

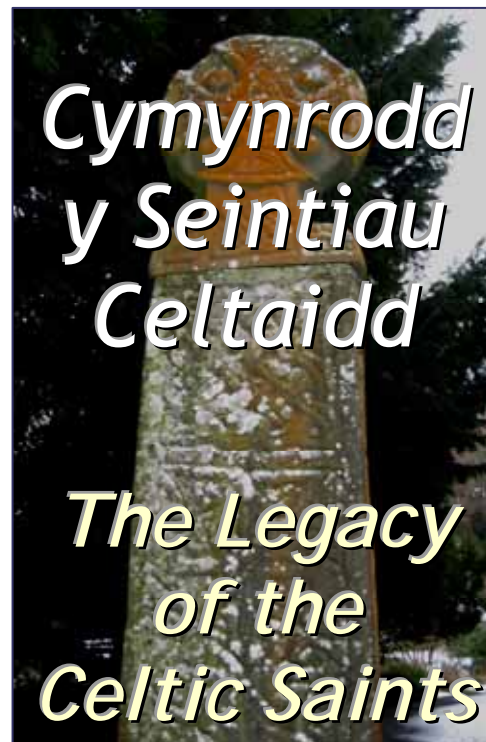
# TOUCHSTONE

GREAT EXPLANATIONS FOR PEOPLE AT PLACES

## Cadw:

Pan-Wales heritage interpretation plan

**Celtic saints, spiritual places and pilgrimage**



## Interpretation plan

April 2011



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## Celtic saints, spiritual places and pilgrimage

*Cymynrodd y Seintiau Celtaidd*  
*The Legacy of the Celtic Saints*

# Interpretation plan

Prepared by  
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April 2011

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# 1 Foreword

## A legacy in stone

*There are now around 600 carved stone monuments in Wales dating from the fifth to early twelfth centuries. These can help us to trace the evolution of the early medieval church in Wales and the development of a range and hierarchy of sites across Wales, mostly on the sites of churches today. They can also contribute to our understanding of the art and beliefs of the period.<sup>1</sup>*

It is not simply the stones that speak. The many place names in Wales that begin with 'Llan' and incorporate the name of a saint, or are simply named after saints, represent just as much of the legacy of the Celtic saints.

Celtic saints are an integral part of the history, culture and psyche of Wales. The origins of Christianity in Wales date from the Roman period. As Christianity evolved and changed during the early medieval period (from about 400 to 1100) the role of saints, often originally monastic founders, increased. The fifth and sixth centuries are sometimes called The Age of the Saints and the origins of some sites can be firmly dated to this period, others probably. During the seventh to eleventh centuries, the power and wealth of many of these churches grew into major centres of faith as well as political power.

While some early monastic churches grew into this central role, many of the saints that were celebrated in early Wales were celebrated for their retreat from settled society. Sites such as Bardsey, St David's and Pennant Melangell, founded in remote places, became focal points of pilgrimages which commemorated these early saints.

The Celtic saints, like all saints of the first millennium were not 'canonised' but became recognised as saints for their devotion to preaching and prayer. Some saints renounced the world to the extent that they were accorded the title 'martyr'. Saints' cults were later promoted, usually at a local level, sometimes on a wider basis, taking account of the traditions of their piety, their family connections and the influence of the churches associated with them.

The churches of early medieval Wales had a distinctive life and culture. Although the Christianity of the Celtic saints in Wales had its origins in the Roman period, it continued to be enriched by contacts with Gaul, Italy and further afield as well as contacts with Ireland and other Celtic language-speaking regions. Holy wells and trees may be relics of a pagan past but the Christian stone monuments are real. However, many of the tales of the saints are just that - memorable legends of memorable times and deeds used to promote the saints' cults. These are stories with a purpose, which was not the writing of history, but a celebration of the widespread devotion to the saints and the power of their churches.

This subsequent tradition has left a rich and beautiful legacy of literature and imagery. Some saints are, however, clearly historic figures and a few sources give

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<sup>1</sup> From this report, Chapter 3, *The archaeology of the saints* by Professor Nancy Edwards

us a remarkable glimpse into the real world of the early monastic saints, to set alongside the later literature of devotion to their cults. Latin was the language of the church in the time of the Celtic saints but from the twelfth to the fourteenth centuries, most records on church and legal matters were written in Middle Welsh which evolved with few substantive changes into modern Welsh. The place-names which show the dedication of churches to saints remain easily recognisable to people with a knowledge of Welsh and in many ways make the Celtic saints a feature of everyday life in Wales.

According to the stories of the Celtic saints, they lived simply and their beliefs may have absorbed some of those of earlier times, particularly their respect for the natural world. Holy wells and trees may be relics of a pagan past.

The Christian stone monuments are real, but many of the tales of the saints are just that - memorable legends of memorable times and deeds used to promote the saints' cults. None was an accurate chronicle but there is some authoritative material written about (and by) the saints. That does not in any way diminish the power and continuing popularity of the tales, but they are stories with a purpose, not history. Latin was the language of the church in the time of the Celtic saints but from the twelfth to the fourteenth centuries, most records on church and legal matters were written in Middle Welsh which evolved with few substantive changes into modern Welsh.

## **A living legacy**

In a Wales which is, paradoxically, both increasingly multi-faith and increasingly secular, many people maintain or develop a strong adherence to Christianity; others retain or gain an 'affiliation' as a result of upbringing or later home life, but are not 'practising' Christians. They may indeed question aspects of Christianity while accepting its ubiquity and continuing, if changing, role in society.

Alongside those who would identify with the Christian community at large, lots of people have no religious beliefs at all and may indeed be antagonistic to organised religion. However, many of them have an ambivalent attitude to places, people and events with connotations of religion, faith, spirituality or belief. They clearly 'mean something' and can engender enquiry or even fascination.

For those brought up in a nominally Christian society, 'religion' is an integral part of their tangible and non-tangible environment. It is an integral part of the history of those countries where church and state battled for supremacy, where religious leaders from abbots to archbishops enjoyed secular power as well as spiritual authority and where local clerics often determined community life. This is particularly true in Wales where Christianity has evolved from Roman times through the early days of the Celtic saints and the flowering of the church in later medieval times to the Reformation and then into modern times when non-conformity has played a large part in the cultural and social environment.

Christianity manifests itself in myriad ways from the landmark church on the corner to allusions to the Bible, from Halloween to the celebration of St David's Day, from Christmas cards to school nativity plays, from St Valentine's Day (or St Dwynwen's Day in Wales) to weddings and funerals. The influence of 'the church' may have waned substantially in Britain and other countries but it is still pervasive in many, and what may appear secular, ways.

Tourists to places - even if they don't expect to - find themselves visiting churches and cathedrals which, as historically important or architecturally interesting buildings, define communities in different ways. Some people find great solace in a quiet church or a sacred site while still professing atheism. Children love stories of Biblical times, of martyrs and religious heroes and - very often - of early saints.

*The Celtic tradition of spirituality is enjoying a huge revival. With its emphasis on the pervasiveness of the divine in the world around us, its legacy of incomparable artwork and the energy, vision and charm of its saints, Celtic Christianity appeals to the present day search for purity of spirit in a tarnished civilisation. It is not easy to come close to the Celtic saints. With a very few exceptions, their biographies were written in medieval times, centuries after their lifetime. However, the sites where Celtic monks, nuns and missionary couples lived and worked can still be seen in the more remote parts of Britain. Their huts, holy wells and chapels are often set in beautiful landscapes: sheltered valleys, dramatic headlands and rocky islands. Archaeology, the study of sites, of place names, inscribed stones and early texts can provide us with further clues about how these men and women lived.<sup>2</sup>*

Today, even allowing for the hyperbole of Elizabeth Rees' publisher, interest in the early church in Wales, its relative simplicity and lack of rich trappings is attracting increased interest from those who wish to associate with what might be described as 'green' ethics. These would include spirituality rather than 'religion', simplicity rather than ceremony and respect for natural resources.

In Wales, as in Ireland, and more so than in England and Scotland, the 'presence' of the Celtic saints is widespread - in place names, in the dedications (the names) of churches in a host of communities and in the stories of saints and places that many children learn. Despite the influence of the saints of Rome, of the Reformation, the rise of non-conformity and of secularism, the Celtic saints are, so to speak, alive and well in contemporary Wales.

This interpretation plan aims to help visitors and residents understand and appreciate some of the sacred sites, their relics and the stories of their associated saints. Using the evidence in the landscape and the inheritance of legends, the plan will encourage visitors and residents in today's Wales to explore the spirit of the past and enjoy the many tales of the Celtic saints.

## A legacy in practice

In order to provide the plan with a thematic basis, we have devised four themes which, collectively, embrace the narrative of the people in the story, the places associated with them, the institution they served and the opportunities to explore all three today. We propose four themes under the headings:

- ◆ *The early church in Wales*
- ◆ *Remembering the saints*
- ◆ *Seeking out the saints*
- ◆ *Pilgrims' paths*

The plan will propose a range of media and other mechanisms for interpreting *Cymynrodd y Seintiau Celtaidd / The Legacy of the Celtic Saints*. It will also

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<sup>2</sup> From the publisher's description of *Celtic Saints in their Landscape* by Elizabeth Rees

propose how people can combine an interest in the saints, sacred places and pilgrims' paths with an interest in the wider Welsh landscape by using the network of rights of way and more recently-defined pilgrimage routes in what might be called 'inspirational exploration'.

The four pilgrimage destinations that we propose should be included in the interpretation plan are:

- ◆ Bardsey Island
- ◆ Holywell
- ◆ Pennant Melangell
- ◆ St David's

## 2 Introduction

Touchstone Heritage Management Consultants, Red Kite and Creu-ad wish to thank Cadw for inviting us to prepare an interpretation plan to explain and promote *Celtic saints, spiritual places and pilgrimage* as one strand in Cadw's pan-Wales interpretation strategy.

We should also like to thank Professor Nancy Edwards of Bangor University and Dr Jonathan Wooding, Dr Karen Jankulak and Dr Jane Cartwright of the University of Wales / Trinity St David for acting as our expert advisors, contributing to our deliberations and recommendations and preparing important overviews of the archaeology, history and legends of the saints.

We are grateful to the many people we have spoken to, formally and informally, during the preparation of this plan. Appendix A lists a number of relevant historical sources.

We have chosen as a working title, *Cymynrodd y Seintiau Celtaidd / The Legacy of the Celtic Saints*, to capture both the physical evidence of the saints and their followers and the continuing part in the cultural inheritance of Wales that the legends of the saints continue to play.

### 2.1 The brief

The brief (attached in full as Appendix B) sets out the objectives for the plan and places it in the context both of the *Spiritual and Inspirational Landscapes* interpretation strand (within the Pan-Wales heritage interpretation plan) and of the overarching interpretive strategy for all of Cadw's properties. It was confirmed in initial discussions that the *Celtic saints, spiritual places and pilgrimage* should be set within the overall background of Wales as a whole. That context encompasses both tangible and non-tangible elements of Welsh history, geography and cultural heritage.

The job of this interpretation plan is to consider eight hundred years or more of the influence of the Celtic saints on the physical, historical, cultural and spiritual landscape of Wales and how best to help visitors seek out, appreciate, understand and cherish this 'legacy' whether or not they have any religious beliefs.

This plan must go beyond the scope of most interpretation plans, not least because it encompasses an abstract element which might be called, loosely, spirituality, which is not a frequent component of site-based interpretation, and because it also demands some definition of the indefinable, of personal convictions - and none.

We hope that this plan will provide the framework for telling stories about the Celtic saints and their place in the landscape, history and culture of Wales, introduce narrative into the interpretation and inspire visitors to develop further their own appreciation of the unique, stimulating and emotively-charged legacy of the Celtic saints in Wales, irrespective of their own beliefs or lack of them.



## 2.2 Our considerations

In developing our approach, we have given consideration to a wide range of issues, some of which were raised in our submission and others at the briefing meeting in November 2010. We have also taken account of the excellent *Strategic Statement* on the Welsh Historic Environment issued by the Minister for Heritage in the Welsh Assembly Government. It takes the broadest of views of what constitutes the historic environment and emphasises strongly that it is a story both *of* people and *for* people. That is particularly true of the Celtic saints.

Part of the purpose of this plan will be to demonstrate that Wales is as rich from the legacy of its early saints as it is from the inheritance of later times. However, two important caveats must always be to the forefront and they present challenges to interpretation. First, while the history of people, places and events following the Norman invasion is taken from largely contemporary records, the stories of the saints, with a number of important exceptions, rely on accounts written many years or usually several centuries after the saints themselves lived. What many people 'believe' about the saints is based on legend and mythology, well-honed in later writing and oral tradition over a long period of time.

Secondly, apart from stone monuments, there is comparatively little physical evidence of any kind on many sites associated with saints and even less that provides proven links with the saints. A church named after a Celtic saint is simply that; it seldom records the presence of the saint at that place and even if it did, there is usually no way in which that link can be proved. Some saints were known, from legend and later-written 'history', to have travelled and left their influence in several places but the proof does not generally exist.

A further caveat is that some people can be uncomfortable with anything that is overtly religious or appears to proselytise. This has had a bearing on the approach we have taken in preparing this plan, both in avoiding certain terminology and in seeking greater 'inclusiveness'. The past belongs to everyone.

In developing our approach we considered many matters in order to provide parameters for the plan and took either firm or provisional views upon them. Our principal conclusions are noted below:

### *Who are the audiences?*

The brief requires that we embrace a range of audiences in our proposals. However, the plan will give greatest consideration to the expectations and needs of the principal audiences identified by Cadw and other stakeholders - the independently-minded family and adult couples. Other audiences, including those with developed or special interests, will also be included in our proposals.

In order to reach visitors and residents, it is important to consider where they are or will be and therefore to relate interpretive material to a series of geographical locations and to make it available in these locations. These locations are chosen to match the principal sites that continue to attract pilgrims and other visitors today.

### *Who were the saints?*

However appealing it may be to relate the ‘history’ of the saints, it must be made clear in the implementation of this plan that we rely entirely on oral history and legend, and stories written long after the saints lived, linked to place and church dedications, for our knowledge of the Celtic saints whose tales have often inspired people.

### *What are sacred places?*

The use of the term ‘spiritual’ implies a personal sense of spirituality which may or may not exist among any or all visitors. The term ‘sacred’ is more objective, more widely used, where appropriate, of sites round the world, and implies a place deserving respect because it reflects other people’s beliefs. Most sites associated with saints have revealed little if any archaeological evidence of their occupation and use in the early medieval period.

### *What is pilgrimage?*

Today’s pilgrimage reflects today’s times but the motivations for going on pilgrimage are probably no different from those in the past. The pilgrimage routes that we consider for inclusion in this plan are those which lead to, or link, sites associated with Celtic saints and were used from medieval, if not early medieval, times. Modern pilgrimage routes that dovetail with those from the past will, of course, play a part.

## 3 The archaeology of the saints

*This chapter has been contributed by Professor Nancy Edwards, Bangor University*

The archaeology of the early medieval saints in Wales is only very rarely directly connected with the saints themselves. At Pennant Melangell there is the twelfth-century stone shrine of the saint, but this is a unique survival. Furthermore only the most important sites, such as St David's, and saints, such as Deiniol of Bangor, were mentioned in early medieval documentary sources, but many centuries after they lived, and only one saint's life associated with Wales (St Samson of Dol) can be dated before the end of the eleventh century.

In general saints' lives were written to promote the cult of the saint concerned and can tell us more about the period in which they were written than the time in which the saint may actually have lived. Other later medieval sources include poems to specific saints in Welsh, such as *Canu Cadfan (The Song of Cadfan)*. Nevertheless, important archaeological evidence for the early medieval church in Wales does survive which can contribute significantly to the understanding and appreciation of sites and landscapes by a range of visitor groups.

First and foremost, there are now around 600 carved stone monuments in Wales dating from the fifth to early twelfth centuries. These can help us to trace the evolution of the early medieval church in Wales and the development of a range and hierarchy of sites across Wales, mostly on the sites of churches today. They can also contribute to our understanding of the art and beliefs of the period as well as other cultural and linguistic developments and the nature of broader contacts with Ireland, England, the Continent and the Viking world.

There are around 150 inscribed memorial stones dating from the fifth to earlier seventh centuries, mainly in Latin, others in the Irish Ogam alphabet, some in both. Not all are necessarily Christian, but most would have marked the graves of early Christians in Wales, both rulers and clergy, men and occasionally women, and they reflect the continuing heritage of the Christianity of Roman Britain while also showing links with the world beyond Wales. Some are marked with Christian symbols: chi-rhos or crosses.

From the late sixth century onwards fashions in commemoration changed and by the later eighth century a variety of different types of carved stone monument began to be produced, including elaborately decorated and inscribed crosses, cross-slabs, and pillars, as well as simple cross-carved stones which were mainly used as grave-markers. Most of this later sculpture is concentrated on what would have been the most important churches of the period, such as St David's and Llantwit Major, and testifies to the wealth of these foundations and their significance to local rulers, as well as to local and regional communities and further afield.

The distribution of these monuments can also help to elucidate the wider landscape of the early medieval church and their presence at church sites and in

other locations can act as a focus for telling a variety of stories about Wales in the early middle ages and beyond.

As far as the visitor is concerned, other early medieval archaeological evidence is much less easy to identify and may not be visible. A handful of early medieval bells survive, mainly in museums (e.g. National Museum Wales) and on some church sites. Some early medieval monastic foundations are associated with writers and/or illuminated manuscripts, such as Llandeilo Fawr with the eighth-century Gospels of St Chad (now in Lichfield Cathedral) and Llanbadarn Fawr with the Welsh and Latin poetry and Life of David composed by members of the family of Sulien in the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries.

However, often we are dependent upon much less tangible or datable evidence, such as curvilinear church-yards. Excavated graves, for example Llanychlwydog and Bardsey Island, may have been securely dated to the early middle ages by radiocarbon or other means and any surviving skeletal evidence, when analysed, can in itself produce fascinating evidence about people's lives. However this is no longer visible to those visiting the sites on which it was found, though information can be given as part of site interpretation.

Holy wells at or near church sites have no surviving evidence of their possible early medieval use; associated surviving structures tend to be very late medieval (Holywell) or eighteenth century (Llangybi, Penmon) in date. Sometimes, saints have left their mark on the wider landscape in the form of locational place-names, for example St David and St Melangell, but dating these names is very difficult indeed.

There are no surviving remains of standing church fabric in Wales prior to the Romanesque, dating mostly to the twelfth century. However, many churches at major sites associated with the saints, for example St David's and Bangor Cathedrals, Penmon and Clynnog Fawr churches, are important medieval buildings in their own right and are an integral part of *Cymynrodd y Seintiau Celtaidd / The Legacy of the Celtic Saints*. This is also true of saints' *capeli y bedd* (grave-chapels) where they survive, for example Clynnog Fawr and Holyhead, and fragmentary shrines, for example Pennant Melangell and St David's.

Other than the church sites themselves, there is little archaeological evidence for pilgrimage routes, though there are occasionally cross-carved stones along the route, as at Pistyll (Llŷn) and at Fishguard South and Llanrhian on the road to St David's. An exception is the (probably) thirteenth-century inscribed stone from Llanelltyd, near Dolgellau.

