

# 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

*This work is for research and educational purposes only.*

## LEANDER Morfa Borth

This is a cottage almost as tall as a house, on the beach side at the southern part of Borth High Street. A cottage was there in 1848. This became one of the London Place Cottages, named after London House over the road. It was probably one of the homes of the Hughes family. In 1910 it was still a humble cottage of a bricklayer's labourer, but has since been altered.



*Leander in 2015.*

Leander is a double fronted cottage in a terrace. It is under a gable roof parallel to the road, and there are no chimneys. Dormer windows in the front light the upper floor. At some time the front was rebuilt much taller, and the original cottage windows enlarged. The walls are smoothly rendered. The windows are modern, but have the casement style of old cottage windows. The front door too is modern, with a window with a coloured glass star pattern, but the 2009 photograph shows the door was then not in the centre. The old cottage would have had a bigger room on the north side for its



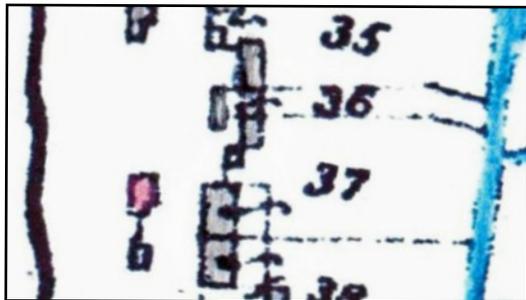
*Leander in 2009. It had its dormer windows in the centre of the roof, under a nearly flat roof. The window frames were not the same, and the rendering on the wall was rough-cast.*

living room/kitchen with a hearth and a chimney.



At the back the yard has a projecting wing under a gable roof at right angles to the old cottage, and a wide area of windows with a door leading out on to a railed balcony would give good views over the beach and across the bay. There are steps down into the yard. The balcony sits on a rendered wall with no openings. A solid gate on the north side, and a gap in the Council's sea defensive vertical plank wall, and stone or concrete steps, lead down to the beach.

The ground for this house, a bank of stones thrown up by the sea, was still open ground in 1829 and called 'waste' by the Crown Manor who owned it as it was no use for farming (National Archive Crown Manor Map LRRO 1/3060). When a villager enclosed this plot to build on he would have either paid a rent for it, or bought it. The road was centuries old 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 on the other side of the road - the tailrace from the Glanlerry Corn Mill (Felinwern) plus two small streams. For fuel villagers had their own area to dig peat on the other side of the River Leri just north of Ynys Fergi.



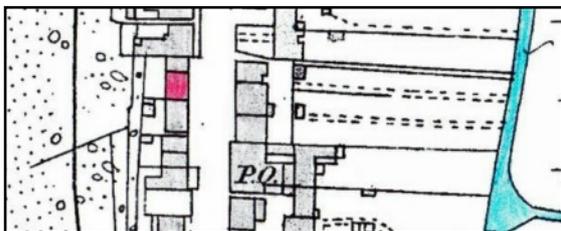
A cottage was built on this site by 1848 (Tithe Apportionments Map, Llanfihangel Genau'r Glyn, Cyfoeth Township, on-line at CYNEFIN National Library of Wales)

*On this detail from the map the cottage is coloured red. The beach side cottages did not have to pay tithe so we do not know who lived there.*

It is not possible to find the cottage in the earlier Census's. However in 1861 in the cottage was a mariner's wife, Jane Hughes, born in Morfa Borth about 1831, and with her were her two sons David 4, and John 2. By the 1871 Census her husband had died, and she was there with her sons Evan 9 and David 6. It is likely that her firstborn David had died, and probably John too.

By the 1881 Census the cottage was the home of another mariner, then away from home. His wife Catherine Richards was there with two children, David Hughes Richards 2, and a baby

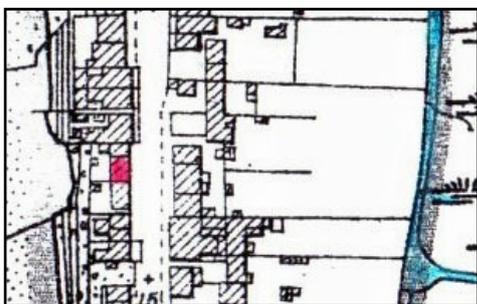
John Richards one month old. The name David 'Hughes' Richards suggests this family were related to the previous one in the cottage. The cottage was one of several in 'London Place'.



*In 1886 this was the Richard's cottage, marked in red. It was not quite as big as its neighbour, now the Orange Tree. It opened directly on to the street, and attached on the north was a smaller building. They shared a yard which indicated the same owner for both. There are two fences at the end of the yard, possibly one*

*or both were defences against the sea, usually wooden stakes or brushwood bundles at an angle anchored into the stone bank. (Detail from the 25 inch Ordnance Survey Map surveyed in 1886 and published in 1888. Cardiganshire III.10)*

The cottage was not listed in the 1891 Census. In the cottage in 1901 was William David Arter who called himself a 'general labourer'. He was born in Borth about 1865. With him was his wife Margaret, born in Lledrod, Tregaron. The Arter family were already in Borth in the early 1800s. Throughout the century many were seamen, and they had many children.



*In 1904 there was a small building in the yard, probably the Ty Bach (outside lavatory). The small building alongside on the north had become 'Cartref' but they still shared a yard. They had poor sea defences compared with the many fences of their neighbours on the north and south. (Detail from the 25 inch Ordnance Survey Map revised in 1905 and published in 1906.. Cardiganshire III.10)*

In 1910 for a valuation for a tax planned but not levied, the cottage was valued at £45. There would have been £2 to pay, £2 10s gross. William David Arter both owned the cottage and was living there. However, by then Cartref had a different owner. In 1911 at the Census, the cottage (now Leander) had three main rooms. Probably the front door opened into a passage, with a living room/kitchen one side, a bedroom for the Arter adults the other, and a loft above where once their children would have slept. William and Margaret were still there. Not only were they Welsh speakers, but they filled in the Census form in Welsh too.

In 1925, 1934 and 1938 the address was still London Place, and William Arter was still paying the rates.

By 1945 the cottage had a new name, 'Leander', but still had the value of an old cottage, valued at half as much as the Orange Tree. With a vote for the cottage in the General Election was John Henry Williams, and he paid the rates in 1949. Leander besides being a Greek mythological hero was also used by the British navy for HMS Leander, for SS Leander, and as the name of a class of cruisers and frigates.

In 1963 paying the rates was J. Tibbott, but he was not on the register of electors with a vote. (Rates and Electoral Registers, Ceredigion Archives).

Since 2009 the roof has been rebuilt with spaced dormer windows, placed much more conveniently for two front bedrooms within the roof. The cottage roof now extends further into the yard, allowing space for back bedrooms too. A fairly modern Council map does not have the wing into the yard with the balcony, so possibly that was recent.



*We can see Leander when it was an old cottage. Reading from the left; London Cottage, Auburn, Ty Bijou and then The Orange Tree, and next door Leander. These were called the 'London Cottages' and London House (and shop) is the big building on the right. The photograph was taken when the road was being dug up - possibly to lay a pipe.*

*Postcard courtesy of the Amgueddfa Ceredigion Museum.*

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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-eredigion.org.uk/tairborth.php>

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