

# 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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## COEDFRYN, Glanwern, Borth

Formerly called 'Lisswood' and built by the author William Hope Hodgson after 1911, and probably by 1914 when he enlisted in the army and went to war.



The house name is Welsh and means 'wood hill' which explains its site on wooded hillside on the south of the road from Borth to Llandre, and almost opposite Felinwern. It is approached by a steep drive on the east. The house is one and a half storeys high under a gable roof at right angles to the road below and of a dark slate colour. It has one central chimney with five chimney pots. This is rendered as are the walls of the house. There is an upper floor in the roof lit by two windows in the gable at the side, four roof lights and at the front a central dormer window at the eaves, with three lights in the style of a casement window, under a flattened arch. It divides into three sections with eight small square lights in each

section. At the front (east side) on the ground floor there are two windows either side of an imposing front door, these match the upper windows, and a similar window is in the top of the front door. Above these is an overhang roof supported by brackets and an inverted V shape above emphasizes the centre. On the west gable end on the ground floor is an oriel window, in the same style with three sections and this will have a view to the sea. Hidden from sight in the photograph above is a wing also two storeyed, with a conservatory outside its ground floor. Upper windows will also have a good view of the sea. The house has a garage beside its east front accessed by a curving drive down to the main road. There is also a garage at street level in a quarried inset in the hillside on its western end. A path with steps leads from this up to the house.

The house stands on hillside woodland. In 1848 this ground belonged to Glanlerry Farm and was called 'rough' and measured 1 acre, 1 rod and 4 perches. Some trees were drawn on it. It was too steep to farm. (Number 128, Tithes Apportionments Map for Llanfihangel Genau'r Glyn, Cyfoeth Township. National Library of Wales on their 'Cynefin' website.)

The house was built by the novelist, William Hope Hodgson, who had previously rented Glaneifion at the northern end of Borth High Street, having come to live in Borth in 1904 with his mother, Lizzie S. Hodgson, a widow with private means, born in Chepstow about 1852, and his sister, also called Lizzie born in Wandsworth, London about 1887. His father,

a clergyman, the Rev. Samuel Hodgson had died many years earlier in 1882. His mother and sister were at Glaneifion in 1911 (Census). He is supposed to have fallen in love with a Borth girl, but nothing came of it. In his books Mr Hodgson showed a powerful imagination and they featured the supernatural and macabre. His most remembered books are, 'The House on the Borderland' published in 1909 and 'The Night Land' published in 1912. He called the house he built Lisswood, and he built it for his wife Bessie, his daughter and a son. This was probably still the rough land of Glanlerry Farm, and the farmer at that time was a middle aged James Richards. As 'rough' this would not have been very expensive to buy. He would have valued the view of the sea from the western windows of his house.

At the outbreak of World War 1 in 1914 Mr Hodgson enlisted. He became a second lieutenant in the Royal Artillery, and died in April 1918 at Ypres. Full details of his life and work can be found on-line at Wikipedia.

Mrs Hodgson was paying the Rates for the house in 1925 and she lived there until her death.

In 1945 with votes for the house at the General Election were Harold and Harriet Gibbs.

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We would like to thank Beryl for her kindness in letting us share her work with the widest possible audience.

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