

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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ANGORFA, also called Angorfa 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 in 1861 and still a home for members of the family in the twentieth century.

RIGHT Angorfa in 2009.

This is the southernmost house in a terrace of three houses. It is two storeys high, and single fronted, its front door is on the south side. It has a gable roof, with walls of rubble stone, and a rubble stone chimney on the southern end. The front door opens directly on to the street. The walls are rendered. In 2009 the two upper front windows were sash windows or modern copies which matched the other houses in the terrace. The ground floor window is modern. Its Welsh name means 'Anchorage' or 'Berth' in English' - very suitable for the home of a master mariner.



LEFT Rendered in white is the substantial extension, also two storeys and rendered, with a rubble stone and red brick chimney on the east end of the roof. There is a single storey lean-to at the end of it and another building a garage perhaps in the garden. This house does have access to the rear along a track on the south side of the building. The garden still extends down to a ditch - the former brook.

For the history of the ground on which this was built please see 'New Road'.

Previously in an old cottage on the Rees family ground was Margaret Rees, aged 50 with a daughter Catherine aged 15, and sons Richard 13 and William 8. Her son Dafydd born about

1828 was the eldest, as he was already a sailor by 1851, eventually a master mariner, and Angorfa would become his home with his wife Elizabeth (Eliza) and their children.

In the 1861 just before the Borth Railway Station opened in 1863 the terrace of three houses was being built on the family land and called New Street. The houses were tucked in alongside the street avoiding the earlier cottages (Census).

In the house in 1871 was Dafydd Rees's wife Elizabeth (also called Eliza) aged 36 with her children Margaretta aged 5 (1866) and Richard aged 1 (1870). Her husband was at sea (Census). That year all three of the New Street houses were taking in holiday visitors. Two took visitors for nine weeks, one for seven weeks. They came on the train many from Wales, and one from as far away as Birmingham. The wives of the master mariners were their landladies. Three single people, or two families, one with children and a nurse could be fitted into one of these New Street houses so it is likely they were the two storey houses we see today. In 1880 Mrs Eliza Rees at Angorfa then called 'Number Three, New Street', in one week in August looked after two families, one with children. (Cambrian News).

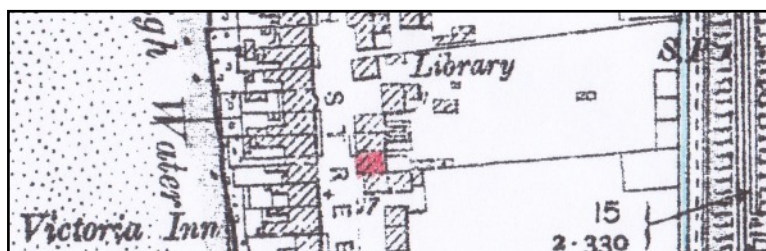


LEFT Angorfa in 1886 is marked in red. The railway had come, but the ground still extended to the brook and it was shared between all the Rees families homes. The small buildings may have been their Ty Bach, but families often kept a pig which would have needed

a pigsty (Detail from the 25 inch Ordnance Survey Map of 1888, surveyed in 1886, Cardiganshire NW III.10)

Captain Dafydd Rees and his wife Eliza eventually had daughters; Mary born about 1859 who ran a dressmaking business at home, Lizzie born about 1872 and Kate born about 1874 and a son John born about 1876. One of the sons wed a Davies, and in 1891 Mary Lizzie Davies, a grand-daughter was living in the house when a little girl aged 6 (Census). She was still living in the house in 1949.

By the 1901 Census another Rees master mariner Captain Thomas Rees born about 1836 and his wife had moved into Angorfa from Morfan - he was then 65, and his wife Elizabeth was 66. He was the son of David Rees who died in 1866 and Catherine Rees who died in 1896. Captain Thomas would still be there in 1910. (Morfan was left empty). By 1911 Captain Thomas by then a 'retired mariner' was the first caretaker of the 'Borth Public Library and Reading Room' another Rees property on their land (now the Oriel Gallery and Café)



LEFT The house in 1904 is marked in red and was open to all the ground at the back. There were three small enclosures beside the ditch (Detail from the 25 inch Ordnance Survey Map of 1905 revised in 1904, Cardiganshire NW III.10)

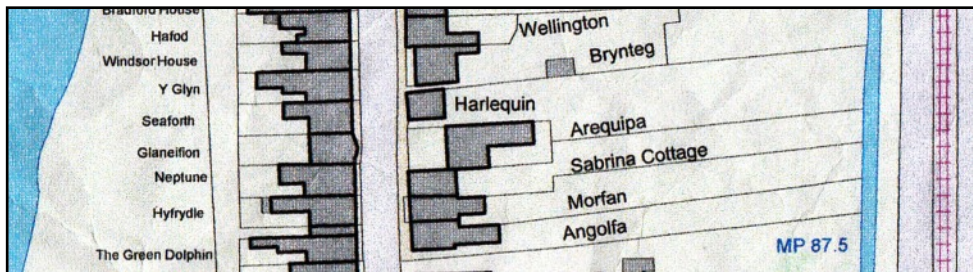
In 1910 for a Valuation for a tax planned but not levied, Angorfa, then called Number 3 New Street was valued at £172 with £5.6s to pay, £6.5s gross. The owner was (Captain) Richard Rees, and Captain Thomas Rees was the occupier. He owned Morfan but did not live there (Ceredigion Archives, T/DV/18 and map at the National Library of Wales) In 1911 the house had its name 'Angorfa House' and was listed in the Census with five main rooms (not including a back scullery or bathroom if it had these.) Captain Thomas Rees had been married for 53 years, and had had 10 children, six still lived and four of whom had died. He died on the 3rd of April 1920 (Cambrian News)

In 1924 Mary Lizzie Davies of Angorfa helped with the women's Institute 'Produce Stall' at a Sale of Work in the National School (now gone - the Meddygfa stands there). She would have been aged 39. In November that year at a mock election held by the Borth Literary and Debating Society at the Libanus Chapel she stood as the Liberal candidate (Cambrian News)

In 1924 John Rees was living in Angorfa. In 1925 for the Rates he owned it and Miss Davies was the occupier. In 1934 she was the occupier and owner of the house. She was there for the vote at the General Election of 1945, together with John Rees, and Evan Thomas.

In 1949 Miss Davies paid the rates as owner of the house. In 1949 she was the secretary of the Borth Music Lovers, and she taught at the Libanus Chapel Sunday School. (Borth Review, National Library of Wales). In 1950 she advertised a furnished apartment for holiday visitors with 3 bedrooms and one sitting room with all Mod. Cons and hot and cold running water (Borth Guide Book, 1950, Aberystwyth Public Library). She paid the rates in 1957 and had a vote for the house (Electoral Registers and Rates, Ceredigion Archives)

Mary died aged 102 on November 3rd 1986 (Y Tincer).



ABOVE Today Angorfa has a substantial wing at the back and its garden stretches down to the brook.



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

LEFT This is a detail of the rear wall of Morfan with some round beach stones, and it is likely that Angorfa has the same walling.

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

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gan/by Beryl Lewis
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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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