



PEMBROKESHIRE YEAR OF LEGENDS MYTHS AND LEGENDS

Myths and Legends

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1. THE MABINOGION.

The eleven stories of the Mabinogion are stories which have been passed down over many centuries, originally through the oral tradition within Wales. They were then gathered and written down in two Welsh collections during the C14, The White Book of Rhydderch and The Red Book of Hergest. It is a collection of ancient Celtic mythology, which includes very early tales of the Arthurian legend.

Pwll and the Journey to the Otherworld

The first branch of the Mabinogion begins with Pwll, Prince of Dyfed setting off to go hunting from his chief palace at Narberth to Glyn Cych. He loses sight of his companions and dogs and enters into a clearing in the woods. He encounters a stag hunted down by strange dogs, glistening white with red ears and eyes. He soon drives them off and then sets his own pack of dogs on to the stag, when up comes a stranger clad in grey, on a grey horse who arrives and scorns Pwll for taking the stag as his own. The hunter in grey is Arawn, a Prince of Annwn, and the Celtic Otherworld. To make amends Pwyll agrees to do him a favour which is to spend a year in Annwn and to kill his enemy Hafgan at the ford, which separates their two kingdoms. Pwll agrees to meet Hafgan at the ford and through a spell of enchantment Pwll becomes Arawn in his likeness and lives the life of Arawn for one whole year. While Arawn becomes Pwll in his likeness and they exchange places with each other for one whole year.

Pwll enjoys living in his new kingdom and after a year, Pwll journeys to the ford for the day of battle with Hafgan. Pwll being a great warrior kills Hafgan with one blow. Triumphantly Pwll then returns to the clearing in Glyn Cych and meets again, as planned, with Arawn the Prince of the Otherworld. Each is restored to their own likeness and the kingdom of Dyfed prospered.

The area of Cwm Cych in North East Pembrokeshire is associated with this story and for many, the stream and fording area in the middle of Fynnone woods is considered to be the entrance to the Celtic Otherworld.

Pwyll and Rhiannon

Pwll lived in his palace at Narberth and near to his palace was a strange mound that if any man climbed to the top he would receive terrible wounding blows or experience strange happenings. One day Pwll prepared a great feast in Narberth for his noblemen from all over Dyfed and on this occasion he decided climbed to the top of the mound, dispelling any fear of being hurt but that he wanted to see a wonder.

As soon as he reached the summit of the mound, Pwll saw a beautiful and richly-clad lady riding up the track towards him on a striking white horse. Pwll was entranced by her and asked if anybody knew who she was but nobody had ever seen her before. So the prince sent his servant to ask of her name and to where she was travelling. The servant followed her at walking pace and then running pace but could not get

any closer to her despite the horse never appearing to increase its pace. He returned to Pwll without success.

Pwll was enchanted by the lady's beauty and the next day he went again to the top of the mound with hope that he would see the same wonder. Rhiannon again appeared leisurely riding up the track on horseback. This time he ordered the servant to take his fastest horse and to follow the lady again but again he could not overtake her to enquire of her name and journey. Everyone was mystified and on the third day Pwll again climbed the mound and this time called for his fastest horse so that he could ride out himself. The lady again appeared, riding towards him on her white stallion. Pwll mounted his horse but already the lady had passed the mound and no matter how fast he galloped he could not get close to her, even though her horse never seemed to quicken.

Pwyll was now getting frustrated and as his horse began to tire he shouted after the lady "Maiden, for the love of he whom you love best, stop and wait for me." She stopped and immediately replied "I will, gladly. And it would have been much better for your poor horse had you asked that long since." Then she pulled back her veil so that Pwyll could see her face and Pwyll had never seen anyone more beautiful. He asked her where she was from and where she was going. She explained that she was Rhiannon, the daughter of Hefeydd the Old, and that she was to be married against her will one year from that very day. She said that she loved only Pwyll and that she journeyed to see if Pwyll would reject her.

By now Pwyll was fully in love with Rhiannon and explained that if he had to choose between all the ladies and maidens in the world, it is only Rhiannon he would choose. Rhiannon then asked for Pwyll to come to the court of Hefeydd a year from then and he would find a feast prepared. Pwyll agreed, and they parted and kept these things to himself and one year later he travelled to the court of Hefeydd with a hundred men on the appointed day, and there he met once again the Lady Rhiannon, amid feasting and music and joyous celebrations.

At the wedding feast a young nobleman entered the hall and asked for a boon and Pwyll promised him that whatever favour that he asked of him he shall have it. Rhiannon was soon worried as she recognized the young man as Gwawl the one chosen by her father Hefeydd for her to marry against her will. Gwawl asked for Rhiannon and for the place of honour at the feast and marriage preparations. Pwyll then knew that he was obliged to keep his promise and to give to Gwawl his place at Rhiannon's side.

Despite all seemingly lost Rhiannon devised a plan to trick Gwawl. Rhiannon told the young nobleman that the feast and the marriage preparations were hers to give and that these things had already been given to Pwyll and his warriors from Dyfed. She explained to Gwawl that a year following that Gwawl would return with his warriors to

the court and then become her husband at the prepared wedding feast. Gwawl was satisfied with this and promised to return in a year's time.

Pwyll became very depressed by his stupidity and believed he would never marry Rhiannon. But Rhiannon had a further plan and she gave him a small magic bag to return to Dyfed with him with instructions as to what he should do in a year's time.

The following year Pwyll and his one hundred warriors travelled at night to the court of Rhiannon and hid themselves. Under cover they saw Gwawl and his men arrive and then the beautiful Rhiannon with her father as the marriage feast began.

Pwyll had disguised himself as a rough vagabond and then as the wedding feast progressed he entered the hall and approached Gwawl and Rhiannon. He approached Gwawl and asked of a small request of him. Gwawl obliged and Pwyll held out the small bag and asked for it be filled up with food so that he would not go hungry. Gwawl agreed and instructed the servants to fill it full with food. But the more food was put inside it didn't appear to fill up. The servants became tired and Gwawl looked at the bag with amazement and asked if the bag will ever be full. Pwyll answered that only a true nobleman who would tread down the food in the bag would say that the bag contains enough. Rhiannon then urged Gwawl forward and he jumped into the bag and began to tread down the food. But immediately the magic bag became larger and Pwyll pulled the top of the bag over Gwawl's head and fastened it with a knot. Then he blew a loud blast on his horn and his warriors rushed in to take down Gwawl's warriors and then Pwyll and his men began kicking and beating the bag.

Hefeydd the Old, Rhiannon's father was afraid that Gwawl would be killed and requested that Pwyll stopped and promised that he would abide by the wishes of Rhiannon. She insisted that Gwawl should give up his claim on her and should leave the hall never to return and insisted that he should never seek vengeance for what had happened to him. Gwawl agreed and was released from the bag.

Pwyll shaved and took his place beside his beloved Rhiannon just has had happened a year previous and a year later than planned, Pwyll and Rhiannon became man and wife.

Pryderi

After three years of marriage the noblemen of Dyfed were worried that Rhiannon would not produce a child as heir to the kingdom of Pwyll and they called for a meeting at Preselau. They wanted Pwyll to take another wife but Pwyll asked for another year and at the end of that year a son was born named Pryderi.

After giving birth Rhiannon fell asleep leaving care of her new born to her maids. But they also fell asleep and when they awoke the baby had disappeared. They became so worried what would happen to them that they made a plan. They killed one of the newborn pups of a nearby hound and left the bones lying around and sprinkled its blood over Rhiannon making it look like she had gone mad and had killed her child.

When Rhiannon awoke and looked for her child the maidens lied and explained how she had gone mad and how she had killed her baby.

The wise men and elders were soon summoned and her punishment was that she was to stand at the mounting block at the court in Arberth and tell everyone who came to court what had happened and she also was to offer to carry visitors on her back into the court.

Meanwhile in the house of Teirnyon, at Gwent Iscoed, the finest of mares each year on 1st May gave birth to a foal which always disappeared without trace. One May night, he didn't want this to happen again so he brought the foal into the house so he could watch the mare foal and as he watched a huge claw came through the window and took the new born colt.

He ran outside and in the barn he found a handsome baby, wrapped in the finest of silk of a noble birth. As the handsome boy grew up, they eventually heard the news of Rhiannon's tragedy and soon Teirnyon realised that the boy that they had brought up was in fact the son of Pwyll and Rhiannon.

They rode together back to Narberth and on seeing them Rhiannon offered to carry them on her back to the court as her punishment for killing her son. In the court Teirnyon explained what had happened to Rhiannon and Pwyll's son and they were overwhelmed with relief from their suffering and Pwyll named their reunited son as Pryderi.

Pryderi continued to grow up strong in Dyfed and after his father died he became Lord of the seven Cantrefs of Dyfed himself.

The Royal Palace on Grassholm

Another story of The Mabinogion tells of the warriors of Britain avenging the insults of the Irish to Branwen the daughter of Llyr. Following the victorious ferocious battles in Ireland only seven of the British warriors returned home, including Taliesin, Pryderi and Manawyddan. Bendigeidfran, the chief of the Britains, mortally wounded during the battle, insisted that he should be beheaded and be taken to the White Mount in London to be buried.

