

## FIXED AFFECTION

In the vocabulary of revived Cornish there are a number of words that owe the vowel of their final syllable to historical i-affection (the equivalent of the ‘umlaut’ phenomenon in Germanic languages like English – e.g. *man*, but plural *men*). Here are three Cornish examples.

### ABERTH

This is a variant of **abarth**, which is itself formed from prefix **a** (originally the preposition **a** ‘from’) and **parth** ‘side’. We still find the original adverbial sense in e.g. **abarth awartha** ‘right up there’ and **abarth awoles** ‘right down there’. We also find **abarth** used as a preposition with nouns, in the sense ‘on the part of’ and ‘for the sake of’, though in this second sense it is generally replaced by the phrasal preposition **rag kerensa** in the later Corpus. There is also the prepositional phrase **abarth dhe**: this has the same meaning as **abarth** when used with a pronoun, and separately means ‘along with’ when used with a noun (i.e. in that case similar in meaning to the bracketing phrase **gans ... warbarth**).

The e-vowel in **aberth** is the outcome of affection in the phrase **aberth in** ‘in(to), inside’ (the i-sound of **in** changing the second a-sound of **abarth** – preserved by end-stress without reduction to schwa – so that the word becomes **aberth**).

In *An Hobys* Williams experiments with extending this **aberth** beyond the fixed phrase **aberth in** where it originated. So we find **aberth dre** (combining the idea of ‘into’ with the idea of ‘through’). This innovation is only justified if we believe **aberth** is so far lexicalized that we may move it away from its phonetic roots. Personally I’m not convinced. I would also, for the same reason, not myself use an adjusted word order that is occasionally encountered: e.g. **i’n rom aberth** ‘into the room’ instead of **aberth i’n rom**.

Some people imagine that **aberth** and **aberveth** are related because they are superficially similar in form and are both used to express the idea ‘inside’. They are *not* related. **Aberveth** does mean ‘inside’ but it comprises prefix **a** plus **perveth** ‘interior, insides’. No affection is involved with this word. Thus **aberveth in** and **in ... aberveth** may be used interchangeably. On the other hand, **aberveth dre** would strike me as an oxymoron; I wouldn’t say it.

### PERTH

Not to be confused with **parth** ‘side’ there is the stem **porth** which occurs as a noun meaning ‘gateway, harbour, cove, etc’. The stem also makes a verb meaning ‘sustain, endure, etc’: the verb-noun is **perthy**, with ending y causing affection o > e. We find the unaffected stem in the imperative **porth** (e.g. **porth cov!** ‘remember!’). But there are also instances of imperative **perth** in the Corpus, under the influence of those forms of the verb where the affection is regular (e.g. **me a berth** – with lost affecting he/she/it ending).

### DALLETH

Williams spells this word as **dallath**. It’s the spelling we find in *The Creation of the World*. But Nance believed, on the basis of the imperfect tense forms, that an earlier form of the original verb-noun (not preserved in the Corpus) had likely been *\*dal(l)ethy*, with ending y causing affection a > e. Nance preserved the a-vowel preterite in UC **dallathas** (still so spelled in SWF; the equivalent KS spelling being **dalathas** because KS simplifies geminate l when pre-tonic); but UC / SWF always spell the verb-noun with e; also when it is used as an ordinary noun. In KS the e-spelling **dalleth** is treated as an optional alternative to **dallath**.