

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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MARSHBANK Glanwern Village, Borth.

A modern home inside the enclosure for a pre-1848 cottage, and built by 1963. Owned by J. H. Astill and then by Mr Turner.



ABOVE Marshbank in 2009.



LEFT The front of the building in 2015.

Marshbank is a modern one and a half storey bungalow in two sections, under roofs parallel with road. The roofs are slate coloured with red ridge tiles, and the walls are rendered.

The building lies on the west end of its site, near the tailrace stream. The west section is highest, with two dormer windows with plain barge boards, in a deeply sloping roof. The windows are modern, in the style of casement. They have tiled surrounds of a pale slate colour.

There is a central brick chimney with one chimney pot. The main roof extends outwards above two oriel windows on the ground floor. On the east face beside the front door is another window. In front of this

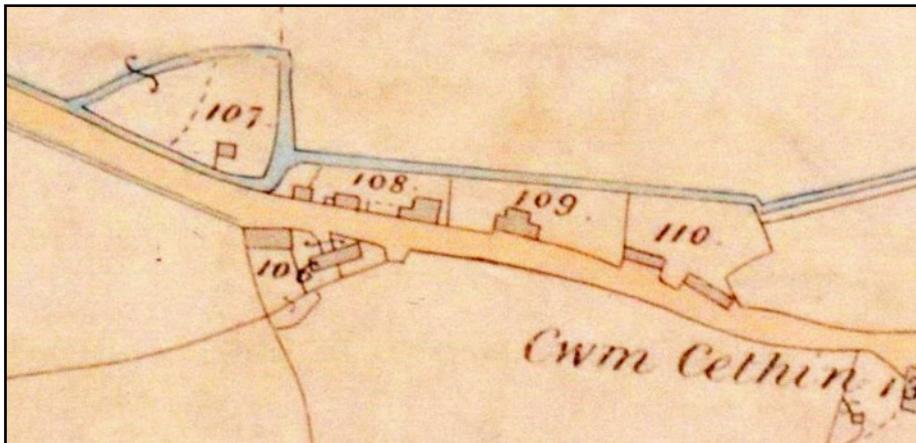


LEFT The west side of the house. The top window has a balcony with an iron railing. There will be a view of the bay.

main section is a walkway entered from the west side of the house, enclosed by a low wall of reconstituted stone. Holes for plants are in the top. The eastern section of the building is lower. The roof is extended over the front door which is on the west side. It has a small window on the east side of it. This section of the house also has two dormer windows but they are smaller. Again in the casement style they match the other top windows. They are topped by red ridge tiles. A large section of the ground floor is taken up by a steel curtain which could conceal a picture window, or a double garage. However there is a detached wooden garage on the far east boundary of the garden. Behind it is a shed. The garden is enclosed from the road by fine wire netting supported by concrete posts, and on the east front is a gate with iron railings. This garden is large enough to have some mature trees and shrubs and a wide area of lawn at the front. There are dormer windows on the rear of the main building too. The east side is very plain with one small window only. Below on the north side are two small windows, also in the casement style. On the south side is a larger window with four lights, the outer two having a small section at the bottom.

The reason a small settlement could grow up at Glanwern was the presence of the tailrace from the Felinwern water corn Mill at Glanlerry. This was fresh water from the River Lerry. It was joined by a small stream down the valley behind Ty Gwyn too, and helped drain the marsh on the north. After passing Glanwern the tailrace ran seawards then turned along behind Borth High Street, providing a brook' with fresh water for the houses and cottages there. This 'brook' is marked on a map of 1829. Today the water flows out to sea from a pipe near the Lifeboat House. To the north of Glanwern Village was the marsh whose old name was Wern Leri. (1859 Crown Manor map NA LRRO 1/3060). There was already a settlement at Glanwern by 1803 when John Williams said he was born there for the Census of 1851. The road was there too, it was shown on a map of 1829 and led down to three lime kilns beginning where the road opened on to the beach. Later another kiln was built. Lime would be carried to farms inland and the road connected to an important road, as today, at Rhyd-y-pennau. The High Street road at Borth was very ancient as in Norman times it was a quick way to north Wales along the shingle bank and high sand dune area at Ynyslas and then across the River Dovey on a ferry to Aberdovey. It was a turnpike road in 1897 (Map of Turnpike Trusts Ceredigion Archives)

