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Dublin Core

Title

St Bride's Bay, Pembrokeshire | Bae Sain Ffrêd, Sir Benfro

Subject

St Brigid

Churches

Stained Glass

Creator

Martin Crampin

Publisher

Ports, Past and Present Project

Date

2023

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Relation

<https://perma.cc/LT4K-CPSK>

Language

English and Welsh

Coverage

51.75469658319399, -5.185414753424805

Curatescape Story Item Type Metadata

Title (Welsh)

Bae Sain Ffrêd, Sir Benfro

Lede

A medieval church in Pembrokeshire and the large bay to the north bears the name of a famous Irish saint.

Lede (Welsh)

Mae eglwys ganoloesol yn Sir Benfro a'r bae mawr i'r gogledd wedi'u henwi ar ôl santes enwog o Iwerddon.

Story

Medieval churches that appear to have been dedicated to the Irish saint Brigid, Bride or Ffraid can be found across most parts of Wales. The large west facing haven known as St Bride's Bay in Pembrokeshire seems to have been known by versions of the name since the sixteenth century, and a church to the south of the bay was dedicated to the saint by at least the mid-thirteenth century.

The veneration of Brigid of Kildare at the western edge of Wales suggests Irish influence that was evident in the area much earlier in the post-Roman period, when Irish Ogham stones demonstrated Irish settlement in south-west Wales.

Samuel Lewis recorded that a chapel stood on the beach near the church in the 1830s, which had been appropriated as a salting-house for the herring fishery that had thrived there in the previous century. The chapel has been lost to the sea, along with burials at the site. Its proximity to the sea, and subsequent loss, mirrors the chapel dedicated to Ffraid at Tywyn-y-Capel near Holyhead, which was finally swept away in 1868.

The present church at St Brides, which is still dedicated to her, is substantially medieval, and was restored in 1868. An image of the patron can be found in the west window of 1892, alongside another of St David.

The series of six windows on the north and south walls of the nave were given as a memorial to William Edwardes, fourth baron Kensington, and his son William, fifth baron Kensington. The fifth baron acquired St Brides Castle, which can be seen from the churchyard, in 1899. Large crosses in the churchyard mark graves of the family, the largest of which commemorates the fourth baron and his wife, Grace Elizabeth Johnstone-Douglas, Lady Kensington, who died in 1910. She provided, along with her daughters, a figure of St Ffraid for the east window of the Church of St Katharine, Milford Haven. Unusually, each of the five figures made for the window was given by different donors.

The Chapel of St Non was built adjacent to the ruined medieval chapel above the cliffs on the north coast of St Bride's Bay in 1934, close to St Davids. Brigid or Ffraid is included among the four saints commissioned for windows on the north and south side of the church, with St David, St Brynach and St Gwenfrewy, or Winefride. Ffraid is shown holding fish – sparlings – that she changed from rushes according to a twelfth-century tradition known from the Life

of St Modwenna. At St Brides she is shown with a lamp, recalling the perpetual fire maintained at Kildare, and at Milford Haven she is shown with a cow, as she churned milk and made butter to give to the poor.

Story (Welsh)

Mae eglwysi canoloesol y mae'n ymddangos eu bod wedi'u cysegru i'r santes Wyddelig Brigid, Bride neu Ffraid yn Gymraeg, i'w cael ar draws y rhan fwyaf o Gymru. Mae'n ymddangos bod yr hafan fawr sy'n wynebu'r gorllewin, o'r enw Bae Sain Ffrêd yn Sir Benfro, yn cael ei hadnabod yn ôl fersiynau o'r enw yma ers yr unfed ganrif ar bymtheg, ac roedd eglwys i'r de o'r bae wedi'i chysegru i'r santes erbyn canol y drydedd ganrif ar ddeg o leiaf.

