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### Legendary characters

**Princess Nest**, known as 'Helen' of Wales, was born sometime around the end of the 11th century, Princess Nest was the daughter of King Rhys ap Tewder. Her dowry was Carew Castle, where it is said she can still be seen, as a ghostly figure wandering the corridors. In life she was a great beauty. She had 2 husbands and at least 3 lovers. Her many children became some of the most powerful people in Wales and beyond.

**Lord Adam de Rupe or Roche** was the builder of Roch Castle, the most northerly defence on the Landsker line, rising up on a rocky outcrop. In the 13th century he was told by a witch that he would die, not in battle or of old age, but by snake bite. However, should he survive the coming year without being bitten he would live a good long life. The year was coming to an end but the wild wind blew and the weather became bitterly cold. A servant brought in a faggot of wood for his master's fire and laid it before the hearth. But in the warmth of the room Adam fell asleep and an adder that was hibernating amongst the wood slid out and bit him. The following day his servants found him dead before the dying fire.

### **Gerald of Wales, Giraldus Cambrensis, Gerallt O Gymru**

He was born c 1146 in Manorbiaer, the youngest son of William de Barri and Angharad, daughter of Gerald de Windsor and Nest (daughter of Rhys ap Tewdwr). He was well educated, and in 1172 received a commission from Archbishop Richard to enforce the payment of tithes on wool and cheese in the Diocese of St. Davids. He became archdeacon of Brecon, and after the death of his uncle, the Bishop of St David's in 1176, he was the chapter's favourite candidate to succeed him. But Henry II refused his nomination and chose Peter De Leia, and being very disappointed, Gerald went to Paris for a few years.

He was tasked with rebuilding St Davids Cathedral with De Leia and in 1183 he received office in the king's service, acting largely as a mediator. In 1188 he travelled with Archbishop Baldwin on his tour through Wales recruiting for the third crusade. He was then offered the bishoprics of Bangor and Llandaff and Ferns and Leighlin in Ireland, but he had set his heart on St. Davids. When De Leia died in 1198 the king and the archbishop of Canterbury objected to the appointment of Gerald as bishop even though again he was the chosen favourite of the chapter. Gerald went three times to Rome to plead his case before Pope Innocent III. His connections with Welsh and

Norman nobility, his radical ideas and intellect held him back from taking the most influential diocese in Wales. He died in 1223 in Lincoln and may have been buried at St. Davids.

There are a number of stories connected to Gerald:

In the 12th century, Gerald of Wales was accompanying Archbishop Baldwin as they travelled through Wales, drumming up recruits for the third crusade. In Haverfordwest an old woman, who had been blind for three years, having heard of the Archbishop's arrival sent her son to hear the sermon being preached. She further asked him to bring back some small 'particle', if only a little bit of the fringe of the Archbishop's garment. It was very crowded, the young man was prevented from approaching the Archbishop, so he waited till the assembly was dispersed, and then collected a small piece of the earth on which the preacher had been standing. The mother received the earth with much joy, and immediately fell to her knees. She pressed the turf to her mouth and eyes and because of the goodness of this holy man, plus her own faith and devotion, she recovered the blessing of sight.

Whilst touring Wales in 1188 with the Archbishop and persuading men to join the third crusade, he arrived at Cardigan. After another rousing speech, many stepped forward to take the cross. However one man's wife held onto her husband's cloak and girdle, and publicly prevented him from volunteering. Three nights later, she heard a terrible voice, saying, "Thou hast taken away my servant from me, therefore what thou most lovest shall be taken away from thee." She woke her husband telling him about the frightening voice and both were stricken with terror and amazement. But falling asleep again, she sadly rolled onto her little boy sleeping by her side and suffocated him. The husband related the sad tale to the Bishop and took up the cross, which his wife sewed on her husband's sleeve.

**Gerald de Windsor** was the castellan at Pembroke Castle in 1094. After a furious battle he found himself and his army under siege by Uchtryd ab Edwin and Hywel ap Gronw. The Welsh planned to starve them out, but Gerald was intelligent and resourceful. Supplies of food and water in the castle were very low, but the Welsh were also now in quite a desperate state too. He decided to risk everything with a very bold bluff. He had the remaining 4 pigs slaughtered and thrown over the castle walls, implying that they were very well supplied with food. The following day he sent a messenger to the Bishop at Lamphey, saying that there was no need to send reinforcements for another 4 months as they had plenty of food. He had a messenger take the letter and 'accidentally' drop it near to the Welsh camp. The letter of course went straight to the Welsh leaders who gave up and left, leaving clever Gerald and his men to fight another day!

