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Dublin Core

Title

The Chapel of St Ffraid at Trearddur Bay, Holy Island | Capel y Santes Ffraid ym Mae Trearddur, Ynys Gybi

Subject

Trearddur Bay

Saints

Holy Island

Creator

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Relation

<https://perma.cc/8F2S-9NXT>

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English and Welsh

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Curatescape Story Item Type Metadata

Title (Welsh)

Capel y Santes Ffraid ym Mae Trearddur, Ynys Gybi

Lede

A lost chapel dedicated to St Ffraid, or Brigid, on Holy Island indicates the importance of this Irish saint to the area around Holyhead in the Middle Ages.

Lede (Welsh)

Mae capel coll sydd wedi'i gysegru i'r Santes Ffraid ar Ynys Gybi yn dangos pwysigrwydd y santes Wyddelig hon i'r ardal o amgylch Caergybi yn yr Oesoedd Canol.

Story

The shrine of St Cybi at the church in Holyhead was probably the most important saint's cult on Holy Island in the Middle Ages, but other saints were also venerated on Holy Island, the largest island off the coast of Anglesey.

The church at Rhoscolyn to the south of Holy Island appears to have been dedicated to St Gwenfaen, of whom very little is known, and at Tywyn-y-Capel, the location of the present resort of Trearddur Bay, a chapel dedicated to St Ffraid once stood. The bay was formerly known as St Bride's Bay, and an association with the saint is known from place-name evidence dating back to the sixteenth century.

Ffraid is the Welsh name for the saint usually known as Bridget, Brigid or Bride, who is closely associated with Kildare. The chapel dedicated to her on Holy Island stood in ruins on a mound on the beach at Tywyn-y-Capel in the late eighteenth century, and was drawn by the artist Moses Griffith for his master Thomas Pennant in 1776.

The landscape in the drawing is scarcely recognisable now and the chapel, and the mound on which it stood, has been lost to the sea. Burials around the chapel became exposed to the elements and in 1868 the local antiquarian William Owen Stanley reported that the chapel had been completely washed away. A recent excavation of 2003–4 at the site suggested its use from the seventh century until the twelfth century. A bronze penannular brooch of the eighth or ninth century was discovered close to the site in 1980, which is now in the collections of National Museum Wales.

St Ffraid was remembered in the dedication of the new church built at Trearddur Bay in 1930–2. The stone church replaced a temporary wooden church that had been re-erected twice on different sites since being put up for the first time in 1898. An image of Ffraid was included in the east window of the church that was installed in 1940 and made by the artist Christopher Charles Powell.

In the window she stands on a turf of grass that appears to be floating on water. A sixteenth-century poem by the Welsh poet Iorwerth Fynglwyd refers to a tradition that she travelled across the sea from Ireland to Wales on a turf, arriving at the Dyfi estuary in mid-Wales.

Other traditions fix her arrival at Deganwy, close to Llansantffraid Glan Conwy in north Wales, and at Tywyn-y-Capel.

Ffraid holds fire in her right hand, a symbol that refers to the perpetual fire maintained by her nuns at Kildare, as attested by Gerald of Wales in the late twelfth century. The symbol of fire is used on the millennium cross set alongside the promenade at Trearddur Bay, which marks the site of the lost chapel of St Ffraid in the dunes.

Story (Welsh)

Mae'n debyg mai cysegrfa Cybi Sant yn yr eglwys yng Nghaer gybi oedd y pwysicaf o blith y gwahanol saint ar Ynys Gybi yn yr Oesoedd Canol, ond roedd yna saint eraill hefyd yn cael eu mawrygu ar Ynys Gybi, yr ynys fwyaf oddi ar arfordir Ynys Môn.

Mae'n ymddangos bod yr eglwys yn Rhoscolyn i'r de o Ynys Gybi wedi'i chysegru i'r Santes Gwenfaen, nad oes llawer iawn yn hysbys amdani, ac yn Nhywynycapel, lleoliad cyrchfan bresennol Bae Trearddur, roedd yna gapel a gysegrwyd i'r Santes Ffraid ar un adeg. Hen enw'r bae oedd Bae Sain Ffraid, a gwyddys am gysylltiad â'r santes o dystiolaeth enwau lleoedd sy'n dyddio'n ôl i'r unfed ganrif ar bymtheg.