## 4 The history of the saints

This chapter has been contributed by Dr Jonathan Wooding and Dr Karen Jankulak, University of Wales / Trinity St David

The early church in Celtic Britain (Wales, Cornwall and North Britain) grew out of the church of Roman Britain, though it retained continuing productive links to the churches on the continent. Our knowledge of the first centuries of Christianity in Wales is limited to a handful of references in mostly later texts, but increasingly supported by archaeological discoveries. Excavation at churches that are adjacent to *villa* sites in the Vale of Glamorgan (Llantwit Major, Llandough near Penarth and Llancarfan) suggests continuity of Roman Christianity into the post-Roman period in the south east of Wales. This model contradicts an older, but still widely-believed, model that the early church in Wales was ‘re-introduced’ by seaborne missionaries in the ‘age of the saints’ that followed the Roman period.

The south eastern continuity of Roman Christianity is consistent with some significant early textual sources. The first of these is Gildas’ *On the Ruin and Conquest of Britain (De excidio et conquestu Britanniae)*, which records the martyrdom of Aaron and Julius at what is almost certainly Caerleon. The language of this text, as well, strongly suggests continuity of a Roman education into the post-Roman period. The second source is the *Life of St Samson (Vita S. Samsonis)*, a seventh/eighth-century *Life* of a saint who, it says, was born and raised in South Wales, studying under Illtud at his famous school at Llantwit Major, before proceeding to a more austere monastery on what is almost certainly Caldey Island, to live as a hermit by the Severn, and finally travelling to Brittany via Cornwall, ending his life as Bishop of Dol.

The third significant source is the *Vita S. David* by Rhygyfarch (who died in 1099), which contains in its text an account of the monastic rule of St David that compares closely with criticisms made by Gildas in a letter to St Finnian in Ireland (a letter cited by St Columbanus on the continent in a letter to the pope, so Gildas’s views must have been well-known and regarded) of a contemporary monastic community (sixth century). The phraseology of Gildas’ comments and David’s rule indicate that they were referring to a common rule - indeed Gildas and David are two very recognisable figures, most probably here in genuine confrontation. (Gildas is a figure who also has high recognition in the ‘Arthurian’ context). Although Rhygyfarch’s *Life of St David* (late eleventh century) was written long after David’s lifetime, Rhygyfarch had access to earlier written sources.

The historical narrative of Welsh Christianity is thus one that can be situated at its beginning in the spectacular Roman and Christian remains of South and Southwest Wales. The earliest Roman Christians can be located with reference to the major sites of Caerleon (where the amphitheatre is the likely setting for the martyrdom of two Roman martyrs) and Caerwent, the civic capital. The earliest well-attested monastic churches claim in one way or another to be associated with St Illtud’s school at Llantwit Major (a large and complex site with great potential as a tourism

hub). Llantwit, in the *Life of Samson*, is also represented as a distinctly ‘worldly’ monastery, which engages with the everyday world.

Llantwit is contrasted with the austere ‘desert’ monasticism of Caldey. Like Llantwit, Caldey is a site possessed of outstanding resources for the visitor: unusually complete remains of a medieval priory and church, and the presence of a living monastic community with potential for the visitor to experience the sound, as well as the visual, dimension of monasticism. The criticisms by Gildas of more austere monasteries also intrinsically draw St David’s into this narrative which contrasts the monastery concerned with the needs of the world to that which attempts to be separate from it.

The dichotomy here between the ‘worldly’ and the ‘desert’ is the embryo of the distinction made in the later first millennium between the ‘mother church’ (*clas*) and the eremitic community (*colidei* or ‘culdees’). *The Life of Samson*, the writings of Gildas and Rhygyfarch’s *Life of St David* thus tie the events of the sixth / seventh century firmly to the later story of the *clas*. The way in which scholars of the *clasau*, such as Rhygyfarch, Lifris of Llancarfan and Caradoc of Llancarfan (both authors of *Lives* of St Cadog), interpreted the deeds of earlier monks provides some of the tension points of the Latin *Lives*. Manuscripts from the *clasau* of Llanbadarn Fawr and Llancarfan / Llandaff provide images for interpretation. It is also worth mentioning links to Cornwall and Brittany, especially given the number of saints sharing or said to have shared cults between these areas. The monastery Samson founded in Cornwall is a known site with early remains (St Kew). The number of twinning arrangements of Welsh towns with Breton partners offers potential links to develop

Llancarfan, close to Llantwit, was an early literary centre. It has a distinctive landscape and significant medieval remains. As well as works such as the *Life of Cadoc* and its attached archive of charters, the school of Llancarfan produced the writers who created the *Book of Llandaff*, with its documentary record - partly historical, partly not - of the churches of South Wales. The records of St Dyfrig (Dubricius) in the *Book of Llandaff* connect with the narrative of the *Life of St Samson* where, as ‘archbishop’, he seems to exercise jurisdiction over both the church of Llantwit and the monastery of Caldey. The *Life of Elgar (Vita S. Elgari)*, written around 1120, in the *Book of Llandaff* is concerned with documenting the extraordinary life of a hermit on Bardsey, who was Llandaff’s witness to the recovery of the remains of Dyfrig for the cathedral of Llandaff. He is a tangible ‘foreground’ figure who can be interestingly set alongside the more distant Dyfrig.

The distinction between a ‘worldly’ monasticism, concerned with the care of everyday people, and its extreme counterpart of monks who sailed away over the sea, provides a second key narrative. The early role of early Britons such as St Patrick and St Finnian (the correspondent of Gildas) highlights the fact that Wales may be presented as in many ways the ‘cradle’ of early Christianity in Britain - a narrative that the older ‘missionary’ model obscured. The roots of movements such as the extremely austere eighth-century Irish *ceili Dé* may be seen early on in the rule of David. David and Patrick, national saints with high recognition, are figures that can be placed in key roles in this narrative.

Intrinsic to the monastic theme is what is widely seen as the ‘Celtic’ tradition of ‘monastic pilgrimage’—not so much pilgrimage in the modern sense as the early

medieval idea of ‘travel / self-exile, for the love of God’ (*peregrinatio pro amore Dei*). This idea is certainly seen in the spirituality of early Britons such as Samson, Patrick and, later, in the figure of Elgar; but it is really also the call that motivated figures such as David. It persists into the second millennium in Wales. The mystical content of the *Life of Elgar* of Bardsey sits alongside an eyewitness report of a hermit who formed his vocation in the light of his experience of captivity from Devon, enslavement in Ireland, and isolation on Bardsey during a time of devastation of Gwynedd - all of which are consistent with historical events. It is Wales’ most remarkable account of the inner life of a hermit of the pre-Norman church.

The claim in the *Life of Elgar* that visiting Bardsey is equivalent in difficulty to visiting Rome is a clear response by Llandaff to the Pope’s statement that a visit to St David’s was worth *half* a visit to Rome. This story is one of a number in which there is complex and continuing response to the monasticism of the early Welsh church and its saints and in which something more than a ‘flat’ picture of the saints can be created. The *Synod of Llanddewi Brefi* as told by Rhygyfarch is another such story, again taking in a key site with ‘hub’ potential. The bases from which the stories were written (Llanbadarn Fawr, St David’s, Llancarfan and Llantwit) all have good potential as hubs, to which the report refers later.

The two narratives here are ones in which continuing Roman Christianity and a distinct early medieval monasticism allow Wales to be seen as central to:

- ◆ The rise of Christianity in post-Roman Celtic Britain
- ◆ The emergence of what is often labelled ‘Celtic’ monasticism
- ◆ A landscape of saints’ histories and legends that is multi-layered, not simply a ‘legendary’ history.
- ◆ Key figures, whom the visitor can recognise (such as David, Patrick and Gildas), can contextualise less well-known figures who have detailed histories such as Samson, Elgar and Dyfrig.

## 5 The legends of the saints

*This chapter has been contributed by Dr Jane Cartwright, University of Wales / Trinity St David*

The literature of medieval Wales is rich in hagiographical lore: numerous Latin and Welsh *Lives* survive which record the medieval traditions associated with various saints who were popular in Wales (both native and universal saints). Place-names, genealogies, calendars, artistic representations and Middle Welsh poetry also shed light on the cults of the Welsh saints and help us uncover what people in Wales believed to be true of the early Celtic saints; how the saints were venerated in medieval Wales and how the saints' perceived powers and miracles were woven into the fabric of everyday life in Wales.

Medieval poetry in particular frequently eulogises local Welsh saints and describes what took place at some of the sites - occasionally describing the buildings, holy wells, shrines or images of the saints. It is certainly plausible that many of the poems were performed at the sites themselves and their aim was to raise the profile of particular local saints, as well as attract pilgrims, and profit, to the churches, holy wells and shrines (in a similar fashion to the prose *Lives*). As well as recording medieval hagiographical traditions that would otherwise have been lost, poems sometimes provide us with first-hand accounts of medieval pilgrimages. To the modern pilgrim / tourist visiting the sites, the miracles and legends associated with the saints add colour and interest to their visit and help contextualise the material culture.

According to the genealogy *De Situ Brecheniauc*, Brychan Brycheiniog had twenty-five daughters and eleven sons of all of whom were Welsh saints. *Progenies Keredic* records that David's lineage (via Cunedda Wledig) was one of the most important saintly families in Wales and, since David's grandmother Meleri was one of the daughters of Brychan Brycheiniog, these two important families were linked, and David was born into a vast network of saints. For good measure the Welsh *Life* also claims that he was related to the son of the Virgin Mary's sister.

Latin prose *vitae* of the following saints are extant: David, Illtud, Teilo, Euddogwy (Oudoceus), Samson, Gildas, Gwynllyw, Cadog, Brynach, Padarn, Clydog, Dyfrig, Cybi, Tatheus, Carannog, Aedh, Brendan, Pedrog, Cyngar, Gwenfrewi and Melangell and there are Welsh *bucheddau* for David, Beuno, Gwenfrewi, Collen, Ieuan Gwas Padrig, Curig, Llawddog and Ursula. It is generally assumed that the Latin versions preceded the Welsh texts: the Welsh *Life* of St David, for example, was composed towards the end of the eleventh century by Rhygyfarch of Llanbadarn Fawr and this was adapted into Welsh in 1346 by the anchorite of Llanddewibrefi. The Book of the Anchorite of Llanddewibrefi also includes the Welsh *Life* of Beuno which is generally thought to be an adaptation of an earlier Latin original, now lost.



The Middle Welsh *Lives* of Collen, Ieuan Gwas Padrig, Llawddog and Curig all occur in a sixteenth-century manuscript<sup>3</sup> as well as other manuscripts. Although the first three saints are native saints, the *Life* of Curig is in fact a Welsh adaptation of the Latin *Life* of SS. Cyriacus and Julitta, but appended to this is a curious section of text outlining specific lands in Wales given to Curig by Maelgwn Gwynedd, Mael of Maelienydd and Ceredig of Ceredigion. The purpose of the text is to confirm the land grants and emphasise Curig's protection over his specific territory. This is reminiscent of the *Life of Melangell* which is preoccupied with confirming the rights of sanctuary at Pennant Melangell rather than advertising the importance of the Romanesque shrine and relics at Pennant.

This mix of foreign and native elements is also found in the traditions associated with St Ursula. According to local oral tradition in Ceredigion, St Ursula was a Welsh princess and set sail on her final pilgrimage to Rome with 11,000 Welsh virgins from the west-Wales coast near her church at Llangwryfon (the Church of the Virgins). Her Welsh legend was translated from Latin by Sir Huw Pennant about 1514 and is preserved in a single manuscript<sup>4</sup>. Having initially refused to marry a pagan prince, she is reluctantly forced to agree, so that her father's kingdom is not destroyed. She manages to delay the event by succeeding in persuading the tyrant to allow her to go on one final pilgrimage and she is welcomed in Rome by the British Curig (rather than Pope Cyriacus).

On her return Ursula and the maidens call at Cologne, but the city is under siege and all of Ursula's virginal companions are brutally murdered. The pagan prince responsible for the murders apologizes to Ursula when he notices her great beauty and requests her hand in marriage, but since she adamantly refuses his offer, he takes out his bow and arrow and shoots her. Ursula is depicted shielding her companions under her cloak and holding the arrow with which she was martyred in modern stained glass at her church in Llangwryfon and a plaque in her church at Cologne commemorates the Welsh connection.

The *Lives* of at least twenty-five international saints were adapted into Middle Welsh and many of these saints became associated with particular shrines and pilgrimage sites. Since sanctity was locally conferred in Wales, many of the international saints' cults took on a local flavour and it is possible that the medieval populace did not differentiate between 'native' and 'non-native' saints in the same way that we do today, particularly in the late Middle Ages. The saints' popularity was often linked to the important services they provided to the faithful.

St Margaret of Antioch, for example, is commemorated in Welsh poetry and various medieval versions of her *Life* are extant, for example the *White Book of Rhydderch*, written about 1350, which also contains the *Mabinogion* legends. She was patron saint of childbirth and her *Life* promises that those who venerate Margaret will give birth to healthy children. It was believed that if women held a copy of her *Life* or strapped the text to their thighs as they gave birth, this would relieve their labour pains.

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<sup>3</sup> Aberystwyth, NLW MS Llanstephan 34

<sup>4</sup> NLW MS Peniarth 182

Mary Magdalene, who is referred to in Welsh poetry as ‘meddyges Iesu’ (Christ’s physician) is depicted holding a jar of ointment in a medieval wall painting at Illtud’s church at Llantwit Major (Llanilltud Fawr) and her Middle Welsh *Life* is preserved in thirteen Welsh manuscripts. The church and holy well at Cerrigydrudion were, no doubt, originally dedicated to Ieuan Gwas Padrig before they became associated with Mary Magdalene, but Ieuan’s *Life* records that he was guided to the spot where he built the church by a roebuck and that he himself decided to dedicate the church to Mary Magdalene.

Acting through the agency of local shrines and statues, even the cult of the Virgin Mary took on a regional significance. Various medieval poems survive which describe pilgrimages to sites in Wales where there were famous statues of Mary (for example at Pen-rhys, Pwllheli, Pilleth and Llanystumdwy) and the poet Hywel Rheinallt referred to her as a ‘brenhines fro’ (local or regional queen). Indeed, Mary was believed to have come to Wales. Traditions survive that she visited Cydweli, Aberdaron, Rhiw, and Llanfair.

At Llanfair in Merionethshire, where a church is dedicated to her, she reputedly walked towards Hafod-y-llyn and knelt at the roadside two miles south east of Harlech. Her knee prints were left on the rock and a holy well sprang forth. Pilgrims crossing to Bardsey Island, referred to by the twelfth-century poet Meilyr Brydydd as ‘Ynys Fair firain’ (fair Mary’s island), would climb down Mary’s steps at Aberdaron, Llŷn, and drink from her well; a natural spring in the rocks marks the spot where she was supposed to have visited and left her hand print.

Of the many native female saints of Wales, only Gwenfrewi and Melangell have official prose *Lives*. The legend of Gwenfrewi (Winefride) is related in two twelfth-century Latin *Lives* - one of which is anonymous and the other was composed by Prior Robert of Shrewsbury. The saint’s relics were translated from Gwytherin to Shrewsbury in 1138 and a fragment of finger bone is still displayed in a silver monstrance at Holywell on special occasions. The Middle Welsh *buchedd* most closely resembles the version by Prior Robert, although it is not identical to it and one wonders whether the Welsh text may have been linked to the Cistercian monastery at Basingwerk which profited from Gwenfrewi’s well throughout most of the Middle Ages.

According to Gwenfrewi’s legend she was decapitated by Caradog because she refused his advances and her holy well sprang forth from the pool of saintly blood spilled on the ground. St Beuno, Gwenfrewi’s uncle and spiritual director, placed her head on her shoulders and she miraculously came back to life, but thereafter a large scar was visible as a reminder of her martyrdom. She went on to become abbess of a community of nuns, first at Holywell and later at Gwytherin, and each year she would send Beuno a magic cloak which remained dry, despite the fact that it was miraculously transported to him by the flow of the river. For this reason he was known as Beuno ‘Cassul sych’ (Beuno of the dry cloak / chasuble).

A statue of Gwenfrewi appears in Henry VII’s chapel at Westminster Abbey and the building of the well chapel at Holywell has frequently been attributed to the generosity and religious convictions of Henry VII’s mother, Margaret Beaufort (1441-1509), although the importance should be emphasised of Thomas Pennant’s sponsorship of the rebuilding work at Holywell, during his time as Abbot of Basingwerk (1481-1522). Medieval Welsh poetry certainly gives the impression that

the building of the current Perpendicular well chapel was overseen and financed by Pennant. Tudur Aled, for example, wishes that Pennant might soon finish enclosing the well and be rewarded for his endeavours by being made either Bishop of York or Bishop of St David's and Siôn ap Hywel in his *awdl* to Gwenfrewi states that:

*O law Tomas urddaswin  
Yr aeth y gost ar waith Gwen:  
Diwan adeilad, da iawn y dylud,  
Da y darparwyd, iti darperir.<sup>5</sup>*

*From the hand of Thomas [provider of] noble wine  
came the cost of Gwen's work:  
A sturdy building, full well do you deserve it,  
well was it prepared, prepared for you.*

The *Lives* of Gwenfrewi describe a whole host of physical illnesses which were cured at the well - from piles to epilepsy.

The Poets of the Princes Cynddelw, Llywelyn Fardd and Gwynfardd Brycheiniog record miracles and events associated with SS Tysilio, Cadfan and David respectively, but it is in the work of the Poets of the Gentry that prolific references to the Welsh saints appear. Hywel Rheinallt's poetry may be taken as a reflection of popular religious practice in fifteenth-century Caernarvonshire and north Wales. He composed poetry celebrating the cults of St Cawrda at Aber-erch, Dwynwen on Llanddwyn Island (Anglesey) and Einion Frenin at Llanengan. Einion is claimed to have been a king in Llŷn (and brother to St Seiriol). Hywel Rheinallt refers to Einion's grave at Llanengan and claims that thousands of people from Gwynedd have been healed at the grave site.

The same poet refers to St Dwynwen's church on Llanddwyn island as 'seren y sir' (the star of the county) and describes how pilgrims from Gwynedd visited the church and holy well in August leaving offerings of gold and wax. Dafydd Trefor (who lived from about 1460 to 1528) in his *cywydd* to Dwynwen gives the impression that the image of the saint was draped in gold and valuable offerings and provides a vivid description of miraculous healings that took place at the holy well:

*Minteioedd ym min tywyn:  
Merched o amrafael wledydd,  
Meibion fil fyrddion a fydd,  
Cleifion rhwng ei ffynhonnau,  
Cruptiaid a gweniaid yn gwau,  
Bronnydd fel lluoedd brenin,  
Pobl o'r wlad, pawb ar ei lin,  
Taprau cwyr, pabwyr er pwyll,  
Pibau gwin, pawb â'i gannwyll,  
Crysau'n llawn brychau gerbron,  
Miragl wrth godi meirwon!<sup>6</sup>*

<sup>5</sup> *Gwaith Siôn ap Hywel ap Llywelyn Fychan*, ed A. Cynfael Lake (Aberystwyth: CAWCS, 1999), p 70. English translation Jane Cartwright, *Feminine Sanctity and Spirituality in Medieval Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2008), p 74.

<sup>6</sup> *Gwaith Syr Dafydd Trefor*, ed Rhiannon Ifans (Aberystwyth: CAWCS, 2005), p 67; English Translation Cartwright, *Feminine Sanctity*, p 90.

