

# 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.*

# WELFARE HOUSE

Morfa Borth - the Marsh Harbour

A home of master mariners, and eventually a tailor and a boot and shoe repairer.



*Welfare in 2009.*

Welfare stands on the east side of the High Street. It is a two storey, detached and double fronted house with rendered rubble stone walls under a gable roof parallel to the road. This does not have the steep slope expected if it was once thatched. Today there are no chimneys, but a postcard of 1912 shows it once had a rubble stone chimneys with two chimney pots, at each end of its roof. There are sash windows. The front door appears to be central, with plaster decoration of 'classical' style with pilaster columns supporting an entablature with a prominent keystone.



*LEFT Edging the top of the front door is a dog tooth border cut into the plaster, rare in Morfa Borth, and the keystone is decorated with a random curving design. Under the entablature are tiny dentils. There are circular patches of texture too. Someone was proud of this house.*



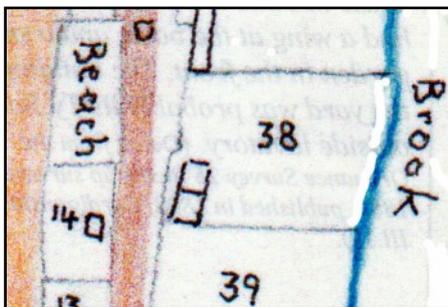
*LEFT and BELOW* The columns (pilaster strips) have a circular motif half way down, now defaced, and a circular motif with a texture on their capitals. A brass plate set in the wall alongside the door has the name of the house. The door is wooden and of a traditional design - not so common now among Morfa Borth's many modern front



*doors.*

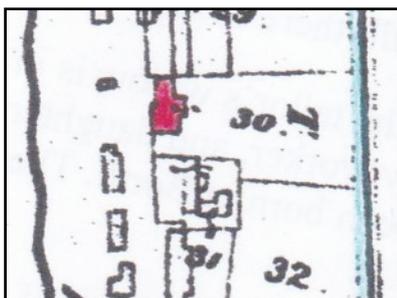
Today there is no front garden, the house opens on to the pavement, and there is a small garden at the back.

Welfare stands on land that had been enclosed from the 'waste' or common land on the pebble embankment thrown up by the sea which belonged to the Crown. This was sold to David Daniel, a master mariner, by the manor court of Llanfihangel in 1821. It was a sizeable plock of three quarters of an acre, extending eastwards to a 'brook' of fresh water. This was from the River Leri for a mill at Glan Lerry (now gone) plus water from two small streams joining it from Ty Gwyn at Glanwern (formerly Cwm Cethin), and from Bryn Owen. Today that water goes out to sea near the Lifeboat House. The road was ancient, leading to a ferry at Ynyslas and was a quick way to North Wales. It had become a turnpike road by the 1770s.



*LEFT* 38 was David Daniel's plot and by 1829 he had built some cottages on it. Nothing yet where Welfare stands (After a water colour map, National Archives LRRO 1/3060).

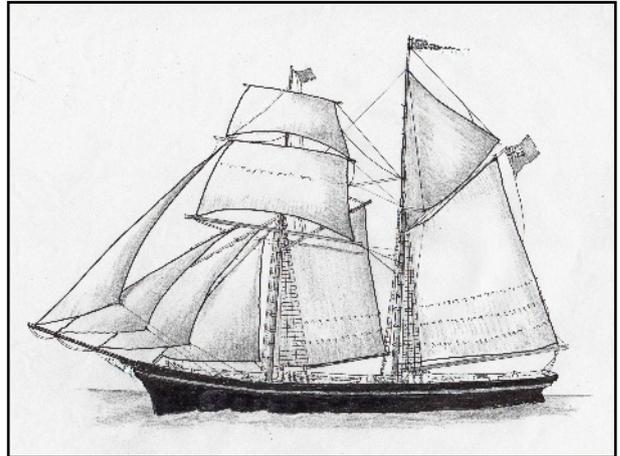
David Daniel was the son of David Daniel who had farmed at Penygraig. He had a wife and four children, and owned and commanded a schooner named Rosina after his daughter. (Parish Register, Ceredigion Archives, 1841 Census and the list of ships in Terry Davies 'Borth a Seaborn Village').



