

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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EPWORTH COTTAGE Morfa Borth

Formerly Number 2 School Place, built by 1881. A small cottage in a terrace on the beach side at the southern part of Borth High Street. It shares the site of an old cottage of a Jones family of mariners with Epworth House.



Epworth Cottage in 2009.

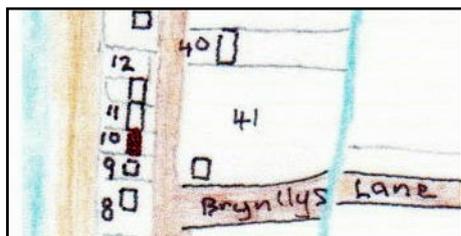


The cottage is single storey, with a roof parallel to the street, and extended at the front over a bay window and to protect the front door. There are no chimneys. The window and front door are modern, and the walls are rendered. There is a narrow front garden enclosed by a low wall.

At the rear is a two storey wing of various heights with almost flat roofs, and with modern windows. The upper floor at the beach end has a railed balcony from a french window, with fine views out to sea and with steps down into the yard. The wing reaches almost to the boundary of its plot, a row of vertical sleepers on top of a wall. This would be good protection for the yard from the sea. Steps down to the beach and the yard are shared with Epworth House. A rendered wall encloses the north of the yard.

Despite its small size the interior is modern and well designed to make good use of the limited spaces.

The ground for this house is the stone embankment thrown up by the sea and called 'waste' by the Crown Manor who owned it as it was no use for farming. A plot was enclosed in 1828 by Morgan

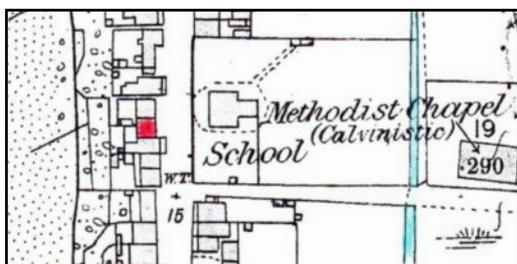


This detail is copied from the Crown Manor Map of 1829, Morgan Jones's cottage was part of a terrace, and was Number 10. Both Epworth House and Epworth Cottage were built on the site of it. Number 41 across the road belonged to the Vicar and a National School would be built there in 1842 (today the Meddygfa)

Jones for a cottage, the ground measured only 8 perches (a rod, a quarter of an acre, was 40 perches). A rent of £1 4s had to be paid every year, or by paying £6 Morgan Jones could buy the plot (National Archive, map and details, 1829, LRRO 1/3060). The road had been there for centuries and was a turnpike road by the 1770s. It led to a ferry from Ynyslas to Aberdovey, a quick way to North Wales. Fresh water for the old cottages came from a 'brook' behind the cottages on the other side of the road, and for fuel the villagers could dig peat on the far side of the River Leri just north of Ynys Fergi.

Morgan Jones was a master mariner who commanded the schooner 'Mary Jones' in 1842 named after his wife (Aberystwyth Register of Shipping, Ceredigion Archives).

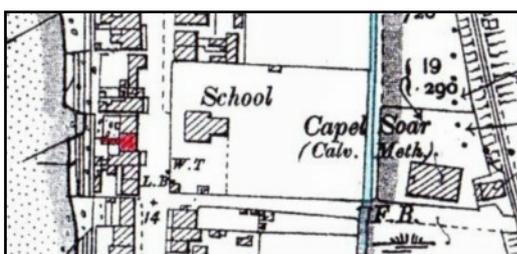
Epworth House appeared in the 1881 Census, but not the cottage.



The cottage is there on this map of 1886, with its yards shared with Epworth House. It opened directly on to the street (Detail from the 25 inch Ordnance Survey Map, surveyed in 1886 and published in 1888. Cardiganshire III.10)

In the 1891 Census it was Number 2 School Place (Number 1 was Y Nyth and neither had a name of their own). In the cottage was Margaret Morgan aged 45, a single woman, born in Borth and she had a grocery shop there. Her baptism was not in the parish register - suggesting she came from a chapel going family.

In the cottage at the 1901 Census was another single woman, Mary Hughes, aged 62, and the daughter of a Morfa Borth shoemaker Richard Hughes and his wife Mary (Parish Register, Llanfihangel Church, Llandre, Ceredigion Archives). She was earning her living as a 'general domestic servant'.



In 1904 a small extension had been built on the back of the cottage. It still shared a back yard with Epworth House. The many rows of fencing at the back were sea defences, usually rows of stakes driven into the stone bank (Detail from the 25 inch Ordnance Survey Map revised in 1904, published in 1905. Cardiganshire III.10)

Mary Hughes was still there in 1910, the tenant of Samuel Hodgson who owned both Epworth House and Epworth Cottage. For a tax planned but not levied the cottage was valued at £30 suitable for its then small size, £2 to pay, £2.10s gross. Y Nyth next door was valued at £150 (Ceredigion Archives T/DV/18 and map at the National Library of Wales). Mary Hughes was 72 in 1911 at the Census, she spoke both English and Welsh. The cottage then had only two main rooms. Miss Hughes died in 1916 aged 80 and was buried on July 30th at Llandre. Her gravestone is written in Welsh. In 1925 Julia Anne Woosnam owned and occupied the cottage. She was still there for a vote for it in 1945, and paid the rates in 1949. It was still a humble cottage with £2 to pay.

Paying the rates in 1963 was L. and M. Middleton. The half yearly rate had increased, there was 10s to pay, Epworth House was 12s. 6d. so it is possible that the wing at the back had

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been built. There was no one on the Electoral Register with a vote for the cottage that year (Rates and Electoral Register, Ceredigion Archives).



This old photograph from a glass plate of 'High Street' shows the National School behind the wall on the left and opposite the bay window of Epworth Cottage can just be seen . Gwynfa, Presbury and Ardwyn House are in the foreground reading from the right. The date is the second half of the 1930s, or beginning of the 1940s.

(Courtesy of Peter Fleming)

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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>

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

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