

THE BUILDINGS OF MORFA 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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TIR-A-MOR

Morfa Borth, Borth Marsh.

At the northern part of the village facing the beach. It appears in the 1934 Rates list and was owned by the Deacon family of builders from Kington in Herefordshire. They built a Public Convenience for Borth.



ABOVE *Tir-a-mor* in 2009.



Tir-y-mor is a house with a hipped roof. Its upper floor has a balcony supported on slender wooden posts which gives good views of the sea. A decorative line, like an old string course, runs along the tops of these windows and is echoed by lines on the top and bottom of the balcony. The roof is slate coloured and the walls are rendered. The house

almost fills its site. A sloping base for the area of the front under the balcony has hard standing, and three steps lead up to the front door. The height of the front may have been designed to protect it in case of flooding from the sea. Tir-r-mor has been given a very distinctive design, there is no other like it in Borth.



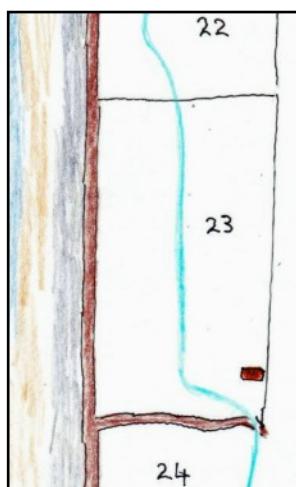
LEFT In 2019 decorative panels one with a kite flank the front door which has a window with an elegant linear design.

BELow At the back in the roof is a chimney with two flues. This would give opportunities for real fires or stoves. Two dormer windows, one with a balcony enclosed with wooden boarding give views of the hills. Interestingly the three small windows in the rear wall on the south side are different sizes. On the north side is a flat roofed extension with the back door. The width of this extension matches the width of the dormer window in the roof above. Tucked in alongside is a platform for the house's oil tank. Like Brockhill (1935) there is a garage within the rear of the house and the pattern made by the placing of windows seems very thirties. The rear garden area is



enclosed by a concrete block wall which is not rendered. There is a gateway for a car to drive in with red brick gateposts.

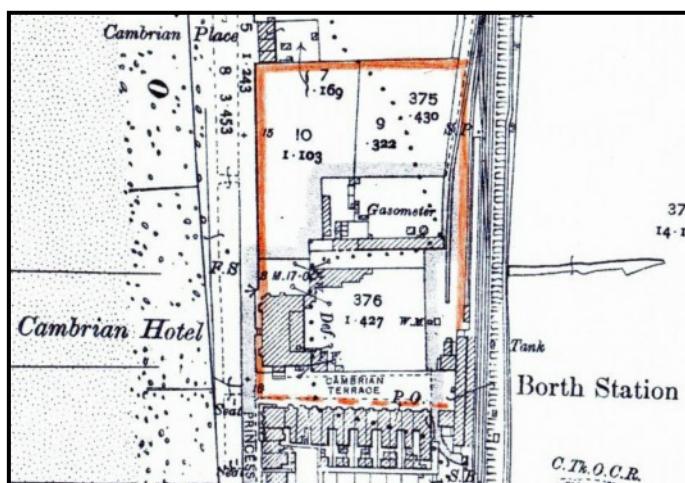
The ground for this house was enclosed in 1809 by a local lawyer called Big John (John Lewis) from the pebble embankment thrown up by the sea, and called ‘waste’ because it was no use for farming, and from the marsh ground beside it (also called ‘waste’) reclaimed for pasture with drainage ditches. It was a field of 4 acres, 3 rods and 20 perches, that is almost five acres, and across it ran a brook on the old course of the River Leri. John Lewis had a cottage on it called Terfynau (boundaries) – where the railway station is today. There were no other cottages. A rent of £3.4s had to be paid every year to the Crown manor who owned the ground, but there was an option to buy it for £16 and John Lewis bought it at the Crown Manor’s Court Leet in 1809.



LEFT On a map of 1829 the ground was Number 23 (A detail after a Map of 1829, National Archives LRRO 1/3060)

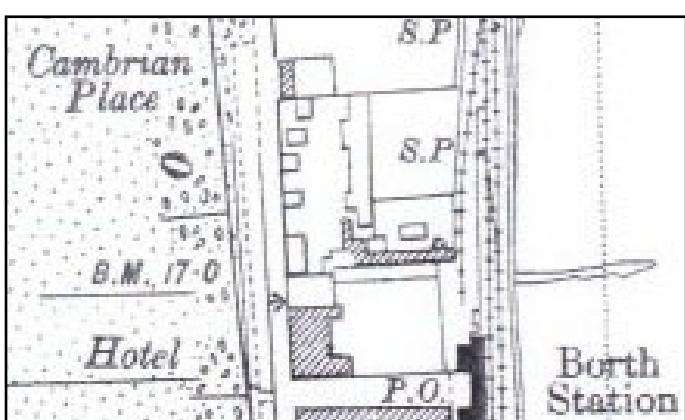
The road had been there for centuries and was a turnpike road by the 1770s. It led to a ferry from Ynyslas to Aberdovey and was a quick way to North Wales. Fresh water for the old cottages and houses came from the brook and for fuel villagers could dig peat on the far side of the River Leri near Ynys Fergi. However, by the time Tir-y-mor was built the homes had piped water and coal could come on the train.

John Lewis's land was sold to the developer Thomas Savin who brought the railway and built the Railway Station, the great Cambrian Hotel and Cambrian Terrace. The Hotel had large grounds for tennis, croquet, pleasure gardens, a bowling green, and possibly a walled garden.



LEFT The hotel's land is outlined in red.