*Crowds on the edge of the seashore:  
Girls from various regions,  
An innumerable myriad of men are to be found [there]  
Sick people, cripples and the weak  
bustling between the holy wells,  
Hill slopes [covered with people] like a king's army,  
People from the countryside, everyone on his knees,  
Wax tapers, candle wicks for health of mind,  
Pipes of wine, everyone with his candle,  
Shirts covered in stains nearby,  
A miracle as the dead are resurrected!*

Other local saints, who do not have prose *Lives*, are commemorated by poets such as Dafydd Epynt. Only one poem to St Cathen of Llangathen in Carmarthenshire appears to have been passed down and this is recorded in a single manuscript in the poet's own hand. In vivid detail Dafydd Epynt describes suffering from a form of malaria that was common in boggy areas of Wales in the fifteenth century and he appeals to St Cathen to heal him, noting that it was believed at that time that Cathen was buried at Llangathen: 'Gwared fi ar gwr dy fedd' (Heal me at your graveside)<sup>7</sup>. Cathen was claimed to be one of Wales's soldier-saints.

St Illtud reputedly gave up his military career for the religious life. He is generally considered to be one of the most important of the early British saints and founder of a monastic school at Llanilltud Fawr. According to the early seventh-century *Vita Samsonis*, St Samson of Dol's parents took him to Llanilltud specifically to study under Illtud. SS David, Gildas and Paul Aurelian were also his pupils. His twelfth-century Latin *Life* describes how Illtud lived in a cave fasting on meagre quantities of barley bread and fish and drew water from a nearby well. One day he heard the sweet sound of a bell that was being taken as a gift to St David. He admired the bell, but was unwilling to ask for it.

When the bell arrived in St David's, no matter how often St David shook it, it remained completely silent, so David had the bell sent to his master St Illtud. Oral tradition records that Illtud's bell could be heard ringing above the house of anyone who was about to die in the parish of Llanilltud Fawr. The poet Lewys Morgannwg recorded similar events to those found in the prose *Life* of Illtud, including the miracle which involved Illtud driving back the sea with his crozier. His Latin *Life* claims he died at Dol in Brittany, but the second *Life* of Samson records that Illtud passed away at Llanilltud Fawr. It is also claimed that he died at 'Bedd Gŵyl Illtud', a tumulus at Penpont in Breconshire.

Numerous Welsh saints were popular in other Celtic regions and their legends were often transferred wholesale to Brittany or Cornwall. Although there are no medieval Welsh or Latin *Lives* of St Non, a late medieval Breton miracle play *Buez Santez Nonn* elaborates on Non's experiences and claims that she died and was buried at Dirinon in Brittany. A fifteenth-century silver reliquary box at her church in Dirinon reputedly contains fragments of her arm bones and an elaborate tomb depicts a carved recumbent figure of Non holding a book.

According to the *Lives* of St David, Non was raped by Sant and gave birth to David in the middle of a thunder storm, but the sun shone brightly over Non's head.

<sup>7</sup> *Gwaith Dafydd Epynt*, ed O. Thomas (Aberystwyth: CAWCS, 2002), pp 32, 94.

Although the location is not mentioned in the *Lives* of David, it is traditionally claimed to be near the site of St Non's well on the Pembrokeshire coastal path near St David's. Modern stained glass in the church at the site depicts Non's arrival in Brittany in a boat with the young St David, thus connecting the Welsh and Breton traditions and a similar window is found in Non's church at Dirinon.

A poem by Lewys Glyn Cothi is the only extant medieval source which describes the church and holy well at the site. The poem provides a valuable description of a Welsh woman's pilgrimage to St David's. Edudful ferch Gadwgan visits Non's chapel and washes her head in the holy water, worships an image (possibly of St Non) and leaves candles on the altar at St Non's before proceeding to St David's where she leaves an offering. The description of the building is not detailed, but it provides us with a rare glimpse of late medieval pilgrimage to the site and stresses the importance of Non's well and chapel in association with the cathedral.

*Edudful Dduwsul a ddaw  
ar Dduw i wir weddiaw;  
bwrw ei phwys yn eglwys Non,  
bwrw ei phen lle bo'r ffynnon,  
dyrchaf dwylaw yn llawen,  
addoli oll i'r ddelw wen,  
ennyn y cwyr melyn mawr,  
a'i roi oll ar yr allawr;  
oddyo heibio'dd â hi  
I glos da eglwys Dewi;  
offrymu, cusanu'r sant,  
iddo gŵyr rhudd ac ariant;<sup>8</sup>*

*On Sunday Edudful comes  
to pray sincerely to God;  
She visits Non's church,  
puts her head in the well  
raises her hands merrily,  
worships the holy image,  
lights the large, yellow candles,  
and puts all of them on the altar;  
From there she passes to  
the good close of St David's church;  
makes an offering of crimson wax  
and money and kisses the saint.*

The legends of the saints, recorded in poetry and prose, provide valuable insights into the history and culture of medieval Wales and undoubtedly have an important role to play in the interpretation of spiritual places and pilgrimage sites across Wales.

<sup>8</sup> *Gwaith Lewys Glyn Cothi*, ed Dafydd Johnston (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1995), p 371. English translation in Cartwright, *Feminine Sanctity*, p106.

## 6 Our approach - a summary

### Saints, sites and routes

Because the Celtic saints have made such a notable contribution to the cultural heritage of Wales, because the places linked with them are held in high regard for many reasons and because pilgrimage is of wide interest, our approach in devising this Interpretation Plan is that it should be wholly inclusive, irrespective of visitors' and residents' attitudes to faith and religion and any associations with them. This Plan is not intended to invite people to do other than to understand - and to take pleasure from - the place of the saints in the story and landscape of Wales.

As we have said in the foreword, interest in the saints, sacred sites and pilgrimage transcends matters of belief. Enjoyment of the tales of saints does not require any profession of faith. Appreciation of sites associated with the saints can evoke as strong a sense of place among those with other or no religious affiliations as people of faith; the saints are historical figures. Following a pilgrimage route can be as rewarding for unbelievers as for believers.

However, there is an increasing interest in the whole 'culture' of the Celtic saints and that there are many faith-based initiatives which embrace, or could embrace, stories of the Celtic saints. These, too, are not the exclusive domain of Christianity or any of its denominations; they are open to all to take part in and to gain from.

### 6.1 The responses as a narrative

*Cymynrodd y Seintiau Celtaidd / The Legacy of the Celtic Saints* can be encompassed in one overarching narrative or story:

- ◆ The stories of the Celtic saints, the sites of their churches and the routes that pilgrims follow to these sacred places form an important and intriguing part of the cultural heritage of Wales.

Within this narrative, we have selected four themes to illustrate it and these are introduced in detail in Chapter 6. However, they can be summarised here:

- ◆ *The early church in Wales:* The origins of Christianity in Wales from its arrival during the Roman occupation, its expansion thereafter, the rise of monasticism and the development of a network of Christian sites across Wales.
- ◆ *Remembering the saints:* The Celtic saints, both men and women, through the stories told about them long after their lifetimes, the places associated with them, and the many churches named after them, have provided a lasting legacy that enriches the cultural heritage of Wales.

- ◆ *Seeking out the saints:* The places associated with the Celtic saints of Wales are often in remote, beautiful and serene locations and offer opportunities for contemplation and reflection in what might be called spiritual (but not necessarily religious) landscapes.
- ◆ *Pilgrims' paths:* From medieval times, pilgrims made their way to sacred sites associated with well-known Celtic saints and today's pilgrims continue to seek out these places, in some cases creating new routes.

## 6.2 The value of the legacy

The value of *Cymynrodd y Seintiau Celtaidd / The Legacy of the Celtic Saints* can be expressed as a series of benefits:

- ◆ The stories of the saints help people to appreciate the life and dedication of holy men and women, the evolution of Christianity in early medieval and later Wales, and the historic and religious characteristics in these times.
- ◆ The sites where the saints are reputed to have lived, prayed and preached continue to evoke a powerful sense of place and help people to understand how the natural heritage played an important role in the lives and beliefs of the saints.
- ◆ The network of pilgrims' paths invites people to make continuing use of them today and to appreciate the strength of belief that encouraged medieval pilgrims to seek out sacred places.
- ◆ Understanding and appreciating the life and times of the saints encourages people to develop a greater interest in the landscape, history, language and cultural life of early Wales and contrast it with today.
- ◆ Understanding and appreciating the stories of the saints brings to life many sacred places and gives added meaning to the many important carved stones, crosses and other relics that remain from that period.

## 6.3 Regions and areas

We have chosen to segment the landscape of Wales into four regions and, within them, ten areas where there are greater concentrations of physical evidence of the saints. This arrangement embraces three elements:

- ◆ The broad landscape character areas associated with particular saints or groups of saints
- ◆ The main topographical regions of Wales
- ◆ The boundaries of tourism-promotion regions (and local authority areas)

The regions and areas are:

- ◆ North Wales - Isle of Anglesey, Llŷn Peninsula, Harlech area, Holywell area
- ◆ Mid Wales -Llangynog area, Aberystwyth / Cardigan area
- ◆ South West Wales -St David's area, Nevern area, Pembroke area, Llandeilo area
- ◆ South East Wales - West Glamorgan, Vale of Glamorgan, Chepstow area

A list of chosen sites and saints is given in Chapter 10. Our choice has been dictated principally by the presence of physical evidence in the form of carved stones, crosses and other memorials.

## 6.4 Sacred sites

There are several important sacred sites or areas that continue to attract pilgrims and many others who have an interest in the Celtic saints. Five which we have identified as being the focus for potential interpretive initiatives are those below, the first and last of which we have selected as cluster studies:

- ◆ Bardsey Island and the Llŷn Peninsula
- ◆ Holywell
- ◆ Pennant Melangell area
- ◆ Around St David's
- ◆ Llantwit Major (Llanilltud Fawr) area

Our proposals later in this report consider the early medieval routes but they may well dovetail with interpretation on recent routes which have been established under a series of regional and local initiatives driven by faith groups working with tourism interests.

## 6.5 Delivery

Reference was made in the Foreword to two levels of delivery of interpretation:

- ◆ National level, under the direct responsibility of an appropriate organisation
- ◆ Site-related level, undertaken by regional or local organisations

We set out in Chapter 10 a range of interpretive media and mechanisms and ascribe them to appropriate levels of implementation. Allied to this, we propose that site-based interpretation about the saints, the sites and the pilgrims' paths is delivered through a series of 'hubs' at places and / or existing facilities where there are key destinations, organisations and other venues that are actively involved in tourism and matters of practical faith. At this stage, no approaches have been made to potential hubs.



## 6.6 Cluster studies

To demonstrate how the associations noted above, and the four themes we have identified earlier, can be made to work for a particular area, we have prepared cluster studies for the Llŷn Peninsula and Llantwit Major area which are set out in Chapter 14.

## 6.7 Pilgrimage destinations

There are four principal pilgrimage destinations that have their origins in medieval times:

- ◆ Bardsey Island
- ◆ Holywell
- ◆ Pennant Melangell
- ◆ St David's

These are dealt with in Chapter 15.

## 6.8 Links with other plans

In selecting locations for inclusion in interpretation, we have also considered where they might relate to other interpretive initiatives. For example, in the area around Llantwit Major, there are two Cadw properties and our proposals link these with other sites in the locality. In the Llŷn Peninsula, there are already well-trodden paths to Bardsey Island and we make proposals linking all the sites in this area. We set out a list of potential partners for implementing this Interpretation Plan in Chapter 14.

## 7 Stakeholders and initiatives

Many organisations in Wales are engaged in activities to interpret culture and heritage for residents and visitors. Faith and church groups, local authorities, national parks, AONBs, Landscape Partnership Scheme projects and many community groups funded through the Rural Development Programme and the Heritage Lottery Fund are producing interpretive materials, organising activities or working closely with communities and interest groups. A few of the projects have developed interpretation specifically relevant to Celtic saints and some have prepared leaflets about churches and also developed church and pilgrimage trails. Many have shown an interest in developing projects that relate more closely to the theme of this plan. A selection of these groups is described briefly below.

**Adventa**, a community development project in Monmouthshire funded through the Rural Development Programme, focuses on developing projects and activities in four themes - activities in the landscape, churches, local foods, and arts and crafts. It has produced a churches trail leaflet for visitors and other guides that celebrate landscape and local arts and crafts.

The **Bardsey Island Trust** has managed the island since 1979. Its aims include encouraging people to visit the island as a place of natural beauty and pilgrimage, to undertake study and educational programmes, to protect the buildings and archaeological sites, to promote the artistic and cultural life of the island, to protect the wildlife and delicate ecosystem of the island and to engage in farming to benefit the island's diverse habitats.

The interpretation strategy of the **Brecon Beacons National Park Authority (BBNPA)** acknowledges the importance of religious influences in the park, and presents themes and subthemes that provide a framework for their interpretation. It includes early Christianity (Sts David and Illtud) and the rise of the non-conformist movement. Although no interpretation has been produced to date on these themes due to lack of resources, the authority would like to pursue interpretation on the cultural elements of the Brecon Beacons story in the future.

**Bible Society** has purchased the redundant church of St Beuno at Llanycil near Bala and plans to make this the Faith Heritage Centre for Wales. The centre will also make links with other aspects of Welsh heritage, especially that of links between faith and culture. An interpretation plan has been written for this site.

**Ceredigion County Council** has a *Faith Heritage Initiative* that is funded through the tourism strand of the Rural Development Plan and which has included interpretive projects at a number of faith related sites in the county.

The **Churches Tourism Network of Wales** is a support and advisory group that encourages churches in Wales to develop tourism and visitor services. It helps by providing information and training for church communities and ideas for how a church can be part of a wider visitor experience for an area. It works in partnership with many organisations with the aim of recognising and promoting the value of the 7500 or so churches and chapels in Wales as a critical part of Welsh heritage.

The **Heather and Hillforts Landscape Partnership Scheme** project, together with **Denbighshire Countryside Service**, is developing projects and activities in the Denbighshire and Clwydian Range AONB areas including audio trails, long distance routes and interpretation projects. One project is the Brenig Way, which runs from Corwen to Llyn Brenig. The route follows ancient drovers' roads and includes churches, holy wells and other ancient sites along the way.

There are many organisations and projects in Wales funded by the **Heritage Lottery Fund** that are helping to reveal and restore the heritage of Wales and bring it alive for communities and visitors. One project, in particular, is relevant to this plan. St Illtud's Church in Llantwit Major has received a major grant to transform the ruined thirteenth century Galilee Chapel, adjoining the church, into a new learning and exhibition centre that will house a unique collection of early medieval carved stone crosses and other sculpture. Llantwit Major was first established as a place of worship in the fifth century, and St Illtud is reputed to have founded a school that is recognized as one of the earliest centres of Christian learning. The Church is integral to the story of Christianity in South Wales and has strong links with Caldey Island, St David's, Llancarfan and Llandaff.

An important issue for church and religious tourism is that many churches are closed at times other than during services. However, through the efforts of the CTNW, many more churches are now unlocked during the day and provide information and interpretation about the stories that they hold. The **Open Church Network** in Wrexham, for example, has worked with 16 churches in the Wrexham area to link them in a trail to help explain the fascinating history of this part of North Wales. Open church projects and church tourism trails have been developed in rural Wales such as **The Living Stones Heritage Trail** in north Montgomeryshire.

The **Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority (PCNPA)** runs the Oriel y Parc centre in St David's which is partly a visitor centre for the Park and a gallery and arts centre. It has run a series of guided walks and other activities from the centre to explore St David's Head, and would like to see this developed further as spiritual trails exploring the stories of saints such as St Non, St Justinian and St David. It has produced interpretation leaflets in the past on 'Saints and Stones' and 'Priors and Pilgrims' but has insufficient resources to develop these further. PCNPA would welcome enhanced interpretation of the 'St David's experience' perhaps through joint funding with other organisations. Activities could include drama productions of the stories of the saints - in the form of 'mystery plays' - which could be enacted at Oriel y Parc and the Bishop's Palace. There is already a Breton one about St Non which could act as a model.

**Planed** is a community development agency operating in Pembrokeshire involved in a wide range of work that helps to build sustainable communities and a thriving rural economy. One of its successful projects is the Saints and Stones group based in Pembrokeshire (see PCNPA above). The group (see below) has developed a number of trails along the ancient pilgrim routes to St David's linking to churches along the route. It is also planning a celebration of the 900th anniversary of pilgrimage to St David's in 2023, and would like to see more of the traditional, and contemporary, pilgrimage routes linked together.

The **Saints and Stones Group** in Pembrokeshire is currently discussing the proposal, noted above, under the title *Pilgrimage to St David's 1123-2023*, to reinstate the

medieval pilgrim ways to St David's and to develop them for the benefit of visitors and the rural economy of Wales. The proposal addresses the concept of pilgrimage against its historical background and in terms of twenty-first century needs and the criteria for promoting heritage projects. It considers the needs for routes and signage, accommodation *en route*, publicity and publications, employment opportunities, likely partnerships and the need for help with costs and organisation.

The **Tywi Afon yr Oesoedd (River through Time)** Landscape Partnership Scheme project is based in Llandeilo. The project focuses on building and landscape conservation but also undertakes projects that encourage visitors to discover the landscape of the Tywi valley. The project has commissioned artists to work with communities to produce artwork and exhibitions that celebrate the landscape. It has produced a series of walks leaflets including a sculpture trail and a churches trail. It has also produced an illustrated guide - 'Exploration Tywi' - that encourages discovery of the valley, its culture and its landscape.

## 8 Aim and objectives

We propose that the overall aim of interpretation implemented as an outcome of this Interpretation Plan should be:

- ◆ To help visitors and local people to understand and appreciate the contribution made to the cultural heritage of Wales by the Celtic saints, and the stories about them, and to encourage them to visit and enjoy the places associated with them.

### 8.1 Interpretive objectives

To support the aim, we propose that the interpretive objectives should be ...

- ◆ To encourage visitors and local people to explore the landscapes of the Celtic saints in Wales and to appreciate why the sites are now associated with them
- ◆ To encourage visitors and local people to learn more of the fascinating stories about the Celtic saints, to appreciate that they are based on legend and later written accounts and how they have contributed to the cultural heritage of Wales
- ◆ To encourage visitors and local people to consider and understand the religious, archaeological, historical and geographical contexts of sites associated with the Celtic saints
- ◆ To encourage visitors and local people to follow the pilgrimage routes which lead to the key sites associated with Celtic saints and to savour the experience of walking, cycling or otherwise travelling in what were once wild places
- ◆ To encourage tourism, arts and religious organisations to give greater consideration to the contribution of Celtic saints to the cultural heritage of Wales and to help visitors to make connections between the saints and the landscapes of today
- ◆ To encourage children, young people, and life-long learners to ‘stop and think’ and to make connections linking the stories of the Celtic saints, the physical and cultural geography, and religious heritage, of Wales
- ◆ To relate, in tourism and arts-related terms, the interpretation of *Cymynrodd y Seintiau Celtaidd / The Legacy of the Celtic Saints* to other aspects of the cultural and spiritual landscape.

The aim and objectives relate, principally, to the categories of visitors and local people without a specialist interest. There is obviously a further objective in relation to the specialist:

- ◆ To help extend the knowledge and awareness of visitors and local people with a special interest in the Celtic saints, the period in which they lived and their religious and cultural legacy.

## 9 Interpretive themes

The aim and objectives suggest the following themes which are there to guide the interpreters and should be implicit rather than explicit in any interpretive media. The first, overarching, narrative is:

- ◆ The Celtic saints, the sites associated with them and the routes that pilgrims follow to sacred places collectively form an important part of the cultural heritage of Wales.