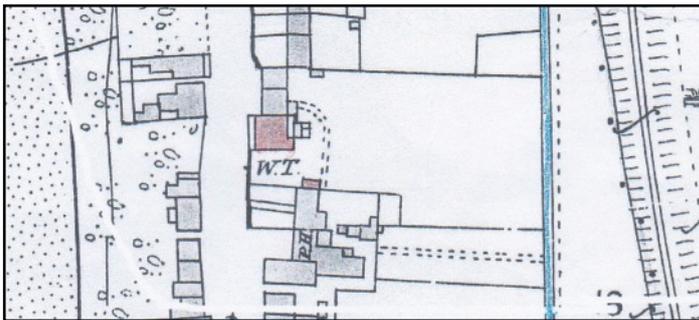
*LEFT* By 1848 coloured in red are a good sized house for himself built at the road edge, and two small cottages to the north of it, later called the Rhiwlas Cottages. Part of his large plot with the old cottages had gone (detail from the Tithes Apportionments Map for Llanfihangel Genau'r Glyn, Cyfoeth Township, on-line at CYNEFIN)

Elizabeth Daniel, a farmer's widow was in the house in the 1851 Census. Either side of her were homes of Hughes families. It is not possible to trace the occupants of the house with any certainty in the Census of 1861 and 1871.

However in 1880 we can trace it and it was called 'Welfare House'. There was room in the house for holiday visitors of three families from Newtown, including a clergyman staying there in August. Their landlord was Captain John Hughes, born about 1835, a master mariner (Cambrian News). In the 1881 Census in the house was Captain John's wife Catherine, born in Borth about 1844, and two daughters, Catherine, born about 1863 and Margaret Elizabeth born about 1873. Captain John owned the local schooner Lorne and commanded it for over 25 years. (Terry Davies. Borth, A Maritime History)



*RIGHT A Schooner*

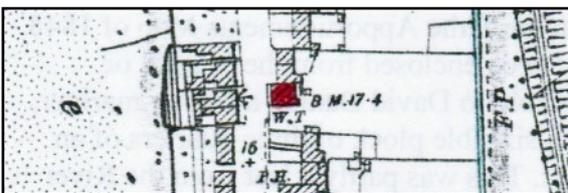


*LEFT Captain Hughes's house in 1886. It still had its most of its plock of land at the back. Alongside it were the two Rhiwlas cottages and in the same ownership, sharing the garden, with a path leading from one of then to the wall of Saxatile. In front of Welfare was a narrow strip of garden, and there were small buildings and yards behind it - a privy and pig sty there were likely*

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

In the 1891 Census the Captain's family were still there, with another daughter Margaret E. Hughes born about 1876 and a lodger who was a stonemason. In 1895 they were still there. The family spoke both Welsh and English (Kelly's Directory of South Wales).

By 1901 Captain Hughes had built two villas over the road, the one the family moved into was called 'Lorne' after his schooner. Living at Welfare House was a middle aged tailor, Lewis Lewis, born about 1842, and working at home. His daughter Anne aged 22 was a dressmaker, and there was another daughter Margaretta, aged 20 who was a school teacher. Neither was married. They had been born in Cardigan. His wife Margaret was born in Llandovery, Carmarthenshire.