**William Marshall** was born 1146, trained as a knight with his father's cousin William of Tancarville, hereditary Chamberlain of Normandy and was probably knighted, by his uncle, around 1167. Between 1170 and 1183 William Marshal was head of the military household of Henry son of King Henry II, being responsible for protecting, training and

running the military household of the heir. He was also noted as an undefeated knight in tournaments. He established friendships with powerful and influential men of the day and built himself a reputation as a diplomat and statesman.

After the death of the young Henry, Marshal spent two years fighting in the Holy Land. He swore fealty to Henry II, serving as his knight, counsellor, and ambassador. When Richard I came to the throne, he acknowledged the position and chivalry of Marshal and gave him the heiress Isabel de Clare and all her lands in marriage. Through her, William Marshal had the palatine lordships of **Pembroke** and Striguil in Wales and the lordship of Leinster in Ireland amongst others.

Marshal used what he had learned from various military campaigns and Holy Lands to improve all his castles including the **Great Tower at Pembroke**.

He served King Richard, he supported John as heir to the throne who in turn made him **Earl of Pembroke**. Although subsequently John accused Marshal of being a traitor, and punished him by confiscating his castles and imprisoning two of his sons, Marshal remained loyal to his feudal lord. He encouraged him to sign the Magna Carta and was the epitome of knighthood and chivalry, possibly the greatest knight in Britain at the time.

After John died in 1216, William Marshal was chosen by his peers to act as regent for the nine year old Henry III. His wise council and dealings ensured the restoration of peace during very difficult times and him being regarded as a great statesman till the last years of his life.

**Bill Frost** was apparently working as a carpenter in 1876 when a plank of wood he was carrying, caught by the wind, lifted him off the ground and fuelled the idea of building a flying machine. It was built in a workshop at his home in St. Brides Hill, Saundersfoot and trials undertaken in fields nearby.

Despite his poverty he constructed the Frost Airship, which from his diagrams resembled a vertical take-off plane, with gas-filled tanks. It was described in the Patent as being "propelled into the air by two reversible fans revolving horizontally" and "wings being spread and tilted by means of a lever, causing the machine to float onward and downward."

Frost had obtained a patent on 25 October 1894 (number 1894-20431) and offered his patent to the Secretary of State for War but received a reply that stated "The nation does not intend to adopt aerial navigation as a means of warfare".

Frost made a first flight at Saundersfoot around 24 September 1896. It flew about 500 metres then crashed into bushes, but these were much better results than the Wright brothers achieved in their first powered flight. Although the event was witnessed, it was not recorded and unfortunately during the night following the flight, there was a violent storm, which destroyed his flying machine.

Subsequently he found himself unable to afford the renewal fees for the patent which lapsed four years later. He died without wealth or recognition in 1935 aged eighty-seven.

**Captain George Pond and Lieutenant Cesare Sabelli were flying their** Bellanca aircraft on a return flight from Rome to the USA, having already completed a west –

east crossing. They had been hoping to make a record double crossing of the Atlantic, New York to Rome and back. The journey had been tricky. During the outward journey, they'd had engine problems and landed on the west coast of Ireland, and then Dublin and a precautionary stop at Aberavon. An engineer from Cardiff had enabled them to get to Rome where they were warmly welcomed and received gifts from Mussolini. The return journey was difficult when Carn Ingli 'got in the way'. On a stormy summer's night in 1934 residents around Newport and Carn Ingli were amazed when the aeroplane crashed into the side of the hill. Both had minor injuries, but when knocking at a local farmhouse for help they were given short shrift by the owner who thought they were tramps! The following day however, they were welcomed like heroes!

**Mary Williams** from Treleddyn Farm near Whitesands beach became known as "The Welsh Grace Darling" after a dramatic sea rescue. In about 1790, Mary spotted seven surviving crew members of a Swedish ship that had been wrecked on one of the lesser Bishops. She rowed out alone from Porthselau to rescue them, approximately 4 miles across the Ramsey Sound. The men had more or less given up hope of rescue. Taking them back to Treleddyn, she looked after them until they were all recovered. Treleddyn is now available as a self catering cottage.

**Thomas Howell** and **Thomas Griffith** were stationed on Smalls Lighthouse. Shortly after their arrival Mr. Griffith became unwell, and although his colleague tried to help him, he worsened. A distress signal was set up to try and get the attention of passing ships but after several weeks of suffering, poor Griffith died. Although the signal was seen, the weather continued to be so bad that no one could land. Since both men were known to argue bitterly poor Howell thought he might be accused of murder if he were to throw the body into the sea. Initially he kept the body with him in the confined space of their accommodation, but as time passed and with no help arriving, he constructed a barrel like structure in which he placed his decomposing colleague and moved him to the exterior platform of the lighthouse.