Ffraid yw'r enw Cymraeg ar y santes sydd fel arfer yn cael i galw'n Bridget, Brigid neu Bride yn Saesneg, sydd â chysylltiad agos â Childara. Roedd y capel a gysegrwyd iddi ar Ynys Gybi yn adfeilion ar dwmpath ar y traeth yn Nhywynycapel ar ddiwedd y ddeunawfed ganrif, a chafodd llun ohono ei dynnu gan yr arlunydd Moses Griffith i'w feistr Thomas Pennant ym 1776.

Prin bod modd adnabod y dirwedd yn y darlun erbyn hyn ac mae'r capel, a'r twmpath y safai arno, wedi'u colli i'r môr. Daeth claddedigaethau o gwmpas y capel yn agored i'r elfennau ac ym 1868 adroddodd yr hynafiaethydd lleol William Owen Stanley fod y capel wedi ei olchi i ffwrdd yn llwyr. Roedd cloddiad diweddar yn 2003–4 ar y safle yn awgrymu ei fod yn cael ei ddefnyddio o'r seithfed ganrif hyd y ddeuddegfed ganrif. Darganfuwyd broets bylchgrwn efydd o'r wythfed neu'r nawfed ganrif yn agos i'r safle ym 1980, sydd bellach yng nghasgliad Amgueddfa Genedlaethol Cymru.

Cafodd y Santes Ffraid ei chofio pan gafodd yr eglwys newydd a adeiladwyd ym Mae Trearddur yn 1930–2 ei chysegru. Disodlodd yr eglwys garreg hon eglwys bren dros dro a oedd wedi'i hailgodi ddwywaith ar wahanol safleoedd ers cael ei chodi am y tro cyntaf ym 1898. Cynhwyswyd delwedd o Ffraid yn ffenestr ddwyreiniol yr eglwys a osodwyd ym 1940 a'i gwneud gan yr arlunydd Christopher Charles Powell.

Yn y ffenestr mae hi'n sefyll ar dywarchen sy'n ymddangos fel pe bai'n arnofio ar ddŵr. Mae cerdd o'r unfed ganrif ar bymtheg gan Iorwerth Fynglwyd yn cyfeirio at draddodiad iddi deithio ar draws y môr o Iwerddon i Gymru ar dyweirch, gan gyrraedd aber afon Dyfi yn y Canolbarth. Mae traddodiadau eraill yn dweud iddi gyrraedd Degannwy, yn agos at Lansantffraid Glanconwy, ac yn Nhywynycapel.

Mae Ffraid yn dal tân yn ei llaw dde, sef symbol sy'n cyfeirio at y tân parhaol a gynhelir gan ei lleianod yng Nghildara, fel y tystiwyd gan Gerallt Gymro ar ddiwedd y ddeuddegfed ganrif. Defnyddir symbol tân ar groes y mileniwm sydd wedi'i gosod ochr yn ochr â'r promênad ym Mae Trearddur, sy'n nodi safle capel coll y Santes Ffraid yn y twyni.

Sponsor

Jeanne Mehan

Related Resources

Andrew Davidson, 'Excavations at Tywyn y Capel, Trearddur Bay, Anglesey, 1997 and 2002–03', *Archaeologia Cambrensis* 158 (2009), 167–223,

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Early Medieval copper alloy penannular brooch, National Museum Wales,

<https://museum.wales/collections/online/object/d913d9ad-d1e0-3057-95c3-832240b620ea/Early-Medieval-copper-alloy-penannular-brooch/>, archived at <https://perma.cc/AJ2E-NKFR>

George Lees, *A History of St Ffraid's Church Trearddur Bay* (Trearddur Bay, 2005)

Martin Crampin, *Stained Glass on Holy Island, Anglesey* (Aberystwyth: University of Wales Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies, 2023), p. 14

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