

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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NUMBER 11 CAMBRIAN TERRACE

Morfa Borth – The Marsh Harbour

Built as a seaside boarding house, with various owners and tenants but also a family home. Like all the houses in The Terrace it had rights to enjoy a piece or parcel of the foreshore between the High Street and the sea. From an old painting in the Borth Railway Museum this looked like a strip of grass and a gravel ‘esplanade’ with seats raised up from the beach and supported by a stone wall. The house also had rights to use the small lane behind the Terrace. The home of a shoemaker, probably with a shop in the house, and a master mariner Captain Lewis Williams. His son Evan Llewelyn Williams ran a coal merchant’s business from the house.



The house in 2014. It shares a slab brick chimney with Number 10. A dormer window in the roof has been added, and there was originally no front garden, the front door opened directly on to the street.

This house is part of the terrace built when the railway had arrived in Borth, it opened to passengers in 1863. The Terrace was a private venture by Mr Thomas Savin who with David Davies built the Railway. He wanted to make Borth a good seaside resort to encourage visitors to travel there on their Cambrian Railway trains. A water supply was put in for the Terrace from a reservoir especially built for the station, the trains and his large Cambrian Hotel. Beside the railway Savin built hotels in Aberystwyth and Aberdovey and developed a market garden with houses at Ynyslas. He eventually over-reached himself and became bankrupt by February 1866. There is evidence all the rooms Savin had provided for Borth in his great hotel were not filled when Uppingham School was moved to Borth from 1876 to 1877, and there were also plenty of rooms available for the school to use in The Terrace.

The Cambrian Terrace houses were built about 1865 to 1870. The architect was possibly W. H. Spaul of Oswestry. (Pevsner Architectural Guides, the Buildings of Wales, Carmarthenshire and Ceredigion, 2006) A beginning date of 1864 has also been suggested. The houses were originally red brick with cream coloured sandstone details and matched the railway station. A good example is the side of Rutland House (Number 1) now in 2014 - it having been cleaned. The columns

framing and supporting the bay windows are iron, and in the Gothic style. The houses were probably owned by the Railway Company to begin with, and let to tenants. Number 11 has only a tiny narrow yard. There was not room at the rear for the longer yard with outbuildings given to Numbers 1 to 9. Number 11 has a narrow yard that can open on to the tiny passage that connects to the back yard of the large corner house, formerly Hafran, formerly the Grand Hotel, formerly Taliesin House. This was because the building, now the Premier Stores and house beside it (formerly called Garibaldi and Robert's Stores) were already there when the Terrace was built. However the house had a garden across the little lane at the back like the other houses in the Terrace.



The house in 2016. Some of the carving of the sandstone dressings of this house has survived quite well, now under the rendering. The front door is modern.

In 1871 there were visitors in the house for fourteen weeks during the summer. They came from as far afield as Liverpool, Manchester, Wolverhampton and Oswestry and whole families came with children and servants. Their landlady was Mrs Peters. The Cambrian also listed her as landlady in Number 9 the Terrace. The house would have been fairly new. Mrs Peters was not listed in the 1871 Census.

