

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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WHITE LION PLACE COTTAGES 1 TO 3.

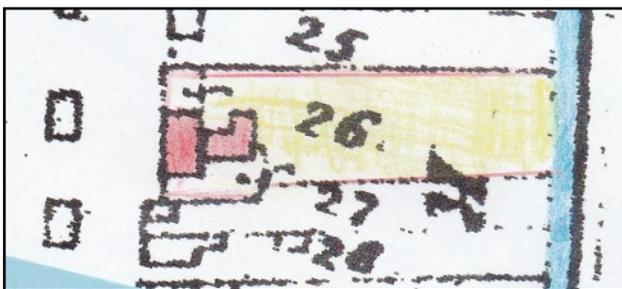
Built between 1856 and 1866 by the money of Mary James the widow of Enoch James, ship owner, master mariner and innkeeper of the White Lion across the lane. Tenants provided rent for members the James family. In the twentieth century the family still owned the cottages.



They are a terrace running east to west along the south side of the paved White Lion Lane. Number One is the furthest from the High Street. The terrace is joined to Beatrice on the High Street by a single storey building. The walls are rubble stone. The cottages are a full two storeys high and have a gable roof parallel to the lane. They are single fronted with their front doors on the west which open directly on to the lane. All three are rendered. They have slate coloured roofing tiles and back on to buildings behind them. In 1949 they had no house names just numbers in 'White Lion Place'.

The ground on which they are built is partly the stone bank thrown up by the sea and partly reclaimed marshland. The High Street is ancient, having been there for centuries and was a turnpike road by the 1770s.

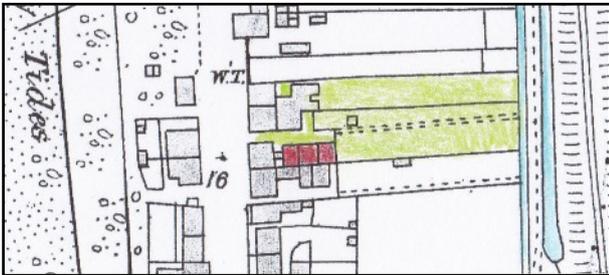
In 1829 the ground had been enclosed but there were no buildings where White Lion Place stands today (Map, National Archives LRRO 1/2060)



LEFT In 1848 the building marked in red on this map was the White Lion Inn which had been there since before 1834. Enoch James was the Inn keeper. He was also a master mariner and ship owner, and this was all his ground on which build houses would be built for his immediate family and for renting out, including the row of three cottages (Detail from the Tithe Apportionments

Map of Llanfihangel Genau'r Glyn, Cyfoeth township, on-line at CYNEFIN)

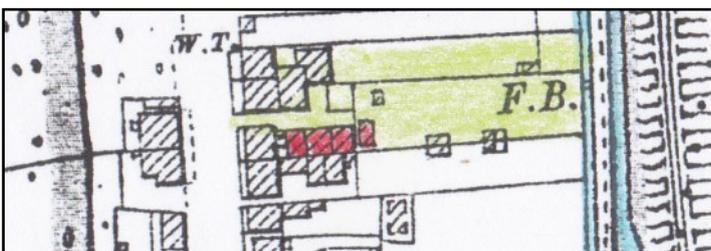
Some history of the place comes from Court Cases concerning Richard James and the ground leading down to the brook, now a ditch. Enoch James the Innkeeper who bequeathed other houses on this site in his Will did not specify who was to have the ground which was 30 yards wide and 55 yards long. Mary James who continued to run the Inn after Enoch died, kept cattle on it. Her first tenants in the terrace were a widow, Margaret Williams, Evan Williams and a shopkeeper Mary Jones. They had access to the ground to get fresh water from the brook.



LEFT By 1886 the three cottages had been built just behind Beatrice but not joining on to it. The cottages are marked in red, the James family's land is green. There was a brook with fresh water at the end of their ground and a footpath to reach it. A wall with a stile and later with steps led into it. (Detail from the 25 inch Ordnance Survey Map

surveyed in 1886 and published in 1888, Cardiganshire NW III.10).

