

# 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.*

# CAER WYDDNO

## Morfa Borth - the Marsh Harbour

Formerly Gloucester House. Developed from a small cottage on this site in 1848, property of Lewis Morgan, a master mariner. Later the home of the ship owning and property owning family of master mariner Captain David Rees and later of master mariner Captain Thomas Davies.



*LEFT The house in 2013.*

This is a low two storey house under a gable roof parallel to the road. It shares a chimney with Môr Awel next door. The walls are rendered and there is a nearly central doorway, as like old cottages this allows for a bigger main living room one side, probably once with the hearth under a chimney (now

gone) A pattern of quoins decorates the end walls of the house.



*LEFT The rendering makes frames for the windows, the lower windows having a pretend keystone decorated with a random pattern. The moulding over the top of the doorway is flat, and is supported by decorated brackets. A column runs down either side of the door, with an inlay of coloured stones and punctuated by a circle. There is a plain base for each column.*

*RIGHT It is one of a pair of houses.*



The windows are modern but in the pattern of the old sash windows. and there is a simple modern front door. The small garden area of hard standing has a very wide entrance and no gate.

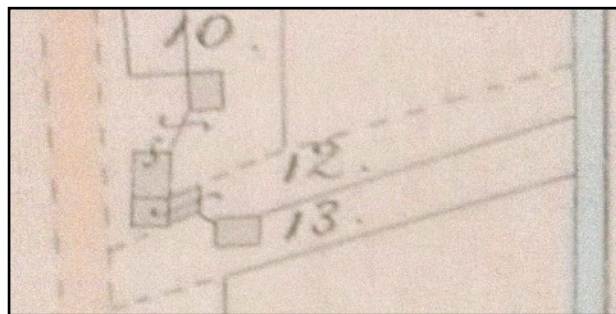


*LEFT* The rear of the building butts up against Gloucester Cottage which is in the foreground and with its extensions it leaves only a small area of ground for Caer Wyddno.

The ground on which the house stands was enclosed from the pebble bank which the Crown manor who owned it considered was 'waste' because it was no use for farming.



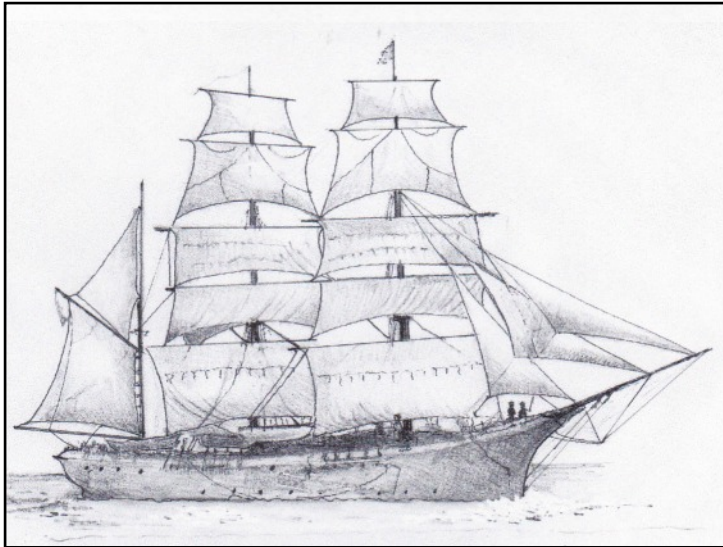
*LEFT* It was Number 26 on this hand painted Crown Map of 1829 and on it were two cottages set back from the road. It was three quarters of an acre owned by a lawyer John Lewis and enclosed in 1823. A note said he sold it in 1845. The buildings were Number 14 on the map below. However the roadside ground for Caer Wyddno was not yet built upon (Detail from Map of 1829, National Archives LRRO 1/3060)



*ABOVE RIGHT* In 1848 the building on Number 12 beside the street would become Caer Wyddno and it was joined to a cottage next door, all owned by the Morgan family. Margaret Morgan, a mariner's widow owned the houses and Lewis Morgan, born about 1811 and a mariner occupied the buildings of Number 12 with its long narrow garden that developed into Gloucester House and Gloucester Cottage. The garden was 32 perches - not quite a quarter of an acre but it shared the big back garden of Margaret Morgan's to the north. Another small cottage, number 13, now Cantre'r Gwaelod's cottage, was close by. (Detail from the Tithe Apportionments Map for Llanfihangel Genau'r Glyn, Cyfoeth Township, on-line at CYNEFIN)

Lewis Morgan would have been 37 years old, and had a wife called Anne and three small children, David, Mary and Margaret. By 1851 Anne Morgan was a widow, and there was another child, Thomas. The 1861 Census tells us she was born at Bronheulyn so possibly she was a Jenkins. That family were ship owners. In 1838 Lewis Morgan was the commander of the sloop 'France' built at Derwenlas in 1828 and part of the coastal trade of wooden sailing ships. She was lost with all hands in 1862 (Register of Shipping at Aberystwyth, Ceredigion Archives)