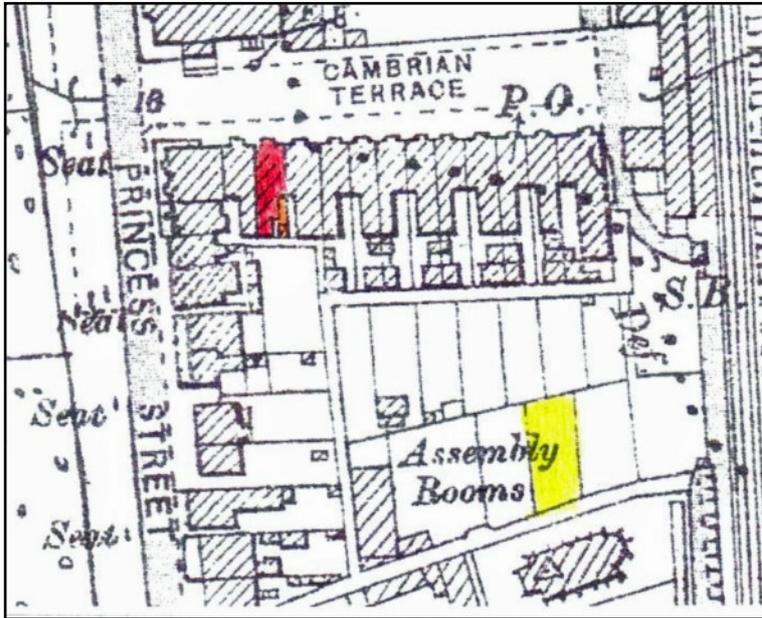
In 1880 the Cambrian News listed visitors to the house for three weeks. They came from Oswestry and Norfolk. One was a vicar and his family. Mrs Margaret Walters, their landlady was an English woman, a widow of 63 from Church Stretton in Shropshire.

Her son John aged 28 was a shoemaker, born in Orleton Herefordshire. Also there was his wife Anne aged 30 born in Oldbury Worcestershire. Her two small children were also in the house, Margaret, 4, William, 2, born in Wednesbury Staffordshire, and a baby of six months John Edward born in Borth. Mrs Walters was listed as a shopkeeper. Did she have a shop on the ground floor of the house to sell her sons shoes? (Census)

The Terrace houses were freehold and had been owned by the Cambrian Railway Company and rented out. By 1888 the hotel and Terrace houses were all mortgaged, and the mortgagees put them up for sale on September 20th 1888. They were in separate lots so each house could have a new owner. The Cambrian News commented that "even though Borth had grown considerably since the railway was made -- the idea of converting Borth into a large and prosperous watering place has not been realised." A coloured Plan in the Borth Railway Museum shows the estate. There was a garden for the Number 11 behind The Terrace which it still had in 1910.

At the 1891 Census in the house was a Welsh speaking master mariner's wife, Sarah Williams aged 43 and born in Borth. Mrs Williams was also there at the 1901 Census, with her daughter

Elizabeth aged 26, her sons Evan Llewelyn Williams aged 21 an apprentice mechanical engineer, and Charles Gordon Williams aged 12. All the children were born in Borth.



The house in 1905 marked in red, its garden in green. The seafront 'Seats' are also marked.

A detail from the Ordnance Survey 25 inch Map Cardiganshire III.10

The same family were there at the 1911 Census. In the house were their father Captain Lewis Williams, by then a retired mariner aged 64 and his wife Sarah. They had wed in 1872 and had four children, one had died. Their son Evan Llewellyn Williams was 31, had not married, and had become a coal

merchant running his own business from home. Their son Charles then 22 was a law student. Mr Williams owned the house, and it was valued at £405 for a tax planned but not levied. (Ceredigion Archives and map at the National Library of Wales). He was to pay £17, £20 gross. Captain Williams was still there in 1926, and 1934 paying the Rates as the owner and occupier. He died and was buried on August 4th. 1937 aged 92. His wife Sarah had died in 1930 aged 82. (Parish Register).

In 1934 paying the Rates was "Len". Evan Llewellyn Williams had moved next door into Number 10.

With votes for the house at the General Election of 1845 were Elsie M. Casse, Gertrude Smith and Margaret L. A. Steer. Paying the Rates in 1949 (£20) was the Borth and Ynyslas Electrical Supply Company. Electricity had been brought to Borth in the 1930s.

Paying the Rates in 1963 was George Bryan (£26). In the late 60s Mr Bryan was a Caretaker of the Public Hall. (Rates and Electoral Register, Ceredigion Archives)

Today (2016) Number 11 is four flats. Its garden has been sold, and the bungalow called Overchurch in Chapel Lane was built on it.

The history with maps of the ground on which the house was built, and the architecture can be found in the 'Introduction to the Terrace'

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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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