However, the Hotel did not do well, it had a hundred rooms, but often many were empty. It was owned by a ‘Hotel and Land Development Company after a Sale in 1931. It is likely it needed to raise money by either selling off its roadside land to build the bungalows and houses, or having them built itself to sell. Maesteg along the road was built in 1937/8.



LEFT The new houses in the hotel's garden are sketched in, added to a map revised in 1904 and published in 1905(Ordnance Survey 25 inch map, Cardiganshire NW).

The house and a garage appears in the Rates list in September 1934, the owner and occupier was W. L. Deacon. This was a valuable house, valued at £22 to pay and £30 gross. In 1949 Ernest

“Ernest” was crossed out, leaving just ‘Deacon’. This was because he died that year, 13/6/1949 aged 65 (Kington History Society Database). This house has plenty of accommodation for holiday visitors, or for some-one to rent. The Deacon family were a firm of builders in Kington, Herefordshire. In about 1950 six bedrooms and a sitting room were advertised by Mrs Deacon to let. She did not live in Borth,

Before the 1960’s sea defence and promenade the lower windows of this house would have had a view of the beach. However, this could leave its front vulnerable to storm damage from stones thrown up by the sea.



LEFT The house began as a bungalow under a very deep hipped roof at right angles to the street, it was taller than the neighbouring bungalow, and had a dormer window. There was a slender chimney on the north gable end. This was after a storm with stones all over the road. The windows were not damaged (Aberystwyth Public Library)

However because they were set back from the road, the stones in the old photograph did not reach the lower windows of the bungalows and houses to damage them. There was a seriously bad storm in October 1927 and this is likely to be the

one in the photograph. A Borth Relief Fund had to be set up. (Cambrian News 28 October 1927).

The concrete sea wall and promenade was completed in May 1956, and in January 1957 the Aberystwyth Rural District Council charged the bungalows and houses because it now offered them protection from the sea. Tir-y-mor was charged £40. This was more than houses in a terrace (£20), as this house’s position on its plot would allow room for flooding. Many owners complained bitterly about the ‘unsightly sea wall’ and said their homes were less valuable as the ground floor could no longer see the sea - very important for seaside homes that could take in holiday makers or be retirement homes. In September 1958 the charge had not been paid, and Mr Ernest Deacon’s executors applied to the Ministry of Housing and Local Government

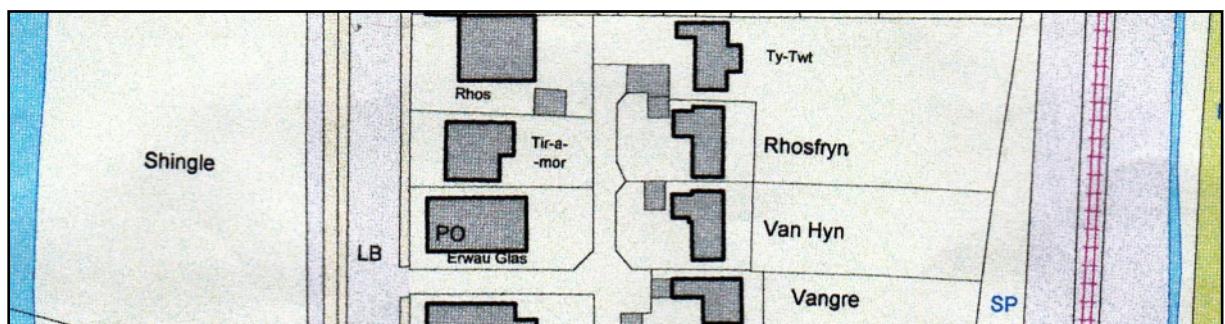
to have the charge reduced. It was reduced to £35, and eventually paid by Mrs Betty Deacon (Ceredigion Archives ABR/HI/6/40)



LEFT The bungalow was transformed by the Deacon family to have a good view of the sea with a big dormer window opening on to a balcony. The window frames were geometrical - usually metal - fashionable in the 1930s like those of Borth’s Brockhill of 1935. Whether they were curved it is not possible to see. The extension for the balcony made a roof over the ground floor, supported by posts painted a dark colour. The entrance was at the northern end of the low wall in front of the bungalow. Tir-a-mor was set closer

to the street than Rhos next door but further back than Erwau Glas in the foreground.

Mrs B. M. Deacon, (Betty, Ernest's widow) was still paying the rates in 1963 and John E. Deacon had a vote for the house (Electoral Rolls and Rates, Ceredigion Archives).



ABOVE On a modern map the house has a square shape, almost filling the width of its site, with an extension at the back on the northern side. It is close to its neighbours, with no access for a car. It has only a small garden as a row of bungalows have been built with an access lane at the rear of Tir-y-mor's garden (Detail from a Council Map courtesy of Councillor Ray Quant who provided it for research for a village event)

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Tai'r Borth / Houses of Borth
gan/by Beryl Lewis
[cyf/ref ADX/1629]

Mae **Tai'r Borth** yn cynnwys dros 350 hanes sy'n ymwneud ag adeiladau unigol ac mae'r hanesion wedi'u darlunio â chyfoeth o ffotograffau, mapiau a dogfennau. Mae'r ffeiliau ar gael ar ein gwefan: <https://www.archifdy-ceredigion.org.uk/tairborth.php?lang=cy>

Hoffem ddiolch i Beryl am fod mor garedig â chaniatáu i ni rannu ei gwaith â'r gynulleidfa ehangaf bosibl.

Ceidw Beryl Lewis yr hawlfraint yn ei gwaith ac mae'r hanesion yn cael eu rhannu at ddibenion preifat ac ymchwil yn unig.

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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