The bad weather continued and eventually further terrible winds smashed the coffin apart. Tied to the railings, the emaciated remains of Thomas Griffith hung for weeks and then months. By all account when the winds blew from a particular direction, it appeared that the dead man was beckoning to his colleague.

Despite the terrible conditions and circumstances, Thomas Howell kept the lighthouse lamp lit but when help finally arrived he was quite mad and barely recognisable.

As a result of his ordeal, it is said that the policy for crewing lighthouses immediately changed, and were always staffed with three people.

**The Rev. David Rees** of Rudbaxton was well known locally for being able to perform miracles. After enduring a particularly hot and dry summer, he apparently prayed for rain at an open air meeting and rain began to fall before the end of it. Also troubled by the noisy antics of pub goers nearby, he prayed for an end to their antics and that night the pub burnt down.

**Captain Charles Colby** of Ffynone died fighting in India. He was sent back for burial in Manordeifi Church but his family were alarmed about the strange shape and size of the

coffin. When they opened it they found the decaying body of a tiger. Sometime after the family received a telegram saying 'Tiger in box, Sahib in Tiger'!

**Hywel Gawr** from Penybenglog Mansion near Eglwysrw was said to have defeated the French King in single combat.

**Samuel Griffiths** of Pointz Castle was one of several people falsely accused of High Treason and conspiring with the French after they landed in Fishguard in 1797. It became apparent during the trial that witnesses had lied and possibly been bribed for their evidence.

**William Nichol**, a protestant martyr, was burnt at the stake in Haverfordwest in 1555. The Martyr Stone once marked the place where this took place but has been removed and erected at the entrance to Dale Castle.

**Thomas Phillips**, also known as **Twyn Waunbwll**, was a well-known character from Glandwr near Crymych. He used to take the Cardi Bach train every Saturday to go to the market at Cardigan. One day, whilst walking to catch the train at Llanglydwen, he sat at the side of the road for a little rest. He then boarded the train and began to feel increasingly uncomfortable. He decided that he must have sat on an ant's nest and took off his trousers to give them a good shake out of the train window. They immediately filled with air and were pulled from his grasp, flying the length of the train. Well there was nothing for it, he had to go to market in his hat, waistcoat, jacket and long johns.

**Huntsman's Leap** is a very interesting coastal feature, not least for the legend surrounding it. It seems that an unfortunate hunter on horseback was galloping across the cliffs and suddenly found himself at the edge of the chasm. With no chance of stopping he is said to have jumped the chasm landing safely on the other side. However on looking back and seeing the great gap that he had jumped, he was said to have died from the shock.

### **Pirates and smugglers**

**John Paul Jones** was one of the best known pirates to have operated around the coast of Pembrokeshire towards the end of the 18th century. He was a great hero of America, regarded as the founder of the American Navy and fought on their behalf during the American War of Independence. He preyed on shipping here, captured boats and their cargoes then took them to obtain prize in France which helped to fund the American cause of independent rule from Britain.

He worked his boat around the Pembrokeshire coast and frequently landed on Caldey to rest and take on fresh water. A little sandy beach on the east side of Caldey Island is called Paul Jones Bay.

Local legend has it, that when Jones died in 1792, his body was pushed into a crevice in the rocks near Small Ord Point on Caldey. They say that on certain dark evenings, the sound of digging can sometimes be heard in Paul Jones Bay, metal on stones, as if a ghostly pirate is burying his ill gotten gain.

One day in 18th century, the people of Tenby were alarmed to see a suspicious looking ship had dropped anchor in the Caldey Roads. It looked like a Man O 'War, but there were no guns visible on her decks. A boat sent to discover the identity of the ship and its purpose received unsatisfactory answers. Fearful of an attack Tenby decided to strike first and a cannon was dragged up to the cliff tops and a few shots were fired. A retired naval man took charge and his first blast sent spray over the deck of the ship. The second knocked away the top mast.

At that, a respectable looking gentleman dressed in black stepped forward and congratulated him on his marksmanship. "Bravo, capital shot, that deserves a glass of brandy, does it not my friends?" said the man to the watching crowd and they cheerfully retired to the nearest inn.

Later that night, the sociable gentleman engaged a boat and crew to take him back to a passing brig, promising them a generous reward. The party set off from the harbour, but as they approached the Woolhouse Rocks, their passenger pulled out a brace of pistols and ordered them to take him to the Man O 'War on the Caldey Roads.

When they reached the ship, they saw that she was ready for sea and the mast repaired. The man in black handed them the agreed fee, as much brandy as they could drink, and bid them tell the people of Tenby how well they had been treated at the hands of John Paul Jones!