Supporting this overarching theme are four topic-based themes:

- ◆ *The early church in Wales: The early church in Wales:* The origins of Christianity in Wales from its arrival during the Roman occupation, its expansion thereafter, the rise of monasticism and the development of a network of Christian sites across Wales.
- ◆ *Remembering the saints:* The Celtic saints, both men and women, through the stories told about them long after their lifetimes, the places associated with them, and the many churches named after them, have provided a lasting legacy that enriches the cultural heritage of Wales.
- ◆ *Seeking out the saints:* The places associated with the Celtic saints of Wales are often in remote, beautiful and serene locations and offer opportunities for contemplation and reflection in what might be called spiritual (but not necessarily religious) landscapes.
- ◆ *Pilgrims' paths:* From medieval times, pilgrims made their way to sacred sites associated with well-known Celtic saints and today's pilgrims continue to seek out these places, in some cases creating new routes.

### 9.1 Sub-themes

A number of sub-themes can be devised to extend the scope of the principal themes. Some may apply only to one area or be related to one key character. They could include, for example:

#### *The early church in Wales*

- ◆ The Roman army brought Christianity to Wales and it began then to be adopted by native people as an increasing focus for their religious beliefs.
- ◆ Many of the saints are thought to have come from local ruling families or developed connections with local rulers who gained prestige from these associations.
- ◆ Many of the Celtic saints devoted their life to prayer and scholarship, others travelled among their people, many are thought to have gone to Brittany and some are reputed to have made pilgrimages to Rome.

### *Remembering the saints*

- ◆ Stories about female Celtic saints such as Dwynwen, Melangell and Winefride are still told today.
- ◆ St David was recognised as the leading saint in Wales more than a thousand years ago.
- ◆ The names of many Celtic saints are remembered through the places and churches named after them.
- ◆ Legends of the saints were often recorded in documents written by scholars long after the saints died.

### *Seeking out the saints*

- ◆ The saints' interest in aspects of nature often appears as an element in the stories and legends about them.
- ◆ Many places associated with the Celtic saints are still important sites of Christian worship and practice such as Bardsey and Caldey Islands and St David's.
- ◆ Many tourist destinations in coastal and rural Wales are close to places associated with the Celtic saints and this provides opportunities for visiting the early church sites while on holiday

### *Pilgrims' paths*

- ◆ Pilgrimage routes in Wales are part of the country's long heritage and can hold a fascination for those without religious affiliations as well as those of faith.
- ◆ Taking part in pilgrimages combines good fellowship and, often, good exercise, with interest in the saints and, for many, strong religious beliefs.
- ◆ There is a growing interest in developing new pilgrimage routes such as the Cistercian Way which links monastic sites which would have been used for overnight accommodation by medieval pilgrims.

## 10 Market and audiences

Many organisations in Wales have knowledge of their visitor and resident markets at a local, regional or national level. Demographic profiles are available for Wales as a whole and for principal regions. Foreknowledge, desires, expectations, experiences and satisfaction levels of visitors have been widely surveyed but not a great deal is known about the personal aspirations and emotions of visitors to and within Wales. For a topic that is at least partially abstract, aesthetic and even spiritual as *Cymynrodd y Seintiau Celtaidd / The Legacy of the Celtic Saints* there is little formal research upon which to base target audiences which are, as a result, generic rather than specific.

### 10.1 Markets

The tourism market in Wales is made up, predominantly, of visitors from other parts of the UK, substantially from the English Midlands and north west England. The great majority of visitors rate 'scenery' and 'heritage' as key components of Wales's attraction for them but the proportion of incoming tourists who have more than a passing interest in the Celtic saints is not known. Anecdotally, given the increasing number of pilgrimage-related initiatives, it appears that there is a growing interest in matters related to faith, ancient sites and pilgrims' routes. The list of 'top places' includes the Pembrokeshire coast, the Llŷn Peninsula and other coastal areas. Many of these landscapes are associated with the Celtic saints.

Other important factors in the overall appeal of Wales are historic sites of all kinds, wild (if safe) countryside and coast, and sites with a special sense of place, many of which feature, directly or indirectly, in the stories of the Celtic saints.

Of the nine million visitors who come to Wales, around one million are from abroad, representing not only a significant market sector but also one that, in general, has an expressed interest in finding out about the country, its scenery, heritage, language and ancestors.

VisitWales welcomes all visitors, including those whose interests lie mainly in spending time, usually in modestly-priced accommodation, at the many coastal resorts. However, it is keen to attract many more of what it calls 'independently-minded' families - those who will seek out the special and often unique qualities of Wales.

Discussions with tourism marketing, arts organisations, community development organisations and other groups reveals more about the nature of the market, particularly for cultural tourism in Wales. Research carried out by the North Wales Tourism Partnership, for example, found that:

**29% of tourists** visited for a specific cultural activity and are the 'pure cultural tourists'. They are well prepared, they will have read information before their visit and know what they are coming for. They will visit specific sites or attractions for a



purpose and will be focused in their visit itinerary. They visit for cultural enlightenment, as well as for entertainment. They tend to be older adults only.

**70% of tourists** are ‘casual cultural tourists’ or ‘accidental cultural tourists’. For casual cultural tourists the cultural context is important but so are other non-cultural factors. The destinations must have a variety of opportunities for activity and must include shopping. Their purpose for visiting is for general interests with some cultural activity. They are generally adults only or with older children.

‘Accidental cultural tourists’ pay little attention to specific cultural aspects before deciding where to go, but are still interested in visiting a cultural site if it is within the area of their general visit. They will not have researched much before their visit and are happy to pick up information that may encourage them to visit other attractions. They tend to be adults-only groups or families with older children.

The largest group of ‘cultural’ tourists are adults travelling as couples or in groups. They are mostly aged 35+ with or without children and in social groups A, B and C1.

This research also showed that the internet is now the most dominant source of information for finding out about destinations, and it is used by people of all ages. People may start by searching tourist board sites but are comfortable using search engines for accommodation and independent review sites. An individual event may be the driver for planning a cultural visit but the general cultural backdrop for the destination is important for making a visit decision.

Other organisations consulted provided more anecdotal information about the market. Some people enjoy taking tours with specific themes - gardens, churches or other cultural topics - but most people are more relaxed about their visits, picking off destinations on a whim rather than as an organised visit. People who come to an area for another purpose are often interested in organised tours if they are available. During the Ryder Cup in 2010 many visitors, particularly from America, joined tours with themes such as churches, saints and genealogy.

Websites are increasingly drawing the interest of potential visitors. Sites that carry more of an explanation of culture, rather than simply information, are particularly useful. The ‘People’s Collection’ - [www.peoplescollection.co.uk/](http://www.peoplescollection.co.uk/) - provides high quality cultural interpretation that can help to increase people’s understanding about the culture of Wales and can also be a valuable part of the planning for a visit. ‘Inspirational Wales’ - [www.inspirationalwales.com/](http://www.inspirationalwales.com/) is another website which encourages ‘virtual visitors’ to explore the cultural heritage of South West Wales.

*Churches do not stand apart, of course, they cross-cut with a range of other potential heritage and wider themes such as: saints and legends, castles, coast, family history, walking routes, and so on. Church tourism can also help to spread visitor activity beyond the obvious ‘honeypot’ attractions, and there is potential for churches and their stories to play a part in the strengthening of secondary visitor destinations, building upon aspects of history, community and sense of place.<sup>9</sup>*

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<sup>9</sup> From *Unlocking the Potential of Church Tourism* by Andrew Duff in *Tourism Insights*, September 2009

Many organisations, including tourism partnerships and the community development projects, confirm that the Welsh landscape and its culture are the main attractions for visitors, with many enjoying the opportunities the landscape provides for activities and pursuits. Many people also like to sample a number of activities in one visit, which might include a tour of castles or gardens, a walk in the hills and a visit to a Cadw or National Trust site. There is an opportunity to provide interpretation that links aspects of culture, heritage and landscape that provides a dynamic picture of *Cymynrodd y Seintiau Celtaidd / The Legacy of the Celtic Saints* in their landscape.

## 10.2 Audiences

We propose that the following audiences represent the principal target markets for the proposals in this interpretation plan:

- ◆ The independent-minded family, attracted to Wales (or to parts of Wales away from home) at least partly by its cultural heritage *and with at most a passing interest in, and knowledge of*, sites linked to Celtic saints for a variety of reasons including location, setting, related stories or religious associations.
- ◆ The independent-minded family, attracted to Wales (or to parts of Wales away from home) at least partly by its cultural heritage, *and with an expressed or strong interest in, or knowledge of*, sites linked to Celtic saints for a variety of reasons including location, setting, related stories or religious associations.
- ◆ Adult visitors and local people *with at most a passing interest in, and knowledge of*, sites linked to Celtic saints for a variety of reasons including location, setting, related stories or religious associations.
- ◆ Adult visitors and local people *with an expressed or strong interest in, or knowledge of*, sites linked to Celtic saints for a variety of reasons including location, setting, related stories or religious associations.
- ◆ Visitors and local people with a special interest in the sites linked to Celtic saints in the context of their involvement in religious belief or practice.

It would be possible to make a distinction between those with, on the one hand, any level of interest or knowledge (or none) in the Celtic saints, and on the other hand, any level of interest or involvement in religious belief and practice. In reality, it will be necessary for all interpretive media to address both groups, some or all of whom may have different levels of interest or knowledge between one aspect and another. A person with strong Christian beliefs may know about Celtic saints but nothing about sites associated with them, a regular visitor may be an enthusiast for the sites but know little about their religious significance.

However, where it is practicable to provide a hierarchical approach, different types of interest can be addressed at different levels.

# 11 Our proposals

Our approach is predicated on creating the greatest level of general interest and that must involve two key elements - storytelling and people. As a general rule, people react and respond more to other people than to anything else. People of all ages love stories and stories involving people have, therefore, the most impact.

## 11.1 The power of the story

We propose, therefore, that the interpretation of Celtic saints, sacred places and pilgrims' paths should be based on telling stories of people at places and, in support, stories of the places themselves, where they add to appreciation and understanding. The people involved would be the saints - as we know them from the legends and, where known, those with whom they came into contact.

We have determined that, for a variety of practical reasons, the interpretation should be based on Wales as a single geographical region. However, when the principles of this plan, or interpretive media, are being implemented, it may be that they are applied to a smaller area than Wales as a whole. This could well be the case in relation to, for example the Llŷn Peninsula, or Pembrokeshire. At this stage, however, we believe that an all-Wales approach provides a more realistic and practicable base for many purposes.

However, this does not preclude the use of other points of focus linked, for example, to particular places, to the influence of key sites, to the chronology involved or, of course, to the saints themselves.

What will be important is the quality of the story told, and that will depend upon the calibre and specialist knowledge of the writers and designers employed to implement this plan's proposals. If the title of this plan were applied, for example, to the whole of Wales ...

### *Cymynrodd y Seintiau Celtaidd* *The Legacy of the Celtic Saints* Sacred places and pilgrims' paths in Wales

... our proposals would be that the content of related media would include, for example, but not necessarily in the following order:

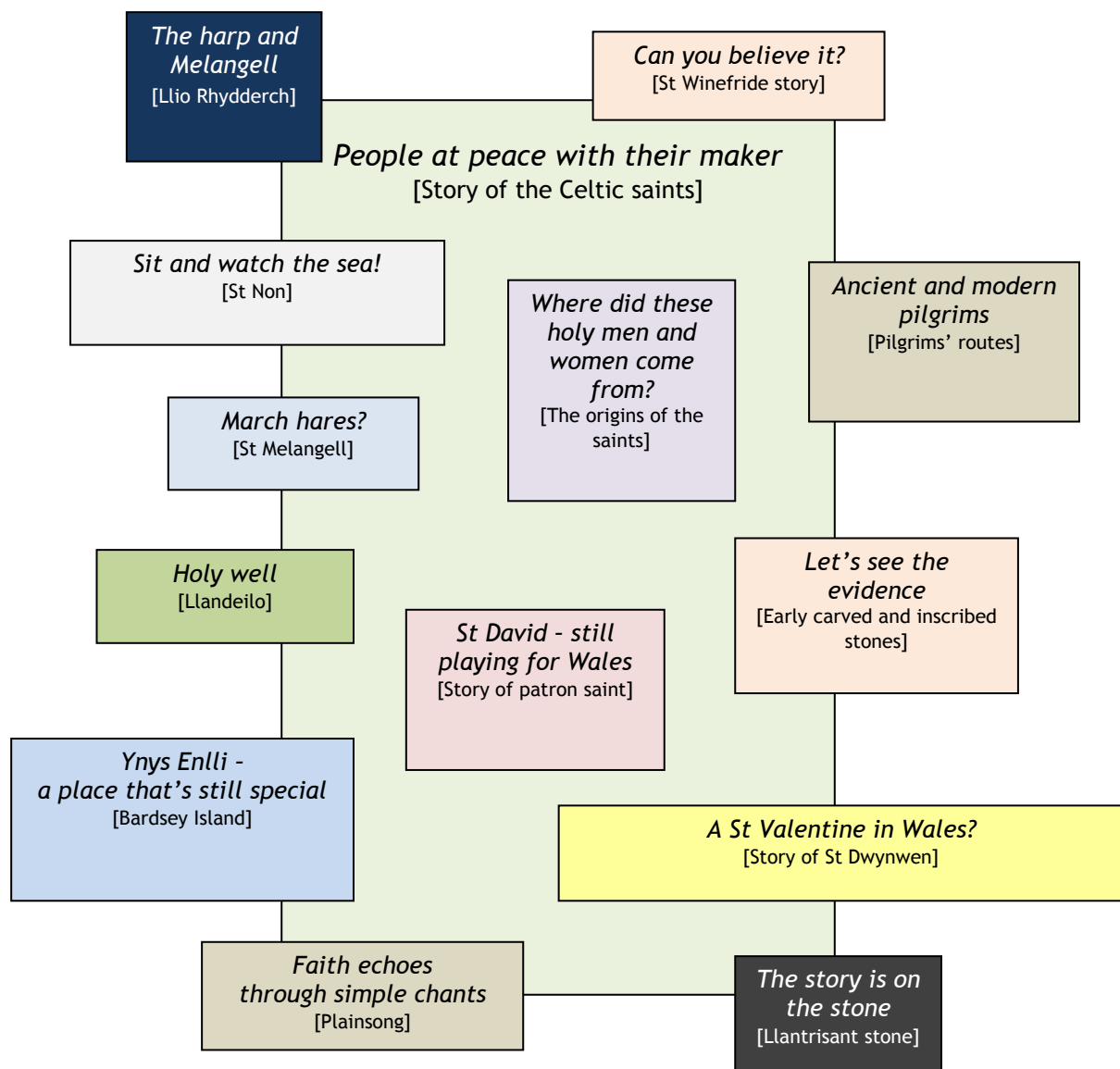
- ◆ *Stories and legends of specific Celtic saints* taken from the stories told of them over the years
- ◆ *Descriptions and illustrations* of the key places associated with the saints, the inscribed stones and sculpture that remains, and why they places have continued to inspire people to visit
- ◆ *The role of the Celtic saints* and their cults in the development of the early Christian church in Wales over several hundred years from the Roman period

- ◆ Examples of *early accounts and stories* of the saints (almost all from the eleventh century onwards) taken from written sources including poetry
- ◆ Descriptions of the medieval *pilgrims' paths* and how to enjoy them today
- ◆ References to other *elements inherited* from medieval Wales such as sacred music and poetry

It will be important to weave a story around the chosen saints and sites rather in the format of a television programme, a magazine article, or a website, effectively illuminating the overall narrative with sidebars, 'pop-ups', boxed sections, quotations and, of course, tales of the saints themselves.

In visual terms, the approach should be full of interest with chosen highlights that will catch the attention of different readers of text or website. The same technique can be used in audio text with 'digressions' or 'interruptions' to the main flow to maintain the interest of different audience groups.

The following graphic is a representation of this approach. Where sound can be part of the interpretation, then music or song, or spoken passages of text or poetry, will provide an added dimension that will appeal to many if not all.



In telling the story and introducing all the points of interest, it will be essential to involve visitors and local people by, for example:

- ◆ Encouraging them to visit sites and consider today's landscape and how much it has or has not changed in the last fifteen hundred years
- ◆ Encouraging them to follow the pilgrims' paths on foot, by bike or by car to experience the journeys of early pilgrims
- ◆ Encouraging them to take photographs of sites of their choice and add them to saints-related and other appropriate websites / add them to social networking sites / take them to a local centre / enter a competition etc
- ◆ Encouraging them to write descriptions, or compose their own written tributes, in response to the sites associated with Celtic saints and contribute them as above

### **The value of cartoons in storytelling**

For many years, the power of cartoons as a storytelling medium has been acknowledged, using the power of gentle humour to point to morals and messages. We feel there could be an opportunity to employ a cartoon technique in some media - the interpretive maps and websites for example - to catch immediate attention, to draw out key aspects of stories and to provide entertainment with an underlying message - the legacy that the saints have left.

The inspiration for this has come from figures and ornaments derived from early medieval art such as that in the St Chad Gospels (in Llandeilo Fawr in the early ninth century, now in Lichfield, and figures on sculpture such as the warrior at Llandyfaelog Fach. In addition, Celtic patterns and motifs remain very popular and offer another starting point for designs used in printed and digital interpretive media. We understand Cadw is considering a symbol for use on sites and trails associated with the Celtic saints.

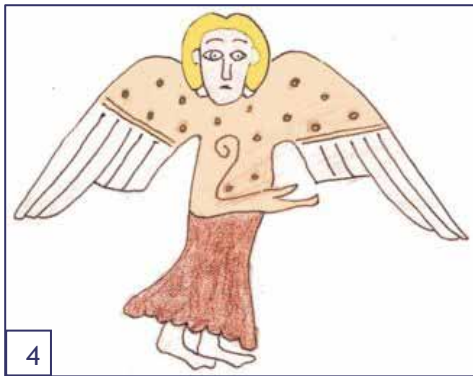
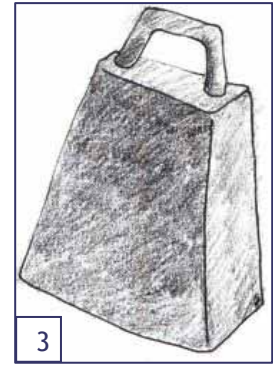
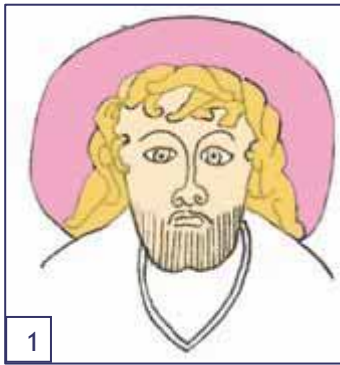
We have prepared a few indicative examples of a cartoon approach for this report<sup>10</sup>. They follow broadly the style as portrayed in the St Chad Gospels. Their idealised figures are decorated with patterns and motifs, but the examples here have been kept as simple as possible.

These examples illustrate:

1. a saint
2. St Winefride by the well.
3. a bell
4. an angel
5. a bishop
6. pilgrims
7. a scholar/monk (which could be St Gildas)
8. an ascetic (which could be St David)
9. St Melangell

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<sup>10</sup> The illustrations are © Lynne Denman, Creu-ad and authorised only for use in this report



## 12 Chosen sites and saints

There are many sites in Wales associated in one way or another with Celtic saints. However, some display little or no physical evidence from early medieval times and the selection we have chosen represents the majority of those where there is something for visitors to see. We have grouped together sites in ‘area clusters’ so that visitors can visit several within a short radius and which are as inclusive as possible in terms of the interests and enthusiasms of visitors and local people. We have also included pilgrimage routes to the early medieval sites although most if not all of these routes date from later medieval times. No modern pilgrimage routes are included.