When Mary James died in 1866 in her Will she bequeathed the three houses to her son Richard for life. He was a master mariner who did not marry. The tenants used the ground for gardens, and Richard kept about 10 or 12 square yards adjacent to the brook for a garden for himself. He thought the ground belonged to him so he built a wall to enclose it, with a stile and later steps to access the ground - see the 1886 map above. His sister, Margaret Jones living in Resolute thought she had a right to access the ground and the brook so she pulled some of Richard's wall down. In June 1872 Richard took her to Court for pulling it down, in September in another Court Case she wanted damages for doing this. It was decided that Richard had no claim to the ground. In 1874 he had assaulted his brother John James because John was annoyed because Richard was building a wall between John's house, White Lion house, formerly the Inn and now Mayfield and the ground behind, which John was sure was his. After Richard died in 1894 his brothers David and John were to have the terrace. David had died in 1870 so his son Hugh, another master mariner, a young man often away at sea, shared the ownership with his uncle John James. In 1874 the cottages had two water closets. In 1896 Richard Jenkins of Erwyd tried to get possession of the cottages from Hugh and John James. He did not succeed.



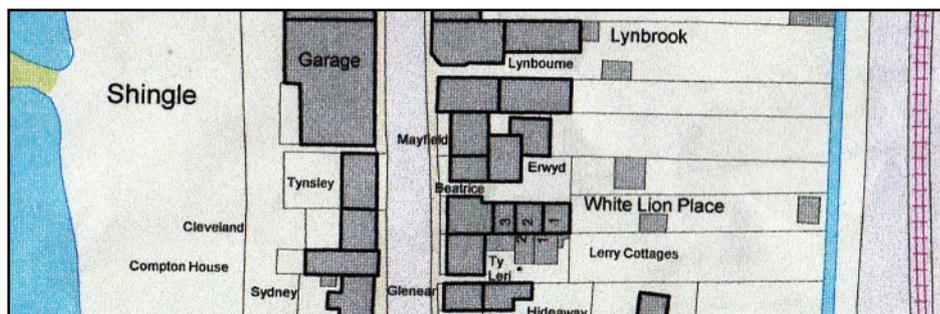
LEFT This detail from the 1905 map shows an extra building alongside Number 1, and a footbridge to reach the second water course. Before the Railway came this was their only source of fresh water. They shared the ground behind with Resolute and Erwyd (Detail from the

25 inch map revised in 1904 and published in 1905. As Above).

In 1910 at a Valuation for a tax planned but not levied, Hugh James and David Hughes were the owners. By 1925 Hugh's widow Maggie owned all three. In 1934 she owned two of them, rates for the third were paid by John Ellis Annie Ellis paid the rates in 1949 and 1957 (Rates Ceredigion Archives).

E. Protheroe who paid the rates for Mayfield, and Glenys Protheroe paid the rates for one of the cottages - either Number 1 or Number 2 in 1949 and 1957. John James Davies paid the rates for Number 3.

By 1975 Beatrice had spread backwards to join up with Number 3, and there were two buildings on the ground at the rear, one close beside the ditch (the former brook) (Historic Maps Online)



ABOVE A detail from a modern Council Map (Map courtesy of Councillor Ray Quant who provided it for research for a village event).

NUMBER ONE

Today Number One (furthest from the High Street) has modern window frames of two lights. It has a chimney of grey brick on the east side of its roof. and two small roof lights. Adjoining it today is a small one storey gabled building - with a metal stove pipe coming out of the roof, and a narrow strip of garden surrounding it. In 2017 the cottage had two bedrooms, and a paddock with a stable and then a strip of pasture extending to the ditch (old brook).

It is not possible to be sure which family lived in this cottage in the 1861 and 1871 Census's. In the 1881 Census in the cottage was John M. Jones aged 50 an out of work gamekeeper. He had been born in Tre-r-ddol. His wife Mary was 49. Their son Morris was 16 and a lead miner. He had been born in Tre-r-ddol. They had a daughter Elizabeth aged 9 and born in Borth. They had a pensioner lodger, a widow, Elizabeth Jones aged 76 and born in Borth.

At the 1901 Census in the cottage was Thomas Richards, a 28 year old railway porter, born in Shrewsbury. His wife Mary Ann was 23 and they had a baby son, David Thomas aged 1.

In 1910 the tenant was a widow, Jane Griffiths. At the 1911 Census she was 83, an old age pensioner, and born in Llanfarian.

In 1925 the tenant was Thomas John Williams.

