

# THE BUILDINGS OF MORFA 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

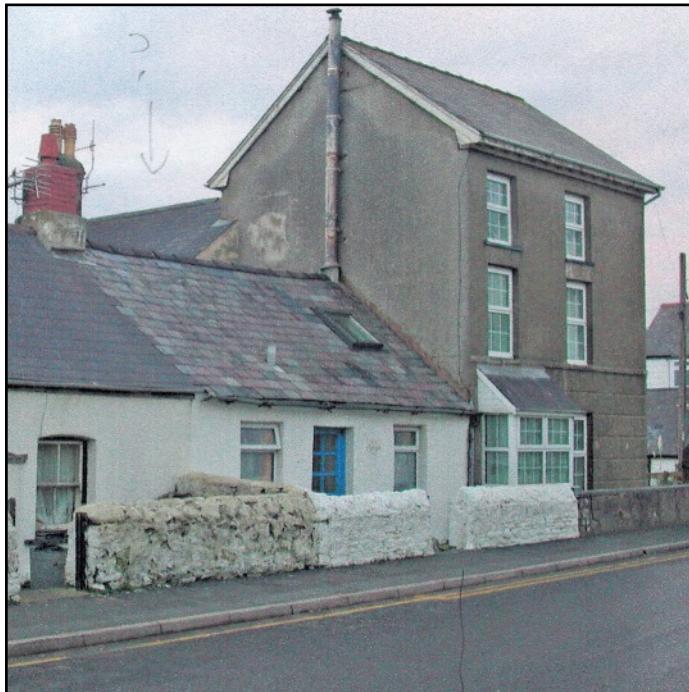
Photographs and History by BERYL LEWIS

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# AUCKLAND HOUSE

## Morfa Borth - the Marsh Harbour

Today two homes it began as a cottage in a terrace built by 1845. The houses are on the east side of the High Street, close to the former Wesleyan Chapel at the southern end of Morfa Borth. Home of Captain John Williams and his son in law, Captain William T. Davies and his wife Annie.



*AUCKLAND HOUSE - the first home in the building, in 2016.*

This is a tall rubble stone house three storeys high, single fronted and under a gable roof parallel to the street. The front and north walls are rendered. The front wall has a string course (moulding) below the second floor windows, with a bold pattern of rusticated masonry below. All the front windows are modern in sash window style with two lights, each divided into six. A pipe chimney runs up the centre of the southern gable end of the building. There are no other chimneys. The roof overhangs. A low wall encloses a narrow front garden. The front door is at the rear, and opens on to the pavement of the Dôl Wen street. The width of the house was governed by the old cottage that once stood there.

*LEFT The overhanging roof at the rear has a pattern of beam ends under the eaves.*



*BELow The second home is in a two storey rubble stone building at right angles to the first home. Its front door opens on the Dol Wen lane. The bay windows and windows in the gable end are modern. There is a small garden or yard and access by a narrow pathway to a large area of ground at the rear of the Warehouse/Chapel and the cottages. A house, Ynys Afallon has been built on part of this. On the right was the 'summer house' which once turned on a pivot - but this did not work by the 1960s.*

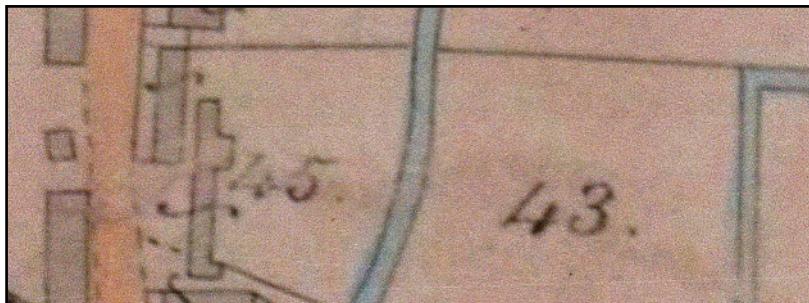




*LEFT The rubble stone of this section of the building is coursed, and interestingly the doorway and small window were edged by bricks. This was fashionable in Morfa Borth at the later part of the nineteenth century. The High Street front probably also had a rubble stone face with bricks round the windows, but today the rendering hides it.*

