

THE BUILDINGS OF MORFA 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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BREAK HOUSE Morfa Borth

This is in the south part of the High Street on the beach side and was formerly called 'Berlin House'. It was the home of Captain John Enos and his family, then his daughter Margaretta and her husband Captain John Herbert. Tara its pair has a date of 1874. The house was also briefly called Gerydon and then Malvern.



RIGHT The front door has some patterned and coloured stained glass.

The house is semi-detached as its south wall is bordered by the public footpath to the beach, and there is access to its back yard from the footpath.

At the back is a wing on the north side of its yard, two storeys high, with a gable roof at right angles to the main house, and with rendered walls. The top floor overlooking the beach has a sun room with a door leading on to a railed balcony which would have fine views out to sea. A gate in the railings opens on to a staircase down into the yard. The balcony is supported on slender posts. Below is a room with a large window which again will have a view of the beach as the yard ends with a low wall of vertical planks used as a defence against the sea during storms. The rear of the main house has an upper window which matches those on the front of the house, having the pattern of a sash window with four panes. The smooth rendering of the walls gives no hint of the stonework beneath.

Break House. It is a pair with Tara on the right. This photograph was taken in October 2010.

Break House has rendered walls, and a canted, modern bay window on the ground floor. It is single fronted, and two full storeys high. Roof lights allow for an attic floor under the roof. The upstairs front windows are sash windows with four panes like the ones in an old photograph.





The back of Break House from the beach in 2015.

The ground for this house, a bank of stones thrown up by the sea, was still open ground in 1829 and called 'waste' by the Crown Manor who owned it as it was no use for farming (National Archive Crown Manor Map LRRO 1/3060). When a villager enclosed this plot to build on he would have either paid a rent for it, or bought it. The road was centuries old and was a turnpike road by the 1770s. It led to a ferry from Ynyslas to Aberdovey and was a quick way to North Wales. Fresh water for the cottages and houses came from a brook on the other side of the road - the tailrace from the Glanlerry Corn Mill (Felinwern) plus two small streams. Taps in the street with spring water had arrived by 1883 (Cambrian News 9th November). For fuel villagers had their own area to dig peat on the other side of the River Leri just north of Ynys Fergi (Tithe Apportionments Map, Llanfihangel Genau'r Glyn, Henllys Township, on-line at CYNEFIN National Library of Wales).

There were no buildings on this site in 1829 or 1848 (Crown Manor Map, National Archive LRRO 1/3060, and Tithe Apportionments Map, Llanfihangel Genau'r Glyn, Cyfoeth Township).

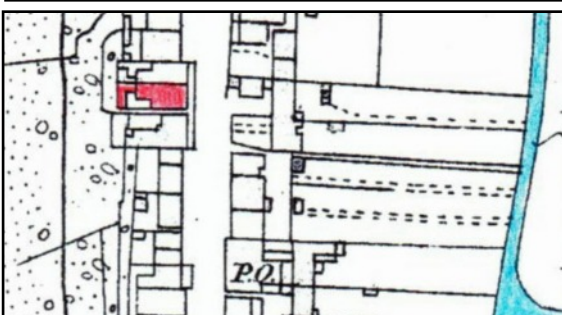
The Enos family were already in Morfa Borth in 1851 (Census), just a sailor's wife, Jane Enos with daughters Jane 14 and Mary 12. Her husband James Enos,(1769-1860) born at Penbryn became Borth's sub-postmaster. The family of their son John, born in 1825 were eventually to live in 'Berlin House' (Break House) (He was baptised at Llandre 23rd September, Parish Register, Llanfihangel Genau'r Glyn). John Enos became a master mariner of the merchant service, and in 1861 at the Census was at home with his wife Elizabeth (formerly Jones), daughter Mary and a lodger, Margaret Jones, 52, born at Bow Street.

At the 1871 Census John Enos was at home with his wife, daughter Mary was 16 and also there were their son Lewis Jones Enos 10, Margareta Enos 2 and John Owen Enos, a baby of eight months. By August 1880 this house was built and named 'Berlin House' and Mrs Enos took in Mrs Taylor and her family from Newtown to stay (Cambrian News).

At the 1881 Census Captain John Enos was away at sea, daughter Mary Jane then 26 was at home and had not married and was working as a dressmaker. Her brother James Owen Enos was then 10 and also in the house.



ABOVE Break House and Tara (formerly Convoy) on this old postcard, 'South End of Borth'. They had exposed rubble stone walls the windows and doors edged with (probably) yellow bricks, and with a brick stripe at the eaves like London House across the street. This style was fashionable in the second half of the nineteenth century. The windows were sash windows, and the ground floor did not have a bay window. The low wall in front was stone and was topped by railings with iron gates to the street. We can see one of the chimneys, today there is a red brick chimney this end of the roof.