**Leekie Porridge** was Jones' accomplice in Tenby and would let him know when a well laden vessel was leaving or arriving at the port and what they were likely to find. Sometimes he would accompany them on their piratical raids. He lived at the north of the town in view of the harbour. His name derives from a local delicacy of chicken and leeks and oats.

When Paul Jones died at the age of 40, Leekie Porridge was out of work and had to revert to his old career, acting as a pilot. One day, he was bringing a boat into the harbour at Tenby, when suddenly the captain of the vessel recognised him from the buckles on his shoes. These were his own silver buckles stolen from him a few months earlier. Very wisely he kept his mouth shut until he was brought back safely into the harbour and then he called for the constable. Leekie was arrested, tried, found guilty and sent to serve out his time on board a Man O'War. He survived this ordeal and returned to live out the rest of his life in Tenby.

On 15 September 1779 John Paul Jones seized a ship that had been at anchor in the harbour at Fishguard. His armed party was sent ashore to demand a ransom of 500 guineas or he threatened to sink the ship. He demanded money from the people of the Upper Town too, threatening them with a bombardment. He fired a few warning shots to reinforce the threat and consequently the money was handed over. It was the actions of Jones that bought into being the little fort at Fishguard.

**Bartholomew Roberts or Barti Ddu** was the most successful pirate during the Golden Age of Piracy. He was born on a farm near Little Newcastle in 1682.

In 1719 whilst off the coast of West Africa, his boat was attacked by pirates, the captain of the boat being Howell Davis from Milford Haven. The men struck up a friendship and Roberts was asked to join the pirates. Initially he refused, but some weeks later Davies and some of the crew were ambushed and killed when going ashore. At this point Roberts was then elected as captain.

Captain Charles Johnson reports him as saying: "In an honest service there is thin commons, low wages, and hard labour. In this, plenty and satiety, pleasure and ease, liberty and power; and who would not balance creditor on this side, when all the hazard that is run for it, at worst is only a sour look or two at choking? No, a merry life and a short one shall be my motto".

(A General History of the Robberies and Murders of the most notorious Pyrates (1724), p.213–214)

During 4 years he captured more than 400 ships and netted about £80 million pounds. He was a teetotaler, tea being his favourite tippie, staunch upholder of the pirate articles, a music lover and captured musicians to entertain him, upholder of the Sabbath. A flamboyant dresser, his penchant for his red damask jacket and finery lead to him being called the "Jolie Rouge" (pretty red) and it has been suggested that this is where the name for the generic pirate flag, the Jolly Roger originated. Eventually in 1722, being so successful and such an embarrassment to the British government, he and his crew were hunted down. He was killed by the first broadside fired.

The pirate **Edward Herberde** captured a ship laden with a cargo of salt that belonged to a Dutchman called Peter Muncke, and placed some of his men aboard to command her. The following night a storm separated the two vessels, and the crew with the cargo took it into Milford Haven to sell the salt. They sent the unhappy Dutch skipper with two of the crew into Pembroke but the Mayor, realised the affair was suspicious, Muncke's face speaking volumes, and managed to have a word about the situation. The Mayor suggested they offer the salt to Sir John Perrot at Carew, and so they all departed for the castle. Sir John was delighted at the chance of obtaining not only the cargo but also a legal swoop that would deprive the pirates of their ships, and he, the Mayor and Dutchman devised a night raid. Two boats put off in the dark, and overwhelmed the pirate vessels. But now in Sir John's possession, the goods were not given back to the Dutchman but rather divided between Sir John, who got the lion's share, five tons of salt going to the Mayor, the ship and her tackle were shared between John Vaughan " the customer," and Richard Vaughan, deputy of Sir William Morgan, Vice-Admiral of South Wales. Muncke received half the salt but then disappeared before the trial of the pirates, who were released. As for Herberde, he lost a further cargo, was deserted by his own men and then terrified by threats made by Sir John, he cut his own throat in his lodging.

Pembrokeshire coastal names such as Brandy Brook, Ogof Tobacco and Ogof Whisky ("ogof" means cave) testify to the presence of smugglers along the coastline. Offshore

islands such as Skomer and Skokholm were major smuggling depots for everything from brandy to tallow.

Many places were strongly associated with smuggling, including Manorbier Castle, St Bride's Bay and Solva, whilst the coastline north of Fishguard became a particularly well-known haunt of salt smugglers. In 1770, local smugglers even had the audacity to attack and scuttle a Customs and Excise vessel called the Pelham Cutter off St David's, plundering everything on board.

