

# 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.*

# MÔR AWEL

Morfa Borth - the Marsh Harbour

Developed from a cottage built by 1848 on land enclosed by a mariner, David Morgan, and home of his descendants for many years.



*LEFT The house in 2009.*

Mor Awel is a two storey house though not a tall one. It is under a gable roof parallel to the road with a central stone chimney shared with Caer Wyddno. The walls are probably rubble stone, but today are rendered with quoins decorating each edge of the front wall, and the windows have plaster frames. There is a porch, and the front garden is enclosed by a low wall which matches the wall on Caer Wyddno next door. The front door is not exactly central, like the old cottages there was a larger room on the north side which once was the main living room with a chimney, a hearth and fire for cooking.



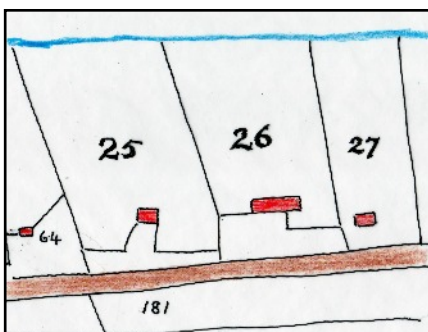
*LEFT Though the front with Caer Gwyddno - the former Gloucester House - is seemingly one of a pair, the present owner has seen a picture showing that Caer Gwyddno was three feet less tall, and a line at the rear shows it was raised.*



*ABOVE The back of the house. Extensions at the back were not there in 1886, but had been built by 1904. They included a kitchen and a Ty Bach inside. The north wall of the extensions butts against Gloucester Cottage. Today there is a glazed porch as well.*



*LEFT The garden is narrow and is smaller than it had been. Some ground was taken to build Llinos Cottage which can be seen above the washing hanging on the line.*

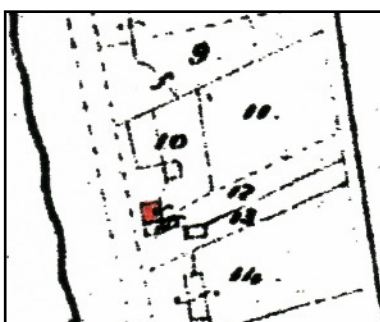


The ground on which the house stands is part of David Morgan's enclosure of one and a quarter acres of the pebble bank which the Crown Manor who owned it called 'waste' as it was no good for farming.

*LEFT* David Morgan's cottage and ground was Number 25 on this detail from a Crown Manor Map of 1829. David had bought the ground in February 1825 and it cost him £10. The cottage has survived as Pant Gwyn (Detail from a map, National Archives, LRRO 1/3060)

David Morgan was the commander of the *Eleanor* and *Betsy* and had 8 and then 10 shares in her. She was a smack, a small wooden sailing vessel built at Aberystwyth in 1831 and could carry 55 tonnes.

