

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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HIGHFIELD Morfa Borth

On the beach side at the southern end of the High Street. Former address 'Britannia Place'. Not there in 1845 but built by 1886 and called Highfield by 1910.



ABOVE Highfield in 2009.

Highfield is a fully two storey terrace house, under a gable roof parallel with the road. It is single fronted with its front door on the south side. The front roof overhangs and is supported by dentil brackets. It has a small roof light for an attic floor. There is a brick slab chimney with two chimney pots on the north side of the roof. The walls are rendered and the front windows, all the same size, are modern, but of a sash pattern. They are decorated with shutters similar to those of Colliscot next door. The front door too is modern, but with a frame round it in the rendering. The door opens on to the street down two steps, and the narrow area of hard standing is enclosed by low walls. The front door opens into a room, not a passage. High on the south gable wall is a small window for the attic floor and the barge boards are plain. This house appears to be one of a pair with Deudraeth next door on the north as the spacing of windows and front door is the same. An old postcard suggests that the walls beneath the rendering are rubble stone.



At the back the house has one roof light for the attic floor, with an upper window and back door into the yard below. On the south side is a two storey extension with good views out to sea from its upper window. A door opens to a railed balcony with stairs down to the yard. Privacy for the yard comes from a tall, stepped wall on the south side. On the north side is the extension of

Deudraeth and a block wall. The yard ends with the vertical planks of the sea defensive wall which has an opening to access the beach.



A most interesting feature of this building are the dentil brackets

LEFT Highfield and Deudraeth's dentils supporting the overhang of the roof.

FAR LEFT The dentils on Pencarreg across the street to the south, a rubble stone two storey house, the home of builder and joiner Evan Griffiths in the second half of the nineteenth century and until 1907.



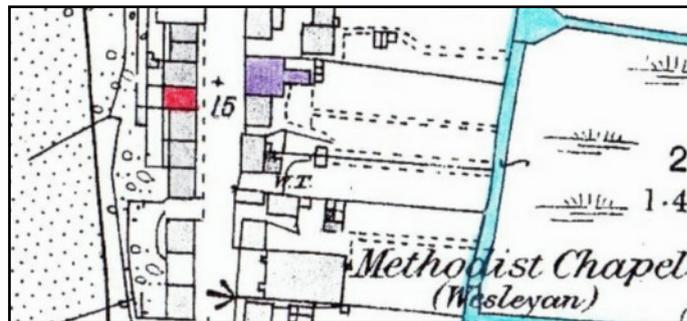
supporting its roof at the front.

LEFT Bradford House at the top of the High Street on the beach side, also rubble stone, but three storeys. The land to build this was sold in 1859.

The site of Highfield was still beach in 1829, part of the stone embankment thrown up by the sea, and called 'waste' by the Crown Manor who owned it because it was no use for farming (*Crown Manor Map 1859, National Archive LRRO 1/3060*) The road had run along the stone embankment for centuries and was a turnpike road by the 1770s. It led to a ferry from Ynyslas

(*Crown Manor Map National Archive LRRO 1/3060*)

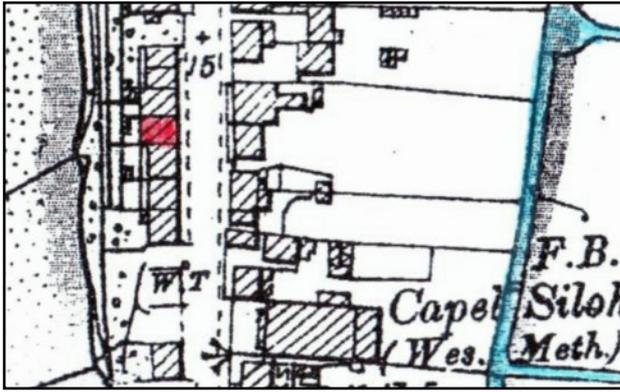
to Aberdovey, a quick way to reach North Wales. Fresh water for villagers was from a brook on the other side of the street behind the cottages and houses. For fuel they could dig peat from the other side of the River Leri just to the north of Ynys Fergi.



The house in 1886 marked in red. Its address was 'Britannia Place'. Britannia House across the street is marked in purple. Highfield and Deudraeth are deeper than the other cottages.

(Detail from the 25 inch Ordnance Survey Map surveyed in 1886, published in 1888, Cardiganshire III.10)

In the earlier Census's it is not possible to trace the families there. In the 1881 Census living there was a farm worker, David Davies, aged 59 and born in Talybont. His wife Ann was local, born in Borth. With them were their children, Margaret 18, Mary 9 and Richard 14. In the 1891 Census the house was Number 2 Britannia Place and living there was Anne Davies, a Welsh speaking widow aged 60 and born in Borth. She called herself a 'housekeeper' and had a boarder, a young bricklayer, William Brown, 22 years old, and born in Manchester. The house was empty in the 1901 Census.



The house in 1904. The little building in the yard was probably its Ty Bach (outside lavatory). There was no large extension on the back then. It had a double row of sea defences, old post cards suggest they were brushwood bundles anchored into the stone bank.

(Detail from the 25 inch Ordnance Survey Map surveyed in 1904, published in 1905, Cardiganshire III.10)

In 1910 for a tax planned but not levied, the house had its name, Highfield, and was valued at £122 the same as Deudraeth next door. £4.4s to pay, £5.5s gross. The owner and occupier was Arthur Townsend.

Sometime after 1922 there were furnished rooms to let: four bedrooms and one sitting room (Illustrated Borth Guide, Aberystwyth Library).



The fourth houses from the left are Highfield and Deudraeth. Highfield's front was rendered, but rubble stone shows through at the side. There was another slab chimney this end of the roof. (Old postcard by courtesy of Mrs Pat Havers).

In 1925 Arthur Townsend, was still the owner and occupier. Possibly the very English name 'Highfield' came from him?



From August 1935 and still in 1949 paying the rates was M. H. K. Pickering.

In 1963 paying the rates and with a vote for the house was F. E. Cutler (Rates and Electoral Register, Ceredigion Archives).

The extension on the back with the balcony suggests this house was altered for beach side living with views of the sea.

The pair of houses in 2009.

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gan/by Beryl Lewis
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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-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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