The ground for Auckland was enclosed in 1809 by John Jones from the pebble embankment thrown up by the sea, and called ‘waste’ because it was no use for farming. It has some cottages in it, but mostly set back

from the main street and not where Auckland stands today. The ground measured 2 rods and 4 perches, that is about half an acre. A rent of £3 had to be paid every year to the Crown manor who owned the ground. It was the southernmost enclosure with cottages in 1829 (Map National Archives LRRO 1/3060) The road was centuries old being a quick way to North Wales via a ferry at Aberdovey. It had become a turnpike road by the 1770s.



*LEFT In enclosure 45 in 1848 the long row of old cottages are set back from the street. However there was then a row beside the street some of which survive today. The Auckland cottage would be the southernmost. A brook provided them with fresh water*

*taken from the River Leri for the Glanlerry Corn Mill (now gone) (Detail from the Tithe Apportionments Map of Llanfihangel Genau'r Glyn, Cyfoeth-y-brenin township on-line at CYNEFIN)*

There were two owners of the ground and cottages, John Benjamin a carpenter from Glanwern’s Ty Gwyn, then Cwm Cethin, and John Jones. Jones also had enclosure 43, which could have been pasture or cultivated. Also living in the cottages were John Evans and Margaret Davies. In the 1841 Census John Jones was an agricultural labourer already middle aged, aged 65. Born about 1776 he would have been an enterprising young man of 23 when he enclosed his pieces of ground. His wife was Catherine, and in 1841 he had children Margaret 21 born about 1820, Jane aged 18, born about 1823 and William aged 16, born about 1825.

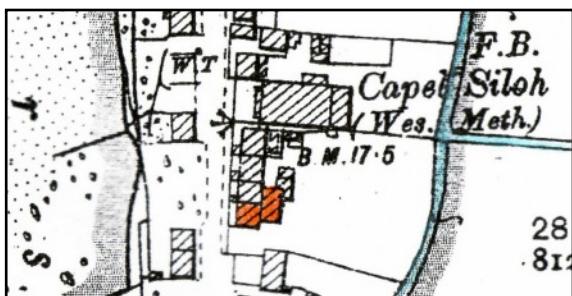
In the Census’s from 1841 to 1871 there is no name for any of the dwellings and it is not possible to know who lived in the cottages. However by the 1881 Census the house had its name “Auckland House” and in it was the young wife of a plasterer, Margaret Jones aged 21, born about 1860.



*LEFT The cottage that became Auckland is marked in red. There were enclosures behind it was not a building though the two small ones were - one could have been the Ty Bach -outside lavatory. The surveyor has drawn one owner for Auckland and all the cottages and the ground behind them (A detail from the 25 inch Ordnance Survey Map of 1888, surveyed in 1886, Cardiganshire NW III.10)*

In 1891 at the Census in the house were Captain John Williams, aged 51 and born about 1841 in Borth, and his wife Anne aged 44 born about 1847 in Penygraig (Farm) Upper Borth. They had a son John aged 13 and Annie aged 10 born in Llanilar and Richard Mackenzie Williams 9 and Albert Wynne Williams 5 were born in Borth. The family spoke both Welsh and English. The good money earned by the Captain enabled the former cottage to be rebuilt as the tall house we see today, including the back section which was already enclosed on the 25 inch Ordnance Survey Map of 1888, surveyed in 1886. Captain Williams left his widow well provided for. He may have been the son of a mariner William Lewis Williams and his wife Elizabeth of Morfa Borth, and was baptised in Llandre on December 7 1841.

By 1901 at the Census Anne Williams was a widow and she was to stay on in Auckland House. Also there in 1901 was her daughter Annie Granville Williams.



