

# 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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# SAXATILE

## Morfa Borth - the Marsh Harbour

A very special house, one of Morfa Borth's oldest. Probably built by 1829 by master mariner David Daniel. Home of the master mariner John Evans and his descendants.



*Saxatile in 2013*

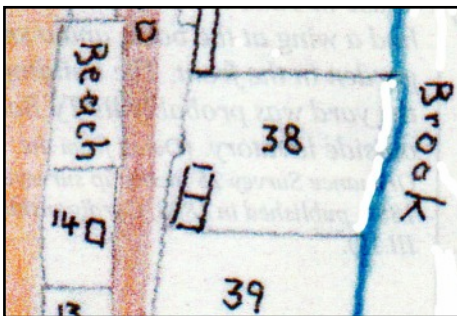
Saxatile has its back to reclaimed land from the Cors Fochno Bog, and is set back from the High Street. This a rubble stone house containing beach pebbles, which is two storeys high - the upper windows reaching the eaves. It forms a terrace with Brookfield next door on the south. The south gable end has no windows. The roof has a slope suitable for thatch, which so close to the Cors Fochno bog would have been reed. The walls are rendered, and there is a simple plaster decoration round the windows, and a classical frame for the door with decorated pilaster strip columns supporting an entablature with a prominent keystone. Some of the glass in the light above the door is old. The windows are sash windows. and are modern replacements using good quality pine for the frames. They have narrow glazing bars. The position of the front door suggests that the main living room/kitchen with a fireplace was once on the northern side of the ground floor. There is a curious spacing of the windows both at the front and the back. The pair on the southern end of the building are widely spaced on the wall - unlike the closely spaced windows around the front door.

There are substantial chimneys of rubble stone on both ends of the roof, the southern chimney shared with Brookfield. They each have two chimney pots.



There is a lean to extension of one storey at the back of the house, in two sections, the southern end having a deeper sloping roof, but the extension does not extend all the way across. The rear windows are sash windows matching those in the front. These again are copies. Only one reaches the eaves. There are gardens both behind and in front of the house. A walled garden edges the front with a path to the front door, but interestingly the path and the northern wall are at an angle and not at right angles to the street, unlike the house itself, and the rear of Brookfield extends a little way into Saxatile's back garden.

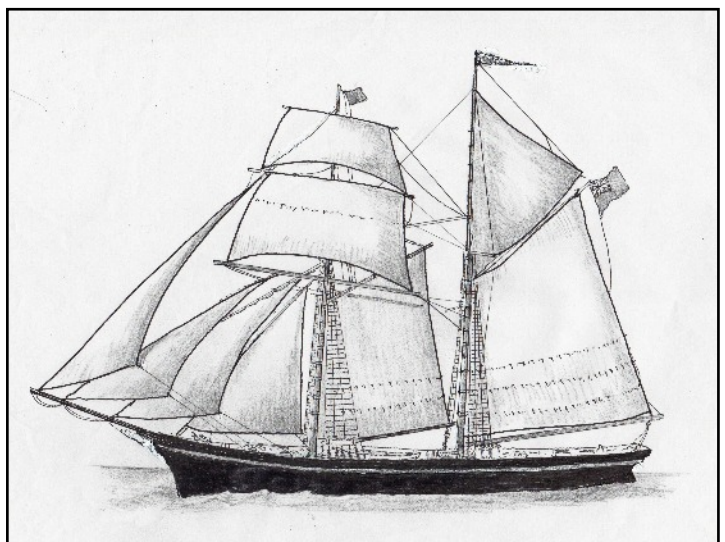
The 1911 Census listed the house with six rooms (that would not include its cellar, a bathroom if it had one, or a scullery at the back. Fresh water can invade the cellar.

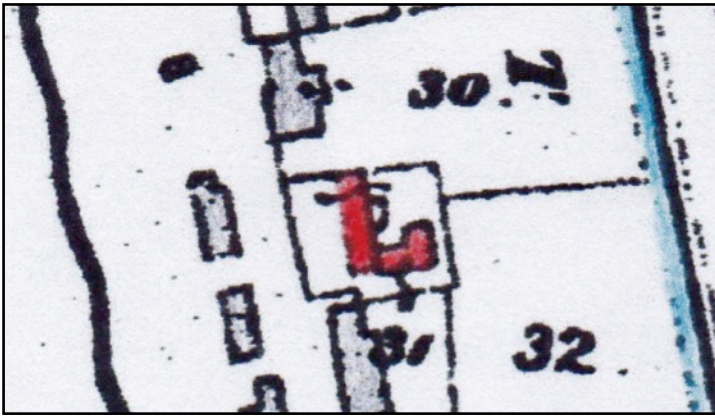


*LEFT Brookfield and Saxatile are in the footsteps of a terrace of buildings shown on a map of 1829. They were on plot 38 that had been encroached from the 'waste' or common land on the pebble embankment built up by the sea. This was sold to David Daniel, a master mariner, by the manor court of Llanfihangel in 1821. His terrace stood on a sizeable plock of three quarters of an acre, extending eastwards to a 'brook' of fresh water (Detail after a map, National Archives LRRO 1/3060).*

The road had been there for centuries and was a quick way to North Wales crossing the River Dovey with a ferry. It became a turnpike road in the 1770s. 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 called Rosina after his daughter. (Parish Register, Ceredigion Archives, 1841 Census and the list of ships in Terry Davies 'Borth a Seaborn Village).