The seven men set off with the severed head and Branwen the daughter of Llyr. They stopped to rest and Branwen soon became overwhelmed with the grief of the atrocities of the battle and died of remorse and she was buried where she died.

The men travelled and spent seven years at Harlech being entertained by three magical birds singing to them the songs of Rhiannon. After seven years they set out to Grassholm, where they found a magnificent royal palace. In the hall they saw three doors, two were open, but the third closed. Manawyddan the magician, warned them to never open the third door. The seven men spent many wondrous years on the island. Then one day Heilyn son of Gwyn, his curiosity won and he opened the door and looked towards Cornwall.

Immediately the seven men became saddened by all of their losses and all those that had fallen or become afflicted. They remembered the loss of their Chief Bendigeidfran and his wish to take his Wondrous Head to London. They could not rest until they set off to London to complete their mission.

Manawyddan son of Llyr

Manawyddan was the brother of Bran and should have been the heir to the kingship of Britain but was left with nothing. Knowing of his plight, Pryderi offers Manawyddan the seven cantrefs of Dyfed and his mother Rhiannon as his bride. Manawyddan visits Dyfed and all goes well with him and Rhiannon and one evening they decide to climb the mound of wonders at Arberth. They heard a great clap of thunder and a mist descended across the land.

When the mist had cleared, the land was deserted and all human beings and animals had disappeared with only Pryderi his wife Cigfa, Manawyddan and Rhiannon left in the whole land.

They lived a couple of years hunting on wild honey, then they went to England to earn a living. They worked in Hereford at making saddles, and did it so well that the local craftsmen became jealous and would have killed them, so they went on to another city and made shields. But the same thing happened, and they went to a third city where they made shoes. When they were chased out here, they decided to go back to Dyfed.

At Narberth they hunted for a year and then one day they chased a pure white boar which disappeared into a strange castle. They were afraid to go in, but Pryderi wanted to get his hounds back, inside he touched a golden bowl in a marble fountain, and immediately he became silent and stuck solid to the floor. Manawyddan was afraid to enter and returned back to Narberth. Rhiannon went to help Pryderi but also became stuck to the ground and at that moment a thunder clap struck and mist fell all around. When the mist had cleared Pryderi, Rhiannon and the castle had disappeared and only Manawyddan and Cigfa were left. They went back to England as shoemakers but were driven out again by the other jealous shoemakers. They returned to Dyfed and this time Manawyddan brought back some wheat and sowed it at Narberth and produced a great crop.

When he came to reap the first field, he found every single ear gone, the same happened to the second field. Before reaping the third field, he lay in wait. He heard

a loud rustling noise and a huge army of mice came and started eating the corn. He chased them and managed to catch a fatter slower mouse and put it in his glove and took it back to Narberth to hang it the next day as punishment.

As he set out for the mound of Narberth to hang it, a scholar appeared and tried to dissuade him from hanging the mouse and offering to buy it. He refused and then a priest came up and tried to buy but he again he refused. Soon a bishop arrived and offered him more money but he still refused.

He then asked Manawyddan to name his price to which he requested the return of Pryderi and Rhiannon. The bishop agreed and Manawyddan also asked that the enchantment be removed from the whole of Dyfed, to which he also agreed.

Manawyddan was inquisitive who the mouse was and the bishop replied that he was Llwyd of Cilcoed and that he had enchanted Dyfed in revenge for the game of badger in the bag played by Pwyll on his friend Gwawl. So he sent his men as mice to destroy the crops over two nights and on the third night his pregnant wife alongside the ladies of the court also granted to be turned into mice to destroy the crops.

Llwyd waved a wand over the mouse who changed into a lovely woman, Rhiannon and Pryderi appeared and the curse was lifted from Dyfed and the people and animals returned as before and nobody, except the four, knew that anything had happened.

Cullwch and Olwen

This story tells of Culhwch seeking the hand of the fair maiden Olwen in marriage, who is the daughter of the chief giant called Ysbaddaden. Ysbaddaden sets many impossible tasks that Culwch must complete before handing over his daughter in marriage. One of the impossible tasks is to retrieve a comb, razor and shears from between the tusks of Twrch Trwyth. Twrch Trwyth was a former king in Ireland who had been turned into a swine because he was so wicked.

Cullwch wins the support of his cousin King Arthur and the quest continues to Ireland where Arthur and his men go to battle with Twrch Trwyth and his seven piglets. Twrch Trwyth and the piglets are incredibly fierce and even King Arthur himself fights with them for nine days and nights killing only one piglet.

After the loss of the piglet the Twrch Trwyth promises to lay waste Arthur's country and sets out for Wales. The Twrch Trwyth lands at Porth Clais and crosses Pembrokeshire, slaying all men and cattle in his path. Arthur and his men sets sail and follows the path of destruction of Twrch Trwyth across Pembrokeshire until meeting up with Twrch Trwyth at the River Nyfer. Twrch Trwyth then turns and runs towards the Preseli Hills and at Foel Cwm Cerwyn the Twrch Trwyth makes a stand and a great battle takes place with Arthur and the Twrch Trywth and four of Arthurs' knights are slain and turned to stone, Cerrig Marchogian marks the spot where the

knights were slain. The battle continues further down the hill and Trwch Trwyth makes a further stand and two sons of Arthur are slain in the battle and turned to stone, the two stones Cerrig Meibion Arthur mark the spot.

The story continues with the Twrch Trywth being chased across Wales and into the Severn estuary and Arthur's men manage to retrieve the razor and shears, but the Twrch Trwyth escapes before they can retrieve the comb. The Trwch Tryth runs into Cornwall causing more destruction and death until the comb is finally retrieved as Twrch Trwyth escapes into the sea at Lands End.

All the impossible tasks are presented as complete to the chief giant Ysbaddaden and the giant gives the hand of his daughter Olwen in marriage to Cullwch and they live happily ever after.

The Dream of Maccsen Wledig.

In this Mabinogion tale, the Roman emperor Magnus Maximus (Maccsen Wledig in Welsh) sets out to hunt into the West as far as Y Frenni Fawr (near Crymych). He set up camp on the Frenni Fawr hill at the camp named name Cadair Facsen.

2. KING ARTHUR

Many areas in Wales are associated with the legendary King Arthur. Although the story of King Arthur is legendary, many people would agree that someone bearing that name became a great ruler of the western parts of Britain, defending the land from the incoming forces that invaded these islands following the departure of the Romans.

There are a number of sites in Pembrokeshire associated with Arthur:

Meini Gwyr at Efailwen is the remains of a stone circle and has traditionally been named Buarth Arthur.

Cerrig Meibion Arthur on the southern slopes of Preseli hills opposite Carnabwth, Mynachogddu. A pair of standing stones which is linked with the Mabinogion story of Cullwch and Olwen, the pair of stones commemorating the slaying of Arthur's sons in the great battle with the Twrch Trywth.

Cerrig Marchogion. The stones of the knights. Another group of stones high up on the Preseli Ridge mark the spot where Arthur's Knights were slayed in their battle against Twrch Trwyth.

Carn Arthur is further East along the Preseli ridge, with a stone sitting precariously on its top.

Bedd Arthur or Arthur's grave is an oval shaped collection of 12 stones, placed near to Carn Bica.

Some neolithic burial chambers or dolmens have been named after Arthur. The most famous is Pentre Ifan which has been traditionally been called Coetan Arthur, or Arthur's quoit. Quoits was a popular C16 game of throwing disk shaped stones, the legend is that Arthur threw the great stone to form the capstone at the burial chamber. Another burial chamber on St Davids' head is also named Coetan Arthur and at Newport another dolmen is named Carreg Coetan Arthur.

Eisteddfa Arthur or Arthur's seat, is an old farmhouse at Brynberian.

Pen Arthur is a decorated cross slab, which can now be found at St Davids cathedral.

Excalibur. There is a tradition that Excalibur the magic sword of King Arthur was obtained from Bosherton lakes and that Arthur sailed from this inlet on his final journey to Avalon.

Gwalchmai and Walwyn's Cast

Gwalchmai, later referred to as the English Sir Gawain, was the best of Arthur's knights. William of Malmesbury called Gwalchmai 'Walwen' and he stated that the

grave of Arthur's cousin Walwen was to be found in the province of Rhos, one of the seven ancient cantrefs of Dyfed

King Arthur and Twrch Trwyth

In the ancient Mabinogion story of Cullwch and Olwen, King Aurthur helps his cousin Cullwch complete a list of seemingly impossible tasks, so as to win from the wicked giant Yspaddeen the hand of his daughter Olwen in marriage.⁷The last of the impossible tasks was to retrieve a comb, razor and scissors from between the ears of the great boar, Twrch Trwyth who had once been a wicked Irish King. The boar landed at Porthclais and laid waste lands across Pembrokeshire before a great battle took place at Foel Cwm Cerwyn, the highest point of the Preselis.

3. LEGENDARY STONES

St. Brynach's Stone, Nevern

The Great cross of St Brynach stands in the churchyard at Nevern. There is a tradition that on April 7th, St Brynach's day, the cuckoo arrives for spring, perches on the cross and calls out its first note. On St Brynach's day the priest would not commence mass until the call was heard from the stone. One year, the congregation waited for the bird to arrive but there was no call and the congregation waited and waited. Later that day the bird eventually landed on the cross stone, the call of the cuckoo was so weak and the bird then just fell down from the cross.