Many coastal properties are still reputed to have secret tunnels, used for moving and storing contraband. Solva was once especially well known for its concealed stores and shafts, but is now more famous for its restaurants, craft shops and wonderful walks.

**Captain Jack Furze** arrived in Manorbier around 1800. The new jolly-looking seaman at the Castle made friends with many of the locals, being very good company. He informed his acquaintances that he was considering taking the Castle farm as well. His smuggling activities centred around the castle with its cellars used for storing contraband. He also had a small brig, The Saucy Jane, which he said was for use in connection with his farm and coal mining. This was a front of course. The Castle is apparently honeycombed with the smugglers cellars, and if you look down the well today, you can see off to the side an access into one of them.

Eventually things got a bit uncomfortable for Captain Furze. When sailing for the coast one day, one of the King's ships appeared on the horizon. A terrible chase ensued with the King's men firing a hail of shots at its quarry. The crew was terrified as the ship got closer, and for more than an hour the boats were engaged in a frightening cat and mouse chase, with the crew more or less ready to give up. Jack told his men to go below or lie flat and he would steer the little brig. Alone at the helm he continued to double and tack until the darkness of the night engulfed them and they escaped unhurt. Too close for comfort, this event brought an end to Captain Jack Furze and his activities at Manorbier.

### Wrecks and Wreckers

The Pembrokeshire coastline is treacherous and many boats met their end on the rocks around the coast and indeed south Wales generally was notorious for wrecks and also the wreckers who would deliberately lure boats to their doom.

Around seaside towns you will find houses that are built from ship's timbers. When any vessel was wrecked everything that could be salvaged would be.

The ship the **Increase** of Scarborough ran aground at Druidston Haven in St Bride's Bay in 1791. In the usual manner the local people living nearby descended to the beach in large numbers to gather the cargo. However amongst the goods was a large amount of gunpowder and with hoards struggling to get their share, throwing the goods, gunpowder was scattered over the rocks and beach. General confusion reigned, and one irritated man snatched a musket and dashed it on the rocks. It caused a spark which was sufficient to ignite the powder in a colossal explosion that threw 60 men and woman into the air. Women's long skirts blazed with flames, the air rent with screams



and pandemonium spread. Eight people were killed and many injured, many wearing the burns on their faces for the rest of their lives.

The ship the **Phoebe & Peggy** was a three-masted American ship carrying both cargo and passengers between Philadelphia, Newry and Liverpool. On 8 January 1773, having crossed the Atlantic and passing through St George's Channel, a terrible storm blew up. The ship was blown towards St Brides Bay and Solva, a small trading port on the West Coast of Pembrokeshire. The store drove the ship onto rocks at the entrance of the inlet and smashed the boat to pieces. Four local captains went out in their small boats to see if they could rescue some of the stricken passengers and crew and managed to take 18 people off the wreck. Tragically on the return journey these boats were smashed against the Black Rock by a huge wave and only one man survived. As bodies, belongings and cargo were brought ashore by the sea, the local people recovered and removed any items of value as was tradition. Poor dead Madam Elliott lost 500 guineas, had her earrings torn from her ears and her fingers chopped off so they could take her gold rings. A local pregnant woman stripped the clothes from a dead baby so as to clothe her own when it was born, but alas her terrible deed caught up with her when both she and her baby died during the labour. In all 19 died in the wreck.

One dark night on the 30th January 1894 a large iron trading ship named the **Loch Shiel** was making its way from Glasgow to Australia. As it passed the entrance to Milford Haven a storm blew up and it was forced in to the inlet and onto the rocks of Thorn Island where it began to sink. The captain Thomas Davies had the lifeboats launched and a paraffin soaked mattress was set ablaze to attract attention of the local coastguard. Angle lifeboat effected a brave rescue of all crew and passengers who were kindly looked after by the local people.

Next day wreckage and cargo began to wash up around the shore, including kegs of gunpowder and what was rumoured to be strong whiskey! This drew many locals looking for the bottles, kegs and cases in remote bays. The event was accompanied by many stories of local drunkenness both immediately after the wreck on the beaches and various days that followed where booze was found. This led to tragedy for one father and his two sons who were towing a keg of whiskey back to shore when their boat capsized and all three drowned. Two brothers who found some bottles of whiskey became so drunk that one collapsed in a heap, the other brother staggering home without him. Sadly the dead body of his brother was found several days later in the hedge where he had collapsed. The customs men recovered some 60 cases of whiskey, but much of the alcohol disappeared without trace to be hidden in caves, gardens, attics and other hidey-holes. Occasionally bottles of the Loch Shiel whiskey turn up in and around Angle including 2 bottles in the 1950s discovered secreted in a roof space!

