

# 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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## EBB TIDE Morfa Borth, Borth Marsh.

At the northern part of the village facing the beach. Built by 1925 as a bungalow with a garage on roadside ground formerly belonging to the Cambrian Hotel, later the Grand Hotel, later Pantyfedwen. The first owner and occupier was J. G. Wright and the bungalow was called 'Picnic'. The row of houses was once called Sea View Terrace.



*ABOVE Picnic in February 2009*



*Ebb Tide in February 2016. A wooden balcony supported by slender columns has been added to give a view of the bay. Glazed doors open on to it. The lifebelt in the centre has the name 'Ebb Tide'.*

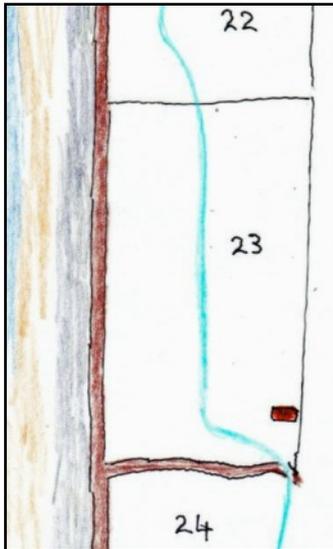
Picnic is a detached bungalow on the corner of a back lane leading off Borth's main street. It has a hipped gable roof at right angles to the main street, and is further forward on its plot than Erwau Glas, a similar bungalow its neighbour across the lane on the north. Its walls are rendered. A lean to roof in the front has two bay windows below it with very large lights. When it was built these would have looked out over the beach but when the concrete sea defensive wall and promenade was completed in 1956 these windows could no longer see the beach. There are dormers on both the north and south faces of the roof, each with two windows the one on the north having particularly good views as there is the back lane alongside. On the ground floor on the south side is an extension with a glazed door and a tall narrow window alongside. A very low rendered rough cast wall encloses the front which

has hard standing and a picnic table. At the rear is a small garden area with a garage opening on to the lane beyond.

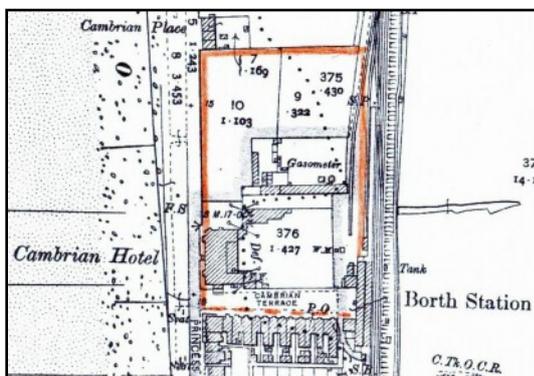


At the north side of the house is the main front door, with a small canopy over it supported by brackets. Two square gate posts with hipped tops mark the entrance from the lane. There is no gate. There are then four windows of different sizes, followed by a further door which because of the sloping site need steps down from it which have a protective block wall.

The ground for this house was enclosed in 1809 by a local



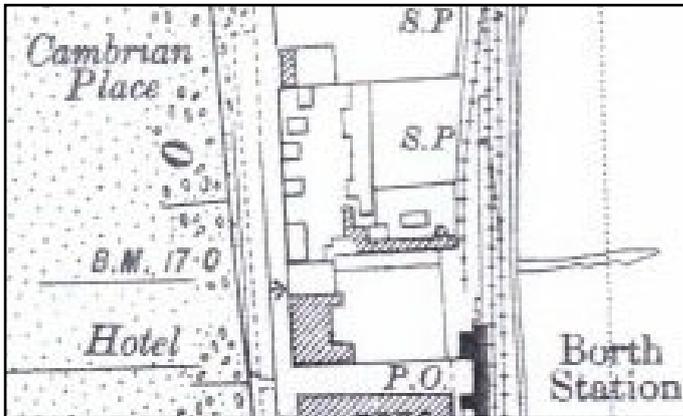
lawyer called Big John (John Lewis) from the pebble embankment thrown up by the sea, and called 'waste' because it was no use for farming, and the marsh ground beside it (also called 'waste') could be reclaimed for pasture with drainage ditches. It was a field of 4 acres, 3 rods and 20 perches, that is almost five acres, and across it ran a brook on the old course of the River Leri. John Lewis had a cottage on it called Terfynau (boundaries) – where the railway station is today. There were no other cottages. On a map of 1829 it the ground was Number 23. A rent of £16 had to be paid every year to the Crown manor who owned the ground, but there was an option to buy it for twice that, and a note with the map said that John Lewis had bought it at a Manor Court Leet in 1809. The road had been there for centuries 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 old cottages and houses came from the brook and for fuel villagers could dig peat on the far side of the River Leri near Ynys Fergi. However, by the time Ebb Tide was built the homes had piped water and coal came on the train.