Vitalianus stone, St Brynach's Church, Nevern

Vortigern is an important Celtic chief in ancient Welsh mythology and it has been recorded that his son Vortimer, was known as Vitalianus. The Vitalianus stone with both Latin and Ogham writing, dated around C6 may well have been the memorial stone of Vortigern's son, Vitalianus.

The Pilgrims Cross, Nevern

It is said that a piece of the cross upon which Christ was crucified is hidden inside a cave, which is covered up with a stone face and stone marking of a pilgrims cross.

Ogham Stone, Caldey Island

A C6 Ogham inscribed stone can be found within the ancient church of St Illtud on the Caldey Island. It has inscriptions which read as MAGL DUBR which some reference to St Dubricius the 1st bishop of Llandaff who consecrated St Samson of Caldey, who was Caldey's first bishop.

The stone was discovered in the ruins of the priory in the nineteenth century. For a while it became the lintel of a window, and then a garden seat, before its importance was recognized and it was taken inside the priory church for safety.

St Teilo's Cross, Penally Church

Traditionally the stone cross marks the birthplace of St Teilo.

Carew Cross

The Carew Cross is one of Wales's most important stone crosses and commemorates the Celtic chief Mareddud ap Edwin, the joint ruler of the kingdom of Deheubarth (South West Wales) who was killed in 1035.

Capel Colman stone cross, Boncath

Local tradition says that the stone was originally placed over the body of St Colman. The stone was moved from the churchyard of Capel Colman to act as a gatepost to a farm track.

It is a circular cross with equal arms. A central cross with a triangle shape is on the rear face of the stone, which has given reference to the three crosses which stood at the crucifixion on Mount Calvary.

Sacred Stones of St David

Many legends and sacred stones dedicated to St. David still survive in south Wales. Near St. Davids, a large standing stone on the Dowrog Common is called **Maen Dewi** (David's stone) and a farm nearby was known as Tir Maen Dewi. Another stone named Maen Dewi was removed from St. Elvis farm near Solva and stands in St. Aidan's church porch in Upper Solva.

Another cross associated with St. David is **Mesur y Dorth**, set into a wall, a mile from Croes- goch towards Fishguard. The Welsh translates as 'measure of the loaf' and tradition says that during the time of famine, David decreed that loaves should be baked no bigger than the circle and hence the measure of the loaf. It was also the place where pilgrims on route to St. Davids are said to have taken their last meal before reaching the shrine.

The **Gurmac stone** was used as a gatepost at Penarthur farm, north of St Davids and is now housed in the Tower Gate over-looking St Davids Cathedral.

Clegyr Boia, St David's

This large rocky outcrop of igneous rock was considered to be the hill top fort of the C6 Irish chief Boia. In the stories of St David, Boia became an enemy of St David but Boia and his fortress was doomed and was destroyed by fire falling from the heavens.

Ringing stones of Maenclochog

Maenclochog traditionally derives its name from two large "bell stones", which once stood near the village and were said to ring like a bell when struck. The ringing would not stop until water from the nearby well of Ffynnon fair was taken into the Church. Locals broke up the stone to find what made the stones ring but they found nothing.

At Carn Alw , a rocky outcrop on the Northern slopes of the Preseli Hills there is hidden treasure, which only needs someone strong enough to find the stone and to lift it to reveal the hidden treasure.

Preseli bluestones and Stonehenge

The inner stone circle at Stonehenge is made up of Bluestones from the Preseli hills.

The Preseli Hills were on an ancient trading route, linking Wessex with Ireland and the hills were revered as a mystical and sacred place. The blue stones themselves were given special significance and ancient people may well have linked the special qualities of the stones with their interest in the stars of the heavens. The surface of the rock revealed feldspar like shining crystals perhaps as reminders of their connection with the skies. A small number of hand axes made of Preseli Bluestone weapons have also been found, with speculation that they would have been considered special and perhaps possessing magical qualities for the holder.

Original stone circles may have been in existence around the Preseli Hills prior to the construction at Stonehenge and the great sacred stones of the hills proved of such great significance that they may well have been transported to form the new magnificent stone circle at Stonehenge. This may give us a pointer to the great

mystery of why the Bluestones of the Preseli Hills were chosen for Stonehenge. The further mystery is how they arrived at Stonehenge and there is much debate around this.

Through the legend of Merlin, myth says that Merlin moved the stones from Ireland to Stonehenge, and in Merlin's days Pembrokeshire would have been very much under the influence of Irish invaders. The Golden road across the Preseli hills would have also been an important trading route for Irish gold.

Parc y Meirw (Field of the Dead), Llanllawer

This was originally a megalithic line of eight standing stones, stretching around 130 feet. Only 4 of the stones still stand, but it is the longest Megalithic alignment in Wales.

Parc y Meirw, 'field of the dead' may derive from the battle of Mynydd Carn which is believed to have taken place nearby in 1081, in which three Welsh princes were killed. A ghostly white lady has also been seen close by.

The Martyr Stone, Dale

In 1555 William Nichol was burnt at the stake in Haverfordwest because of his Protestant views. A stone was placed to mark the place in Haverfordwest, it was later moved to the Dale Castle entrance

Cnwc y Celwydd, near Moylegrove

This tumulus or cairn in translation is the "Tump of Lies". Traditionally people would have met on the Sabbath Day, just to tell each other lies.

Beddau

Beddau translates as a grave in Welsh and would have marked the burial place of a very important person in ancient Wales and there would be a tradition of folklore built up around many of these old heroes of Wales. Bedd Arthur on the Preseli Hills is one of the sites which marks the burial place of King Arthur.

Bedd Morris

Bedd Morris is a large standing stone on the upland ridge between Carningli and Dinas Mountain, on the road between Newport and Pontfaen. There are differing stories around this stone some referring to it as a memorial to an ancient chieftain "the grave of Morris."

Another legend says that Morris was a highwayman who terrorised the old road across the mountain and robbed the travellers as they passed. He lived in a cave with his dog but the locals attacked his cave. They cut the dog's throat and Morris was hanged at the roadside. The stone was erected to warn others of the plight of robbers.

A further tale tells of a gentleman Morris and a fair maid of Pontfaen being in love with each other but Morris was considered not good enough and consent to marriage was not given by her father and instead he arranged a marriage with another young man.

Morris challenged his rival to a duel, and they met up on the ridge at the highest point to fight to the death. Morris was killed in the duel, and he was buried where the stone now stands.

Quoits

Giants were often associated with the megaliths and the boulders which they threw from the hills. The stories of the quoits of King Arthur and St Samson explained how the large standing stones and megaliths came to be in such strange places. Many legendary stones are named after Arthur including Carreg Coetan Arthur and Bedd Arthur

The Nevern Valley Cromlechs

Around the Nevern Valley is an important concentration of cromlechs or Neolithic burial chambers. Six cromlechs survive at Pentre Ifan, Carreg Coetan Arthur, Cerrig y Cof, Trellyffaint, Llech y Dribedd, and at Bedd yr Afanc.

Pentre Ifan was said to be a favourite place where fairies would gather to dance on moonlit nights.

Five stone burial chambers are joined together to form Bedd yr Afanc and is traditionally the site where a fearsome water monster or "afanc" was buried after being caught and killed by local people under the bridge near Brynberian

Carreg Samson burial chamber

This Neolithic burial chamber overlooks Abercastle Harbour. It comprises six uprights (originally seven), three of which support the massive twelve ton capstone, which legend says that St Samson lifted with his little finger and severed it while lifting the stone. Hence the tomb was once known as the Grave of Samson's Finger.

Devil's Stones

There is a burial chamber and two standing stones named Devil's Quoit in the Stackpole area. The legend says that the stones come alive and meet annually on midsummer's eve at Saxon's Ford to dance the hay. They would later return to their original positions as if nothing had happened.

Huntsman's Leap

On the cliffs between Stack rocks and St Govans is the Huntsman's Leap, where a lone rider leaped the chasm. Despite successfully leaping the divide it is said that he died of fright on looking back.

Carnedd Meibion Owen

The Rocks of the Sons of Owen near Ty Canol are the setting for a traditional tale of

the three sons of Owen. They fought a battle with each other over their father's inheritance by hurling rocks at each other until they were all killed.

Llech Lafar, The Speaking Stone'

The Llech Lafar, 'The Speaking Stone' bridged the River Alun near to St Davids cathedral. The legend tells of a corpse being carried across the stone to the graveyard when the stone burst into speech and then cracked down the middle and no corpse was ever taken over it after that.

When King Henry 11 was returning from his invasion of Ireland the king went to St Davids cathedral to pray. As he walked a local woman threw herself at the king's feet complaining about the bishop of St Davids. The king was told what the woman had said but the complaint was not dealt with. The woman got angry at this and shouted loudly for the Llech Lafar to revenge against the king and reminded everyone about the prophecy that said that an English king who had conquered Ireland would be wounded by a man with a red hand and would die on his way home as he passed St Davids and crossed the Llech Lafar.