*LEFT The house in 1905. Auckland House is marked in red and has a building behind it. All the land behind the cottages was in the same ownership as before. (A detail from the 25 inch Ordnance Survey Map of 1905, revised in 1904, Cardiganshire III.10)*

In 1910 for a valuation for a tax planned but not levied Auckland was valued at £303. This was a very good property. There would have been £10.2s.6d to pay, £12.10s gross. Mrs Anne Williams 1847 - 1930 born at Penygraig (Farm) Upper Borth was both the owner and occupier. She also owned the adjacent cottages (Ceredigion Archives T/DV/18 and the NLW).

In the 1911 Census Auckland House was listed with six main rooms. Mrs Anne Williams and her daughter Annie Granville Williams were in the house. Her middle name came from a ship her father commanded.

After the First World War Albert Wynne Williams came home after he had been badly gassed on the Western Front and a summer house was built for him in the garden, this revolved so that it could be facing the sun to help him recover.

In December 1934 Mrs Williams was no longer paying the rates, but Annie G. Davies was. Annie Granville Williams had become the wife of Captain William T. Davies. She owned an old cottage called Osprey Cottage nearby which was a workshop for Eben Ellis.



*LEFT Annie Granville Williams outside the back section of Auckland House and the family remember this was her 'front door'. The stone walls edged by yellow bricks was a favourite style of building in the later half of the nineteenth century - for example Gordon Villa - built about 1891 and Glyngarth. Mrs Williams told her family that her father Captain John Williams had built Auckland (Photograph by courtesy of Sue Plater)*

We have a glimpse of Annie's house remembered by one of her family. It was all one house at that time, and was 'quite a Victorian house'. The room facing the sea was the

parlour which was only used when special guests came to the house, and Annie's sitting room was alongside the front door. Her bedroom was above her sitting room, and a guest bedroom was above the parlour. On the floor above were two more rooms. The kitchen was at the back

with a garage or shed attached to it and the kitchen had a slate work top. Similar slabs were outside on the boundary wall.



*LEFT Some of the family sitting and standing on the wall outside Auckland, topped by the slate slabs during the Carnival of 1967. The front of the house was rendered with the string course moulding and bold pattern of pretend ashlar stonework and there were sash windows (Photograph courtesy of Sue Plater)*

In 1934 Annie Granville Williams had paid the rates but then it was 'Davies'. She had wed Captain William T. Davies, 1869 - 1934. She had a vote for Auckland in the General Election of 1945 and was paying the Rates for the house in 1949 and for the Osprey Cottage. (Electoral Registers and Rates Ceredigion Archives.)

In the 1960s Mrs Granville Davies also owned Carreg Wen and Y Gragen two of the three adjacent cottages. She had a vote for Auckland in 1963 and paid the rates for the house. She died in 1978 and left it to the children of her brother Mac but they did not live there. The youngest niece was given her Carreg Wen cottage and Auckland House was divided after her death.

In 1963 Mr Garratt paid the rates for a private garden at Auckland, and Mr Price had been paying the rates of £3 for a 'store' at Auckland, but it had been vacant for six months.

The building of the Dôl Wen lane and the house Ynys Afallon appropriated the land formerly behind Auckland and the cottages, and removed a house with a garden to the south of Auckland on the old maps called Osprey Cottage, possibly the southernmost of the very first cottages on John Jones's enclosure of 1809. Captain William Davies sometime before his death in 1934 had converted it into a garage cum workshop with a double door at the south end which involved raising the eaves of the cottage. In the second world war Annie Granville Davies was letting it out to local fishermen as a store. There were a couple of upturned boats outside and inside a jumble of nets, lobster pots, bits of engines and other things. It remained uninhabited and semi-derelict until it was pulled down.

(The author would like to thank Mr David Rowlands of Canberra for some helpful family information, and Colonel Malcolm Parry Davies for information about Osprey Cottage).

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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.

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