

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 FOUR CAMBRIAN TERRACE

Morfa Borth - the Marsh Harbour

A shop for many years. Also a seaside boarding house and briefly Borth's Post Office. Now a family home.



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. Savin 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 he built for the station, the trains and his large Cambrian Hotel.

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.) The houses' red brick with yellow sandstone dressings matched the railway station. Today a good example is the side of Rutland House (Number 1). Number 4 is under a gable roof parallel to the street, and is of three storeys and single fronted. Its front door is on the east. However the window on the other side of the ground floor bay window is interesting as it is set with a sandstone dressing that reaches down to the ground, as though another door could be there. Possibly this is because it began with a shop on the ground floor, so two doors would have given an entrance for the customers and an entrance for the family. In the centre of the front is a canted bay with



three windows reaching up to the eaves where it ends with a roof in three sections probably originally slate. The ground floor window is taller than the other two. Beneath the eaves is a pattern made by protruding bricks in between mouldings. Prominent string courses (moulding that cast a shadow) ran between the windows, linking Number 4 to its neighbours. The columns supporting the bay windows are iron, and in the Gothic style. The window frames were a dark colour but today are modern with two lights in in the pattern of the old sash windows and with a pattern of four lights in the ground floor window of the bay.



LEFT Above the door was quite a large window to light the hall. The door is wooden and has panels as it is likely the original doors had. The chamfers on the stone dressing round the door have been picked out in white. Photograph in 2014, and on the previous page in 2016.

RIGHT The western window on the front whose sandstone carved frame suggests it was once a door.

BELOW The rear of the house has an extension in two sections, the one nearest the house being taller and original brick and shared with Number 3. There are no chimneys in 2016 and a large



ABOVE The building rendered red ends at the old wall. Houses 5 to 9 also had these and they were brick, quite spacious, and open to the roof. Number 3's was probably used as a stable for the postmaster's horse.

In 1871 the Cambrian News listed families staying in the house for 13 weeks during the summer, some from as far away as London, Birmingham and Worcester. Their landlord looking after them was Mr Thomas. He and his wife were not in the house when the 1871 Census takers called, but his daughter Kate was listed as a 'shopkeeper's daughter, and Number 4 was a shop. The family had come from Llan-cynfelin where his daughter Kate and his son John O. Thomas were born. A young daughter, Elizabeth only 6 in 1871 was born in Borth. It is likely the family came to Number 4 when it was new. Boarding in the house was the 'Independent Minister of Borth and Clarach Chapels', William Williams, a young man of 28, born in Bangor.

By 1880 there was a new family in the house, and it still had a shop, but it had holiday visitors staying there for ten weeks too. Mr William Richard Roberts was their landlord.

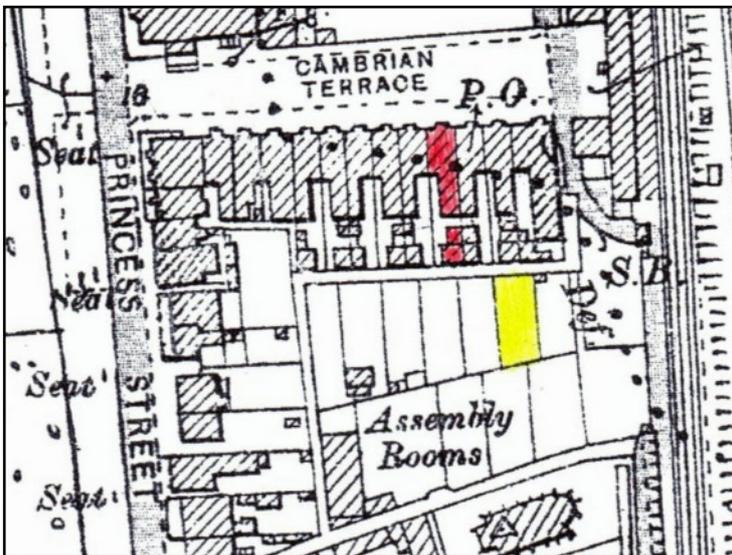
Some were from Oswestry, and some stayed for several weeks. Mr Roberts was also the shopkeeper, a Grocer and General Dealer. He was born in Bethesda, Carnarvonshire. He was 47 in 1881, and his wife Ellen also born in Carnarvonshire was 52. Their sons Richard and Robert were born there. A boot and shoe shopkeeper called Mary J Samuel, born in Aberystwyth was boarding in Number 4, and selling shoes there - in the shop. The second front door would lead into the shop, now a living room, and the first front door opened on to a passageway to the stairs, lit by a light above the front door.