By 1871 there was a new family in the house. The Cambrian Times lists the house which was then called 'Gloucester House' as it was putting up holiday visitors for ten weeks during the Summer. They could manage five different people or families at a time. Their landlord

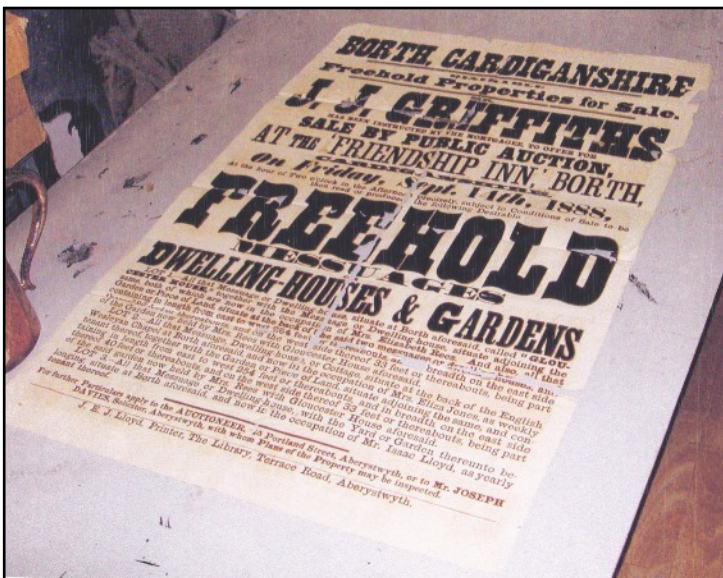


was Captain David Rees, and it is likely he owned Gloucester Cottage as well, and he also had two other houses when they were put up for sale in 1888 (Amgueddfa Ceredigion Museum poster, Aberystwyth). Captain David also was the owner and the master of a barque called Drusus which was an ocean going vessel rather than just serving the coastal trade (Terry Davies, Borth a Seaborne Village, page 86). There used to be a painting of her at Gloucester House.

LEFT A barque.

Visitors came from Gloucester, Newtown, Llanfyllin and Shrewsbury - probably on the train as Borth station had opened for passengers in 1863. In 1881 visitors stayed for four weeks at Gloucester House. Mrs Elizabeth Rees was then their landlady - Captain David had died, his gravestone says he was buried on the 12th December 1880. He was only 56 years old.

In 1883 his widow Elizabeth Rees had to sell the 'Drusus'. She died on 29 September 1888, aged 63. Gloucester House and Gloucester Cottage and two other houses were put up for Sale. Either Elizabeth or both of them had been in need of money, as their houses had been mortgaged. The poster reads as follows;



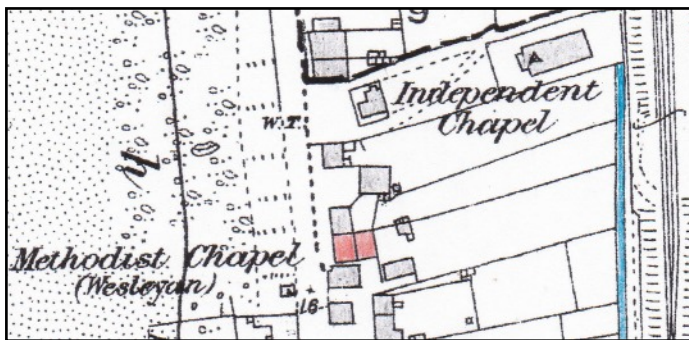
“Borth. Cardiganshire. Desirable Freehold Properties for Sale. Mr J.J.Griffiths has been instructed by the mortgagee to offer for Sale by Public Auction at the Friendship Inn Borth Cardiganshire, on Friday September 14th 1888 at

the hour of one o'clock in the afternoon, subject to Conditions of Sale to be then read or produced the following desirable Freehold Messuages Dwelling Houses and Gardens.

Lot 1 All that messuage and dwelling house situated at Borth aforesaid, called GLOUCESTER HOUSE together with the MESSUAGE OR DWELLING HOUSE situate ADJOINING THE SAME, both of which are now in the occupation of Mrs Elizabeth Rees. And also all that Garden or Piece of land situate at the back of the said two messuages or dwelling houses, and containing in length from east to west 254 feet or thereabouts, and in breadth on the east side thereof 28 feet or thereabouts and on the west side thereof 33 feet or thereabouts being part of the Garden now held by Mrs Rees with Gloucester House aforesaid.

Further particulars from the Auctioneer, 45 Portland Street or to Mr Joseph Davies Solicitor Aberystwyth with whom plans to the property may be inspected. J.E.W. Lloyd Printer The Library Terrace Road Aberystwyth.