When the king reached the stone he stopped before crossing. Then he walked straight across it and, reaching the other side, he turned to gaze at the stone saying 'Merlin is a liar, who will trust him now?' With this a member of the crowd pretended to be insulted and replied, 'you are obviously not the one who will conquer Ireland! Merlin was not talking about you!'

4. SAINTS

St Gwyndaf

St Gwyndaf, a Breton was know as a Gwyndaf Hen ('The Aged'). One story of Gwyndaf tells when he was returning to Llanwnda from Fishguard on horseback. While crossing a stream a fish suddenly leapt up, startling the horse with Gwyndaf falling off and breaking his leg. St Aidan was his companion and in temper Gwyndaf cursed the stream so that no fish has been seen there since. Another story about Gwyndaf's temper is when he was travelling to St Davids with St Aidan. While stopping at Tregroes Well, a fight broke out about who was to give their name to the holy well. Aidan was the victor and battered Gwyndaf who set off to Llanwnda instead, to found his church and his own holy well, Ffynnon Wnda.

St Dubricius or St Dyfrig in Welsh

Local tradition says that St Dyfrig was born in the area of Fishguard area and resided in a monastic cell above Lower Town, near the pool known as Pwll Dyfrig. . There is also the tradition of a cave, Ogof Dyfrig where St Dyfrig spent time as a hermit. St Dyfrig's festival was celebrated in lower town, Fishguard.

The C6 saint went on to set up the first monastery on Caldey Island with Piro appointed as abbot. He was known for his alcoholic indulgence and following one final session while returning to his cell, he fell over and landed in the island well and drowned.

St. Caradog's

A great miracle was recorded when the C12 St Caradog passed away. St. Caradog's body was being carried across Newgale beach on its journey to burial at St. David's when a terrible rainstorm came down upon everyone. They all ran for shelter from the storm. When the storm had passed and they returned to the coffin, it was all miraculously dry, while everything else around was drenched. A chapel dedicated to Caradog was built nearby.

The Seven Saints of Mathry

A story tells of Cynwayw and his wife having seven sons together. Cynwayw was poor and didn't know how they would be able to look after them so he decided to drown the septuplets at birth. St Teilo was passing by so he saved them and took care of them at his monastery. They then spent some time at Llanddowror, where they were known as The Watermen or Dwfrwyr in Welsh before being sent by St. Dyfrig to Mathry. They later became known as the Seven Saints of Mathry, and became well known for their good works. In 1720 seven identical stone coffins were dug up at Mathry graveyard.

St Justinian

A son of a Breton prince who came to Ramsey Island as part of a hermit cell, on agreement that all women left the island. His was a strict and devout holy man who became the confessor of St David. His disciples where tired of his strict ascetic rules

and they set a fatal plan for him. They lied to him saying that St David was ill and needed him on the mainland. They set off rowing Justinian across the water, but Justinian sensed their evil deeds and saw his followers turn into devils and to fly off like crows, leaving him on his stone altar and to the mercy of the waves. The final blow was eventually dealt and his disciples cut off his head and a well of water sprung up where his head fell. Justinian immediately picked up his head and crossed the dangerous waters of Ramsey Sound to the headland and finally collapsed and died at the site where his chapel now stands. The murderers were treated like lepers and were transported to spend their life on Leper's Rock. Later it is said that St David moved the body of St Justinian to his own Church site.

St Non

After being assaulted by Sant the Chief of Ceredigion Non became pregnant and gave birth to St David, traditionally at the site of the ruinous St Non's Chapel, during a time of a great storm. Miraculously though at the time of the birth, Non and her baby were protected from the storms and were surrounded by a comforting light. It is said that at the time of birth a spring gushed up from the ground, which is now the site of St Non's holy well which has been an important place of pilgrimage for many centuries.

St Patrick & Ireland

When St Patrick visited the area of St Davids he was convinced this was the site where he would establish his holy community but he received a vision which told him that the place was planned for another holy man who would come after him. He was then inspired to set sail to Ireland instead and it is believed that he set sail from Whitesands. He achieved great success in Ireland just as St David did a few years later on this peninsular in West Wales. The southern gate of St Davids Close is called Porth Padrig.

St Brynach

The life of St Brynach the Irishman is retold through many stories and is associated with a number of Churches and special sites within North Pembrokeshire and around the Preseli Hills. The Churches include Llanboidy, Cillymaenllwyd, Llanfrynach, Henry's Moat, Pontfaen, Cwm yr Eglwys, Nevern. There are number of wells of St Brynach including Buarth Brynach, Brynach's Enclosure.

Following the journey of St Brynach's life, the story behind some of the place names unfolds. The story begins with St Brynach on mission in Brittany and as he stood on its shores, he wished he was in Wales.

He placed a stone on the water and he floated over the sea to Milford Haven. He married Corth, a daughter of Brychan Brycheiniog and was granted land in Emlyn. Brynach's wife turned against him and arranged for him to be murdered. He was stabbed by a lance but a swarm of winged ants came to protect him and killed his

attacker. Brynach cleaned his wounds in a stream and the water became blood red as he was miraculously healed.

He journeyed to Llanboidy but as he was not welcomed and he ended up sleeping in a cow shed. He further journeyed back towards Cilymaenllwyd near Loglan, where he was again rejected and took shelter under a grey stone. Brynach continued with his journey across Pembrokeshire until he arrived at the area of Llanfynach where he at last found a welcoming population. He further ventured down into the Gwaun valley and it seemed that Brynach had finally found a suitable site to set up his religious foundation, until he fled the valley because of the dark spirits which he had encountered.

It is said that Brynach spent some time in ascetic solitude and is associated with Carningli or the Mount of Angels. While in prayer he communed with angels ascending and descending at the hill of Carningli. He also received a vision in which he was told he would encounter a boar with suckling piglets and that was where he was to build his monastic settlement.

It is said that St David visited Brynach on his way to Llandewi Bref and David was carrying a large stone cross on his journey which Brynach persuaded David to leave at Nevern.

Brynach had a great affinity with animals and two stags pulled his cart for him and the story of Brynach and his beloved cow. The story tells how Brynach's favourite cow produced the finest of milk and that his tame wolf took care of the cow, taking her back and fore to the lush meadow. One day a stranger arrived at Brynach's community saying that he had brought a message from his king who was visiting the area, demanding the best of food and lodging for the night.

Brynach was wary of this king, as he was already friendly with the local chief of the region who was also a Christian like Brynach. Brynach sent a messenger back to the king, that he would not look after him and his men. The king was tired and hungry and returned his men to find cattle for their cooking pots. The spies soon found Brynach's special cow, and returned back to their king. The cow was soon slaughtered and cut up into the cooking pots.

Back at Brynach's enclosure the wolf had gone to fetch the cow from the meadow but was nowhere to be found. He returned to let his master know and Brynach and all his men searched but soon realised that she had been stolen by the foreign King. Brynach loved all of his animals and was sad, he knelt down in the meadow and prayed.

Back at the King's camp something strange was happening with the cooking. The more they built up the fire the water stayed ice cold. They tried fresh water from the river but it still wouldn't warm up. They tried roasting instead, but still wouldn't heat up. They soon became scared because they were worried about strange powers at

work. So they returned back to the meadow, where they found Brynach down on his knees, praying.

The king and his men asked for forgiveness and were converted into faith through St Brynach. They all then walked to the monastery to worship in the church. They were then given supper and accommodation for the night. The next day the king and his men returned to their own land and as they passed the meadow, the beloved cow was miraculously grazing there.

St Samson

Samson was a student of St Iltud at the great religious centre of Llanilltyd Fawr and ordained by St Dyfrig. He went to Caldey Island to become abbot, he is also associated with Stackpole and Bosherton remembered in place names such as Sampson Brake, Sampson Cross and Sampson farm.

Some writers link Samson as the nephew or cousin of King Arthur. His feats of strength are remembered through the throwing and raising of stones such as Ffyst Samson near St Nicholas and Carreg Samson at Abercastle. He is remembered at three holy wells in the county near Llandeloy, near Llangolman and Newport. One of the miracles in the life of Samson was that of the Pestiferous Beast which was probably a huge dragon that had already destroyed two districts of South Wales with its deadly breath.

Samson was asked to get rid of the beast, so he left Caldey accompanied by a young boy. The dragon sensed them approaching and roared out, breathing fire. When Samson began to speak with the dragon it became calm and quiet and stopped breathing fire.

Samson then removed his linen girdle, tied it round the dragon's neck and walked it away from its cave, to a highpoint on the sea cliffs, loosened the girdle, and sent it off the cliffs into the sea, never to be seen again.

Samson succeeded Piro as abbot on Caldey and tried his best to stop the monks' drinking habits. Finally, defeated by problems of discipline, he left Caldey and retired with some of the more faithful monks to Stackpole. The monks took over an abandoned camp that can still be seen today, and Samson settled into a cave in the side of the headland overlooking the sea.

Barre

An abbot called Barre had been on a long pilgrimage on the continent and decided to return to his monastic life in Ireland. Near the end of his journey he spent a while visiting David. He enjoyed the conversation so much however that he missed the winds that his ship needed to travel across the sea and he soon became worried for he was sure that because of his long absence his brethren would be arguing amongst themselves and destroying the monastery. Searching for another way to

reach home he eventually came across David's horse and requested David's blessing and then rode the horse out across the sea.