Many of the sites are accessible at all or most times but where early medieval inscribed stones and other carved stone monuments, for example, are within churches, access may depend on contacting a local key holder or even making contact ahead of time. Arrangements can also change depending upon local circumstances.









Entries are shown under four regions, within which they are grouped by ‘area cluster’. Those centres we propose as *Cymynrodd y Seintiau Celtaidd / The Legacy of the Celtic Saints* hubs (see Section 13) are clearly identified. However, at this stage, we have not made approaches to owners / managers of potential hubs.










There are stories about many of the saints. Stories are the lifeblood of interpretation but great care must be taken, when using these stories in interpretation, to emphasise that they are not historically accurate. However, to lose the mythology would be to lose much of the appeal of the saints for many people. Many legends of the saints were set out in Chapter 5 and a well-used (but not necessarily academically-sound source of stories is *The Lives of the British Saints* by Sabine Baring-Gould and John Fisher, published in 1907.












<i>The Legacy of the Celtic Saints - chosen locations and saints</i>			
<i>Location</i>	<i>Saint(s)</i>	<i>On-site evidence and stories</i>	<i>Accessibility</i>
<b>North Wales - Anglesey</b>			
St Seiriol’s Well, Penmon Church	St Seiriol	Two Viking Age crosses, font, cross-carved stone. Fine Romanesque church, well, views of hermitage on Ynys Seiriol. Stories of saint.	🚶 Possible Parking nearby
Ynys Llanddwyn, Newborough [tidal island]	St Dwynwen St Beuno	Holy well, ruined late medieval chapel, good folk tale about eel in the well. Stories of St Dwynwen, saint’s day 25 January, celebrated by lovers (cf St Valentine)	🚶 Not practicable Parking on mainland

Location	Saint(s)	On-site evidence and stories	Accessibility
<b>North Wales - Llŷn Peninsula</b>			
Bangor	St Deiniol	EM sculptural fragments, Cathedral C12th. <i>Life</i> of St Deiniol from the end of the middle ages.	🚶 Easy Parking in town
Bardsey Island	St Cadfan St Dyfrig St Deiniol Elgar the hermit '20,000 saints'	EM cross and cross-carved stone in the chapel. Site of EM graves. Well? Later ruins of St Mary's Abbey. Stories of Sts Cadfan and Elgar.	🚶 Possible but not practicable Parking on mainland
Bardsey Pilgrim Route Potential <i>The Legacy of the Celtic Saints hub</i> at Aberdaron	Saints associated with local churches en route	See cluster study in Chapter 13	See individual sites
St Beuno's Church, Clynog Fawr	St Beuno	C8th or 9th sundial. Fine late medieval pilgrim church with Capel Beuno, a <i>capel y bedd</i> , site of grave of saint until late C18th. Cross-carved stone in the chapel. Holy well nearby. <i>Saint's life</i> .	🚶 Steps at one entrance Parking on road Church open at times, but not <i>capel y bedd</i>
Llanaelhaearn Church	St Aelhaearn	Early Christian sculpted stones in church and churchyard.	🚶 Possible Parking nearby
Llangian Church	St Cian	C5th or 6th inscribed funerary monument.	🚶 Possible Parking nearby
St Cybi's Well, Llangybi [Cadw]	St Cybi	Holy well, C18th. Cross-carved stone in churchyard. Stories of saint.	🚶 Not possible Parking on road
St Beuno's Church, Pistyll	St Beuno	Font with Viking Age ornament in picturesque church. Another cross-carved stone nearby.	🚶 Steep path to door Parking on road Closed most of time
<b>North Wales - Harlech area</b>			
St Tanwg's Church, Llandanwg	St Tanwg	Three inscribed stones, one cross-carved stone, one small Viking Age cross. Picturesque church in beautiful setting.	🚶 Good Parking nearby Church often open in summer
St Derfel's Church, Llandderfel near Bala	St Derfel	Site of shrine of St Derfel with large wooden statue of horse or stag. That of the saint burnt after the Reformation in London - a good story. Stories of saint.	🚶 Good Parking



Location	Saint(s)	On-site evidence and stories	Accessibility
St Cadfan's Church, Tywyn	St Cadfan	Unique cross-carved stone with Welsh memorial inscriptions Fine C12th church. EM sundial at nearby leisure centre. C12th poem about St Cadfan.	 Good Parking Usually open
<b>North Wales - Holywell area</b>			
St Winefride's Well, Holywell [Cadw] Potential <i>The Legacy of the Celtic Saints hub</i>	St Winefride (Gwenfrewi), St Beuno	Holy well (site first mentioned in Domesday Book), fine late medieval well chapel and chapel. Finger bone in monstrance and fragments of early medieval wooden shrine sometimes on display Good C12th stories. Holywell still a destination for pilgrims.	 Easy access No car park Admission charge
Whitford [Cadw]	St Cwyfan (?Irish St Kevin)	Cross known as <i>Maen Achwyfan</i> , Viking Age with some pagan mythological iconography. Early inscribed stone nearby in Whitford church.	 Good Open site Parking nearby
Tremeirchion, St Asaph	St Beuno	Well, later medieval or later superstructure.	 Good Roadside parking
<b>Mid Wales - Llangynog area</b>			
St Dogfan's Church, Llanraeadr-yn-Mochnant	St Dogfan	C 9th/10th cross-slab with later inscription. Fragment of EM font.	 Good Parking
St Tysilio and St Mary's Church, Meifod, Welshpool	St Tysilio	Late C11th / early C12th cross-slab, site of major foundation associated with later medieval rulers of Powys. Large graveyard which in C12th had three churches. C12th poem <i>Canu Tysilio</i> .	 Good Parking
St Melangell's Church, Pennant Melangell Possible <i>The Legacy of the Celtic Saints hub</i>	St Melangell	Romanesque shrine of Melangell. EM excavated church site with C12th fabric and possible site of saint's grave. Excellent late medieval saint's life. Surrounding landscape with features associated with the saint. Pennant Melangell still a destination for pilgrims.	 Good Parking
<b>Mid Wales - Aberystwyth / Cardigan area</b>			
St Padarn's Church, Llanbadarn Fawr Potential <i>The Legacy of the Celtic Saints hub</i>	St Padarn	Two Viking Age crosses, fine later medieval church. Association with family of Sulien who wrote poetry in Welsh and Latin and produced surviving illuminated MSS - good story.	 Good Parking

Location	Saint(s)	On-site evidence and stories	Accessibility
St David's Church, Llanddewibrefi	St David	C6th inscribed stone, collection of cross-carved stones. A now fragmentary inscribed stone recorded as naming St David set into wall. Good late C11th story of St David's connection with site.	 Good Parking
<b>South West Wales - St David's area</b>			
St David's Cathedral and Close [Cadw in part] Potential <i>The Legacy of the Celtic Saints hub</i>	St David	Porth-y-Tŵr: Large collection of EM crosses and grave-slabs. Includes cross-slab commemorating sons of Bishop Abraham who was killed in a Viking raid on monastery - good story. Many stories and legends. St David's still a destination for pilgrims.	 Good Parking Donation
St Non's Well and Chapel	St Non	Ruined chapel, cross-carved stone and well with modern superstructure. In late C11th <i>Life</i> of saint where Non gave birth to St David.	 No access, difficult path View only Parking bay
<b>South West Wales - Nevern area</b>			
Churches and redundant churches, Gwaun Valley	St Brynach St David	EM cross-carved stones, eg at Pontfaen, Llanychlwydog, Llanllawer (also well), Llanychaer (pillar with crucifixion).	 Varied
St Dogmael's Church, Llandudoch	St Dogmael	Latin and Ogam-inscribed stone and two cross-slabs in St Thomas's Church adjacent to later Abbey, the site of the EM monastery. Collection of cross-carved stones in adjacent coach-house.	 Good Parking
St Brynach's Church, Nevern Potential <i>The Legacy of the Celtic Saints hub</i>	St Brynach	Two Latin and Ogam-inscribed stones, one Viking Age cross and another cross-carved stone. Fine medieval church and botanically rich graveyard. Pilgrim's cross in rock nearby. According to C12th saint's life, St Brynach buried in church. Good stories in <i>Life</i> of St Brynach.	 Good Parking Church always open
<b>South West Wales - Pembroke area</b>			
St Govan's Chapel, Bosherton	St Govan	Chapel, site of well. Stories of saint.	 None Parking nearby
Caldey Island Potential <i>The Legacy of the Celtic Saints hub</i>	St Illtud St Paulinus St Samson	Early Ogam stone reused in late C8th / early C9th as a cross-carved inscribed memorial stone in church found on site of later medieval Abbey. C8th <i>Life</i> of St Samson describes stay in hermitage.	 Possible with help Parking near jetty / pier
Carew Cross, Carew [Cadw]	None	Viking Age cross (on site of EM hill fort as well as later castle).	 Good Roadside parking

Location	Saint(s)	On-site evidence and stories	Accessibility
St Nicholas's Church, Penally	St Teilo	Two fine C9th crosses and fragment.	 Good Parking
St Ishmael's Church, St Ishmael's	St Ishmael	Cross-carved stones and fragment of cross. Picturesque church. Bishop house associated with St David's.	 Possible Parking nearby
<b>South West Wales - Llandeilo area</b>			
Llanarthne	St David	C11th cross slab with inscription	 Possible Parking nearby
St Teilo's Well, Llandeilo	St Teilo	Well, two cross-slabs. This church is the one associated with the gospels of St Chad and has a turn-the-page exhibition of the MS. Stories of saint.	 Possible Parking nearby
<b>South East Wales - Swansea area</b>			
St David and St Cyfelach's Church, Llangyfelach	St Cyfelach	Cross-base, two cross-carved stones.	 Possible Parking nearby
Margam Stones Museum, Port Talbot [Cadw] Potential <i>The Legacy of the Celtic Saints</i> hub	None	Extensive display of early inscribed stones, crosses and cross-slabs from site and surrounding area	 Good Parking
<b>South East Wales - Bridgend and Vale of Glamorgan</b>			
St Teilo's Church, Merthyr Mawr	St Teilo	Large collection of crosses and cross-carved stones.	 Good Parking nearby
St Cadoc's Church, Llanccarfan, Barry	St Cadog ?St Elli	One small fragment of sculpture in parish church. C12th <i>Life</i> of St Cadog good source of stories.	 Good Parking poor
<b>South East Wales - Llantwit Major (Llanilltud Fawr) area</b>			
St Illtud's Church, Llantwit Major Potential <i>The Legacy of the Celtic Saints</i> hub	St Illtud St Gildas St Paulinus St Samson	Large collection of crosses and cross-carved stones. Inscription on one names Illtud. Also various local rulers named. C12th <i>Life</i> of Illtud and C8th <i>Life</i> of Samson. Excellent stories. Stories of Sts Gildas and Paulinus.	 Good Parking in road
St Stephen and St Tathan's Church, Caerwent	St Tatheus	Cross head - only a tiny fragment. C12th life of St Tatheus.	 Good Parking
St Arvan's Church, St Arvan's	St Arvan	Cross slab in church	 Easy access Parking in road

## 13 Interpretive media

The potential range of media that could be used for interpreting *Cymynrodd y Seintiau Celtaidd / The Legacy of the Celtic Saints* is considerable because of the unusual nature of the narrative which embraces a range of topics including:

- ◆ The saints themselves
- ◆ The early church in Wales
- ◆ The early medieval period
- ◆ Faith and belief
- ◆ Sacred sites in the landscape
- ◆ Early medieval inscribed stones, crosses, cross-slabs, cross-carved grave-markers etc
- ◆ Pilgrimage routes and destinations

Some media could be ‘dedicated’ to the narrative, in many cases a range of different vehicles could be used to embrace it, particularly when implemented by potential partners.

It will be important throughout, that media always relate to a national overview - in terms of geography, archaeology, the early medieval era and ecclesiastical history - and that detailed interpretation about individual saints, places and routes is set in this context. While the narrative will, of course, concentrate on the saints in Wales, there is an opportunity where appropriate to include stories of the links which saints had with Cornwall, Brittany and Ireland - and vice versa. Some of these were mentioned in Chapters 4 and 5.

The range of organisations that could be involved in providing interpretation embraces faith groups, tourism interests and others, but we believe it is essential, because of the importance of the subject, that some media be produced at a national level under the aegis of an appropriate organisation. That organisation could also, of course, guide others at a regional or local level, in implementing parts of the Interpretation Plan and, where appropriate, by providing funding assistance.

We have divided our proposals between ‘conventional’ print-based and graphic media which continues to be sought and used by visitors (and residents), digital media which is increasingly used by people of all ages, often before visits are undertaken, and other mechanisms for interpreting *Cymynrodd y Seintiau Celtaidd / The Legacy of the Celtic Saints*.

The speed of development of digital media appears to be exponential at the moment but its overall role is now proven even if some equipment has not yet faced the test of time. Web-based interpretation is particularly appropriate for the target audiences of independently-minded families and adults.

### *The use of Welsh*

All media should be prepared in Welsh and English versions but it is essential that it should be written or compiled from a Welsh perspective and then interpretations in English prepared. Full use should be made of quotations from literature or other sources, in Welsh (and English), in text and in sound.

Where original text from early documents is quoted in sound, in Latin or Welsh, this should be clearly introduced to help listeners to acclimatise to the language before any translations are given.

### *Important considerations*

It is essential that media are available - and relevant - for use:

- ◆ Before visitors to a region or area set out; the better informed they are about possibilities and options for understanding *Cymynrodd y Seintiau Celtaidd / The Legacy of the Celtic Saints* the more they will be able to appreciate and enjoy it
- ◆ During their visits in different forms; many visitors make instant decisions or change plans when alerted to something they were not aware of, or were not able to find out about before arriving
- ◆ After their visit; many visitors want to follow up aspects of what they have experienced and enjoyed when they get home and have more time

A further consideration is that all media, particularly websites, should take account of educational audiences, particularly schoolchildren, whose particular needs should be considered when planning content and links.

In addition, the content of media must address those of many different faiths and none, making no presumptions about prior knowledge of the Christian faith, its history and practices.

Finally, it is essential that the content of all media stresses that the stories of the saints are based on later accounts and legend and not on historical fact and that associations of saints with particular places may or may not be factually correct. It will be important to monitor levels of accuracy in all media, particularly on websites where the content is more susceptible to frequent changes and, therefore, to the inclusion of inaccuracies and the introduction of outdated ideas about the Celtic saints

## 13.1 Priority mechanisms

### **National level**

We propose that the following dedicated media, ie media solely or largely about *Cymynrodd y Seintiau Celtaidd / The Legacy of the Celtic Saints*, be considered within an overall menu of interpretive media:

#### *Interpretive maps*

We propose that a single interpretive map, covering the whole of Wales, be produced in print for wide distribution centrally and regionally. The production of

the map could involve, for example, the regional tourism partnerships and pan-Wales faith groups but should be overseen and managed by an appropriate organisation with national responsibilities.

Interpretive maps combine a range of features which, in this context, could include:

- ◆ A brief introduction to the area or site (in this case all Wales) and purpose of the interpretation
- ◆ A pictorial map of the country
- ◆ A series of topic-based interpretive ‘nuggets’ to illustrate the map
- ◆ A series of topic-based panels to provide additional background information
- ◆ Details of access by road, ferry, foot, cycle etc
- ◆ Details / sources of church etc opening hours
- ◆ Sources of further information

The interpretive map principle is very close to that illustrated in the visualisation of content provided in Chapter 8. The range of content and the concentration on people makes it highly accessible and if one element does not catch immediate attention, others certainly will, depending upon users’ own interest.

#### *Promotional dispensers*

We propose that simple dispensers be produced to display and dispense the interpretive maps and which can be placed on counters etc at a series of regional hubs and other outlets. The dispensers could be attached to an A4 backing board that introduced the concept and appeal of *Cymynrodd y Seintiau Celtaidd / The Legacy of the Celtic Saints*. Their production could involve the same faith and regional tourism involvement but again should be overseen by an appropriate national organisation.

#### *Websites*

We propose that, in parallel with the map, a national website be developed to embrace the interpretation of *Cymynrodd y Seintiau Celtaidd / The Legacy of the Celtic Saints* for the whole of Wales. It should use the same content and graphics as the map and be downloadable in sections to domestic printers, those located in hubs, and to MP4 equipment using Bluetooth or other means. As with the map, the management of this project should be overseen by an appropriate national organisation to ensure a national picture is presented and one which is accurate and informative, and avoids repeating misconceptions.

However, the website could be augmented by audio and video material including:

- ◆ Spoken excerpts from early and contemporary writers and poets
- ◆ Excerpts from performances of early sacred music and song
- ◆ Archive material from television and radio

It could also draw in the connections with Cornwall, Brittany and Ireland and provide links to appropriate sites relating to these areas.

We would also propose that the website had an interactive map to allow those using it to seek out information related to the place(s) they intend to visit which could provide specific interpretation material about *Cymynrodd y Seintiau Celtaidd / The Legacy of the Celtic Saints*.

### *Interpretive cartoon strips*

A mechanism which could be used in interpretive maps and other publications, and on website, is the cartoon strip which appeals to all audiences can help to emphasise, in the case of the Celtic saints, that the stories are not factual but are based on legend and later records. We illustrated a possible style earlier which reflects the style of illustration in the early medieval period and is 'sympathetic', ie it does not make fun of the subjects but is likely to engender interest and gentle amusement.

### *Material for children*

The cartoon approach would be particularly appropriate for use in material produced for children which should include shortened and simplified versions of the stories, and brief quotations where appropriate but not be 'dumbed down'. Aural material for children, downloadable from websites or available on CDs, with or without accompanying printed material, could include short quotations in Welsh and English with explanations about the use of the languages - and Latin.

## **Local level**

We propose that the following dedicated media, ie media solely or largely about *Cymynrodd y Seintiau Celtaidd / The Legacy of the Celtic Saints*, be considered for use at a local level; the list should be regarded as a menu from which items can be chosen according to their suitability and practicability. They include:

### *Interpretive panels*

- ◆ On-site, self-contained panels - but only for sites in the two study areas (or others chosen on the same principles) in order to draw together the stories at the various sites to achieve cohesion. The panels should reflect and summarise the overall thematic approach but deal with only one or two elements of the whole narrative, ie those relevant to the site itself. They could feature an imaginative design but should add to the enjoyment of a site and not intrude upon it. Ideally, the panels would incorporate a solar- or battery-powered sound store with excerpts of music, song, prose or poetry. An example of a simple but effective panel is shown.



### *Interpretive seats*

- ◆ On-site commissioned seats, which themselves are a response to the landscape, embodying a brief interpretive message and a sound store. The length of any inscribed text should be short but a small interpretive panel could be included. The seats could also be linked into downloaded and / or downloadable digital material. Examples of seats installed on sites are shown. It is important that the seats meet artistic, interpretive and structural criteria.



### *Interpretive rests*

- ◆ As an alternative to seats, resting points could be provided at sites where visitors could stop for a few moments to consider the site or the view. They could incorporate very brief elements of text and could incorporate sound stores - or be linked into downloaded and / or downloadable digital material.

