his map. The extension and its ground on the south of it would eventually be the site of Ystrad (Tithe Apportionments Map Llangihangel Genau'r Glyn, Cyfoeth Township - on line at CYNEFIN - National Library of Wales).

In 1859 it was drawn on a map of the Crown Manor, enclosed by fence or walls, and with a little ground on the south of it on which Ystrad Cottage would eventually be built. (Map, Plot number 18B, National Archives LRRO 1/3060).

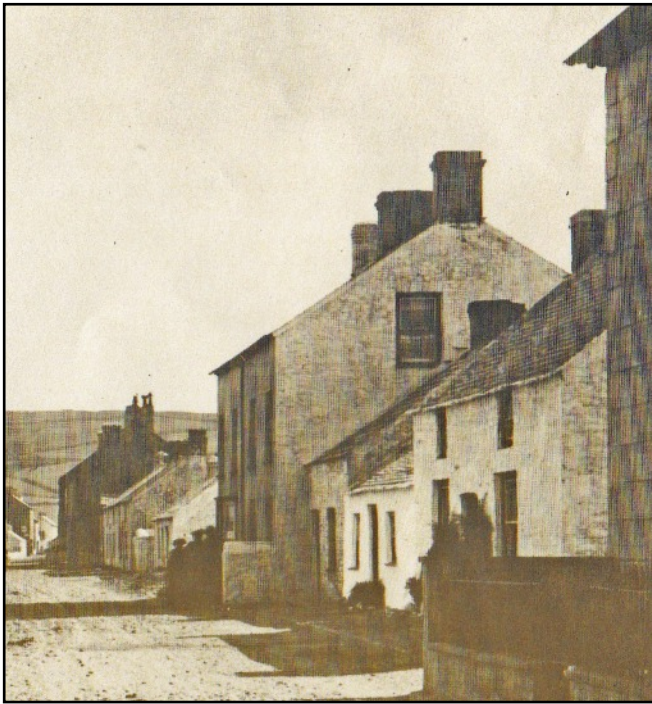


ABOVE The house from the beach in 2016. Its top and second floor have railed balconies for views of the sea. It is west facing. The second floor has an extension underneath the top balcony for a living room with windows and wide french doors that open on to its balcony. The ground floor has a back door with access to the yard, and there is a protective fence along the back of the yard.

It is not possible to trace the old cottage in earlier Census, however in the 1871 Census a young widow of 28, Jane Davies with two small children; Margaret J. Davies 4 and Eliza Davies 2 were living there. Also in the cottage was Mrs Davies's unmarried sister, 26 year old Eliza Davies. They were all local.



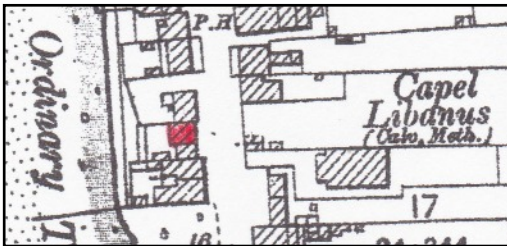
In 1886 we can see it was good sized cottage. It is marked in red, and opened directly on to the street and had small outbuildings in the yard, in one was probably its Ty Bach - outside lavatory. It shared the yard with Ystrad, and the surveyor has drawn them with the same owner. (Detail from the 25 inch Ordnance Survey Map, surveyed in 1886, published in 1888, Cardiganshire III.10)



Another Davies was in the cottage at the 1891 Census, 45 year old Catherine Davies who was a 'domestic servant' and spoke only Welsh. The address of the cottage was 'Number 3 Libanus Place' after the Chapel on the other side of the road. Catherine died in 1945.

LEFT A detail from a postcard shows Catherine Davies's cottage in about 1895. It is the small one sandwiched between a taller narrow cottage (Ystrad) and a house which would later be rebuilt. We cannot see its chimney. It has the pattern of Borth's oldest cottages with a nearly central front door which nearly but not quite reaches the eaves. It appears to have a narrow front area with a bush, and it opened on to the street. (Postcard Private Collection)

In 1901 at the Census in the cottage was an 84 year old widow, Margaret Davies with her grand daughter Mary Davies who was 14. They were both local.



LEFT In 1904, coloured red, it had lost the small buildings behind it, but was still in the same ownership as Ystrad Cottage. It had three fences to protect it from the sea, these would be stakes at an angle hammered into the stone bank (Detail from the 25 inch Ordnance Survey Map, revised in 1904, published in 1905. Cardiganshire III.10)



On this old postcard of the High Street Ystwyth Cottage is tucked up against a tall Morwylfa rebuilt from a smaller house.

(Postcard Private Collection)

In 1910 for a tax planned but not levied, the cottage was valued at £44 with £2.14s to pay, £2.15s gross. John William Davies was the owner and occupier.

In 1911 at the Census it was still a cottage with just three main

rooms, probably two on the ground floor and a room in the loft and probably a lean to back kitchen (not counted in the Census) as it is deeper than some cottages on the maps. Mr Davies was a house painter born in Aberystwyth, and he probably gave the cottage its name Ystwyth Cottage after the River Ystwyth. People seeking to employ him would find him more easily with a name for his cottage. His wife Helena J. Davies was 28 and local. With them were their four children; John Eric Davies 4, William C. Davies 3, David H. Davies 1, and baby Eleanor 5 months old.

John William Davies died in 1915 aged only 36, and his sons John Eric Davies died in 1923 aged 17 and David Hector Davies died in 1931 aged 22. Their gravestone at St Michael's Llandre is in Welsh. The widowed Mrs Helena Davies became the owner of the cottage.

The Davies family who had owned the cottage on the site had died by 1831, and it was a Jenkins family who rebuilt the old cottage as a two storey house and shop. E. L. Jenkins is pencilled in on a list of people to pay the rates in 1925.

After 1934 but by 1938 Evan Lewis Jenkins paid the rates for it. These had been £14 to pay, £21 gross, but this was reduced a little to £12 to pay, £20 gross. Mr Jenkins died in 1943 aged 68 (Parish Register, St Matthew's Church Borth, Ceredigion Archives).

Paying the rates for Ystwyth in 1949 was Harold Lees, and it was described as H. and M. Lees, Newsagent, Stationer and Tobacconist ('Borth Review' National Library of Wales). In 1968 it also sold toys and paperbacks (Handbook and Guide to Borth, Ceredigion Archives). In 1962 Mrs Lees advertised holiday accommodation there of four bedrooms and two sitting rooms. There is a building in the yard at the rear.



LEFT An advertisement in a 'Borth Guide' 1s. 6d. of 1962. The shop had a paper round.

Harold Lees was still paying the rates in 1963. No-one had a vote for the house.

In 1987 Mrs Nina Evans was living there (Y Tincer January)

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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-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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