There were two other Rees properties being sold, a cottage or house near the Wesleyan Chapel with a garden (Cantre Gwaelod perhaps) and another house and yard or garden. Both had weekly tenants (Poster courtesy of the Amgueddga Ceredigion Museum).



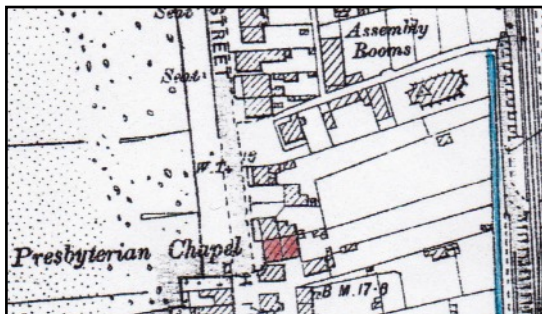
*LEFT In 1886 marked in red are the house now Caer Wyddno and the adjoining cottage Elizabeth Rees was selling. The roadside house with Môr Awel seeming the same size and shape. They opened directly on to the road. There was ground in front of the cottage at the back but the long garden behind belonged with what is now Cantre Gwaelod Cottage (This is*

*a detail from the Ordnance Survey Map of 1888, surveyed in 1886. And published in 1888. Cardiganshire NW III.10)*

There was to be a family connection with the next family in the Gloucester House. The Rees's daughter Agnes had married Captain David Daniels, and she had a small daughter Mabel Agnes Daniels in 1881 when the Census takers called at Gloucester House. Their small daughter Mary Esther Maude died aged 2 in May 1884 (gravestone). Terry Davies wrote that her husband was associated with the steamship Tamar in 1886, his wife was with him and their daughter Agnes was born on board. By 1891 Agnes was a young widow, aged 35, and was running a 'lodging house'.

There was a son of Captain David and Elizabeth Rees in the house when the Census takers called in 1891. Llewelyn was born about 1860. He was a master mariner like his father.

By the 1901 Census there was another family in the house. This was the shoemaker John Ellis, born in Macynlleth about 1853. His wife Mary was a Borth girl, born. c. 1854. They had a small seven year old son Rowland.



*LEFT The house and cottage in 1904 had changed very little since 1886.*

The owner of the house in 1910 was Captain Thomas Davies, and there was a tenant living there. The valuation for a tax planned but not levied was £190 and there was £7. 4s. 6d. to pay, £8.10s gross. The house was much less valuable than Mor Awel next door (£300), but it does not

appear to have had a garden. It was listed with six main rooms in the 1911 census - Mor

Awel had nine. Mary James, a widow, was living there. Despite being 70 she was running a boarding house. She was born in Clarach about 1841.

In 1925 Captain Thomas Davies, the owner, was living in the house. Terry Davies wrote that he worked for the 'Coast Lines Shipping' (Borth a Maritime History page 46) The Cambrian Times wrote in 1924 that his wife helped with the WI with a bran tub at the National School at a WI Sale of Work. There was a Miss Davies too.



*LEFT The pair of houses in 1937 from a postcard. The chapel had a new front to support windows and a central door.*

From the later 1920s to the 1950s 'Furnished apartments of four bedrooms and two sitting rooms' were to let to visitors. In 1950 the landlady to contact was Mrs Humphreys. She advertised 'mod.cons'. In 1945 Edward J.

Humphreys was on the voters list and he paid the rates for the house in 1949. He died in 1971 aged 69, his wife in 1979 aged 76.



*LEFT This detail is from a photograph on a glass plate taken before 1911 as Bay View had not been built yet. Caer Wyddno then Gloucester House opened directly on to the street as it would have done if it had been an inn. The Methodist (Wesleyan) Chapel was next door (Photograph courtesy of Peter Fleming)*

John Ellis whose aunt had lived in the village for most of the nineteenth century writing in 1929, and whose forbear Ellis the shoemaker lived in the house in 1901, said that Gloucester House had been the inn called the 'Prince of Wales' (Translated from the Welsh by Terry Davies and on-line)

In 1868 Thomas Nurse was the innkeeper and an Aberystwyth ship owner called Thomas Jones was said to own it (Maritime Wales, published 1995, pp 28 - 53). In 1871 the innkeeper was Edward Lloyd Jones, then aged 44 and from Llangunllo and also in the inn was his wife Mary Anne Jones born in Clun and a 23 year old son called Pendry who was working as a butcher (Census).

In 1881 at the Census the innkeeper was Samuel Bluck born at Minsterley Shropshire, with his wife Emma, daughters Fanny and Emma and his son Dick. However the 1881 Census also lists a 'Gloucester House' with Elizabeth Rees and her family in the house - perhaps the inn was in the Gloucester Cottage alongside?

Archifdy Ceredigion Archives  
yn cyflwyno / presents  
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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.

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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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