In 1883 after some bad storms, the Cambrian News of October 26th published an article called 'The Inroads of the Sea at Borth'. Mr Roberts is mentioned speaking at a public meeting about this. He and eleven other Borth men were chosen to see the Sanitary Authority about the flooding and the damage. In 1879 the Terrace had been under three feet of water. In 1889 Mr Robert's only daughter Sarah Ann married a master mariner, Lewis Jenkins. (Cambrian News July 26th).

Until September 1888 Number 4 was part of an estate owned by the Cambrian Railway Company called the 'Cambrian Hotel Estate'. This was heavily mortgaged, and the estate had to be sold by auction on Thursday September 20th. It was broken up into lots and the house and its garden over the lane at the back was Lot 4. Mr Roberts bought it.

At the 1891 Census Mr Roberts was listed as a 'Confectioner', and his son Richard, then 25 had become a coal merchant. His daughter Sarah Anne Jenkins now had a little son, Llewellyn aged 11 months. In 1901 Mr Roberts then 67 was still in the house, and was running his grocery shop. His son Robert was an 'assistant grocer'. They had a housekeeper, Mary Jones, a single woman of 32, born in Cardiganshire at Llangwryfon.

In 1910, for a tax planned but not levied, the house had a new owner and occupier, Captain Lewis Jenkins Sarah Anne's husband. It was valued at £440 and the site at £25. The Rate to pay would have been £19. 11s, gross £23.



LEFT On this detail from the 25 inch Ordnance Survey Map of 1905 the house is coloured red and its garden is green. 'P.O.' W was the Post Office in Number 3. The 'Seats' beside the beach were on a hard-standing promenade edged on the roadside by a strip of grass. All people living in The Terrace had a right to use them. (Deeds to Number 8)

By the 1911 Census Mr Roberts had retired, and his wife had died. Head of the household was Sarah Anne Jenkins, Mr Robert's daughter, now aged 50 was a widow, but was of 'independent means' as her mariner husband and possibly her father must have provided for her. She had a housekeeper called Elinor Jenkins, aged 19, and born in Borth. The house had nine main rooms.

In 1925 the Rev. J. Llewellyn paid the Rates as the owner and occupier of the house. He was the minister of the Borth Congregational Church. He had moved to Number 4 with his wife and children from a smaller house in the High Street. His photograph by John Thomas can be found on-line on the National Library of Wales website. Since September 1934 the Rates for the house were paid by Miss Mary J. Llewellyn, £24.

With a vote for the house in September 1945 at the General Election was Rhodwen Llewellyn, Ceridwen M. Hughes and Charles T. Hughes. In 1949 J. D. Griffiths was paying the Rates for the house. I think he was Treasurer for the Borth British Legion (Borth Review, National Library of Wales)

In 1963 there was still a shop there, and Mr Griffiths paid the Rates for it.

In a Handbook and Guide to Borth of the late 1960s the house had a telephone, Borth 221, and had become the Post Office. (Previously at Number 3). The post was collected from there at 10.45, 4.45 and on a Bank Holidays at 4 p.m.

Today there is one front door only, no shop, and the house is a family home with no flats, and this house still has its original garden



ABOVE This photograph can be dated after 1911 but before 1924. In the foreground is one bay window of Rutland House (a shop), then a bay of Bibury, then a bay with notices in it which was Mr Watkins the postmaster's Post Office in Number 3. The next bay was number 4, and what is so interesting is that Numbers 1 to 4 still had their original brick walls with bold sandstone dressings. There were no front gardens.

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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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