## 13.2 Supporting mechanisms

### **National level**

We propose that the following be considered:

- ◆ Interpretive guide book / map for all Wales, printed and /or downloadable to printers from a parallel all-Wales website (which could incorporate the four regional websites referred to above)
- ◆ Links from the website to webpages relating to individual saints, places and routes
- ◆ DVD versions of interpretive map / website with music, song, spoken prose and poetry

### **Local level**

- ◆ Commissioned installations embodying creative responses to the sacred sites; these could be designed to reflect the style and content of early medieval carved stones but should not attempt to mimic them
- ◆ Branded markers where access is recommended from the Coastal Path or other walking / cycling routes, to link sites associated with one or more saints
- ◆ Downloadable portions of the website, incorporating video and audio, and suitable for uploading to MP4 players from a variety of local sources or which can be accessed 'on the move' by means of accessing specific websites



- ◆ Local guided tours and story walks with personal interpretation of the history of the Celtic saints at locations such as Bardsey Island, the area round Pennant Melangell, the area around St David's and the Llantwit Major area
- ◆ Events of various kinds with or without a faith element to encourage visitors and local people to 'interact' with the stories of the saints

## Other mechanisms

Other media which could incorporate elements relating to the topic, for example:

- ◆ Joint national or regional promotional initiatives with tourism partnerships, faith groups and broadcasting organisations etc
- ◆ More general tourist and / or descriptive publications / websites / downloadable tours etc
- ◆ Interpretive panels on wider topics where it was appropriate to include references to aspects of *Cymynrodd y Seintiau Celtaidd / The Legacy of the Celtic Saints* themes
- ◆ Local initiatives with church and faith groups, community centres and other faith-linked organisations
- ◆ Competitions open to the public as a whole or in sections to produce their responses to sacred sites in pictures, photographs, words or music with winning entries which could be displayed, with an explanation about the project, in a variety of settings including local hotels, b&bs, pubs, shops etc and, of course, church and other places
- ◆ Invitations to the public to make contributions to the website via social networking media
- ◆ Events and activities of various kinds from storytelling sessions and role-playing to workshops and debates on the mythology of the saints
- ◆ Initiatives related to life-long learning courses both formal and informal
- ◆ Initiatives related to appropriate aspects of the school curriculum

## Distribution points and *The Legacy of the Celtic Saints* hubs

As the principal medium we propose for 'promoting' *Cymynrodd y Seintiau Celtaidd / The Legacy of the Celtic Saints* theme will be an interpretive map, supported by a website, it is essential that there are easily-accessible distribution points for the map. Most will be staffed but not necessarily by staff with any involvement in faith-related matters.

We propose that organisations with a direct involvement in the places associated with the saints, or with faith-based initiatives, should be recruited to act as *Cymynrodd y Seintiau Celtaidd / The Legacy of the Celtic Saints* hubs, where staff (if available) will be able to explain the approach and augment the content of the map / website for visitors and for residents. There would need to be at least one hub in each of the key areas of the geographic regions we have identified and we have suggested a number in the list of potential partners. However, at this stage, we have made no approaches to their owners or managers

We would propose that the staff of the hubs - and volunteers where appropriate - should receive training about the themes and how they can be delivered. Such staff could act as *Speakers for the Saints* and, in addition to meeting visitors and residents, could organise events, devise trails and undertake other activities to explain the special characteristics of their local saints and sacred places and how they still have relevance in the cultural and spiritual inheritance of Wales.

The organisations which we suggest could be approached to act as hubs are identified in Section 13.

## 14 Cluster studies

*Cymynrodd y Seintiau Celtaidd / The Legacy of the Celtic Saints* is a strategy for interpreting the impact of the Celtic saints, their sacred sites, and pilgrimage routes rather than providing a detailed interpretation plan for numerous sites around Wales. Because of this, we are presenting two cluster studies that indicate how the overall national narratives can be reflected in a particular area. These studies also present a model for how interpretation might be delivered at area level throughout Wales.

The cluster studies relate to two areas - the Llŷn Peninsula and the area round Llantwit Major. The first has been selected partly because of its obvious national significance within and beyond Wales and helps to illuminate the themes in this plan. It is an area with rich associations with the saints and a developed network of routes which are and can be used by pilgrims on their way to Bardsey Island.

The second area has been selected for several reasons. It is where there is the best evidence of Christianity's arrival in Wales with the Roman garrison at Caerleon, Llantwit Major itself was a very important focus for the early church in Wales and Llandaff has links at the end of the early medieval period with St Elgar who is also linked to the Llŷn Peninsula partly because of the importance of the sacred sites. Again, it can be linked with all of the national themes.

### *Purpose of the cluster studies*

The purpose of the cluster studies is to indicate an approach that could be taken to using the plan at a local level. They are not intended to prejudice proposals linked to other areas or which are being developed in the areas concerned. In the plan we have identified several groupings of sites associated with the story of the early church in Wales. These are based on geographical logistics but they also have strong thematic relationships.

We are aware that grouping of early Christian sites will interlink with sites and themes taken from other aspects of the *Spiritual and Inspirational Landscapes of Wales*. This may influence thinking about projects, which might have cross-cutting themes. However, these cluster studies assume that the implementation is only related to this particular plan.

### *Think nationally, interpret locally*

The cluster studies demonstrate how a local proposal can relate to the overall plan and especially to the core themes:

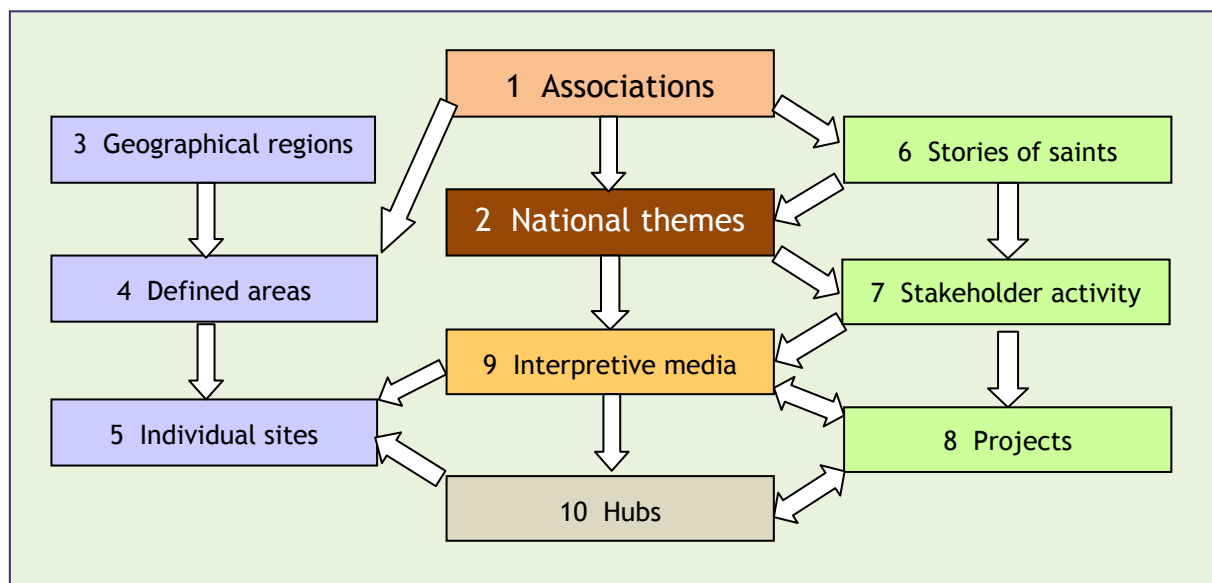
- ◆ The early church in Wales (A timeline and key ideas associated with the early church, including links to the tradition of scholarship)
- ◆ Remembering the saints (The legacy including stories, which have been invented at a later date)
- ◆ Seeking out the saints (Sites associated with saints and place names that have subsequently been used to indicate a reverence for individual saints)

- ◆ Pilgrims' paths (The routes that date from the Celtic period and new paths of a later or recent date)

### *Structuring an interpretive project*

The diagram below shows the inter-relationship between the various elements involved in the cluster studies and therefore how an area interpretive project might be structured. This key provides a fuller explanation of the boxes:

1. **Associations** are those that link specific with the area
2. **National themes** are those that provide the overall narrative
3. **Geographical regions** are the four broad (administrative) segments of Wales
4. **Defined areas** are those related to the pilgrimage destinations / cluster studies
5. **Individual sites** are those where there is physical evidence from early medieval times, sacred places and sites visited by pilgrims
6. **Stories of saints** refer to narratives linking specific saints to individual sites
7. **Stakeholder activity** covers a wide range of regional and local initiatives related, or which could be related, to implementing the national themes
8. **Local projects** are both existing and new proposals for interpretation projects, which fit within the framework of this plan
9. **Interpretive media** are the mechanisms by which the stories are delivered and will include on- and off- site media, including digital and online media
10. **Hubs** are places within the geographical area where visitors can access interpretive media



If a proposal is to be developed around a group of sites, we suggest that a cluster-based interpretation plan is commissioned as a first step in clarifying the project and to develop a coherent, costed proposal.

## 14.1 Cluster study - Llŷn Peninsula

Llŷn is an important area for interpreting the history of the early church in Wales. The main focus of this history is the island of Bardsey (Ynys Enlli), associated with settlement by the Saints Cadfan, Dyfrig and Elgar and numerous other unnamed holy people reputed to be buried there. Associated Christian sites and holy wells were established on the mainland. By the eleventh to the twelfth centuries Bardsey had become a focus for pilgrimage and this led to the continued importance of many of the churches along the northern and the southern routes to the island. These churches, originally built of timber, were later built in stone from the twelfth century onwards and, later still, rebuilt or extended.

The table below creates a timeline showing how the early Christian church in Wales unfolds in Llŷn. It indicates original artefacts that can still be seen at each site.

Llŷn Peninsula- Timeline						
Site	Roman period - to C4th	Early medieval period, C4th - C9th	Medieval period C10th - C12th Written evidence of pilgrim routes from c 1100	Later medieval period C13th - C15th	Links to present day Links with proposed modern pilgrim route	Notes
Bangor Cathedral Gwynedd Museum, Bangor		Two inscribed stones	C12th sculptural fragments	Life of St Deiniol		Pilgrimage Northern
Llanfaglan Church		Inscribed stone		Church building		Pilgrimage Northern
Clynnog Fawr St Beuno's Church		C8th/9th Sundial Cross carved stone in chapel	Holy well Life of St Beuno	Church building St Beuno's <i>capel y bedd</i>		Pilgrimage Northern
Llanaelhaearn Church		Two sculpted stones - in church and churchyard				Pilgrimage Northern
Llangybi Church		Two well chambers Carved cross in churchyard		Holy well	Holy well (present building C18th)	Pilgrimage Northern
Pistyll Church		Viking period font Cross carved stone nearby		Church building		Pilgrimage Northern

<i>Site</i>	<i>Roman period - to C4th</i>	<i>Early medieval period, C4th - C9th</i>	<i>Medieval period C10th - C12th Written evidence of pilgrim routes from c 1100</i>	<i>Later medieval period C13th - C15th</i>	<i>Links to present day Links with proposed modern pilgrim route</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Llangwnadl Church		Bell from church now in National Museum	Cross carved stone in church wall	Church building		Pilgrimage Northern
Aberdaron Church		Two C6th inscribed stones from Capel Anelog	Church building			Pilgrim routes join Start point for Bardsey
Bardsey Island (Ynys Enlli)			Cross-carved stone in chapel Graves from Viking period excavated	Ruins of St Mary's Abbey Canu Cadfan Life of St Elgar	C19th chapel	Pilgrimage destination
Llandanwg Church Near Harlech		Three inscribed stones One cross carved stone	One cross	Church building		Southern pilgrimage
Oriel Plas Glyn y Weddw, Llanbedrog		Two inscribed stones				Southern pilgrimage
Llangian Church		C5th/C6th Inscribed funerary monument				Southern pilgrimage

## 1 Associations

These sites have associations with the following saints:

- ◆ St Deiniol (Bangor & Ynys Enlli)
- ◆ St Beuno (Clynnog Fawr & Pistyll)
- ◆ St Cybi (Llangybi)
- ◆ Sts Cadfan Dyfrig (Ynys Enlli)
- ◆ St Elgar (Ynys Enlli)
- ◆ St Gwynhoedl (Llangwnadl)
- ◆ St Aelhaearn (Llanaelhaearn)
- ◆ St Tanwg (Llandanwg, nr. Harlech)
- ◆ St Cian (Llangian)

## 2 National themes

The sites can be linked into the four themes:

- ◆ The early church in Wales
- ◆ Remembering the Saints
- ◆ Seeking out the Saints
- ◆ Pilgrims' Paths

## 3 Geographical region

All the sites fall within:

- ◆ North Wales

## 4 Defined area

All the sites fall within:

- ◆ Llŷn Peninsula (including Bangor)

## 5 Individual sites

The following sites are included in the area:

- ◆ Bangor (Cathedral and Gwynedd Museum)
- ◆ Llanfaglan (near Caernarfon)
- ◆ Clynnog Fawr Church
- ◆ Llanelhaearn Church
- ◆ Llangybi Church
- ◆ Pistyll Church
- ◆ Llangwinnadl Church
- ◆ Aberdaron Church
- ◆ Bardsey island
- ◆ Llandanwg (near Harlech) Church
- ◆ Plas Glyn y Weddw (Llanbedrog)
- ◆ Llangian Church

## 6 Legends of saints

Stories associated with the early saints in Wales have been gathered over the centuries and date from a later period than that of the saints they refer to<sup>11</sup>.

A useful story that creates a powerful link between North and South Wales is that of St Elgar, whose (reputed) relics - his teeth - were taken from Bardsey Island to Llandaff in 1120 and whose *Life* contains visions of the early saints.

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<sup>11</sup> A source that draws on authentic material is A W Wade-Evans's *Vitae sanctorum britanniae et genealogiae* published in 1944 by the Board of Celtic Studies of the University of Wales.

## 7 Stakeholder interests

The following organisations<sup>12</sup> have an existing or potential interest in the context of this plan:

- ◆ Bardsey Island Trust
- ◆ Church in Wales - Diocese of Bangor
- ◆ Church Tourism Network Wales
- ◆ Countryside Council for Wales
- ◆ Dwyfor Council
- ◆ Gwynedd Council
- ◆ Gwynedd Museum and Art Gallery
- ◆ Llŷn AONB
- ◆ Llŷn Landscape Partnership Project
- ◆ Nant Gwrtheyrn
- ◆ National Trust
- ◆ North Wales Tourism Partnership
- ◆ Plas Glyn y Weddw
- ◆ Ramblers' Association
- ◆ Roman Catholic Church
- ◆ St Asaph Cathedral

## 8 Interpretive media

Examples of potential media which could be used for this area include:

- ◆ Inclusion in national (and regional / local) *Cymynrodd y Seintiau Celtaidd / The Legacy of the Celtic Saints* interpretive maps
- ◆ Links to national (and regional) *Cymynrodd y Seintiau Celtaidd / The Legacy of the Celtic Saints* websites
- ◆ Use of the hubs for internet access and interpretive material
- ◆ Branded markers where access is recommended from the Coastal Path or other walking/cycling routes
- ◆ Interpretive seats at sites, where appropriate; they could include element that is 'collectable' as part of doing the trail
- ◆ First person interpretation, including story walks linked to organised visits eg special services and events

### *Existing interpretation:*

There is very little existing relevant interpretive material. Some mention of the subject is on panels related to the Coastal Path, such as the panel outside the Post Office at Clynnog Fawr.

The Llŷn Coastal Path Leaflet (Countryside Council for Wales and Gwynedd Council) refers to the 'footsteps of early pilgrims' and that 'the earliest Christians built the

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<sup>12</sup> Contact details can be provided for a number of these



numerous ancient churches'. St Beuno's, Clynnog Fawr, Pistyll Church and St Hywyn's, Aberdaron are mentioned in this context.



Some churches have a 'Pilgrim Path' marker but not all.

The church of St Gian at Llangian has a Cadw-funded interpretation panel in the porch of the church.

St Gwynhoedl's church already has a small replica of the Llangwnnadr Bell, now in the National Museum of Wales. More could be made of this artefact as a symbol of this site or of the whole project in Llŷn.



Some churches, including St Beuno at Pistyll, St Hywyn at Aberdaron and St Gwynhoedl at Llangwnnadr, have a sales area with souvenirs and information about the church and the area.

The management of Plas Glyn y Weddw are planning to improve the interpretation of the two ancient stones that stand in their main entrance porch. This will be a part of the bigger interpretation project planned for the Plas.



## 9 Hubs

Several places have been identified that could function as interpretation hubs for the story of the early church in Llŷn and for presenting the way in which this story cross cuts with other aspects of the heritage of the area.

A number of these centres already have a significant number of visitors every year. The Aberdaron centre will complete the provision around the whole of Llŷn. These centres would be good places for visitors to access the central story of the early church in Wales and to provide detailed interpretation for that story in Llŷn.

**Gwynedd Museum and Art Gallery**, Bangor has an archaeological collection including stones from the early Christian period.

**Nant Gwrtheyrn** on the north coast of Llŷn has over 30,000 day visits a year, in addition to residential Welsh language courses and other events. Its heritage centre tells the story of the Nant and of slate quarrying in the area.

**Oriel Plas Glyn y Weddw** on the south coast of Llŷn has two early stones there as well as an art gallery and café. It welcomes at least 80,000 day visitors, runs courses and is currently applying for funding to develop an outdoor interpretation hub and performance amphitheatre. The proposed **Y Winllan** amphitheatre and outdoor interpretation hub would offer opportunities for live interpretation of various kinds.

Aberdaron Coastal Visitor Centre (National Trust) has recently received funding from the Welsh Assembly Government and ERDF. The centre will provide an experience to visitors and a hub to encourage visitors to enjoy other parts of the Llŷn Peninsula and Snowdonia. The centrepiece will be a low-carbon visitor centre providing audio-visual displays taking visitors on a journey along the Llŷn Peninsula.

## 10 Local projects

A number of projects are in place or are planned:

- ◆ Proposed pilgrim route from Basingwerk to Bardsey
- ◆ The Llŷn Landscape Partnership Project is supporting the development of cross cutting projects that interpret the coast and the heritage of Llŷn, that includes a support for a pilgrim route
- ◆ Plas Glyn y Weddw has ambitious plans for Y Winllan and for the development of the gallery and café. In 2008, the gallery bought an adjacent 12-acre forest which formerly included sculpture trails as part of the gallery until it was sold off. It plans to re-open the trails, introduce an amphitheatre and car park and link to the coastal pathway. The National Trust is developing the new Coastal Centre of Excellence at Aberdaron.