St Teilo

Traditionally St Teilo was born at Penally and studied under St Dyfrig, and remained with David during the foundation of his monastery in the Vallis Rosina. He accompanied David and Padarn on pilgrimage to Jerusalem.

One of the churches dedicated to St Teilo is at Llandeilo Llwydarth, near Maenchlochog. When St Teilo was dying he was fortunate to be attended by a maid servant from Llandeilo Llwydarth. Just before he breathed his final breath he told her to swear that exactly a year after his burial at Llandeilo Fawr in Carmarthenshire she would take his skull and place it at the nearby well. St Teilo asked her to do this so that the local people could benefit from the holy waters and be cured of their ailments by his holy relic. A year later she brought the holy skull to Llandeilo Llwydarth and the tradition of the well and skull was established. The skull was eventually passed onto the Matthews family to look after and then passed onto the Melchior family at Llandeilo Lwydarth who became guardians of the holy relic. Traditionally the waters from the holy well at Llandeilo Llwydarth was poured into the skull for visitors to partake of its healing powers.

After his death three churches of Llandaf, Llandeilo Fawr and Penally insisted upon the burial of his body so the eldest priest gave up and decided to let God choose the right one for burial. He told the others to go to field the next morning and his body was miraculously divided into three separate bodies and was then buried in each of the three churches.

St Aidan

St Aidan originated from Ireland and he became a companion of St David. He was famous for being absent minded and during his time with St David, he left an important book out in the rain when he was called away and when returning for the book he found it miraculously undamaged. Because of this St David ordered Aidan to do penance by lying on the shore at Whitesands, the tide came in and David himself came along to pull Aidan out with ropes to stop him from drowning. Pembrokeshire dedications are at Llawhaden and Solva and two wells are remembered at Ffynnon Faiddog near Whitesands and Ffynnon Madoc at Rudbaxton.

Tradition tell of the occasion when St David was building a church at Llandewi Velfrey and sent Aidan with wagons, to collect wood for new church. He needed to cross the Eastern Cleddau, through a ford. A steward of St David, jealous of Aidan because he had a special friendship with St David, bribed a fellow pupil to kill St Aidan, while they were felling trees together in woods.

While checking on the building of new church, David received a vision, that while collecting wood in the forest near the river Aidan was about to be killed by a lay

brothers axe. St David rushed out to save St Aidan, in such a rush that he was wearing only one shoe on his way to the river. The murderer was holding the axe suspended in mid-air with the lay brother unable to move. St Aidan escaped from the wood and St David saw Aidan approaching with "numerous troops of angels around the boy" and Aidan's life was saved. In gratitude Aidan erected a cross and Aidan decided to found his own religious community at the place now known as St Aidans Church Llawhaden.

Aidan's forgetfulness proved incurable and when he returned to Ireland to found his own monastery he had forgotten his most prized possession, the little bell that St David had given him as a parting gift. St David knowing him well had already dispatched the bell by a swift moving angel. Aidan had also realised that he had forgotten to ask St David for the name of a suitable Irish soul friend, no Celtic saint felt complete without one. The angel who carried the bell to him, also recommended the name for his Irish soul friend.

St Aidan founded a monastery in Ireland and one Easter eve an angel appeared to him warning him that Dewi was about to be poisoned because of jealousy. St Aidan sent one of his servants to warn Dewi but there were no ships ready. Scuthinus one of his servants went to the beach and found a strange sea animal waiting for him to cross the waters to Pembrokeshire. David had just finished the Easter service and Scuthinus told Dewi all that the angel had told Aidan.

St Elvis

St Elvis, is the name of the farm on the coastal cliffs near Solva. He was Bishop of Munster and Irish sources tell how he was abandoned in the forest and suckled by a she-wolf. Years later, the saint repaid the favour by saving the beast from a hunter.

He is known as a confessor at St David and a cousin of St David, and was responsible for the baptism of St David at Porth Clais. A holy spring, Ffynnon Ddewi, is said to have come forth at the time of the baptism.

St Hywel

Also known as Hywel Farchog one of the knights of King Arthur's court in the tales of the Mabinogion. He is famed as one of the three royal knights of the court. St Hywels church is in Llanhowell near to St Davids.

St Colman

An Irish saint remembered in the Churches of Llangolman and Capel Colman. He is believed to have studied with St Elvis and travelled to Rome where he was consecrated as bishop by Pope Gregory. On one occasion he miraculously restored to life as still born baby. An ancient stone cross at Capel Colman remembers the saint.

St Govan

St Govan was probably an Irish abbot at the time of St David. He spent much of his

life as a hermit at St Govan's Head and St Govan's chapel and the well is built in a fissure in the sea cliffs. A set of stone steps leads down the cliff to the chapel and tradition says that it is impossible to count the steps accurately.

During stormy seas St Govan would see passing ships seeking shelter in the little bay, only to crash onto the rocks. Local folk would lower themselves down the cliffs on ropes to pull in the bounty from the wrecks and some evil folk would even lure ships onto rocks with lanterns.

St Govan made it his mission to pluck people out of the sea from their shipwrecked vessels. One evening after saving the life of a lone sailor, he gave the ship's bell to Govan. Govan then set the bell on a high rock to warn away ships during the storms, saving many lives.

The locals became angry that they were losing their shipwreck bounty and armed with weapons they went to kill Govan and to destroy his bell. Govan heard them and prayed to God for his safety, the cliff opened up and engulfed the hermit. They couldn't find Govan but they seized the bell and threw it out to sea. Soon after Govan saw an angel flying back with the bell and the angel set the bell in the rock near Govan's dwelling. When Govan struck the rock, the bell rang out warning seafarers of the dangers during the storms. The locals were now afraid of Govan's powers and began to change their ways.

Today In the chapel of St Govan can be seen a small crevice where St Govan hid from villagers. In this crevice you will also see marks like the imprint of ribs upon the rock surface. Local custom says if you turn 3 times within the crevice, fulfilment of your wish will be guaranteed.

Some stories refer to Govan as Sir Gawain, the faithful Knight of King Arthur and the round table and at the end of his adventures the knight retired to the cliffs as a recluse. Another tale tells of Sir Gawain being wounded and dying in the cleft in the cliffs.

St David

The miraculous birth of St David was prophesied through both Christian and pagan traditions and was foretold as a man whose power would fill the whole land. Merlin prophesied that an Irish preacher would become dumb because of the infant in the womb, as the child in her womb would be greater than he and traditionally the lesser could not speak before the greater.

St Patrick himself wanted to bring his own monastic community on the site of St Davids but he received a vision that it was reserved for another saint. Before the birth of David his father Sant received a vision to gather three animal treasures from the River Teifi to be set aside for the monastery; a stag, a salmon and a swarm of bees in preparation for his birth. The honeycomb from the hive symbolised wisdom,

the salmon as a sign of asceticism and the stag signifying the power of light and good over darkness and evil.

Another story tells of David's father Sant, a prince of Ceredigion as committing the dreadful act of raping his mother Non and as she conceived two standing stones emerged from the ground.

At the time of David's birth Non found a special place for the birth, one story says that she even needed to hide from her own father who wanted to kill Non and her child. Non came to that special place but there was a terrible storm around her with thunder and lightning and torrential rain but miraculously at this site she was protected from the storm and was surrounded by an oasis of calm, dry and a heavenly light. During the birth she laid down between two stones and a spring of water emerged from the ground which feeds into a Holy Well, known as St Nons to this day.

David was baptised by St Elvis, the Bishop of Munster and while the blind monk Movi was holding him in his arms, some of the baptismal water splashed into Movi's eyes and his sight was restored. Immediately a spring of water came forth which was used for baptisms from that day.

Tradition says that St David was tall and strong and was able to bear a yoke and pull a plough as well as any team of oxen and that his diet was mainly bread and herbs, particularly watercress.

Water was also an important feature in the life of David with the emergence of springs of water and he was known as the waterman or dyfrwr in Welsh. David only drank water and as penance, would stand up to his neck in cold water reciting the psalms.

One day it became so hot that the river was reduced to a trickle and David's followers complained to him of the lack of water. David then retreated in prayer and a flowing spring soon came from the earth. He also helped his neighbour by placing his staff on the ground for another spring to pour forth.

As David grew up in the teachings of the Church a dove became a constant companion. He was sent to the blind teacher Paulinus to further his studies and during this time David healed Paulinus and restored his sight.

The time came for David to leave Paulinus and set off around the country sharing in his divine mission. Founding churches including Glastonbury and the monasteries of Leominster and Llangyfelech.

David returned to his birth place and lit a fire to claim the land for God. Boia was a local chieftain living nearby and on seeing the smoke became annoyed that someone else was making claim to the local land. His wife told him to gather his men and stage an attack but as they approached David, all of his men became too ill with a fever to attack.

When Boia arrived home all of his cattle had been struck down and Boia realised that he was up against a divine power. Boia soon returned to David and asked for forgiveness and agreed for David to settle on the land. David forgave them and when Boia returned home his cattle had been restored to life.