In the 18th century, on the hills around **Marros**, was an isolated smallholding where a farmer, his wife and his son scraped a poor living from the soil. Times were hard, and after two years of harvest failures and disease among the cattle the son could stand it no longer. He left home and went to sea, seeking fortune and adventure. The farm

became neglected and the animals provided little milk or meat, and the farmer and his wife became bitter and disillusioned.

After a while, in a desperate attempt to survive, the couple joined a gang of wreckers who operated on the coast between Pendine and Amroth. Night after night they placed false lights on the cliff, luring merchant ships to their doom on the treacherous sands of Telpin and Marros. The place became a graveyard for coastal trading vessels. Many sailors died, but the couple prospered, and before long they enjoyed good wine, food and fine clothing.

One morning, after yet another cargo ship had floundered on the sand and broken up in the wild surf, the couple were collecting boxes of cargo from the beach below their farm. They came across a seaman, face down in the sand. He was still alive, and following the practice of the wreckers they dispatched him by crushing his skull with a heavy stone. They dragged the body up the beach and began to remove the gold rings from the white fingers. Too late, the wife realised that she recognized one of the rings. They turned the body over, and recognized the features of their own son! It is said that, from that day onward, no light was ever seen around the farmhouse on the hill above Marros.

Local wreckers were enthusiastically aided in their business by the local customs officers and unfortunately others in positions of authority and influence did not always set a good example.

By all accounts a clergyman was preaching a sermon one Sunday at **Marloes** in Pembrokeshire, when suddenly someone burst through the door and said that a boat was being wrecked on the rocks nearby. Immediately everyone rose and began excitedly making their way out of the church. The Vicar shouted to his congregation to stop and show some restraint and 'moderation in all things', but when he realised that it really was no use-he added that he thought they really ought to give him a head start-since he was no longer as quick on his feet as he had once been.

During a storm on the 8th December 1893, the schooner **Ellen**, of Carnarvon, travelling from Norway with a cargo of floorboards for Cardigan, ran aground on Grassholm and was totally wrecked.

It seems that the captain put into Milford because of the bad weather and as soon as it improved proceeded for Cardigan. All went well until the following night, when a heavy gale sprang up, the ship was eight miles from the Bishop's when the captain decided for safety's sake, to return to Milford. However they never made it back. The storm kept the crew at the pumps all night, and then the following morning her sails were ripped away by the wind. The sea was wild and the ship now quite unmanageable and ran onto the rocks at Grassholm with great violence. Five of the crew climbed the rigging and got on to the rocks by way of the fore-yard, although sadly one drowned in the attempt. Later they found the badly injured captain and all sheltered on the island in great distress with no food or water for the day until the steam trawler Birda fortunately came into view. The Birda got as close to the island as the dangerous rocks would allow and launched a rescue boat with a long line and a buoy. As the boat drew close to the rocks it threw out the line and buoy, and the shipwrecked men, leapt from the rocks seized the buoy, which enabled them to be hauled to the rescue boat. The captain, being helpless, could not be gotten to the boat, and was left on the island. The

Birda took the rescued men to Milford and when the trawler Her Majesty heard that the captain was still on the island in an unconscious condition, went out to Grassholm towing the Angle lifeboat to rescue him. The sea was still wild though and they could not get near causing them to repeat the mission some 48 hours later, by which time the captain had succumbed to his injuries.

In November 1929 whilst steaming from Manchester to Cardiff, the cargo ship **SS Molesey** with 36 people onboard, ran in to trouble near the Bishop's in terrible weather. In extremely high winds they were blown out of control and dashed on to the Wooltack point.

The wireless operator E.R. King continued to send out the SOS endlessly from his cabin. Several boats went looking for the wreck including the St David's Lifeboat who had to abandon the search. Eventually the Angle lifeboat located the wreck and the 28 survivors. Sadly the heroic SOS operator remained at his post and died when giant waves smashed the apparatus and swept his cabin overboard. Seven men and one woman lost their lives.

**William Truscott** was known romantically as 'The King of the Smuggler's organising the smuggling in the area in the 1830s. However in 1834 he was captured at a cave he used for storage near St Govan's, but he managed to escape, fleeing as far as the Pembroke River at Bentlas. He tried to cross to Pembroke Dock but here, whilst running into the water and becoming stuck in the mud, a revenue officer shot and wounded him. Despite the injured man's cries for help, they were ignored and he drowned. The jury at the inquest judged that the conduct of the king's men 'was a highly reprehensible, cowardly and cruel acte'.

Where Truscott tried to cross the channel is now a mere trickle at low tide. A ferry once operated here.