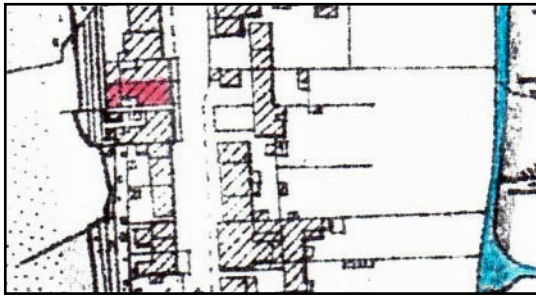


LEFT This was the Captain's house in 1886, marked in red. It had an extension and other buildings round its yard and shared its front garden with its neighbours. At the back it shared a back fence with Convoy House and The Cottage. Some stones drawn inside this suggest it was still rough ground. (Detail from the 25 inch Ordnance Survey Map, surveyed in 1886 and published in 1888. Cardiganshire III.10)

By the 1891 Census the Captain was 65 and had retired from the sea. His wife Elizabeth was also in the house with their son John D. Enos and daughter Margaretta. He was a valued member of the community, as he was asked to serve as a juror at the Inquests of 25th. September and 4th. October 1894 at Borth on the death (it was murder) of Mary Davies of London Place (Ceredigion Journal, Vol. XVI No. 2, pages 11-40).

The Captain and his wife and some grandchildren were in the house at the 1901 Census, with them was Margaretta, then married, with her children Rosa Ann Herbert 6, Doris Elizabeth Herbert 4, John Emlyn Herbert 2, and five months old Lewis James Herbert. This

was a Welsh speaking household. They had a 'domestic servant', nineteen year old Hannah Jones, a Welsh girl from Swyddffynon.



LEFT In 1904 the yard had become smaller, the buildings round it were larger. The four fences marked at the back and shared with other houses were probably sea defences, stakes driven into the stony bank. There had been a bad storm in October 1896 (Cambrian News, October 9th). Householders were responsible for these defences. (Detail from the 25 inch map revised in 1904, published in 1905)

In 1910 for a tax planned but not levied, 'Berlin' was valued at £250, the same as Convoy next door There would have been £10. 4s to pay, £12 gross. This was a good quality house paying as much as Lorne and Gordon Villa. Captain John Herbert owned Berlin and was also the 'occupier'. (Ceredigion Archives T/DV/18 and map at the National Library of Wales)

At the 1911 Census the house was listed with 8 main rooms. Captain Herbert another master mariner was 45 and born at Nevin, Carnarvonshire. Margaretta his wife was then 42 and they had been married for 18 years, and had four children, all still alive. Two were at home, John Emlyn Herbert 12, and Lewis James Herbert 10. Also in the house were their niece Hilda Frances, 22, and Mrs Herbert's brother James Enos aged 48 and with 'private means'. He too was a master mariner. Terry Davies writes that he commanded many vessels. There was a servant girl, Lizzie M. Andrews, aged 26 and born in Macynlleth.

Captain Herbert was on the list to pay the rates in 1925, and had called the house 'Gerydon'. However, this was crossed out, and the owner and occupier had become James Marden, and he called the house 'Malvern'. We have a description of 'Malvern' in 1929. A 'freehold residence, it was put up for Auction in August its furniture to be sold on the premises on Wednesday August 28th. The house had five bedrooms, a bathroom and lavatory, two reception rooms and the kitchen with the 'usual offices'. There was a side entrance leading to the beach (Cambrian News advertisement, July 19th. 1929). It is not clear what happened, because Mr Marden was still paying the rates in 1934 and 1938 but the house was owned by John Herbert.

In 1949 the house had a new name, Break House, and paying the rates was C. (Charles Stuart) Atkinson.

Someone in the Atkinson family paid the rates in 1963 and with votes for the house were Mr Atkinson, and Dorothy Carol Atkinson. (Rates and Electoral Registers, Cerdigion Archives).

This is one of the Morfa Borth houses which has been given a 'modern' look but beneath the rendering would be an interesting pattern in the old rubble stone and bricks.

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gan/by Beryl Lewis

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Hoffem ddiolch i Beryl am fod mor garedig â chaniatáu i ni rannu ei gwaith â'r gynulleidfa ehangaf bosibl.

Ceidw Beryl Lewis yr hawlfraint yn ei gwaith ac mae'r hanesion yn cael eu rhannu at ddibenion preifat ac ymchwil yn unig.

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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