Boia's wife soon became restless and wanted to make amends with David and his monks so she sent her maids to the Vallis Rosina where David had settled and ordered them to strip naked to dance suggestively to entice the monks away from their life of discipline. David encouraged the monks to stand firm in their faith and to ignore the lurid maids and the maids eventually left without success.

Finally, in a third act against David, Boia's wife lured her innocent and trusting stepdaughter Dunod down to the valley to gather nuts. There she made Dunod lay her head down so that she could brush her hair and then she slit the girl's throat.

Following this act Boia's wife became mad and disappeared, and Boia became angry and started to plot against David again. The end of Boia came at the hands of another Irishman called Lisci who landed at Porth Lisci, stormed Boia's camp and beheaded him, soon followed by 'fire from heaven destroying everything'.

There were many companions throughout St David's life and one of those was St Aidan. One time St Aidan was in Ireland and an angel warned that one of St David's followers was jealous and was going to poison David. The angel advised Aidan to send one of his servants to warn David. The wind for sailing was not in favour and one of Aidan's servants Scuthinus straddled a sea animal at the seashore and crossed the sea to warn David of the impending treachery. They soon sat down to eat and the poisoned bread was served. Scuthinus took the bread and broke it into three portions feeding one to the dog and one to a crow who both fell dead upon eating the poisoned bread. David took the remaining portion, blessed it and ate and to the amazement of everyone around him the poison did not affect him.

Along with St Teilo and St Padarn, St David went on pilgrimage to Jerusalem and when leaving for home the Patriarch of Jerusalem gave them gifts of a portable holy altar, a bell, gold tunic and a staff. There is a tradition that the portable altar brought back from Jerusalem is the Sapphire Stone which is housed in the South Transept of St David's Cathedral and is associated with numerous miracles.

After his return, David was called to a synod gathering at Llandewi Brefi to challenge the Pelagius heresy. On the way to Brefi, he restored to life the dead child of a widow and a spring Ffynnon Ddewi marked the site. The child followed David to Brefi and on arrival he spread a cloth on the ground for David to preach from. There was such a crowd that it was difficult for David to be seen and heard, so as David began to speak at the Synod the ground beneath him rose up to form a mound so that

everyone could see and hear him and a dove flew down and landed upon his shoulder. The white dove was a symbol of the Holy Spirit.

On the south side of the Cathedral is a flat grave slab with two marks which are said to be the devil's footprints marking the spot where the devil landed after he was pushed off the Cathedral roof during a fight with St David.

Another story tells of how St David raised an old priest called Criumther from the dead while he was at Porth Mawr waiting to sail to Ireland

As David was nearing the end of his life an angel visited him eight days before the 1st of March and told him to prepare for his death. At that moment a heavenly light came all around and the angel told his followers that he would pass over to heaven on 1st March. David then stayed and prayed with his monks and the news of David's final days was shared wide and far. As the final day approached people all over the country came and gathered around David's monastery to witness his final moments.

His last words to his grieving followers were 'do the little things that you have heard and seen through me'. On a Tuesday, the first day of March, the monastery was filled with angels as David passed away.

His bones and relics including his hand bell, robe and staff became objects of veneration and as a destination for pilgrimage. Various upheavals caused the relics of St David to disappear and the monks of Glastonbury claimed to have them but some of them must have remained at the monastery site. The relics were prayed upon before battle to bring hope and victory such as the Battle of Mynydd Carn and in time of war the portable shrine was carried by priests ahead of the army invoking the saint's help to protect them in battle.

The shrine was eventually completely plundered and the relics and bones lost until the Prior of Ewenni had a dream in which he dreamt where David's body was buried. Miraculously, just as in the dream the bones were discovered and placed in a new shrine in the cathedral.

There are many other sites remembering the life of St David. There is a tradition of Capel y Gwrhyd, which is the Welsh for a fathom or 6 feet and was said to have been the span of David's outstretched arms. The holy water stoup from Capel y Gwrhyd is now housed in the modern Chapel of St Non.

The feast day of St. David 1st March is celebrated as the Welsh national day and on this day, the leek has always been worn as a national emblem.

St Canna

St Canna is a female Pembrokeshire saint and is associated with the Church of Llangan near Whitland. There is a holy well famed for its healing properties and a large rock to sit on called Canna's chair. The healing process was intensified if the ill person managed to fall asleep on the stone.

St Bride

There is one female saint who left her mark throughout Northern Europe as well as in Pembrokeshire. She is St Brigid, or St Bride, the patroness of Ireland and there are more churches dedicated to her in Britain and Ireland than there are to any other saint.

5. HOLY WELLS

The healing waters from springs and wells were used deep back into prehistoric times. Celtic culture considered that Water from springs, wells and lakes held sacred healing and protections powers.

The wells would have been used in Pagan times and with the conversion of the people to Christianity, the healing practice of the wells would have continued but with a new dedication to the Celtic Saint

Some of Pembrokeshire's wells hold that ancient connection and some are linked with Pembrokeshire's prehistoric stones.

Ffynnon Fair, or 'Mary's Well', Maenclochog

There was a tradition of a ringing stone at Maenclochog and that when the stone was struck it would ring, to stop it ringing water would be taken from the well to Maenchlochog church.

St Non's well

2nd March is St Nons day. The beginnings of the well traditionally derived from the birth of St David during a terrible thunderstorm and at this time a spring of pure water burst out of the ground nearby.

Pilgrimages were made to the well at St Nons and travellers would place gifts, pins and even pebbles as part of the healing tradition.

St Edren's well

Set in the churchyard at Letterston and one Sunday a woman ignored the law of resting on the Sabbath and washed her clothes in the well. After this the well dried up but the healing properties of the well were not lost because they were transferred to the grass of the churchyard and if eaten, the person received the same healing properties of the well. The particular healing properties were for curing madness in both humans and dogs.

St Govan's well

A small stone covered well lies just below the chapel of St Govan.

The well is now dry but was a popular healing well for lameness. There are stories of people leaving their crutches behind as a testament to their healing.

The chapel itself is built over a small spring with the water seeping into the floor but tradition says that it would never flood the chapel and pilgrims were often lifting the sacred water from the ground by limpet shell.

Llanllawer Well

A traditional wishing well in which people would make a wish as straight pins were thrown into the well, crooked pins were for making a bad wish. There are two ancient cross stones on either side of the gate to the church, often referred to as preventing evil spirits from entering. The healing properties of the well were associated with eye complaints.

St Degfels well

Found in St Dogmaels and was a known as a healing well for warts.

Pistyll Meugan, Eglyswrw

There were three separate streams with different healing properties, the eyes, joints problems and the heart. Only the spring now remains.

St Teilo's well

The curative properties of the spring were renowned, and the water was used to treat chest complaints such as whooping cough and tuberculosis. For the healing powers to work, the water was drunk early in the morning out of the relic of the skull of St Teilo and there were rituals of leaving offerings or dropping bent pins into the wells.

Higgin's well at Haverfordwest

Used by pilgrims on their journey to St Davids.

This medieval well-chapel considered lost, until it was rediscovered in a ruined cottage. It seems that the well never runs dry and is the only holy well in Wales to be exploited for commercial use and local bottled water can be purchased.

Gumfreston wells

Three bubbling wells spring beside the C14 church of St Lawrence. It is said that the upper one is pure water, the middle one is chalybeate water and the lower one sulphur. On Easter day local people would visit the wells and drop pins into the water, a tradition which was known as "throwing lent away".

Bernard's Well, Henry's moat

Bernard is the English for St Brynach, who is associated with numerous Churches around North Pembrokeshire. This well can still be visited in a corner of the farm field of Bernard's well farm.

St Justinian's Well

There were also chapels and wells on Ramsey Island, and John of Tynemouth wrote that a man with a swollen stomach drank the water to seek a cure. He immediately threw up a frog and got better. St Justinian's well lies directly opposite the chapel, beside the road. The spring is now sealed and protected by a little round stone building.

Clegyr Boia, St David's

At this rocky outcrop overlooking the St Davids peninsular is a small hollow in the rock, just big enough to get a hand in. It is claimed that this was a healing well, with properties of healing eye ailments.

6. LOVE AND MARRIAGE.

The regulations of marriage rights have been written down in ancient Welsh laws. Also we have some traditions and customs of marriage passed down to us through the oral traditions of the great Welsh tale of the Mabinogion. In the story of Cullwch and Olwen we have the questing and taking of the bride by contract and the completion of the impossible list of tasks and then the bride was handed over.

In early tales marriage was called “oed I gysgu” and was the appointed time to sleep together. It suggests a contract was held which would then be consummated by the act of sleeping together. Following the giving away of the bride to the bridegroom a gift called “cowyll” was paid by the husband to the wife and a payment called “amobr” was paid as the purchase price for the lady in marriage.

The old Welsh laws refer to 3 different types of marriage: the bride was given by her father, some brides were taken without consent and of course the religious ceremony of marriage.

Some customs around the arranging of the marriage include the “dyddio” the appointed day, the “Gwahoddwr” the bidder. The “dyddio” involved the meeting of both fathers for permission to be obtained for the maiden to marry and to agree the conditions of the contract and to appoint the day. Once agreed the “Gwahoddwr” the bidder would be sent out to invite people to the wedding, some bidders would have made this undertaking as their profession.