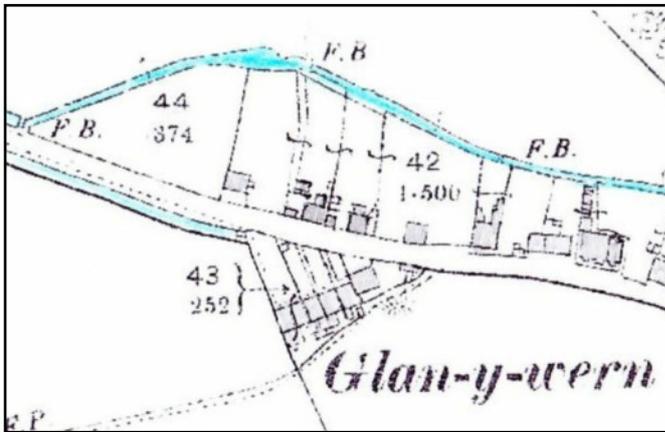
On a map of 1848 Marshbank's ground was part of Number 107 which had a cottage on it, close to the road. The Tithe map listed David Hughes as the owner or tenant and William Davies as his under-tenant. His ground measured 1 rod which was a quarter of an acre. This would have been an enclosure from 'waste' ground between the road and the tailrace from the Felinwern Mill and a rent would have had to be paid to the Crown Manor when it was enclosed. There



ABOVE A detail from the Tithe Apportionments Map of 1848 for Llanfihangel Genau'r Glyn, Cyfoeth Township. Courtesy of the National Library of Wales, it is on-line in their Cynefin.

was the option to buy the ground too. The ground was wet, as it had to be completely enclosed by ditches needed to drain it if was to be useful for example to grow grass or other crops. There is a dotted line suggesting part of it perhaps was used to grow something

different. The cottage on the east astride the boundary with 108 would become our Sunny Hill. There were two Davies in Glanwern the 1841 and 1851 Census, but neither was called William, and at present it is not possible to trace the Marshbank cottagers in later Census.



LEFT The cottage had gone in 1886, The tailrace stream from the mill had been moved to give better gardens to the other roadside cottages. It is likely that the tailrace had been cut off, and no longer flowed south between the old cottage and what is now Sunny Hill. The watercourse formerly alongside the road had been moved to the other side of the road (Detail from the 25 inch Ordnance Survey Map of 1888, surveyed in 1886, Cardiganshire NW III.10)

On the 25 inch map of 1905 revised in 1904 the site still had no building on it.

In 1910 for a valuation for a tax planned but not levied Marshbank's plot of 'land' was part of Number 116 and was owned and occupied by the blacksmith from Gwastad, Hugh Williams. It included the enclosed plot next door where the old cottage had stood, valued at £30. The plot where Marshbank now stands was valued at £120. There would have been 8s.6d to pay 18s.6d gross. This was quite valuable for 'agricultural land' but of course it would have been recognised as a possible site to build houses on. Hugh Williams had already built a terrace of houses on land he had bought over the road (Ceredigion Archives T/DV/18 and map at the National Library of Wales).

In 1925 the Rates for the plot of land alongside Sunny Hill on which the old cottage had stood was 7s. 9d, gross 8s. 6d., and it was called 'agricultural land' and the owners were James O. James and William Jones the tenants were Mary and James Williams, On the Rates list I could not find the former Hugh Williams piece of 'land'. However a humble building appears in the list, somewhere there, called Wernfa, ('marsh place' in Welsh). It is not clear exactly where it stood, and I have no photograph of it. Paying the Rates was A. H. Darby. The value was just £2. It was probably a cottage as 'Little Cot' the cottage across the road was valued at £3. In 1938 paying the Rates for Wernfa was R. Aubrey Davies, and again the value was £2. In 1963 paying the Rates was Mrs D. E. Tomlins. She paid £9. Compare that with for example the newly built Werndeg which was valued at £74 and the older cottages now houses were £20 to £29 (the valuations are based on one year's rent). However humble, English incomers were happy to buy it. Wernfa still stood in 1963 when Marshbank had been built. This was possibly on the site where Penhale stands today.

Marshbank was in the Rates list for 1963 as a house and garage, and paying the Rates had been J. H. Astill, but this had been altered to 'Mr Turner'. The house was valued at £24. A modern map shows that it stood on the western side of the ground, near the tailrace stream and was set back from the road. Marshbank is English for the Welsh 'Glanwern' (Rates Ceredigion Archives).

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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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