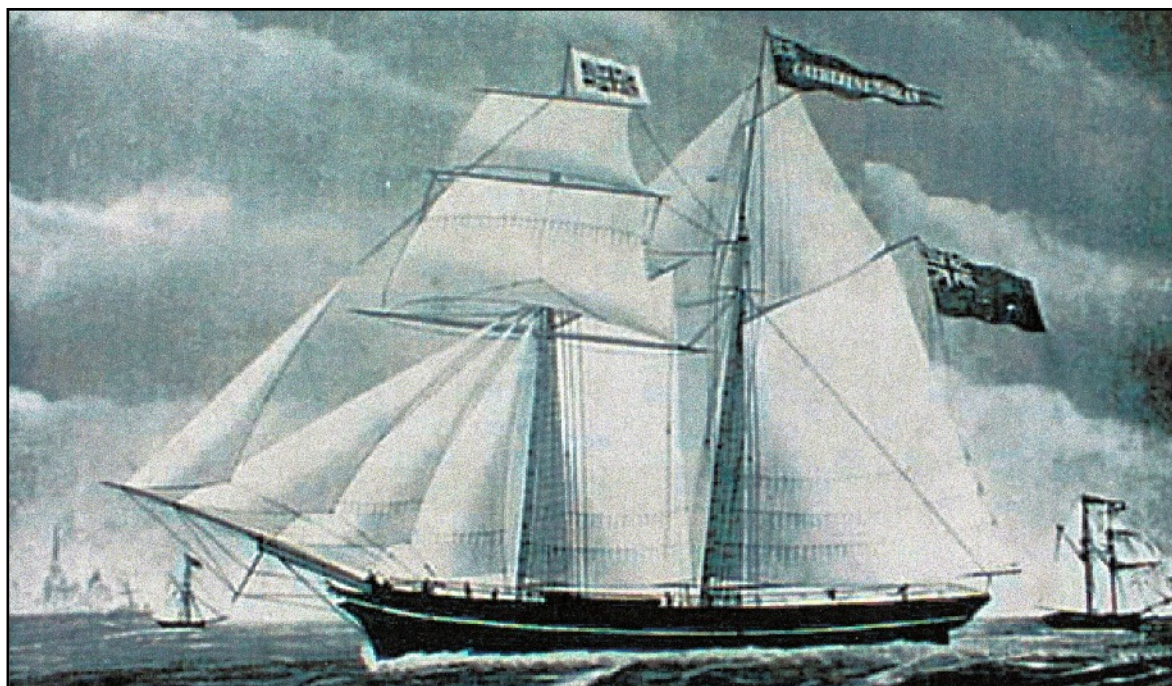
By 1848 there was another building, marked in red alongside Morfa Borth's main street on David Morgan's widow Margaret's garden and the Tithe Apportionments map described it as a house and not a cottage, and showed it as part of Number 10, and Margaret Morgan owned both dwellings. She also had a large garden, Number 11 at the back. The neighbour now *Caer Gwyddno* on the piece marked 12 was small, but had a long back section. Living there was Lewis Morgan.



*LEFT* A detail from the Tithe Apportionments Map of 1848 for Llanfihangel Genau'r Glyn, Cyfoeth Township, on-line at CYNEFIN.

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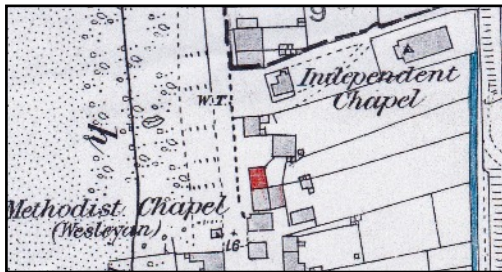
Mor Awel was there in 1861. At the Census in the house was Ann Morgan born in 1805 at Bronheunlyn, a widow, and with her in the house was Mrs Catherine Rees born in 1826 at Frongoch and her son Thomas who was six and born in 1855 at Morfa Borth.



*ABOVE* The schooner 'Catherine Morgan' commanded by Captain John Jones (Picture from a photocopy of a painting, courtesy of Miss Rosemary Morgan).

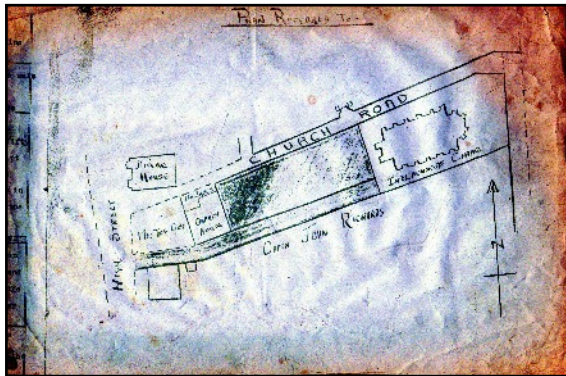
On the 29<sup>th</sup> October 1867 Hugh Morgan granted some of his land to John Thomas (of Kilburn London) to build the Capel-y-morfa - Congregational Chapel which opened in 1869. And to Captain David Rees and John Thomas use of a carriage way 15 feet wide and its right of way to the Turnpike Road (Princess Street). In 1870 John Thomas and David Rees conveyed to the Trustees of the Chapel the right to construct and maintain the carriage way from the turnpike road to the new Chapel for the use of Chapel goers and themselves and for any other home alongside it.