In the tale of Pwll and Rhiannon it seems that the tradition of a one year contract may have been in play with permission for separation at the end of the year due to infertility. In some instances the relationship could be finally broken by either party entering into another marriage. In some cases of bigamy within Wales, the defendants would defend themselves by arguing that their estranged spouse had started living with another partner.

Divination practices to see their future marriage partner

Young people were keen to know if they were to marry the lady or the gentleman they now love, or who else their future partner maybe or even if they would remain single. Some would resort to romantic charms and incantations. It was believed that the spirit of a person could be invoked and that they could obtain sight of the young man they were to marry.

Such charms were performed sometimes on certain Saints Days, or on one of the three “Spirits’ Nights,” or on a certain day of the moon but more frequently on “Nos Calan Gauaf” or All Hallows Eve, 31st October. All Hallows was an important night in the calendar when young maidens were anxious to see the spirits of their future husbands.

One practice was divination by a ball of yarn, known as “coel yr edau wlan”. A young unmarried woman would take a ball of yarn to her bedroom and double the threads,

and then she would tie small pieces of wool along these threads, so as to form a small thread ladder. She would then throw the miniature ladder from her bedroom window and then winding back the yarn she would say "I am winding, who is holding?" Then the spirit of her future husband would mount the little ladder and appear to her. But if the spirit did not appear, the charm was repeated over again, and even a third time. If no spirit was to be seen after performing such ceremony three times, the young lady had no hope of a husband. Some girls would not take the trouble to make the ladder, but simply throw out the ball of yarn through the window while saying the words "I am winding, who is holding."

In Pembrokeshire, it was a custom for girls to place a shoulder of mutton under their pillow with nine holes bored in the blade bone. At the same time they would put their shoes at the foot of the bed in the shape of the letter T while chanting an incantation over them. They then hoped to see their future husbands in their dreams.

Another well-known form of divination in Pembrokeshire, is for a young woman to wash her shirt or other clothing worn next to the skin and then to turn it inside out and place it before the fire to dry. Then they would wait and watch to see who would come at midnight to turn it. The spirit of her future husband was hoped to appear and perform the work for the young woman, but if she was to remain single, a coffin would be seen moving along the room.

Also by placing the plates on the dining-room table upside down, at midnight the spirit of the future husband was supposed to come and arrange them in their proper order.

Another common practice in West Wales is for a young woman to peel an apple at twelve o'clock, before a looking glass in order to see the spirit of her future husband.

Another well-known ceremony was for a young woman to stick pins at midnight in a candle, all in a row, top to the bottom and then to watch the candle burning and the pins dropping one by one, till the last pin had dropped, and then the future husband of the girl to whom the pin belonged, was supposed to appear. If she was destined to die single, she would see a coffin.

It was also a custom in Wales once for nine young girls to meet together to make a pancake, with nine different things, and share it between them before going to bed in order to dream of their future husbands.

On St. John's Eve many girls would go out at midnight to search for St. John's Wort which was taken home and hung in their bedrooms. Next morning, if the leaves still appeared fresh, the girl was to marry within that same year but if the leaves were dead she would not marry that year.

The Bible and key divination

Through Bible and Key Divination, the two first letters of a future Wife's or Husband's name were sought after. A small Bible was opened and the key of the front door is

placed on the 16th verse of the 1st Chapter of Ruth. Then the Bible was closed, and tied round with the garter taken off the left leg of him or her who wishes to know his or her future wife initials. The young person must then put the middle finger of his right hand on the key underneath the loop, and take care to keep the Bible steady. Another person then repeats the above and when he comes to the appointed letter, the first letter of the future wife's name, the Bible will turn round under the finger.

Dumb Cakes

There was an old tradition that an unmarried woman could find a husband by baking a cinnamon and honey cake or "dumb cake", which had to be prepared in total silence, and then placing it on the capstone of Coetan Arthur. She then had to run around the stones three times in an anticlockwise direction in order to gain her wish.

Divination by the tea-cup

Tea cup divination is also practised to find out some future events concerning future love. After having emptied the cup, it is turned round three times in the left hand, so that the tea-leaves may cover the surface of the whole cup. Then the cup is placed in the saucer, bottom upwards, to drain, for a few minutes before inspection. If the leaves are scattered evenly round the sides of the cup, leaving the bottom perfectly clear, it is considered a very good sign but when the bottom of the cup appears very black with leaves, it is a very bad sign of trouble misfortune.

When the leaves form a ring on the side of the cup, it means that the girl who consults is to marry very soon but if the ring is at the bottom of the cup, no great news of love is forthcoming.

When there is a speck floating on the surface of a cup of tea before drinking, some people say it means a letter, a parcel, or a visitor, but a young girl takes it to represent her lover, and she proves his faithfulness by placing the speck on the back of her left hand, and strike it with the back of her right hand. Should the speck or the small tea leaves stick to the back of the left hand and cling or stick fast to the right hand when striking it, it means that the young man is faithful but on the other hand, should it happen that the tea, still remain on the left hand where it was first placed, especially after striking it three times, the young man is not to be depended upon.

A heart shape signifies joy and future happiness and two hearts seen together in the cup predicts a wedding is to take place.

Courting

There was once a frowned upon custom of bundling, it has been said that the custom had its origin in primitive times, when, a whole family would lay down together with their clothing on to keep warm. The custom for courting young men and women was to lie down together in bed but with their clothes still on. Church and chapel condemned the practice.

In rural Wales farm sons and daughters and farm servants were so busy on the farm that they had little time to devote to their love concerns and it was common for young men to set off in the middle of the night to see their young ladies. Sometimes a group of men would set off together and even the servant would go, so that the farmer's son met the farmer's daughter and the servant met up with the servant maid. They would knock at the window of the young woman's room very cautiously, not to wake the farmer and his wife.

Another way of meeting your love would be at the fairs, or on the way home from the fairs. The fairs were great opportunities for young male and female farmers and farm servants to meet up for intimacy. It was often at these fairs that they would meet up for the first time.

Further opportunity for courting was going home from church or chapel. Historically Welsh people were very religious and most people would attend a place of worship and it became common practice for a man to accompany a young lady home from church.

Birch trees are connected with love in Welsh poetry and during the Welsh entertainment gathering "Noswaith Lawen" birch twigs were given to their partners as a sign of their constant love. It was also the custom to adorn the birch with flowers and a ribbon and leave it where it was most likely to be found by the person intended on May-morning.

Alternatively a "collen," or hazel-tree was another well known sign in courtship. It was a sign of a change of mind on the part of the young man and that the maiden was no longer the attention of his love. If it was the lover's intention to break off the engagement a hazel sprig would be delivered to the young lady by someone in disguise.

The Welsh name for hazel-tree is "collen" meaning to lose. There is an obvious association with collen and making use of the hazel tree in courtship as a symbol of losing love.

The wedding

The day before the Wedding was once known as "Ystafell," and represented bringing home of the furniture.

It was also customary on the same day for the young man and the young woman to receive gifts of various kinds, such as money, flour, cheese, butter, bacon, hens, and sometimes even a cow or a pig, also a good many useful things for house-keeping. This was called "Pwrs a Gwregys", a purse and a girdle.

Traditionally Wednesday was a favourite day to get married in some places while it was Friday in other places.

On the morning of the wedding, trouble and argument was put in path of the bridegroom. When the bridegroom's procession halted at the house of the bride's parents, when finding the door barred they would formally demand to see the bride, generally in rhyming song.

The innocent fun of the argument from within and without the house in the form of rhymes would continue for an hour. Eventually the doors were opened and the bridegroom's party admitted into the house but even then it was the custom for the bride to hide. A search would be made for her everywhere under the tables, beds, and every corner in the house, and at last found, perhaps dressed in disguise. Whoever discovered the bride perhaps received a pint of beer and a cake as a prize, all done in the name of fun.

After finding the hidden bride they were joined by the bridegroom and his friends, and made their way towards the church. The young woman was mounted on a fine horse and the whole party would proceed to church. But during the procession the bride would be seized suddenly by one of her relatives or friends. The bridegroom and his friends would ride after the captor until they rescued the bride to continue the journey to church.

It was considered unlucky for the wedding party to go and return from the church along the same path, so sometimes it was customary to go out of the way a bit so as to avoid ill-luck. It was customary to decorate the roads where the wedding party is to pass with arches and banners. In Wales, it was also considered unlucky to marry on a wet day.

Another common custom was known as Chaining or Halting the Wedding. As the young couple were riding home from Church after the wedding ceremony they would find the way blocked by ropes stretching the road, covered with flowers and ribbons. This would symbolise the first challenge in married life and usually they were not allowed to pass until paying a fee to the pranksters.

Sometimes the newly-married couple resorted to a Wishing Well, and the first to drink of the water became the master of their wedded life.

A shipwrecked love affair

There is a story of a man who was shipwrecked on the Pembrokeshire coast and when washed up on the seashore was almost dead. He was found by the daughter of Sir John of St. Brides, who carried him to her father's house where he was looked after. The young man fell in love with his helper and they soon went on to become married and the family went on to live for generations at Orlandon near St Brides.