## Individual sites - accessibility and other details where known

### *Bangor Cathedral*

- ◆ Wheelchair access; parking nearby; train and bus services
- ◆ Open Monday to Friday, 12.00 -14.30, Saturday 10.30 - 13.00

### *Gwynedd Museum, Bangor*

- ◆ Wheelchair access to shop and gallery; parking nearby; train and bus services
- ◆ Open Tuesday to Friday, 12.30 to 16.30pm, Saturday 10.30 to 16.30

### *Clynnog Fawr Church*

- ◆ Three entrances to church, one with steps; parking on A499
- ◆ Open at times
- ◆ Some interpretation

### *St Beuno's Well*

- ◆ On right side of A499 leading south out of Clynnog; not easy to find; access by road and walking directly from Llŷn Coastal Path

### *Llanelhaearn Church*

- ◆ At junction of A499 and B4417; short link on B4417 from Llŷn Coastal Path; short path from road; three parking spaces
- ◆ Not usually open

### *St Cybi's Well*

- ◆ By road from A499 off a minor road about three miles south of Llanelhaearn; not easy to find; signed from road but across a field

### *Pistyll Church*

- ◆ On B4417 off the A499 and near Llŷn Coastal Path; steep concrete path to door; parking on road or track
- ◆ Open when visited
- ◆ Greetings and postcards; information sheet

### *Llangwnnadr Church*

- ◆ On minor road off the B4417 between Aberdaron and Tudweiliog; quite difficult to find; possible wheelchair access along path; parking on road near the church
- ◆ Open when visited
- ◆ Book and leaflet; souvenir items for sale

### *Aberdaron Church*

- ◆ Easy path from road; parking in village pay car park
- ◆ Open when visited
- ◆ Leaflet *Sauntering around St Hywyn's*; other local information inside church

### *Bardsey Island*

- ◆ Viewed from Uwchmynydd (end of Llŷn) and from the Coastal Path
- ◆ Minor road to Uwchmynydd from B4413 between Sarn Mellteyrn and Aberdaron; ferry daily in summer, in clement weather, from Pwllheli or Porth Meudwy; not suitable for disabled people
- ◆ Open in summer when weather permits crossing
- ◆ Existing interpretation not known

*Llandanwg (near Harlech)*

- ◆ On minor road from A496 between Harlech and Llebedr; on coastal walking route; Cambrian Line train stops nearby

*Plas Glyn y Weddw (Llanbedrog)*

- ◆ Access from Coastal Path and from A499 between Pwllheli and Abersoch; wheelchair access through café; stones in porch and can be seen through the door
- ◆ Open 10.00 - 17.00 daily except Tuesday
- ◆ Website & leaflet

## 14.2 Cluster study - Llantwit Major area

The Llantwit Major area - and the broader south east of Wales - has an important role in the development of early Christianity in Wales. One of the reasons for its prominence is that it includes fertile parts of the country easily accessed by sea and land. Some of the settlements associated with the early church are near to the coast or in places often close to Roman sites.

In South East Wales, Gwent and the Vale of Glamorgan, it is possible to trace the origins of the early church in Wales from the introduction of Christianity by the Romans which, after they left, led to the fifth and sixth century foundations of monastic settlements or *clas* and their development until the ninth century. Some of these establishments, such as that at Llantwit Major, were associated with scholarly learning, others such as Llandaff with growing episcopal power in the eleventh and early twelfth centuries. Other than some stones and cross fragments, the documentary and physical evidence is from the twelfth century and the later medieval period.

The timeline table below indicates how individual churches and sites link into this history.

Llantwit Major (Llanilltud Fawr) area - Timeline						
Site	Roman period - to C4th	Early medieval period, C4th - C9th	Medieval period C10th - C12th	Later medieval period C13th - C15th	Links to present day	Notes
Caerleon National Roman Legion Museum	Martyrdom of Saints Julius and Aaron, possibly in amphitheatre Probably late C3th					Cadw site
Caerwent Church of St Stephen and St Tathan	Roman temple makes link with pagan religion	May have been seat of early bishop of Archenfield	Fragment of a cross head C12th Life of St Tatheus (St Tathyw)			

Site	Roman period - to C4th	Early medieval period, C4th - C9th	Medieval period C10th - C12th	Later medieval period C13th - C15th	Links to present day	Notes
St Arvan's Church. St Arvans		Circular churchyard possibly C9th origin	Carved cross fragments	Origins of present church building		
Llandaff Cathedral, Cardiff Saints Dyfrig, Teilo and Euddogwy		Reputed to be founded in C6th	Carved cross fragments near Chapter House door 1107 earliest part of present building 1120 -relics of St Elgar moved from Bardsey in <i>Book of Llandaff</i>			
Llandough	Roman graves	Roman graves C5th-C6th monastic site	Roman graves C10th-C11th pillar cross in churchyard			
Llancarfan		C7th - C9th foundation	Small sculptural fragment in church Life of St Cadog Medieval wall paintings	Major school of later first millennium		
Church of St Illtud, Llantwit Major		Many stones Life of St Samson C6th leadership of St Illtud	Collection of crosses and cross-carved stones. Life of St Illtud			
St Teilo's Church, Merthyr Mawr			Large collection of crosses and cross-carved stones			

## 1 Associations

The sites have associations with the following saints:

- ◆ Sts Julius and Aaron (Caerleon)
- ◆ St Tatheus or Tathwy (Caerwent)
- ◆ St Arvan (St Arvans near Chepstow)
- ◆ Sts Dyfrig, Teilo, Euddogwy (Llandaff, Cardiff)
- ◆ St Cadog (Llancarfan)
- ◆ St Illtud (Llantwit Major)
- ◆ St Teilo (Merthyr Mawr)

## 2 National themes

The sites can be linked into three of the four themes:

- ◆ The early church in Wales
- ◆ Remembering the Saints
- ◆ Seeking out the Saints

## 3 Geographical region

All the sites fall within:

- ◆ South East Wales

## 4 Defined area

All the sites fall within:

- ◆ The Llantwit Major area

## 5 Individual sites

The following sites are included in the area:

- ◆ Caerleon (Cadw site - including the Legionary Museum)
- ◆ Caerwent (Cadw site)
- ◆ St Arvans (near Chepstow)
- ◆ Llandough (near Penarth)
- ◆ Llancarfan (near Cowbridge)
- ◆ Llantwit Major
- ◆ Merthyr Mawr (near Bridgend)
- ◆ Llandaff (Cardiff)

## 6 Stories of saints

- ◆ Stories associated with the early saints in Wales have been gathered over the centuries and date from a later period than that of the saints they refer to. They have to be used with care, emphasising that they are simply stories<sup>13</sup>.

The story that links North and South Wales is that of St Elgar, whose (reputed) relics - his teeth - were taken from Bardsey Island to Llandaff in 1120.

## 7 Stakeholder interests

The following organisations have an existing or potential interest in the context of this plan:

- ◆ Cardiff City Council
- ◆ Church in Wales
- ◆ Church Tourism Network Wales
- ◆ The Galilee Chapel project at Llantwit Major
- ◆ Llandaff Cathedral

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<sup>13</sup> A source that draws on authentic material is A W Wade-Evans's *Vitae sanctorum britanniae et genealogiae* published in 1944 by the Board of Celtic Studies of the University of Wales. For the story in this part of Wales the lives of St Illtud, St Cadog and St Samson provide useable material.

- ◆ National Museum Wales
- ◆ Newport City Council
- ◆ Roman Catholic Church
- ◆ Vale of Glamorgan Council
- ◆ South Wales Tourism Partnership

## 8 Interpretive media

Examples of potential media which could be used for this area include:

- ◆ Links to central website
- ◆ Use of the hubs for internet access and interpretive material
- ◆ Local interpretive map
- ◆ Branded markers where access is recommended from cycle or walking routes
- ◆ Interpretive seats at sites, where appropriate; they could include an element that is 'collectable' as part of doing the trail
- ◆ First person interpretation, including story walks linked to organised visits eg special services and events

### *Existing interpretation:*

There is very little existing interpretation relevant to this plan. Both Caerwent and Caerleon have comprehensive interpretation of their substantial Roman history and the remains that can be seen at each site.

At other sites there is occasional explanation of features. St Arvan's church (*right*) has a tenth century stone cross slab with a brief explanation in a picture frame.

St Stephen and St Tathan's church in Caerwent has a fragment of a twelfth century cross head which was found in the graveyard. There is an extract of a formal description of the stone but no other interpretation. The interpretation of the Roman remains in Caerwent is extensive and provides a vivid picture of Roman life in the village.

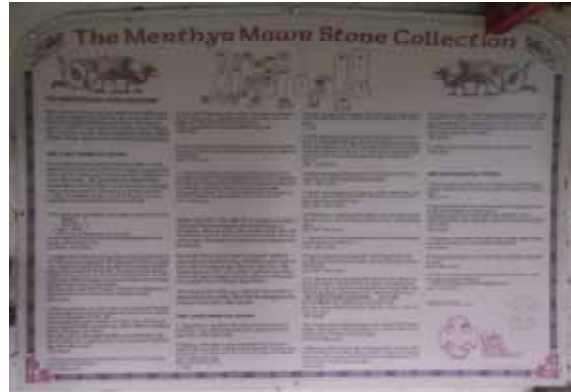
At Llandaff there is a metal plaque at St Teilo's well near the cathedral explaining the association between St Teilo, and two other Celtic saints, and the cathedral. Inside the Cathedral there is a tomb of St Teilo and a reliquary with a reputed fragment of his skull. There is a short description of the tomb and the life of St Teilo. There is no existing evidence of the relics of St Elgar which were transferred to the Cathedral from Bardsey in 1120.

At Llantwit Major there is a plaque on the church gate with an explanation of the church's origins and its associations with St Illtud. There are other similar plaques



on buildings in the village. A major interpretation project is planned to be implemented during 2011 to install interpretation in the Galilee chapel.

St Teilo's church in Merthyr Mawr has a fine collection of stone crosses and slabs from many periods starting in the fifth century, that are housed in an open building in the churchyard (*below left*). The collection has a Cadw-funded interpretation panel with explanation of the origin of each of the stones (*below right*).



## 9 Hubs

Several places have been identified that could function as interpretation hubs for the story of the early church in the Llantwit Major area and for presenting the way in which this story cross cuts with other aspects of the heritage of the area.

- ◆ The Galilee Chapel, Llantwit Major: this project is already underway and has secured funding to rebuild the ruined Galilee Chapel as a centre for interpretation and study.
- ◆ Llandaff Cathedral, Cardiff: The cathedral has a fascinating history and is a major Christian centre. It would be an ideal focus for Celtic saints' interpretation.
- ◆ National Roman Legionary Museum, Caerleon: The museum is a major visitor attraction though currently it has no information on Roman Christian history. There is opportunity for inclusion of Christian interpretation in the exhibitions and distribution of leaflets and maps.

## 10 Local projects

- ◆ The Galilee Chapel, Llantwit Major (*right*). In 2010 the Heritage Lottery Fund awarded a second phase grant to the Galilee Chapel project to restore the chapel and transform it into a centre of learning and research into Celtic Christianity in Wales.

The church is believed to be Britain's earliest centre of learning, established by St Illtud as a monastic school. The project will renovate the chapel as a centre of education and as a museum for one of the finest collections of Celtic stones in Wales.





## Individual Sites - accessibility and other details where known

### *Caerleon*

- ◆ Easy wheelchair access to Museum; car park by Roman Amphitheatre
- ◆ Museum open 10.00 to 17.00, Monday to Saturday, 14.00 to 17.00, Sunday.

### *Caerwent*

- ◆ Good access into church with ramp at entrance; car park at west end of village for Roman site tour; small car park for church

### *St Arvan's Church*

- ◆ Easy wheelchair access to church; parking in road next to church
- ◆ Open when visited

### *Llandaff Cathedral*

- ◆ Steps and ramps into the church; car parking near cathedral and access paths to main entrances
- ◆ Open 9.00 to 18.00 Monday to Saturday; services on Sunday.
- ◆ Collection of information sheets in many languages; shop / information area; very helpful volunteers

### *Llandough Church*

- ◆ Car park across road with fairly easy access to church; pillar cross in churchyard.
- ◆ Locked at time of visit

### *Llancarfan*

- ◆ Parking in road next to church.
- ◆ No access at time of visit as church undergoing restoration, including a series of medieval frescos found recently

### *Church of St Illtud, Llantwit Major*

- ◆ Easy wheelchair access at eastern end to main entrance; car parking in roads around the church
- ◆ Locked at time of visit
- ◆ Current metal plaques will be augmented by interpretation and learning centre following HLF funded restoration of the Galilee Chapel

### *St Teilo's Church, Merthyr Mawr*

- ◆ Easy access to collection of stones at rear of church; car parking near church along narrow lane with flat path to church
- ◆ Interpretation panel explaining the history of the stones

## 15 Pilgrimage destinations

In our foreword, we identified several sites as important pilgrimage destinations since medieval times:

- ◆ Bardsey Island
- ◆ Holywell
- ◆ Pennant Melangell
- ◆ St David's
- ◆ Ramsey Island

Each has its own characteristics and each continues to attract pilgrims today. For many people of faith, going on a pilgrimage is an important way of proclaiming their beliefs but, as in medieval times - if we are to believe even a little of Geoffrey Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* - it also provides like-minded company and, if undertaken at least partly on foot or bicycle, healthy activity as well. For this reason, as we suggested in the interpretive sub-themes in Chapter 9, following pilgrimage routes has a wider constituency than simply those of confirmed religious affiliation.

From later sources, it is clear that sites associated with the Celtic saints attracted pilgrims from early Medieval times, but documented evidence came later and it was only in later medieval times that routes and pilgrimage were recorded. Many pilgrims on their way to shrines visited monasteries on the way as there they could find overnight accommodation and food - ecclesiastical B&Bs. The Cistercian Way, a recently-defined route for modern-day pilgrims, incorporates many of the former monasteries which are now the focus of evocative monastic landscapes, such as Strata Florida.

### *Bardsey Island*

Bardsey Island remains one of the most popular destinations for pilgrims for a number of reasons. It is, of course, a most important site associated with the Celtic saints and one which pilgrims have visited for many hundreds of years. It is reached through the attractive Llŷn Peninsula where, in addition, there are many other sites with associations with Celtic saints.

We have used the Llŷn Peninsula, including Bardsey Island, as one of our 'cluster studies', set out in Chapter 14.

### *Holywell*

St Winefride's Well at Holywell is not only a 'memorial' to a Celtic saint, it is also a shrine recognised by the Roman Catholic Church and remains a much-visited site of pilgrimage. The story of St Winefride (Gwenfrewi), referred to in Chapter 5, is full of all the ingredients that make legends so powerful but she was a real person and the well has been a place of pilgrimage and healing since early Medieval times.

The present building housing the well dates from the sixteenth century and is listed as Grade 1 for its architectural merit and interest. There is also an interpretive exhibition and an audio-trail and the site is open all year.

### *Pennant Melangell*

There has been a church at Pennant Melangell for over 1200 years and it stands in a peaceful setting in the Tanat Valley, deep in the Berwyn Mountains. Parts of the building date from the twelfth century. The fifteenth century carved oak screen tell the colourful story of St Melangell who is the patron saint of hares as a result of her encounter with Prince Brochwel. The church is noted for its unique twelfth century shrine of the saint. The church is listed Grade 1 and there are various publications available in it.

St Melangell's Church has always been a pilgrims' church and the nearby Saint Melangell Centre is a Christian retreat.

### *St David's*

St David's is a prime destination for pilgrims and has been since early medieval times. In 1123, Pope Calixtus II authorised St David's, and Santiago di Compostella, as major centres for pilgrimage - two journeys to either equalled one to Rome! Henry II of England came to St David's on his way to conquer Ireland. From then on, the cult of St David flourished, even after the Reformation partly because of its association with Welsh nationhood. With the 900th anniversary of papal authorisation in 2023, plans are afoot to develop the network of pilgrim routes to St David's.

Close to St David's are St Non's Well and Chapel and St Patrick's Chapel, both of which are usually included in pilgrimages to St David's, its Cathedral and other monuments. References to the Saints and Stones Group's proposal are given in Chapter 7.

### *Ramsey Island*

The island is the hermitage island of St David, Ynys Dewi, and reached by boat in the summer (limited sailings in winter) from near St David's. Visitors can see St Justinian's Chapel from the harbour on the way.

## 16 Visitor packages

One of the requirements of the brief is to propose a number of total visitor packages covering pre-visit decision information, welcome, orientation, inspirational visit guidance and encouragement to visitors to explore further.

Our proposals for interpretive media incorporate all these elements in different ways:

**National (and area) websites** should include:

- ◆ Adequate pre-visit information including sources of further information from routes and accommodation to specific places of interest
- ◆ Over-arching inspirational visit guidance
- ◆ Overall encouragement to explore further and sources of information to support this guidance

**National (and area) interpretive maps** should include:

- ◆ Overall pre-visit information including sources of further information - particularly the related websites which will be more detailed in this respect
- ◆ Implicit welcome
- ◆ General orientation with clear maps and sources of further information
- ◆ Clearly-articulated inspirational visit guidance
- ◆ Embodied encouragement to explore further with sources of information to support this
- ◆ Information or sources of information on opening times of churches etc and operation of ferry services

**Interpretive panels** should include:

- ◆ Implicit welcome
- ◆ Well-articulated stories appropriate to the site
- ◆ Guidance for further visiting directly relevant to the site or story

**Interpretive seats** should include:

- ◆ Implicit welcome
- ◆ Well-articulated mini-stories / quotations etc appropriate to the site

**National and local support services** should include:

- ◆ *Cymynrodd y Seintiau Celtaidd / The Legacy of the Celtic Saints* hubs providing a welcome to visitors, further orientation, information, interpretation and guidance
- ◆ Inclusion of appropriate guidance information, introductory interpretation and encouragement to explore, in national or regional publications and websites

produced by tourism partnerships and similar groups, broadcasting and faith organisations etc

- ◆ Inclusion of appropriate welcome, orientation, visit guidance, interpretation and encouragement to explore in any material designed for digital downloading either from websites or other sources
- ◆ Provision of appropriate information and interpretation in churches, at pilgrimage and monastic sites, and other faith-linked venues
- ◆ Guided tours and other activities such as faith-based workshops near locations associated with Celtic saints and pilgrimage

## Working with others

However, one of the challenges of interpreting the legacy of the Celtic saints is that the overall story is dispersed in time, geography and personalities and, except in areas where there is considerable ‘density’ of material - and obvious landscape appeal, such as the area round St David’s, or those chosen for our cluster studies, is not easy to package in a way that provides a compelling attraction in its own right.

Our proposals for national and area websites and interpretive maps (with appropriate digital spin off in downloads etc) will provide much of the required package, particularly when linked with other sources of information relating to visitor facilities. Other media suggested above will support these two key mechanisms.

Although all the interpretive mechanisms we have proposed will help to provide ‘packages’ for visitors, we believe that many people within and visiting Wales are more likely to incorporate their interest in the Celtic saints with other attractions and activities and, for that reason, we believe that much of the success of this overall project will depend upon its being integrated with the promotional, informational and interpretive work that is more general, whether on a national, regional or local basis - as we have suggested earlier

This would be also be apposite in the cases of the two other projects related to *Spiritual and Inspirational Landscapes* - those concerned with *Monastic Landscapes* in particular and with *Artistic Responses to the Landscape*. Working in association with these other projects and with the wider promotion and interpretation of the landscape in Wales, will provide a broader context for *Cymynrodd y Seintiau Celtaidd / The Legacy of the Celtic Saints* which can only be to the advantage of that project and to the wider appreciation of Wales as a whole.

## 16.1 Compiling packages

When considering the compilation of specific regional or local packages within the overall narrative of *Cymynrodd y Seintiau Celtaidd / The Legacy of the Celtic Saints*, we suggest that the organisations responsible should:

- ◆ Use existing sources to assemble the names of saints who are associated with the area; the information in Appendix A will be helpful in this respect.

- ◆ Ensure that the information collected is clearly identified as legend or folk history, or obtained from documents produced after the time of the saints
- ◆ Agree the specific interpretive and marketing aims of the package within the overall narrative of *Cymynrodd y Seintiau Celtaidd / The Legacy of the Celtic Saints*
- ◆ Decide which of the four themes is or are most appropriate for the package
- ◆ Select the principal or most evocative stories and associated places to illustrate the themes, with particular reference to what residents and locals can go and see
- ◆ Commission, where appropriate, skilled interpretive writers and designers to prepare whatever graphic / printed / digital material is required
- ◆ Commission, where appropriate, contemporary (local) artists to contribute to whatever material is produced or to produce public art
- ◆ Ensure that distribution of printed or digital material is considered in advance and supplies / content kept updated

## 16.2 Wider links

Using different funding sources relating the international cooperation, it could be possible to develop joint packages with interests in Brittany and Ireland to present a wider picture of the Celtic saints, emphasise the links many of them had with countries other than their own and promote opportunities for people to explore the stories in combination with visits to other nations.

