

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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BODLONDEB

Morfa Borth – the marsh harbour.

At the northern end of the village facing the sea. Once alongside the gardens of the Cambrian Hotel. The southernmost of a terrace of



three house called Cambrian Place, described in 1888 as three brick built cottages with gardens and land.

LEFT The front of the house in 2017.

Bodlondeb which means ‘contentment’ in Welsh was larger than Trigfan but smaller than Sea Breaker. It is single fronted. The house is two storeys high under a slate coloured gable roof parallel to the road. It has a rendered chimney each end of its roof, each with two chimney pots, and it shared the northernmost chimney with Trigfan. Its front door is on the northern side of the front.

On the upper floor at the front is a bay window. This would have been needed after about 1960 when the concrete sea wall and promenade were built, hiding the beach from the ground floor windows. The bay window which is modern is for the lounge and has sea views. Interestingly the windows match those of its neighbours which is not surprising, as all three had the same owner into the twentieth century. The lower window has two lights. The door is a plain glass door. There is a narrow paved front garden enclosed by a low rendered wall at the front, and a taller stone-built wall at the south side. At the rear is a narrow garden angled at the end, which extends to a passage between the terrace and Cae Gwylan Number 7 and adjacent houses. This would open into Cae Gwylan.

In the house at the Census of 1881 was a mariner’s wife, Margaret Hughes, born in Borth about 1829. Also in the house were her two sons, Evan, a pupil teacher and John also at school. With them was her married daughter, Jane Williams. They would have been tenants. In 1880 she had taken in holiday visitors for just one week. (Cambrian News 23 July.)

The history of the site can be found in the Introduction to Cambrian Place. The 25inch Ordnance Survey Map of 1888 surveyed in 1886 showed the three houses shared a garden, as they had the same owner. Bodlondeb was larger than Trigfan but smaller than Sea

Breaker. One or more of the tiny buildings in the garden would probably be its Ty Bach (outside W.C.). They all opened on to the street. Over their southern wall was the garden grounds of the Cambrian Hotel.

Sometime after 1863 when the railway arrived, George Lewis of Oswestry the secretary of the Cambrian Railway Company had bought these cottages together with the Cambrian Hotel, the Cambrian Terrace and other land and cottages. By 1888 this estate was heavily mortgaged and had to be sold. The cottages were Lot 15, put with two roadside pieces of land suitable for building on and were bought for £560 by Thomas Lewis for the Rev. Evan Jones of the Welsh Church in London (*Aberystwyth Observer* 22 September 1888). Richard Evan Jones owned them in 1910. (*Ceredigion Archives C/DV/18*) The old water course had been completely removed when the railway was built, piped water under the railway had to serve the areas of pasture, and a water pipe and public tap on the street near the Cambrian Hotel gave the cottagers a supply of pure spring water, Bodlondeb was nice and close to this, until the parish provided a water supply by 1883. (*Cambrian News* 9 November 1883)

Early photographs for postcards show they were all two storey and double fronted, and in front of them was the road and then the beach. There was still plenty of open ground to the north of the terrace. The chimneys remain today. Because they were brick – unusual for Borth, it is possible that the terrace was built after the railway arrived in 1863, when the railway station and Cambrian Terrace were built of bricks brought on the train.

At the 1891 Census the house was empty. In the 1901 Census in the house was Abraham Davies, a mariner aged 40, with his wife Jane, and two daughters, Maud and Jane and sons Thomas, Richard Rees and John. They were all born in Borth. In the 1901 Census Abraham Davies was still there.

In 1910 for a tax planned but not levied the house, still called Cambrian Place, was valued at £126, less than Trigfan at £148 and Sea Breaker at £163. The owner of all the houses in the terrace was Richard Evan Jones. Abraham Davies was listed as the tenant.

At the Census of 1911 the house had four main rooms only. Anne Jones, a widow aged 52 Anne Jones, born about 1849 in Aberdovey was married, and had daughters Jane Elizabeth, a dressmaker working at home, and two younger daughters, Mary Emily and Gertrude. She was employed as a housekeeper and could speak both Welsh and English.

Sometime after 1922 the Borth Illustrated Guide advertised rooms to let for holiday visitors, two bedrooms with three beds, and a sitting room (*Aberystwyth Public Library*). In 1924 the *Cambrian News* reported that Miss Anne Jones was seriously ill. She died and was buried at the Garn Cemetary, Bow Street. She was 66 years old.

In 1925 for the rates there was no tenant in the house, and the owner was still Richard Evan Jones.

With a vote for the house in the General Election of 1945 was Cicely Berkley, a very English incomer to Borth. The owner of the house was Gertrude M. Jones and she was also listed as living there.

With a vote for the house in 1963 were Samuel Alfred Derbyshire and Eleanor Victoria Derbyshire. He was no longer paying the rates in March 1963, but Richard Evan Jones O.B.E. of Cambrian Terrace and H.V. Jones who were part owners paid the rates.

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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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