The wedding in a cave

Cecil Powell Lewis, of Llandow, was an attractive well sought after lady and Thomas Picton, of Poyston was determined to gain her hand in marriage. She eventually agreed to be married in a cave. She was cunning and arranged a bogus ceremony to

challenge the bridegroom and then dissolve the marriage as soon as the fun was over.

A disguised man led the ceremony, and despite many friends of the bridegroom in attendance the bride declared the ceremony invalid.

The bridegroom was cleverer than her cunning activities and he produced the special licence, and the disguised clergyman took off his mask, to reveal Rev. Edward Powell, rector of Llandow. Their marriage life against all expectations proved to be a very happy one. Thomas Picton and his beautiful wife became the parents of Sir Thomas Picton, the famous Pembrokehire soldier who fell, at Waterloo.

7. UFOS

The area of St Brides Bay in 1977 became one of the most important sites in the UK for UFO sightings through a series of media reports.

However an earlier event happened in 1952 near Castlemartin. Mr Thomas while walking along the sand dunes found a partially-concealed metallic object. He then saw some alien men warning him to stay away as he would be injured by the powerful rays. They told the gentleman that they were from another planet and been visiting the Earth for hundreds of years.

February 1977 at Broad Haven Primary School a yellow cigar-shaped object was seen landing in a nearby field. The children told headmaster, and he asked them to draw what they had seen, the similarity in the drawings was uncanny. A few days later 3 of the school staff at the school saw the UFO.

Later that year in April in Milford Haven, Cyril John, looked out of his bedroom one morning to see an egg-shaped object with an orange-red light on top. Close by was a humanoid about 7ft-8ft tall, floating in mid-air. It hovered motionless for about 25 minutes, before taking off.

In March of that year in Milford Haven, a glowing orange disc was seen in the sky and a Mr Taylor also saw a large domed object, with a tall man with high cheekbones wearing a one-piece suit. Nearby at a similar time a young girl said she had seen a 3-ft humanoid standing on her bedroom windowsill.

19 April, the owner of the Haven Fort Hotel in Little Haven, Mrs Glanville was woken up early by strange noises and lights outside. Outside was "upside-down saucer" in the field next to the hotel, and 2 "faceless humanoid" creatures with pointed heads. Mrs Glanville also felt an intense heat and felt her face burning. The next day Mrs Glanville found flattened grass and scorch-marks where the sighting has been.

At Ripperstone Farm which overlooks Stack Rocks, there were further strange phenomena; being chased by a glowing object whilst driving home; cattle being moved mysteriously and a man in a silver suit.

Many people have linked the lights in the sky to activities out of RAF Brawdy but since it's closure sightings of cigar shape UFOS continue and the area has been named "The Welsh Triangle".

8. MISCELLANEOUS

Nevern

Within the perimeter of Nevern castle can be found a ditch cut through the solid rock, with the remains of a masonry tower right on the edge of the castle site. This is reputed to be the place where the Lord Rhys, the most powerful ruler in Wales, was imprisoned by his own sons for a whole year as a result of a family feud.

Cnapan

Cnapan was medieval game played on a vast scale across the Barony of Cemais. A few hundred men would have played the game over a number of days with the pitch probably stretching out over many miles of the open fields in North Pembrokeshire.

The game involved hurling and caching a ball, passing, running, tackling and some people consider it to be the forerunner of rugby. There were three categories of players “the gamesman who were the equivalent of modern forwards” the “scouts” equivalent of the three quarters and the forerunners who seemed to be the blockers. Some of the most important games were made up of almost 2000 players and the goals were the porches of parish churches several miles apart. Games would last from dawn to dusk and the ball was made of solid wood boiled in tallow to make it slippery.

Recently a softer version of the game was re-established in Newport with the annual cnapan contest between Newport and Nevern parishes. At the Gateshead Garden festival in 1991 there was a cnapan international match which the Welsh players all from Newport won.

Ty Unnos

Poor country folk could make claim to their own home by building their house in a day on common land. It was called Ty Unnos, a one night house. If the house was built within one night and there was smoke coming from the chimney by dawn, the plot was his and furthermore he could enclose the land as far as he could throw an axe.

Rhydwylym

A group of religious dissenters in the C17 broke away from the Church of the land and established their own Baptist Church at Rhydwylym. As they were dissenters they were treated like criminals and if found practising their religion they could have been looked up or even deported.

Building their site at Rhydwylym was ideal, it was hidden away in a remote valley and was at the junction of three parishes Llandysilio, Llangelman, and Llanycefn and the river divided the land between the two counties of Pembrokeshire and Carmarthenshire. The plan was if they were pursued by the Pembrokeshire

constabulary they could just slip over the river and be free from the jurisdiction of Pembrokeshire, the same went for the Carmarthenshire side.

The Church acted as a host for the Baptist Association of Wales on many occasions and on one notable gathering the star preacher was Christmas Evans whose theme was the day of judgement. As he preached powerfully about the day of judgement, suddenly the sky darkened and the rain fell in torrents and strikes of lightning and claps of thunder came down around the Church. It was if the day of judgement had arrived.

The Llangwm Fisherwomen

The women historically played a dominant role in the social and economic life of the community of Llangwm. The Llangwm Fisherwomen were particularly remembered for their distinctive colourful dresses and shawls as they travelled to the markets of South Pembrokeshire with their baskets full of fish, oysters and cockles. One journey often taken by the Llangwm women was to take the boat across the estuary and then walk up to seven miles with their fully laden baskets to set up their fish stall at the market in Narberth.

Rebecca

The story of the Rebecca Riots began with the local farmers setting off from the foothills of the Preseli Hills on horse and cart to gather lime from the coast. The lime was important to sweeten the acidic soils of their land and to make the land more fertile for production. It was a struggle to make a living in these foothills and when a toll gate was set across the road of their journey and charging extortionate rates the local farmers were enraged.

They met and hatched a plan to smash down the first toll gate at Efailwen but they were worried what would happen to them if they were caught. So they decided to attack the gate under the cover of darkness and with blackened faces and to dress up in women's clothes so that they were unrecognisable.

There was one problem, their ring leader Thomas Rees of Carnabwth or Twm Carnabwth was a big man and where would they find a dress big enough to fit Twm. The answer was with Beg Beca of Llangolman and during that first attack at Efailwen toll gate, the uprising of unrest became known as the Rebecca riots after Twm Carnabwth and the borrowing of the dress of disguise from beg Beca of Llangolman.

Cadifor, Lord of Blaen Cych

Cadifor is a historical figure, but a local tale maintains that he built his palace on arches which crossed the Afon Cych with supports in both counties connecting the Pembrokeshire and Carmarthenshire sides of the river. There is a small cave known as Ffwm Cadifor which was said to be the old kitchen of the palace.

Mystery of the Hirlas Horn

One of the great ceremonial moments of the Welsh National Eisteddfod is when the

Arch druid receives the Hirlas Horn. There are other ceremonial horns and the Hirlas Horn of Pembrokeshire is linked with Henry Tudor and his march to Bosworth Field.

The Hirlas Horn of Stackpole Court was one of the great treasures of Baron Cawdor and the Campbell family and it was in safekeeping at Stackpole Court. It was mounted in silver and supported by the two animals of a dragon and greyhound, which formed the arms of the house of Tudor.

It is said that Henry sent the horn to Dafydd ab Ifan of Newquay as a sign of gratitude for the hospitality he had received when he marched to the battle of Bosworth. It remained with the family of Dafydd ab Ifan for almost 300 years, until it was passed to the Campbells of Stackpole Court.

The wine glass tombstone

In Llangolman churchyard there is a stone memorial to Martha Thomas who died in 1820 at the age of 43. Near the top of the stone there is a carving of a wine glass which may offer a clue to the life that Martha lived.

To the north of Martha's memorial between Llangolman and Maenclochog, lies the hamlet of Llandeilo Llwydarth. Walking along the valley towards Llandeilo a ruined cottage a ford is passed which enabled people to travel along a track from Llandeilo Church to Llangolman House. Along this track can be found the remains of a cottage, where tradition says that Martha Thomas lived and brewed illicit drinks which she served to locals and passing travellers

Tradition says that the Bishop of Saint David's travelled along these paths on his way through the diocese and local story tells of the Bishop and his party stopping for refreshments at Martha's house on the many times that they passed through.

The Last Great Tournament

Sir Rhys ap Thomas was a great supporter of Henry Tudor especially at the Battle of Bosworth Field and Henry made Sir Rhys a Knight of the Garter. In 1507, he decided to celebrate his knighthood in style and he staged the Last Great Medieval Tournament in the British Isles at Carew Castle.

The most important noblemen from all over Wales, together with their ladies were invited. The most important guests stayed in the castle while the others camped in a special village of tents. Five hundred men were chosen to take part in the tournament and were soon participating in jousting training. After a great banquet accompanied by bards and harpists, the tournament began.

There was, throwing the bar, tossing the pike, and wrestling with Sir Rhys as umpire. The occasion was that of chivalry and according to an ancient chronicler, was the fact that 'although one thousand men had spent five days in company, not one quarrel, unkind word, or cross look had passed between them.'

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