*RIGHT A Schooner*





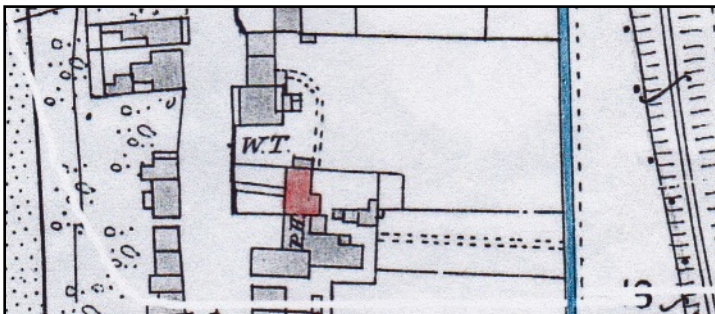
By 1848 David Daniel had built himself a sizeable new house on the street edge of his land - today Welfare House stands there.

*LEFT* A new plot had been enclosed with a garden around it, and the buildings are coloured in red. This had a new owner, David Hughes, another master mariner (born 1797/8). It was drawn as a block - today Saxatile and Brookfield are there. To the south on Number 31 David Hughes had other houses and cottages. Behind them was half an acre of

*garden or pasture - number 32. (Detail from a photocopy of the Tithe apportionments Map for Llanfihangel Genau'r Glyn, Cyfoeth Township, on-line at CYNEFIN)*

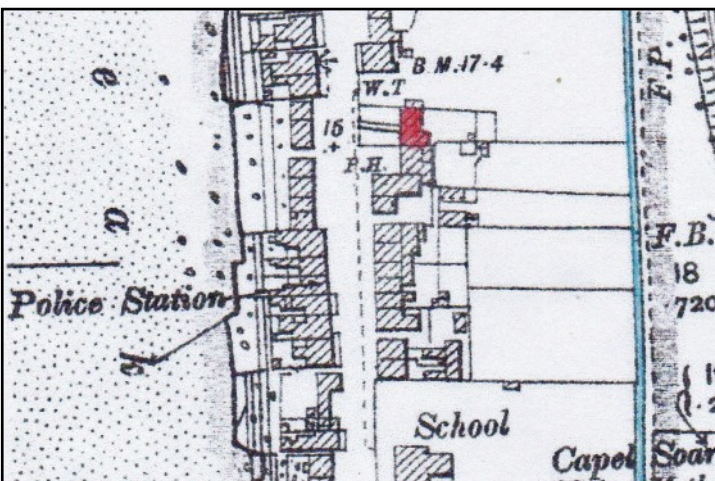
By 1861 Saxatile had become the home of a master mariner called John Evans. His wife was Sarah, born in Borth in 1834, and he had a schooner in 1858 built at Aberdovey called the 'Sarah'. He also commanded a brigantine, the Rowland Evans' and in 1872 a schooner called 'Savatele'. They had a son William born about 1858, their eldest daughter Jane was born about 1862, Sarah Mary was born about 1865, and there were also daughters Margaretta Elizabeth, and Lizzie. It would eventually not be a quiet and peaceful place to live as Brookfield House next door was then the Railway Inn used by local people and also by travellers coming to and fro from the ferry to Aberdovey.

In 1881 the house had its name 'Saxatile House'. Did the Census taker mis-spell Savatele?



*LEFT* In 1886 this was the Captain Evan's house marked in red with its own garden. Brookfield was by then an Inn (P.H. Public House) and that site had been developed with more buildings (Detail from the 25 inch Ordnance Survey Map surveyed in 1886 and published in 1888, Cardiganshire NW III.10)

By 1901 Jane Evans was running a lodging house there. Her sisters lived there too, neither Jane, Sarah or Margaretta had married. Sarah Mary was a dressmaker, Margaretta Elizabeth was an assistant teacher at the Council School at Upper Borth/ Jane was 49 years old in 1911 at the Census.



*LEFT* This detail is from the 25 inch map of 1905, revised in 1904. There were changes to the back of the Railway Inn next door

In 1910 for a tax planned but not levied, the house was valued at £250. Jane and her sisters lived there, and the house was owned by William Evans (their brother?). In 1911 at the Census the house had six main rooms. It was still the lodging house run by Jane Evans also there were her dressmaker and teacher sisters.

They were still there in 1925 (Rates, Ceredigion Archives). In July 1924 one of the Miss Evans helped with refreshments at a Women's Institute Sale of work at the National School see the map above

(where the Meddgyfa is today) (Cambrian News) Sometime after this, apartments with three bedrooms containing four beds and two sitting rooms were let to holiday makers.

In 1949 the owner was M. E. Evans - an elderly Margaretta Elizabeth? (Rates, Ceredigion Archives)

In 1962 accommodation of two bedrooms with hot and cold water, and a kitchen was advertised by Mrs G. Williams. After 1968 the advertisement said it was suitable for five persons, furnished, and with a bungalow chalet (Guide books to Borth, Aberystwyth Library and privately owned). There was no telephone yet. Terry Davies remembers a Janet Williams at Saxatile.



*ABOVE* Looking from the High Street this is the curious angle of the front path parallel with the northern boundary of the plot. Interestingly a large part of the walling is rounded beach stones a feature of so many of Morfa Borth's oldest cottages. The importance of the front door has been created by the classical details around it. Saxatile is one of Morfa Borth's most interesting houses.



*LEFT* This small portrait of a man is on a glass plate, and was found in the attic. It is not known who he was (Courtesy of Mrs Marianne Barron).

Possibly in the ownership of one family since 1861 and until 1949 or later, Saxatile has escaped some of the alterations to create a more modern appearance so noticeable in many of Borth's houses.

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**Tai'r Borth / Houses of Borth**  
gan/by Beryl Lewis  
[cyf/ref ADX/1629]

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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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