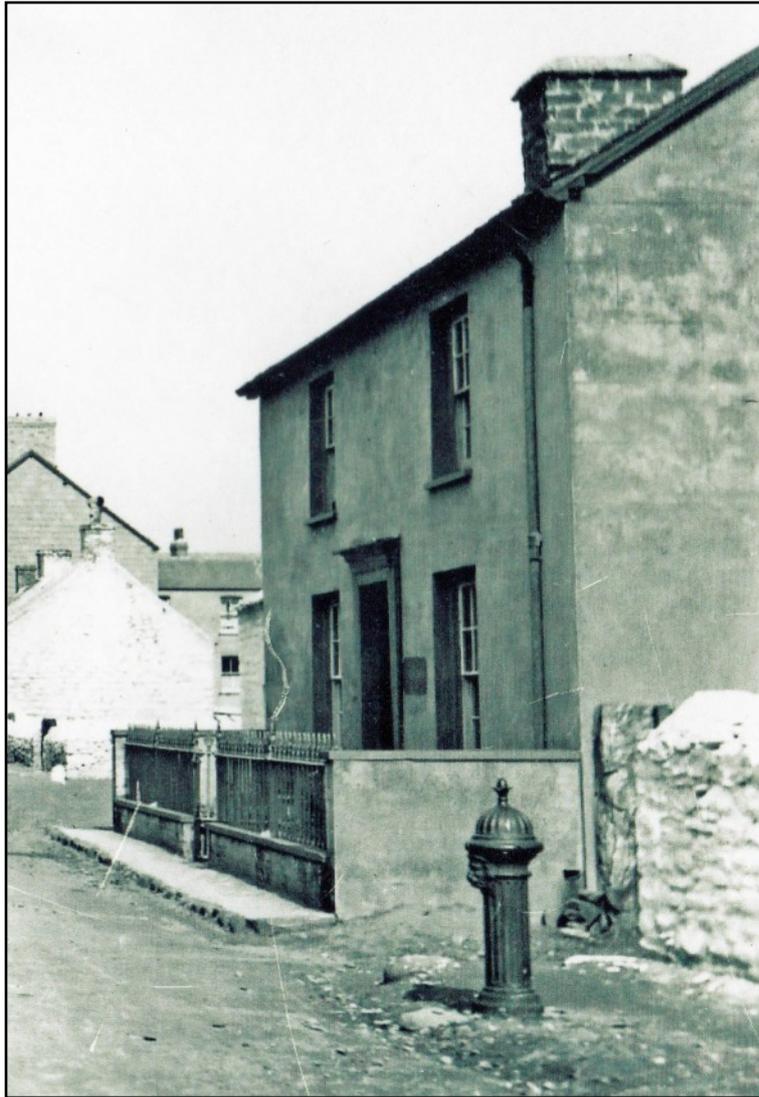


*LEFT Lewis Lewis the tailor's house in 1904 and very little had changed. The furthest cottage now had a garden. They still stood in 1949. Today only a scrap of walling with the front door of the nearest one remains.*

*RIGHT* The house with the small front garden. There were railings and a gate. This is from an undated glass plate. Part of one of its chimneys is on the top right. In the foreground is one of Borth's taps of spring water supplied by the parish council. (Photograph courtesy of Peter Fleming)

In 1910 for a tax planned but not levied the house was valued at £225. John Hughes was the owner, the Lewis family were tenants. In the 1911 Census the tailor's widow is in the house, her daughter Mary Elizabeth was a shop assistant and dairy worker, and daughter Annie was still dressmaking. These two had not married. They had been born in Borth. There were six rooms in the house (not including any scullery or its cellar).

*BELOW* The Carnival in 1912 passing Welfare. It had two chimneys each with two flues, so was a well heated house (Amgueddfa Ceredigion Museum)



Sometime after 1922 a Borth Guide advertised furnished accommodation at Welfare, of four bedrooms and 2 sitting rooms (Aberystwyth Public Library).

In 1925 the house lost its land at the back when the Borth Memorial Village Hall (now gone) was built. Paying the Rates in 1925 the owner and occupier was Isaac Pritchard, a boot maker and repairer. He had come from a small cottage, 5 Railway Terrace. In 1924 at a mock election held by the Literary and Debating Society at the Libanus Chapel (later the Gerlan), he seconded the Liberal Candidate. (Cambrian News, November). He was the president of the society, 'newly founded'. He helped establish a local water supply committee, and was its clerk when work was starting on a reservoir in May 1924. (Cambrian News, 30 May) Also in May that year he helped the parish council when the embankments on the River Lerry needed repairing. He went on to become an elder of the the Libanus Chapel, but had moved away from Welfare by 1945.



*LEFT In about 1936 on the left are the Rhiwlas Cottages, beyond is Welfare. (Postcard, private collection)*

By 1934 Isaac Pritchard had left, and paying the rates was Margaretta E. Jones the owner. Occupying the house was Thomas Jones.

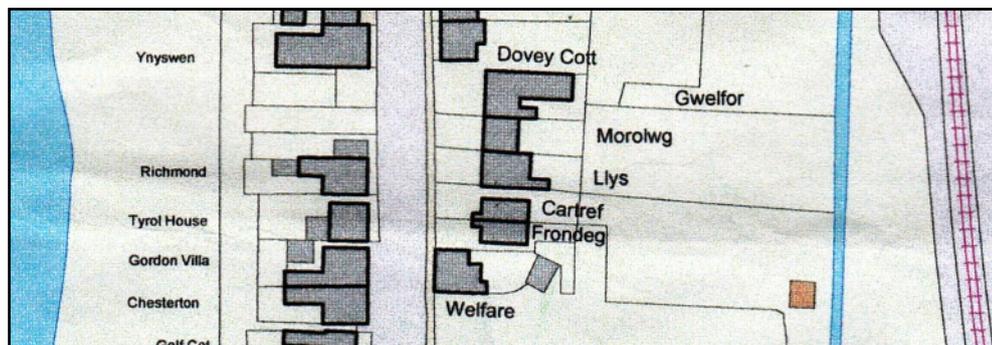
Margaretta E. Jones paid the rates in 1949 as owner and occupier, and she had a vote for the house in 1945.

In about 1950 another Borth Guide advertised an apartment to let with two bedrooms and one sitting room. It was doing bed and breakfast, and there was a garage. Mrs Davies was in charge. She advertised a taxi, telephone Borth 438 (Aberystwyth Public Library, Guide to Borth)

Caradog Davies paid the rates in 1957.

With votes for the house in 1963 were Caradog and Angharad Mary E. Davies.

*In 1976 Welfare had the Public Hall behind it and another building in its garden - probably the garage which opened on to the public parking place around the Hall (Historical Maps online).*



*ABOVE This detail from a modern Council Map shows the house today. The Memorial Hall has gone (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-eredigion.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-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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