

# 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

*This work is for research and educational purposes only.*

# OLD CHAPEL HOUSE

Morfa Borth - the Marsh Harbour

Former Wesleyan Methodist Chapel built before 1886 - then an English Presbyterian Chapel, later a Billiard Room, then converted to a shop 'The Midland Stores'. Being rebuilt as a house since 2104.



*LEFT The building in 2104. The front windows are modern.*

This building has its gable end to the street, and runs east-west as would be expected for a chapel. The walls are rendered, and the front has a door on the south side and large modern windows.



*LEFT The building was in process of being rebuilt as a home when this and the following photographs were taken. As it had been built by 1886 the walls are likely to have been rubble stone and some of this remains, but sections had been repaired with bricks.*

*Old Chapel House Page 2*



*LEFT This is part of the south wall showing it has a footing of stone and some of the brick walling.*



*LEFT The inside of the south wall above*



*LEFT Some of the old stonework survives on the north wall at the west end. There are some sizeable and good quality stones. The roof light is part of the re-building.*



*LEFT The window in the north wall encased in bricks.*

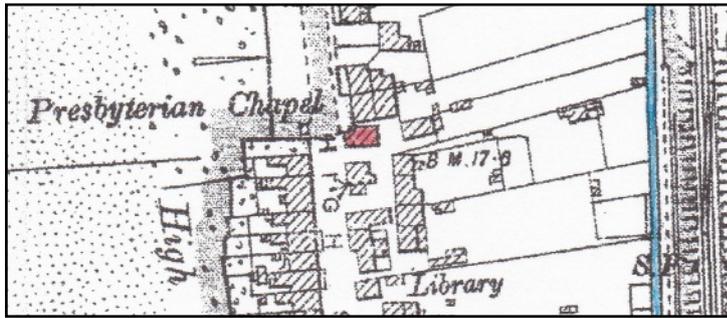
The ground for the building was enclosed from the pebble bank owned by the Crown Manor which considered it was 'waste' as it was no use for farming. It was Number 26 on a hand painted Crown Map of 1829 and on it were two cottages set back from the road. It was three quarters of an acre owned by a lawyer John Lewis and enclosed in 1823. A note said he sold it in 1845. However the roadside ground for the Chapel and Caer Wyddno next door was not yet built upon (Detail from Map of 1829, National Archives LRRO 1/3060)

In 1848 there was still no building on the site that would become the Chapel, though the cottage for Cantre Gwaelod had been built and the cottages that would become Gloucester House ( now Caer Wyddno) and Gloucester Cottage. Lewis Morgan, born about 1811 and a master mariner commander of the sloop 'Frances' occupied these. He had a long narrow garden leading down to a brook of fresh water, now a ditch. The garden was 32 perches - not quite a quarter of an acre (Detail from the Tithe Apportionments Map for Llanfihangel Genau'r Glyn, Cyfoeth Township, on-line at CYNEFIN and Register of Shipping at Aberystwyth, Ceredigion Archives)

In Borth the Wesleyan Methodists as opposed to the Calvinistic Methodists went back a long way. The Shiloh now a warehouse on the High Street was begun on that site as early as 1806. It was a branch of the Aberystwyth Circuit and in 1841 had 127 members and flourished, needing to be enlarged several times (Parish Churches and Nonconformist Chapels in Wales, Volume 1 by Bert J. Rawlins, first published in 1987) Cornish miners had brought Wesleyan Methodism to Mid-Wales when they came to work in the lead mines and Borth was included in a circuit established in the 1850s (Lead Mines in Wales by W. J. Lewis 1967)