Duties were paid on so many goods, and salt and tallow, which was used for making candles, were two of the items smuggled in. Apparently The Baptist Chapel was lit by candles made from tallow smuggled into **Solva Harbour**, and having heard this was the case, the excise officer, burst into the chapel and confiscated all the candles leaving the congregation in the dark.

Salt was used extensively by the local fishing industry as a preservative for storing fish. The tax on the salt therefore was a terrible burden. It was sold for about 1s a pound, whereas through the smugglers you could get it for at 4d per lb. Apparently one day a spy informed the justice, Mr Raymond living in Bank House, that a boat had just come in with smuggled salt aboard. Mr Raymond, sympathetic with the local fisherman, made such a noise remonstrating and shouting about what he would do to the culprits, that by the time they got to the boat, with everyone in the whole neighbourhood having been privy to his intentions, all the salt had strangely vanished!

In the 15th, 16th and 17th centuries the problem of piracy was a major issue in all of the western counties of Wales. This was, in many respects, due to the fact that the area was so far away from central government but a large part of the problem also stemmed

from the fact that all elements of society, from squires and landed gentry to humble shop owners and fishermen, were involved in the business.

For a long while, in the days of Elizabeth I, one of the prime movers in both piracy and smuggling was **George Clerk**. He was at the centre of a web of illegal operations that brought him hundreds of pounds every year. And he was also a senior customs officer stationed at the town and port of **Pembroke**. Small wonder he could operate with impunity.

Clerk was the man who also owned the **Point House Inn** in Angle. This ancient beer house was renowned as the haunt of pirates and smugglers, often giving sanctuary to men on the run from the law. John Callice, the famous Cardiff pirate, was just one man who made use of Clerk's hospitality - for a price, of course.

From the mid 1570s onwards Clerk was regularly paid to "turn a blind eye" to the dealings of the more unscrupulous merchants of Pembroke town. Although war between Britain and Spain did not break out until 1587, the two countries had been implacable enemies for many years as men like Francis Drake and John Hawkins constantly harassed and captured Spanish ships. It did not stop the Pembroke merchants transporting cargoes of leather and grain to and from Spain. Clerk simply ignored the trade and happily took his share.

Note: The Point House Inn still operates as a pub. It is a very interesting and in a superb location on the Pembrokeshire Coast path overlooking East Angle Bay

On either side of the Holloways Water just outside Tenby, were two fine mansion houses of **Scotsborough**, owned by the Ap Rice family, and **Trefloyne**, owned by the Bowen family. It was well known locally that they were involved in the terrible trade of wrecking, placing out false lights that would lure unsuspecting ships to sand banks and rocks where they would be wrecked.

Although their good fortune was due to change. There was only one heir in the Ap Rice household and one daughter of the Bowens. It seems they had been abroad, many said eloped and married. They were returning to their families, who sadly, wrecked their vessel on this dark stormy night, and both lovers were drowned. But it was said that after this time only sadness and misery descended on both families.

Note: Trefloyne Manor was built on the ruins of the old house. It is now a boutique hotel with its own 18 hole golf course. <http://www.trefloyne.com>

### **Local Customs**

**Christmas** was an important day for the young women to kiss and be kissed. She should place a sprig of mistletoe over the chair in which her intended sits. When he is under the mistletoe she must kiss him suddenly, and if she succeeds, she may claim from him a new pair of gloves.

It was once thought that if a maiden missed being kissed under the mistletoe on Christmas she would also miss her chance of marriage during the following twelve months. It is also thought these superstitions go back to the time of the Druids.

**Plygain**, meaning 'morning light' was a traditional religious service held in the local Parish Church, at 3 am on Christmas morning to watch the daybreak of Christianity and commemorate the coming of Christ. The service would attract large crowds, even though they may have to walk several miles in the dark and cold. The service consisted of prayer, praise, thanksgiving and carols were sung. Local bards might be expected to compose a carol, indeed a poet was not considered a poet unless he could sing a carol. Each family would take their own candles of various colours and those that were left over became the property of the clerk.

In Tenby on **Christmas Eve**, lighted torches were carried through the streets by a procession, cow-horns were blown around the streets, verses sung, bells chimed and windows of houses were decorated by evergreens.

In **Tenby** the young men of the town would escort the Rector with lighted torches from the rectory to the Church for Plygain on Christmas morning. On arrival they extinguished their torches and left them in the porch and after the early service re-lit the torches and escorted the Rector back to his home with the chimes ringing till the time of the usual morning service.

