

# 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.*

# MORFAN also called MORFAN HOUSE

Morfa Borth - the Marsh Harbour

Formerly part of New Street and on the east side of the High Street. Built for a home by a Rees family of master mariners and used for holiday visitors. Being built at the 1861 Census and still owned by members of the family in the twentieth century but let to tenants.



*ABOVE Morfan in 2019 is the centre house of this terrace of three.*

This is the middle house in a terrace of three houses. It is a bare two storeys high, and single fronted with a front door on the north side. It has walls of rubble stone which are rendered, and a gable roof parallel to the street, which has a rubble stone chimney shared with neighbours either side of its roof. All the front windows are sash windows which match the other houses in the terrace. They have narrow glazing bars and may be original or modern copies. There is a small curving wall in the front of the house enclosing a very narrow strip of ground.



*LEFT At the back is a single storey extension. substantial extension, and some outbuildings. There is a long narrow garden which extends down to a ditch - the former brook. Roof lights are for an attic floor and the windows have the pattern of the sash windows in the front of the house.*

For the history of the site please turn to 'New Street'.

In the 1861 Census there was a terrace of three houses being built on the Rees family land and called New Street. They were tucked in alongside the street avoiding the earlier cottages. This was when the railway was about to come to Borth, and the station would open in 1863. The Rees family of master mariners owned and commanded wooden sailing ships mostly in the coastal trade, and had shares in other vessels. This usually (but not always) earned a good living for them. All three houses in the terrace were occupied by the family.

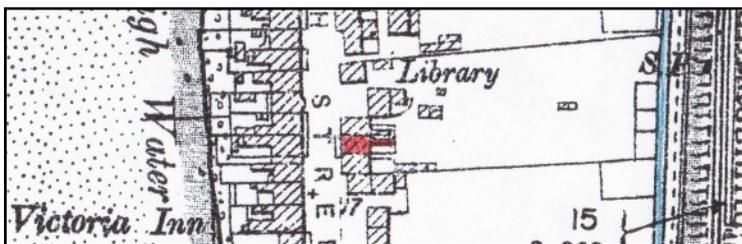
In the 1871 living in the house now Morfan was Catherine Rees aged 45, born in Borth about 1826, and the widow of Captain Richard Rees born in 1829, a master mariner who had died in 1866 aged only 37. Mrs Rees took in holiday visitors for nine weeks that summer, from Oswestry and Llanidloes who probably came on the train. She could manage two families at once, one with children and a nurse which suggest Morfan was built as the two storey house we see today. In the summer of 1880 she had visitors for six weeks (Cambrian News). The Census's listed her as 'Independent' so she probably had some income from her husband's shipping as well as from her holiday visitors.



*LEFT Morfan in 1886 marked in red. The railway had come, but the ground still extended to the brook and it was shared between all the homes. The small buildings may have been their Ty Bach - outside lavatory - but families often kept a pig which would have needed a pigsty.*

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

In the 1891 Census her son Richard, born in 1855, and a master mariner like his father was also in the house. He was aged 36 and unmarried. In the Census's of 1901 and 1911 the house was unoccupied or the owner was away.



*LEFT Morfan had a narrow extension on the back in 1904 and a narrow front garden (Detail from the 25 inch Ordnance Survey Map revised in 1904 and published in 1905 Cardiganshire NW III.10)*

In 1910 for a tax planned but not levied the house was valued at £204 just over £20 more valuable than its two neighbours, but with the same rate to pay, £5.6s, £6.5s gross. Captain Thomas Rees owned the house but living there was Bridget Evans.

Sometime after 1922 furnished apartments in the house of two bedrooms and one sitting room were advertised to let to holiday visitors. (Illustrated Guide to Borth price 6d, Aberystwyth Public Library). Paying the Rates in 1925 was Elizabeth Jane Rees, the owner, but living in the house was John Jenkins. In August 1934 Mrs Jenkins provided a recipe for Ginger Biscuits for a St Matthew's Church Bazaar. (Cambrian News booklet, Ceredigion Archives)

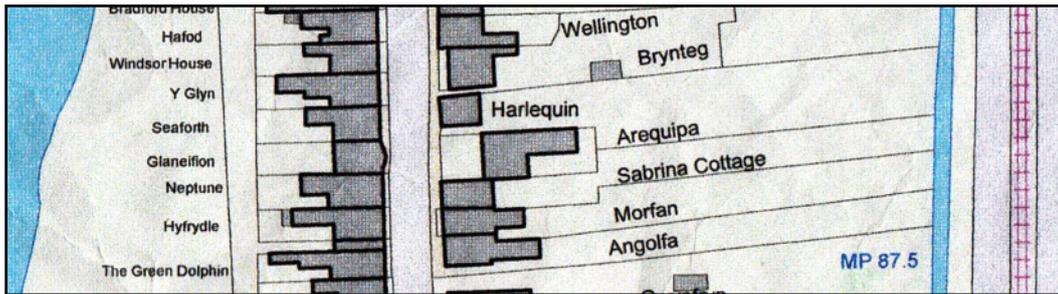
### *Morfán Page 3*

In 1934 Elizabeth J. Rees was still the owner and her tenant was David John Jenkins. The house was then called 'Morfán House'.

Mr Jenkins and Elizabeth E. Jenkins had a vote for the house in the 1945 General Election, and in 1949 Mr Jenkins paid the rates.

In 1957 someone called Jones was the tenant, and the owner was Perlon.

Anne Hall had a vote for the house in 1963, and paying the rates was Mrs H. Hall (Electoral Registers and Rates, Ceredigion Archives).



*ABOVE Today Morfán has a wing on the back, and its own garden which reaches down to the ditch. It had a narrow front garden when this map was surveyed.*

*(Detail from a Council Map courtesy of Councillor Ray Quant who provided it to help with research for a local event).*



*LEFT The rubble stone rear wall and a sash window in 2019.*

*(Information about the Rees family and a photograph are in Terry Davies 'Borth A Maritime History,' pp 43 - 45)*

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**Tai'r Borth / Houses of Borth**  
gan/by Beryl Lewis  
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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.

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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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