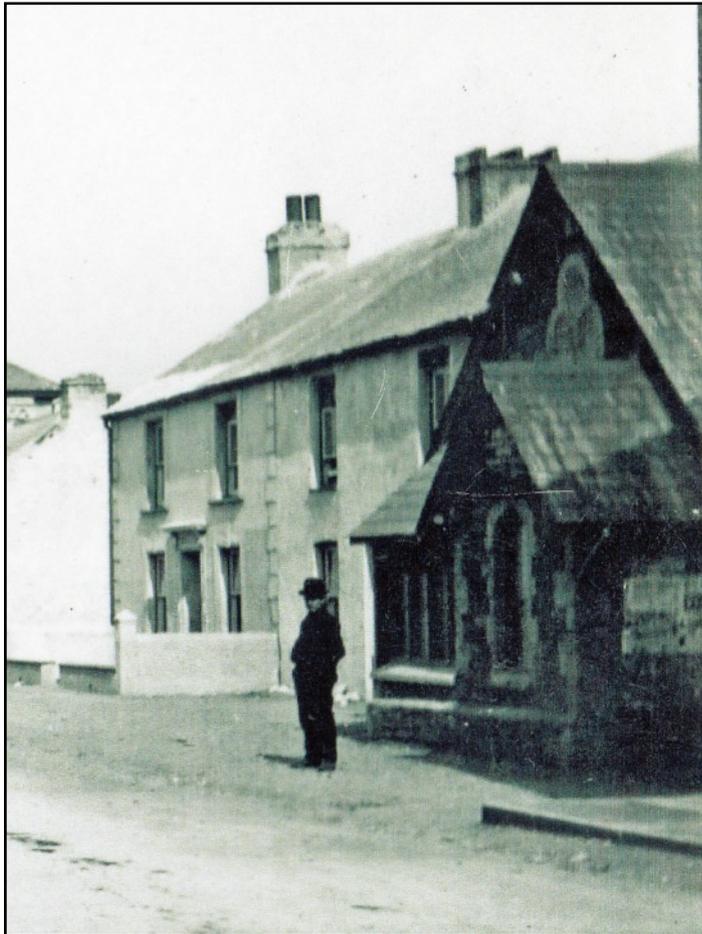


*LEFT This was the Chapel on the site in 1886. There seems to be a wide porch section on the street front of the building which was open to the road. There would have been access to fresh water for baptisms in the stream of fresh water not far away - now a ditch. Unlike the old Gloucester Cottage and the Cantre Gwaelod's old cottage which are at the angle of the gardens behind them, the chapel is square on to the road (Detail from the 25 inch Ordnance Survey Map surveyed in 1886 and published in 1888, Cardiganshire NW III.10)*



By 1890 the Wesleyan Methodist Chapel had become an Old English Presbyterian Chapel. On 30<sup>th</sup> August a sermon was preached there in memory of Captain J Lloyd who died at Santiago and who was one of the chief supporters of the church from the beginning (Aberystwyth Observer).

The English services were in the summer only, at 10 am and 6 pm.



*ABOVE LEFT* This was the Chapel in 1904. It seems unchanged since 1886 being further out in the road than Caer Wynddno beside it (Detail from the 25 inch Ordnance Survey Map revised in 1904 and published in 1905. Cardiganshire NW III.10)

*LEFT* This is a detail from a photograph on a glass plate pre 1911. The front had an extension out into the road with a further extension of a porch. The porch was lit by a window on to the pavement, and the roofing was probably slate. There was a gothic style triple window high up in the gable end. The walls are stone with a pale stone details for example around the windows, possibly a yellow sandstone some pieces of which were found during the re-building (Photograph courtesy of Peter Fleming)



*LEFT* This is a detail from a photograph taken in 1909 of the Carnival and we have a glimpse of the other side of the street front of the Chapel (Photograph courtesy of the Amgueddfa Ceredigion Museum)

In 1910, for a tax planned, but not levied, it was occupied by Jesse Matthews who had a butcher's shop next door at Leronian House, but it was still called the Old English Presbyterian Chapel, and Trustees of the Chapel owned it. The rates were £145 to pay and gross £170. With it were the words Bilhara Road.

Jesse Matthews still owned the Chapel in 1925, and it had become a Billiard Room and its address was Wellington Place. (This once included Cantre Gwaelod's cottage, Heathfield and the row of buildings with workshops behind the butcher's shop. Ysbryd-y-mor was once Wellington House). The rate was less than when it had been a Chapel with £5.19s to pay and £7 gross.



In 1949 and 1950 Cecil J. Matthews was the butcher next door, but there is no mention of a billiard room or old chapel.

*LEFT A detail from a Valentine's postcard of 1937. The Chapel porch had gone and the front built out to support windows and a central door. 'R Davies' was on a sign at the side, and below a sign said 'Billiards'. (Postcard courtesy of Peter Fleming)*

The chapel had not had a gallery and it was to become a shop, with a shop window fronting the street, a central door, and inside a section for the shop and a small kitchen section at the back with a back door.

It was not listed in the 1934 rates or the 1938.

It became the Midland Stores of P. L. S. Henigan - grocers, greengrocers and flowers and had a telephone, Borth 359.

In the 1950s V. Beenham was the occupier of the 'Midland Stores' owned by A. Emrys Williams and valued at £18 for the rates. He was a fishmonger and a fruiterer.

J. Williams paid rates for it in 1963 (Rates Ceredigion Archives).

Since 2014 the building has been given an upper floor and is being converted into a private house.

Henigan's shop sign on the north face of the building has been removed.

*The author would like to thank the present owners of the building for their help.*

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gan/by Beryl Lewis  
[cyf/ref ADX/1629]

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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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