Paying the Rates for Number One in by 1934 and still in 1963 was John J. Davies. With votes for the house in 1963 were Mary Davies, Jane Elizabeth Davies and John James (Electoral Registers and Rates, Ceredigion Archives)

NUMBER TWO

Number Two has sash windows with twelve lights, possibly similar to the original windows, and one large roof light and no chimney.

It is not possible to be sure which family lived in this cottage in the 1861 and 1871 Census's. In 1881 in the house at the Census was a mariner's wife, Elizabeth Jones aged 29 and born in Llansilin, Montgomeryshire. She had two sons, Robert Edward aged 8 born in Borth, John David aged five and daughter Mary Margaret aged 2.

At the 1891 Census in the house was John Edwards, aged 43 an Auxiliary postman and a weaver working at home of his own account. He was born in Aberystwyth.

At the 1901 Census in the house was again the mariner's wife, Elizabeth Jones aged 39 and born in Oswestry. Her son John David was 15 and a labourer. There were four other children, daughters Mary M., Elizabeth J., and Martha and a son Thomas. There must have been attic rooms under the roof to fit all these in! The 1911 Census listed it with four main rooms.

In 1910 at a Valuation for a tax planned but not levied. David Thomas was the tenant. Paying the Rates for Number Two in 1925 was Virtue Hughes which changed in 1934 to J. James Davies and in 1949 E. Protheroe.

NUMBER THREE

Number Three has modern windows of sash design each with two lights and a brick chimney also on the east side of its roof. There are two chimney pots - two flues on each chimney.

It is not possible to be sure which family lived in this cottage in the 1861 and 1871 Census's. In 1881 Number Three was unoccupied.

At the 1891 Census in the house were Lewis Lewis, a tailor, aged 48 and born in Llandre. His wife Margaret aged 50 was a Borth girl, their son William aged 18 was a mariner, and their daughter Margaret was sixteen.

At the 1901 Census in the house was David Thomas aged 68 a general agricultural labourer born in Llancynfelin, and his wife Mary aged 73, a general domestic servant.

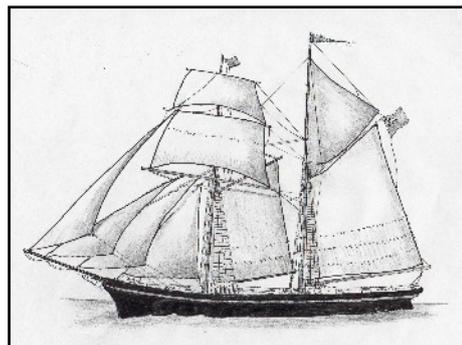
In 1910 at a Valuation for a tax planned but not levied David Thomas was the tenant. (Ceredigion Archives T/DV/18) At the 1911 Census they were elderly. They had been married for 55 years and had had seven children. Three had died. Four remained. Their daughter Jane was 49 and had been married for 18 years. She had been born in Aberteifi. She had had four children, two of whom had died.

In 1925 John Hayden Ellis was a tenant of the cottage. Paying the Rates in 1949 was Annie Ellis his wife. They were related by marriage to the Enoch James family. In the 1950s the house was arranged as follows, through the front door was the stairs. On the left was the living room which had a hearth - and probably a range. Upstairs were two bedrooms. There was electricity but no bathroom. The Ty Bach - outside lavatory built of wood, was at the end of the garden near the ditch and railway line. There were Ty Bachs for other homes there too. Because the building backed against other houses there were no back windows. The extension on the east end today was not there then.

Annie Ellis lived there until about 1956. She could be kind but was could also be severe. She resented the fact that her husband went back to sea in World War 2 to help the war effort, and on a ship he was not meant to go on and a voyage he was not meant to go on, the ship carrying coal from Sunderland to Bordeaux, the boat was torpedoed by a U-boat which sank it. As a strong swimmer he dived in to try to save the Captain (a Borth man) who was trapped below deck, but perished in the attempt. (John Ellis grandson of John Hayden Ellis).

A villager remembered that one of the cottages had been a beer house and that there was a building across the lane that was its lavatory.

The writer of this article would like to thank John Ellis for family details and for finding the Court Cases; Richard James v. Margaret Jones, September 1872 - reported in the Aberystwyth Observer, 5th. October. Richard James v. John James reported in the



Archifdy Ceredigion Archives
yn cyflwyno / presents
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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