Census's show the house stayed in the Morgan family. Margaret's daughter Mary had married a mariner called Jones - probably master mariner William Jones. She was there in 1871 aged 26 with her mother in law Mary 50 years old and a widow also born in the parish. In 1881 Gloucester House was next door and Mrs Elizabeth Rees, a 50 year old widow was head of the household. It seems she was the second wife of Captain David Rees born in 1824 who died in December 1880 aged 56. In Mor Awel was Mary Jones and her mother and the house was then called Number 7 Princess Street.



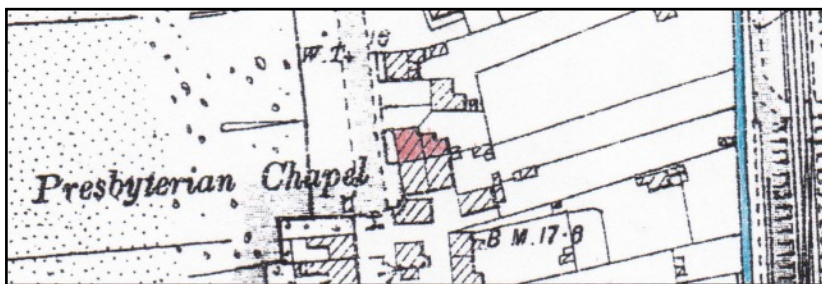
*LEFT* By 1886 the house marked in red had a small garden beside the old cottage (Pant Gwyn) and a long garden reaching to a brook of fresh water, now a ditch. The front of the house was open to the road. *Caer Wyddno* (Gloucester House) was alongside with a cottage behind it. The carriage way to the Chapel is marked. It was unfenced (Detail from the 1888 25 inch Ordnance Survey Map, surveyed in 1886, Cardiganshire NW III.10)

With a Deed of the 26<sup>th</sup> of August 1891 the Trustees of the Chapel sold the carriage way 15 feet wide and its right of way to the High Street then a turnpike road for £6 to Mrs Martha Roberts, of the draper's shop Garibaldi (now the Premier Stores). She had to maintain it.



*LEFT* The plan from the Deed. Captain John Richards lived in the cottage now *Murmur-y-mor*. *Osprey* house today is *Meirion*. *Diana House* is *Pebbles* and Mr *Ody* was a *Morfa Borth* butcher with just ground there.

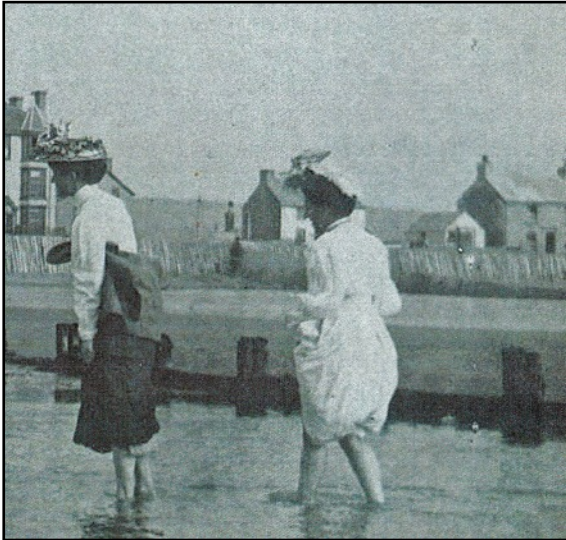
That year Mary Jones inherited *Mor Awel* and was living there. She had not married, spoke only Welsh and in 1901 was keeping a 'lodging house' (Census).