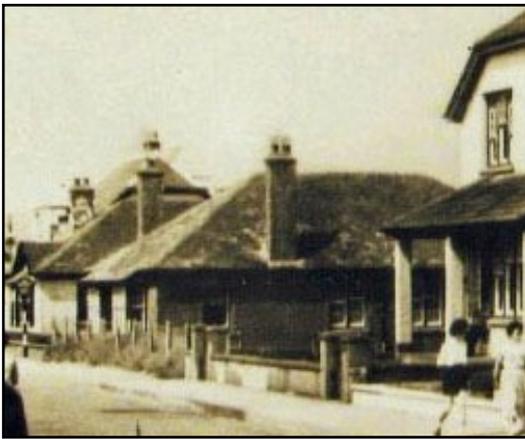
*ABOVE The Cambrian Hotel land is outlined in red on this detail from the 25 inch Ordnance Survey Map of 1905. The north western section beside the street was to have the new homes.*

John Lewis's land was sold to the developer Thomas Savin who brought the railway and built the Railway Station, the great Cambrian Hotel and Cambrian Terrace. The Hotel had large grounds (nearly two acres) for tennis, croquet, pleasure gardens, a bowling green, and possibly a walled garden. However, the Hotel did not do well, it had a hundred rooms, but often many were empty. It is likely that by the 1920s and 1930s it needed to raise money by either selling off its roadside land to build the bungalows and houses, or having

them built to sell. Ebb Tide then called Picnic was built by 1925 on part of the garden belonging to the Hotel. Paying the Rates for it was J. E. Wright, and it had a garage so Mr Wright could afford a car. It was valued at £15 with £12.10s to pay. Mr Wright was both the owner and the occupier.

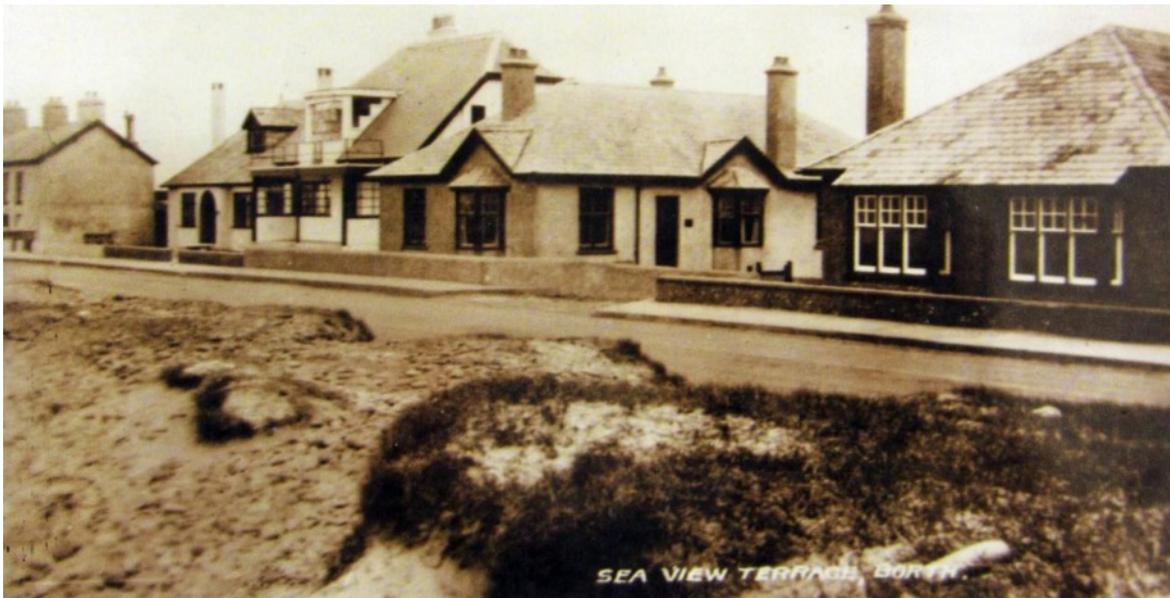


*LEFT An Ordnance Survey 6 inch map of 1948 shows it close to the main street. It is the fourth building from Cambrian Place now ending at Bodlandeb. It was on its own with gaps either side – as the lane on the north side of the bungalow is not marked, and on the south side Trysordy was not yet built. The map does not show any gardens.*



*LEFT and BELOW Two old postcards, but dated pre 1960 show the bungalow once had a tall chimney on its north and south side roofs. We can see what were probably the original window frames, with large lights below and a square light above divided into four. The walls were rendered. The extension of the front roof with bay windows was there.*

Paying the Rates for it with its garage, in 1933 when its value had risen to £18, and in 1949 when valued at £20, was Alan Gidley Wright.



*ABOVE On this postcard Ebb Tide, then called 'Picnic' is on the right. These were its old bay windows and the roof over them was supported by columns. Though they were close to the beach, in storms stones covered the road but they did not usually break the bungalow's windows.*

The concrete sea wall and promenade was completed in May 1956, and in January 1957 the Aberystwyth Rural District Council charged the bungalows and houses because it now offered them protection from the sea. Ebb Tide then called Picnic, a freehold house and its garage was charged £20. Many owners were angry about the 'unsightly sea wall' as their homes were less valuable as the ground floor could no longer see the sea - very important for seaside homes that could take in holiday makers or be retirement homes. (Ceredigion Archives ABR/HI/1/39, Correspondence). Sidney H. Griffiths was paying the rates for the bungalow at that time and was probably living there.

Mr Griffiths paid the Rates for it in 1963 when it was valued at £33. There had been an improvement to the bungalow but we do not have a picture of it then. With votes for the bungalow were were Sidney, George and Peter Griffiths (Electoral Registers and Rates, Ceredigion Archives).



*ABOVE The rear of Ebb Tide in February 2016. The house has a rear window and the remainder of the back has an extensions. A roof light gives light to an upper floor room. A tall wooden fence encloses a small garden and at the end of the garden is another low building with rendered walls and a garage beyond accessed from the back lane.*

Between 2009 and 2016 there has been a major alteration of the front with the wooden balcony to give views over the bay.

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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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