## 17 Potential partnerships

Cadw has been charged with the overall responsibility for developing this and related interpretation plans but, for a variety of reasons, will not be in a position to implement the proposals on its own. It will look to other organisations with complementary interests to bid for funding to undertake interpretive initiatives or simply to adopt the principles within their own work.

The range of bodies which, potentially, could play a part is considerable and the list below identifies a range of them. We propose that those identified with [H] would act as *Cymynrodd y Seintiau Celtaidd / The Legacy of the Celtic Saints* hubs where staff could also act as *Speakers for the Saints*.

### *National organisations*

- ◆ Bangor University
- ◆ Bible Society
- ◆ Church in Wales
- ◆ Church Tourism Network Wales
- ◆ National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth [H]
- ◆ National Museum of Wales, Cardiff [H]
- ◆ University of Wales Trinity / Trinity Saint David

### *Regional organisations*

- ◆ Brecon Beacons National Park Authority
- ◆ Ceredigion County Council
- ◆ Clwyd-Powis Archaeological Trust
- ◆ Dyfed Archaeological Trust
- ◆ Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust
- ◆ Gwynedd Archaeological Trust
- ◆ Gwynedd Museum and Art Gallery, Bangor [H]
- ◆ Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority
- ◆ Snowdonia National Park Authority
- ◆ South West Wales organisations
- ◆ Wrexham Open Churches Network

In addition, there are many websites that play a part in presenting and interpreting the Celtic saints, sacred places and pilgrims' paths.

## 18 Monitoring and evaluation

As a precursor to monitoring and evaluation of interpretation, it is important to set targets and performance measures, not least to give yardsticks against which to judge performance. However, in the case of this interpretation plan, this presents a number of challenges:

Many of the proposals in the plan relate to actions and activities which cannot easily be measured. For example:

- ◆ As we said in our introductory sections, this plan deals with a mix of aesthetics and perceptions, neither of which are easy to monitor, let alone measure
- ◆ References to Celtic saints, sacred places and pilgrims' paths in tourism promotional material are likely to encourage visitors as much to areas as to specific sites, and many sites, even then, will have no formal admissions perimeter or visitor counts.
- ◆ It is notoriously difficult to determine the more personal thoughts and reactions of visitors (including local people) to Celtic saints and sacred places, and therefore constructing a data base against which to measure future research will be problematic and expensive, as will the later research itself.
- ◆ The manner in which a variety of organisations may implement all or parts of this plan is likely to be extremely varied, to include as target markets visitors and / or local people, and to be linked to, or integrated with, other activities which will make largely impossible any monitoring and evaluation, in isolation, of the plan's effectiveness.

There appears to be no detailed knowledge of tourists' (or local people's) interests or detailed evaluation of their intellectual satisfaction from visits to specific or generic sites. Motivations and principal attractions are surveyed but they are so general as to be of little assistance in the case of this plan and its implementation.

### *Monitored sites*

Where specific visitor sites are involved, such as archaeological remains or historic buildings, then there would be opportunities to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the plan although, even there, disaggregating the 'Celtic saints and sacred places' element from other motivations and satisfactions will present challenges of their own. Where the plan forms a part of other activities, it may be possible to attribute any success to the impetus provided by the plan or to specific elements within it.

However, where new interpretive media are created and installed, whether in physical or digital form, then there are mechanisms for judging their success which should be put in place. These include.

- ◆ Pre-testing of new interpretive media from graphic panels, installations, printed material, websites and digitally-downloaded material.



- ◆ Monitoring of the use of such interpretive media (including use by different audiences and those with accessibility challenges).
- ◆ Evaluation of the use of different media.
- ◆ Evaluation of the interpretive approach as a whole.

There are many methods that can be used to undertake each of these activities and we identify a number of them below. The list is not exhaustive but indicates some of the methods that can be employed to take stock of different elements of the interpretive approach. Wherever possible, pre-change data should be obtained in order to provide for immediate comparisons and to establish base lines of ‘graphs’ for continued monitoring and evaluation.

## 18.1 Pre-testing

Pre-testing is something that many organisations fail to do because ‘deadlines’ are cited as the need to get things on the ground, or out in the public domain. On the principle of ‘getting it right, rather than getting it now’, we advocate strongly that Cadw, and / or its partners in implementing this plan, test out new media before committing final expenditure and implementation work. A further benefit of this approach is in ensuring that the local community is given a chance to feed into the development process both by commenting and by participating.

In terms of printed and similar material, this process is now simpler and cheaper with the availability of computer-derived artwork that can be produced inexpensively and, in the case of printed material, easily circulated. In the case of interpretive panels or similar media the artwork can be laminated to last for the brief period necessary. Reactions can be sought from selected or random users / viewers, from ‘focus groups’ or otherwise chosen groups of people, or by other means that ensure wide pre-implementation appraisal and approval.

With any sound stores, or downloaded audio / video tours, sample scripts or ‘sound bites’ should be tested by visitors and local people over a period to ensure, as far as possible, that they meet their expectations of a visit as well as promoting the promoter’s aspirations. The same applies to websites, DVDs etc.

## 18.2 Monitoring

Once media are in place, then monitoring their use and / or success can be done in a variety of ways, often in conjunction with evaluation. For example, the following largely quantitative checks could be instituted:

- ◆ Maintaining accurate checks of questions asked - and the type of questioners - as well as of material issued and advice given at tourist information centres and site admission points
- ◆ Maintaining accurate records of printed material distributed and replenished
- ◆ Maintaining accurate records of publications issued, website ‘hits’ and material downloaded, audio / video tours downloaded and comments made etc

- ◆ Making observation of visitors' and local people's use, behaviour, time spent etc when viewing specific and installed media
- ◆ Making observation of visitors' use of printed material
- ◆ Maintaining records of number of visitors to key sites and special events.

◆

## 18.3 Evaluation

The more time-consuming and, therefore, costly, aspects of the work of appraising success are those that involve qualitative research, which can include:

- ◆ Face-to-face interviewing of visitors (and local people) at key sites, using interpretive media and / or attending events or guided walks / tours / trips
- ◆ Distribution of questionnaires for self-completion
- ◆ Use of focus groups, private and public meetings etc.
- ◆ Analysis of questions asked and answered (or not) by visitors at tourist information centres and key sites
- ◆ Analysis of unsolicited written communications by email, letter or otherwise

The depth of analysis of visitors' and local people's perceptions and reactions goes beyond any conventional tourism survey which seldom if ever cover interpretation, although many comments may have a bearing upon interpretation, or the lack of it. However, evaluation of this plan's implementation would make a suitable subject for a piece of more academic research.

Few organisations undertake any or more limited monitoring and evaluation of interpretation and only occasional pre-testing is undertaken. In a commercial environment, such appraisal of the potential success, as well as actual success, of a product would be undertaken as part of the overall marketing function. The same should be done by any organisation responsible for spending substantial sums on activities of public benefit.

Pre-testing, monitoring and evaluation will provide essential data and anecdotal material that will inform the development of the interpretive approach and guide it throughout its implementation over succeeding years. It is recommended that Cadw, and / or its partners, dedicate appropriate time and resources to the evaluation process in order to determine those initiatives that are successful in developing and maintaining the audience for Celtic saints, sacred places and pilgrims' paths. This will help to ensure that resources can continue to be effectively targeted.

## 19 Appendices

The following appendices are referred to in the text:

- ◆ Relevant sources
- ◆ The brief in full

### Appendix A: Relevant sources

Two sets of sources are appended, one relating to the archaeology of the saints (provided by Professor Nancy Edwards) and the saints (provided by Dr Jonathan Wooding).

#### The archaeology of the saints

##### *General on Wales c AD 400-1100*

Davies, W., 1982, *Wales in the early middle ages*, Leicester

Arnold, C. J. and Davies, J. L., 2000 *Roman and Early Medieval Wales*

Redknap, M. 1991, *The Christian Celts, Treasures of late Celtic Wales*, Cardiff

##### *Christianity and the Church*

Petts, D., 2009, *The Early Medieval Church in Wales*, Stroud

Edwards, N. (ed), 2009, *The Archaeology of the Early Medieval Celtic Churches*, Leeds

Edwards, N. and Lane, A. (eds), 1992, *The Early Church in Wales and the West*, Oxford

Victory, S., 1977, *The Celtic Church in Wales*

Thomas, C., 1971, *The Early Christian Archaeology of North Britain*

Petts, D., 2003, *Christianity in Roman Britain*, Stroud

Edwards, N., 1996, Identifying the archaeology of the early church in Wales and Cornwall, in J. Blair and C. Pyrah (eds), *Church Archaeology, Research Directions for the Future*, York, 49-62

James, H., 1993, The cult of St David in the middle ages, in M. Carver (ed), *In Search of Cult*, Woodbridge, 105-112

##### *Art*

Lord, P., 2003, *The Visual Culture of Wales: Medieval Vision*, Cardiff, Chs 1-2

##### *Sculpture and inscriptions*

Redknap, M. and Lewis, J. M., 2007, *A Corpus of Early Medieval Inscribed Stones and Stone Sculpture in Wales, Vol I, South East Wales and the English Border*, Cardiff

Edwards, N., 2007, *A Corpus of Early Medieval Inscribed Stones and Stone Sculpture in Wales, Vol II, South West Wales*, Cardiff

Edwards, N., 2013, *A Corpus of Early Medieval Inscribed Stones and Stone Sculpture in Wales, Vol III, North Wales*, Cardiff

Nash-Williams, V. E., 1950, *The Early Christian Monuments of Wales*, Cardiff

### *Holy Wells*

Bord, J. and C., 1985, *Sacred Waters, Holy Wells and Water Lore in Britain and Ireland*, London

Cope, P., 2008, *Well Kept Secrets, New photographs of the holy wells of Wales*, Brigend

*'Celtic Christianity' - up to present day*

Bradley, I., 1999, *Celtic Christianity, Making myths and chasing dreams*, Edinburgh

Meek, D. E., 2000, *The Quest for Celtic Christianity*, Edinburgh

### *Pennant Melangell*

*Montgomeryshire Collections*, 82, 1994, collection of articles about this iconic site.

## The saints

### *1. Gildas, Ruin of Britain (sixth century).*

Winterbottom, M. (ed and transl), *Gildas* (Chichester: Phillimore, 1980)

Williams, H. (ed.), *Gildas* (1899) online at Christian Classics Ethereal Library, [http://www.ccel.org/ccel/pearse/morefathers/files/gildas\\_01\\_intro.htm](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/pearse/morefathers/files/gildas_01_intro.htm)

Describes:

Martyrs at Caerleon

Dissolute kings, some historical figures

### *2. Gildas, Letter to Finnian (sixth century)*

Winterbottom, M. (ed and transl), *Gildas* (Chichester: Phillimore, 1980)

Williams, H. (ed.), *Gildas* (1899) online at Christian Classics Ethereal Library [http://www.ccel.org/ccel/pearse/morefathers/files/gildas\\_01\\_intro.htm](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/pearse/morefathers/files/gildas_01_intro.htm)

Describes distinction between 'worldly' and 'desert' monastery, reflected later in *clas* model

Likely direct reference to St David's rule

References to this letter in Irish collections of Canon Law and in Columbanus' letter to Pope Gregory the Great in AD 600

### *3. Life of St Samson (seventh or eighth century)*

Taylor, T. (transl), *The Life of St Samson* (SPCK, 1925) reprinted by Llanerch

Taylor translation available online at Trinity Saint David website, Celtic Christianity e-library (down at the moment, soon back online - will be linked off my webpage

<http://www.trinitysaintdavid.ac.uk/en/schooloftheologyreligioustudiesandislamicstudies/staff/drjonathanwooding/>

Describes:

Monastery at Llantwit Major

Distinction between 'worldly' and 'desert' monastery

Caldey Island monastery

St Kew monastery in Cornwall

Church in Brittany

#### ***4. Rhygyfarch, Life of St David (c. 1090)***

Translations of longer (earlier) text:

Wade-Evans, A.W., *Life of St David* (London: SPCK, 1923)

Sharpe, R and Davies, J.R. in Wooding and Evans (ed.), *St David of Wales - Cult, Church and Nation* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2007).

Sources from St David's include early rule, almost identical to that used by Gildas

Account of early Synod at (Llanddewi) Brefi that may be partly historical

References to St David's and Henfynyw sites

Important manuscripts survive from family of Rhygyfarch at Llanbadarn

#### ***5. Life of St Elgar***

Translations:

Rees, W.J. (ed and transl), *The Book of Llandaff* (on Celtic Christianity e-library)

By Jankulak, K. and Wooding, J. M, in Wooding, J. M. (ed.), *Solitaries, Pilgrims and 20,000 Saints* (Lampeter 2010).

Describes:

Process of becoming a hermit

Process of identification of relics

Inner spirituality of British hermit

#### ***6. Confession of Patrick***

White, N. (transl), *St Patrick* (1919) - available online

Hood, A.B. (transl), *St Patrick* (Chichester: Phillimore, 1978)

O'Loughlin, T., *Exploring St Patrick* (London: DLT, 2005)

First-hand account of labours of fifth-century Briton, of Roman descent, in Ireland.

Evidence of inner spirituality of post-Roman British Christian.

Some possible further sources to explore:

*Antiphonary of Bangor*

Early monastic liturgical collection from near where Finnian worked, evidence of monastic office of possible comparable type to Wales

Penitential of Finnian

Foundational manual of penance by a British monk (sixth cent)

Llandaff Charters

#### ***In preparation***

Jankulak, K. and Wooding, J.M., *Early Christianity in Celtic Britain* (SPCK, 2011), which is a set of extracts and discussion of most of the above.

Wooding, J.M., *Saints and the Sea in the Celtic Lands* (Cardiff: UWP, 2012)

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- Pryce, H. (ed. and transl.), *Acts of the Welsh Rulers 1120-1283* (Cardiff, 2005)
- Taylor, T. (transl), *The Life of St Samson* (SPCK, 1925) reprinted by Llanerch
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- Wade-Evans, A. *Life of St David* (London: SPCK, 1923)
- White, N. (transl), *St Patrick* (1919) - available online
- Williams, H. (ed.), *Gildas* (1899)
- Winterbottom, M. (ed and transl), *Gildas* (Chichester: Phillimore, 1980)
- Wooding, J.M., 'Island and coastal churches in medieval Wales and Ireland', in Jankulak, K and Wooding, J.M. (eds), *Ireland and Wales in the Middle Ages* (Dublin, 2007), pp. 201-28, pp. 207-8.

## Appendix B: The brief in full

### Celtic Saints, spiritual places and pilgrimage Interpretation Plan

#### Summary

Cadw, the Welsh Assembly Government's historic environment service is seeking quotations to produce an interpretation plan for the sites associated with the Celtic saints, spiritual places and pilgrimage.

#### Context

After a major review of the interpretative provision at its 127 sites across Wales, Cadw is developing an overarching interpretation strategy for its estate. Cadw is also leading on the implementation of a significant Heritage Tourism Project, part-funded by the EU Convergence Programme. Consequently, Cadw is developing a pan-Wales Heritage Interpretation Plan.

The Plan will focus on a number of chronological and/or thematic story strands which create a cohesive picture of the story of the Welsh historic environment. One story strand concerns the *Spiritual and inspirational landscapes* and this headline story has been subdivided into three interconnected story strands. These are: *Celtic saints, spiritual places and pilgrimage*, *Churches, chapels and monastic landscapes* and *Artistic responses to the landscape*.

The interpretation plan for the story strand for *Celtic saints, spiritual places and pilgrimage* should detail how the stories of the Celtic saints, spiritual places and pilgrimage can be told.

Although Christianity arrived in Wales with the Romans it was not widely adopted until the sixth century AD when it was re-introduced by an influx of missionary monks from Ireland and continental Europe. Most early monastic sites have been lost, but the names of the saints have lived on as place names and through associations with special places, many of which later became the foci of pilgrimage trails.

The plan should detail how the stories the Celtic saints, spiritual places and pilgrimage can be told at individual sites and through visitor oriented packages. Two areas in which the stories can focus have been identified as Pembrokeshire and NW Wales.

Plans for the *Churches, chapels and monastic landscapes* and *Artistic responses to the landscape* will be commissioned separately through the Interpretative Framework.

The contractor will need to be aware of the wider context, historically and geographically in which their proposals need to sit and of the significance this aspect of Welsh history continues to have in contemporary culture and thinking.

#### Requirements

Cadw needs an interpretation plan for the theme of 'Celtic saints, spiritual places and pilgrimage'. The interpretation plan needs to:

- ◆ Identify the key elements of the story of Celtic saints, spiritual places and pilgrimage and the key sites or destinations which can help bring that story alive. Note: some sites identified may be problematic in terms of general public access and some will certainly pose challenges for people with disabilities. These issues and, where feasible, suggestions as to how to address them, should be highlighted in the Plan.
- ◆ Propose strong interpretive themes and relevant stories.
- ◆ Be firmly grounded in historical fact.
- ◆ Offer interpretation proposals which acknowledge each site's unique qualities and deliver interpretation which makes each site a 'complete visit' in itself.
- ◆ Propose, in addition, an appropriate number of total visitor packages, covering pre-visit decision information; welcome; orientation; inspirational visit; a desire to explore further.

- ◆ Propose interpretation which is focused on a broad audience base, from special interest to the family holiday market. Note: information about the existing visitor profile will be made available by Cadw and relevant Tourism Partnerships; the potential to attract new audiences, including special and local interests, is also a factor.
- ◆ Propose interpretation which is participative and involves the audience.

Note: Some of the sites in question are unstaffed and some are often open to extreme weather conditions. The proposals need to be realistic in terms of audience and use media appropriate to the site, the story and the audience.

## Outputs

Cadw requires an Interpretative Plan for Celtic saints, spiritual places and pilgrimage by 27th March 2011. A first draft would be required for comment by early Feb 2010.. The Plan will:

- ◆ Recommend how to tell the story of Celtic saints, spiritual places and pilgrimage; to identify the sites key to telling that story; and analyse the key audiences.
- ◆ Propose interpretative interventions appropriate to the target audiences and the sites in question.
- ◆ Identify key themes and sub-themes.
- ◆ Comprise interpretative planning for individual sites, the relationship between sites and the wider *Spiritual and inspirational landscapes* story strand and other interconnected plans.
- ◆ Recommend means of motivating visitors to the site/s and to explore further.
- ◆ Acknowledge that some sites may have a story to tell relating to more than one of the proposed headline story strands. In such cases interpretative proposals may need to take account of other strands or topic areas.
- ◆ Recommend evaluation and monitoring techniques to measure the effectiveness and use of the interpretation in line with interpretative objectives.

## Deliverables

The consultant will need to:

- ◆ Familiarise themselves with the key sources relating to the story strand and the interpretation and tourism developments relevant to the project. Information will be made available by the client, but the contractor may also need to obtain access to additional historical reference material.
- ◆ Engage in dialogue and discussion with heritage and tourism interests relevant to the subject area and the locality.
- ◆ Engage in dialogue, liaison and negotiation with other organisations and/or consultants undertaking other interpretation or heritage promotion projects.
- ◆ Work in association with an expert relevant to the story strand.
- ◆ Embrace Cadw's conservation and interpretation principles.
- ◆ Meet with a steering group, led by Cadw, drawn from regional heritage and tourism interests, at agreed milestones during the commission and present the completed plan and recommendations to the steering group and, if deemed appropriate, an invited audience of sector interests.

Cadw

1 October 2010