*LEFT* By 1904 the *Mary Jones's Mor Awel* had been extended at the back and it had a front garden. The very tiny extension was probably its *Ty Bach* - outside lavatory (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, now with the name *Môr Awel* (*Sea Breeze*) had a new owner, Captain John Arter who was going to build '*Bay View*' next door for his family.



*LEFT Môr Awel is on the far right of this family photograph of the beach in 1915. The house had two chimneys then. There appears to be a little shop in front of Pant Gwyn. Bay View was later built on that site.*

In building Bay View with only a narrow frontage to the street, Captain Arter took away some of the north wall of Mor Awel which had had a very wide old fireplace and arranged that the two houses would share the tall chimney of Bay View. So the front of Mor Awel we see today is not as wide as it had been.

Captain Arter put a tenant in Mor Awel, Richard Rees. Interestingly the place is listed as a 'cottage' but it was valued at £300 with £6 16s to pay, and gross £8. Captain Richard Rees was a mariner, a member of the Libanus Chapel and had a wife called Mary born in Llanilar. They had been married for seven years and had no children. He died in 1918.



*LEFT Bay View is built in this detail from a photograph by Howard Lloyd Roberts taken about 1926. Captain Arter owned Pant Gwyn Cottage too (Ceredigion Archives) The overlap with Mor-Awel is very obvious.*

In May 1920 Mrs Ann Arter sold Mor Awel to Mrs Mary Rees, and there were some legal charges from the properties board of the Capel-y-Morfa possibly in connection with a loan.

Sometime after 1922 there was furnished accommodation offered in the house of four bedrooms and two sitting rooms (The Illustrated Borth guide, Aberystwyth Public Library).

In 1925 Ann Arter owned the house and Mary Rees was living there (Rates, Ceredigion Archives)

Mary Rees paid the rates and owned the house in 1934 and was there in 1938 (Rates, Ceredigion Archives)



*LEFT Mor Awel and Gloucester House in 1937 from a post-card. There was some detail over and around the front doors, matching house fronts with sash windows and the shared chimney between them.*

In 1938 Mrs Mary Rees sold the house to J. B. Florence Esquire.

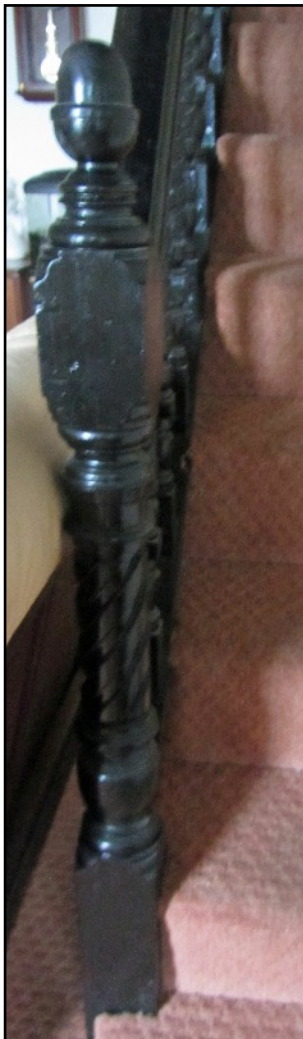
In 1945 Mr Florence sold the house to Mrs Maude Nichols.

With votes for the house in the General Election that year were Gwyneth Cater and Mrs Nichols. In 1946 Mrs Nichols sold the house to Mrs G. V. Hazle wood.

In 1949 and 1957 Mrs G. Violet Hazelwood paid the rates and Mr Hazelwood was on the committee of the Borth British Legion (Borth Review, National Library of Wales).

In 1959 Mrs Nichols sold the house to Mr Maurice McManus Esq. and in 1963 Mr McManus paid the rates (Electoral Registers and Rates Ceredigion Archives). He was to sell it the following year (Deeds of the property private owner).

*BELOW A very fine oak staircase survives in this house, with splendid carving. The Morgan family owned an oak plantation somewhere inland.*



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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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