Mae parch tuag at Brigid o Gildara ar lannau'r Gorllewin yn awgrymu dylanwad Gwyddelig a oedd yn amlwg yn yr ardal yn llawer cynharach yn y cyfnod ôl-Rufeinig, pan fo cerrig Ogam Gwyddelig yn dangos bod Gwyddelod wedi setlo yn y De-orllewin.

Cofnododd Samuel Lewis fod yna gapel ar y traeth ger yr eglwys yn y 1830au, a hwnnw wedi'i droi'n dŷ halen ar gyfer y bysgodfa benwaig a oedd wedi ffynnu yno yn y ganrif flaenorol. Mae'r capel wedi ei golli i'r môr, ynghyd â chladdedigaethau ar y safle. Mae ei agosrwydd at y môr, a'r golled ddilynol, yn adlewyrchu'r capel a gysegrwyd i Ffraid yn Nhywynycapel ger Caergybi, a gafodd ei ysgubo i ffwrdd o'r diwedd ym 1868.

Mae'r eglwys bresennol yn Sain Ffrêd, sy'n dal wedi'i chysegru iddi, yn ganoloesol i raddau helaeth, ac fe'i hadferwyd ym 1868. Gellir gweld delwedd o'r nawddsant yn ffenestr orllewinol 1892, ochr yn ochr ag un arall o Ddewi Sant.

Rhoddwyd y gyfres o chwe ffenestr ar furiau gogleddol a deheuol yr eglwys fel cofeb i William Edwardes, pedwerydd barwn Kensington, a'i fab William, pumed barwn Kensington. Prynodd y pumed barwn Gastell Sain Ffrêd, sydd i'w weld o'r fynwent, ym 1899. Mae croesau mawr yn y fynwent yn nodi beddau'r teulu, gyda'r mwyaf ohonynt yn coffâu'r pedwerydd barwn a'i wraig, Grace Elizabeth Johnstone-Douglas, Arglwyddes Kensington, a fu farw ym 1910. Darparodd hi, ynghyd â'i merched, ffigwr o'r Santes Ffraid ar gyfer ffenestr ddwyreiniol Eglwys y Santes Catrin, Aberdaugleddau. Yn anarferol, cafodd pob un o'r pum ffigur a wnaed ar gyfer y ffenestr eu rhoi gan roddwyr gwahanol.

Adeiladwyd Capel y Santes Non gerllaw'r capel canoloesol adfeiliedig uwchben y clogwyni ar arfordir gogleddol Bae Sain Ffrêd ym 1934, yn agos i Dyddewi. Mae Ffraid wedi'i chynnwys ymhlith y pedwar sant a gomisiynwyd ar gyfer ffenestri ar ochr ogleddol a deheuol yr eglwys, gyda Dewi Sant, Brynach Sant a'r Santes Gwenfrewi. Dangosir Ffraid yn dal pysgod – brwyniaid – roedd hi wedi'u creu o frwyn yn ôl traddodiad o'r ddeuddegfed ganrif a geir ym Muchedd y Santes Modwenna. Yn Sain Ffrêd mae'n cael ei dangos gyda lamp, gan gofio'r tân tragwyddol sy'n llosgi yng Nghildara, ac yn Aberdaugleddau fe'i dangosir gyda buwch, gan ei bod yn arfer corddi llaeth a gwneud menyn i'w roi i'r tlodion.

Related Resources

St Bridget, St Brides, Pembrokeshire, Dyfed Archaeological Trust, <https://www.dyfedarchaeology.org.uk/wp/discovery/projects/churches/st-bridget-st-brides-pembrokeshire/>, archived at <https://perma.cc/WQ9C-PZL2>

Cemetery, St Bride's Haven, Coflein, <https://coflein.gov.uk/en/site/544132>, archived at <https://web.archive.org/web/20230613082721/https://coflein.gov.uk/en/site/544132/>

Martin Crampin, *Welsh Saints from Welsh Churches* (Talybont: Y Lolfa, 2023), pp. 188–89