After the service the day was devoted to pleasure, including hunting hare, woodcock and especially the squirrel. Games of football were played and old quarrels ended.  
Christmas in North Pembrokeshire

In **North Pembrokeshire** Christmas Day signalled the start of the holidays which continued for 3 weeks until Epiphany Sunday. Apparently the farmers and all their staff suspended all farming operations, and in every farm the plough was carried into the house, and placed under the table in the dining room where it remained until the end of the "Gwyliau Calan" (New Year's holidays).

On **Christmas Day**, at the principal farm in the area, a fine dinner was prepared, to which all the others would be invited. During these 3 weeks, parties of men went from house to house, and having been invited in would sit around the table with the plough beneath and would be given warm beer from brass pans kept ready for callers. But before they drank they always wetted the plough with their beer to indicate that though they had dispensed with its service for the time, they had not forgotten that soon it would resume its work.

Around the Christmas period, the fishermen in **Tenby** would dress up one of their number, who they called the "Lord Mayor of Penniless Cove". Covered with evergreens and a mask over his face, they would then carry him aloft seated on a chair. The party had flags flying, violins playing, and in front of every house the "Lord Mayor" would address the occupants by wishing them "A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year." If his good wishes were responded to with money, the followers gave three cheers, the mayor would thank the household and the crowd again gave three cheers.

The day after Christmas is **St. Stephen's Day** a somewhat frightening day for young women in the area who would be subject to a furious onslaught by men and boys armed with large branches of prickly holly. Female domestics often having short-sleeved garments, their aim was to beat the girls about their bare, unprotected arms with the thorns. The custom was said to have stemmed from the martyrdom of St Stephen and the bleeding of cattle. Fortunately the practice died out when the police force was established.

In Pembrokeshire it was considered good luck to rise early on **New Year's** morning. The custom of 'letting in' was widespread around Pembrokeshire, and although it varied from area to area, it related to the good or bad luck that might be brought in by the first visitor to the house. It was also considered good luck that the first human seen on New Year's morning or first across the threshold should be a man, although not to be seen by another man. Sometimes the initials of the man could bring good luck, H for happiness or health, J for joy and R for riches.

In **South Pembrokeshire** it was customary to dance the New Year out.

In some parts of the county children would go out on New Year's day asking for **Calennig** or a New Year's gift. They might sing various little verses and ask to be allowed to come in. They often carried an apple that had 3 sticks pushed on to form a tripod base, another to make a handle and then the apples were decorated with oats, evergreens and berries. They would go from house to house bearing good wishes to the people of the household for the year to come. In return they would receive money or food, usually bread and cheese. Sometimes there was a prize for the best decorated apple.

On **New Year's** day children rose early, drew water from the well which they would take from house to house in a little tin can. They also collected evergreens, which they would dip in the water and use to sprinkle the hands and face of all those they met whilst singing a special song. They would knock at the doors of houses and then one of their number would be admitted and proceed to sprinkle each room with a little of the New Year's water. They would be given silver or copper coins for their New Year's blessings and good wishes. Those who did not invite them in were wished a bad year and a house full of smoke.

**Mari Lwyd** is almost certainly a pre-Christian ceremony, versions of which can be found all over the world. It was once widespread in Wales and in Pembrokeshire it was called '**Y Gynfasfarch**' (**The Canvas Horse**). The Mari Lwyd would make an appearance at different times of the year according to the county or place. In Pembrokeshire it was associated with New Year, but in most places the visits would take place over several days or even weeks.

The Mari Lwyd comprised the skull of a horse that had been stripped by burying with lime, although sometimes a wooden block was used. The lower jaw was fixed with a spring so that it would shut with a snap. The skull or block was fixed to a pole approximately 5 feet long with a white sheet draped over the head and attached like a

cloak. There were bells and coloured ribbons attached to the skull, glass eyes and cloth ears. A man would then stand under the sheet operating the mouth. The Mari Lwyd would be part of a group of men dressed sometimes as the leader and main singer, the Sergeant, The Merryman and Punch and Judy. The procession would approach a house and having knocked and being denied entry, would commence singing traditional rhymes. This would be a lighthearted battle of nerve and wits between the party outside and the householders within. Eventually the Mari Lwyd and the entourage would gain admittance, the horse 'snapping' and 'biting' at all the women. There was then much fun and frolicking, with Punch chasing Judy, kissing the women, Judy sweeping the hearth and Merryman playing the fiddle. Eventually all would sit down to eat and drink. Around the St David's area, a variation of the horse's head comprised a canvas sheet sewn into a sort of conical structure with button eyes, stuffed with straw and carried aloft on a pitch fork. Standing under the canvas the man could lift the head and turn it this way and that, peering even to upstairs windows. The tradition of the Mari Lwyd has been revived in certain parts of Wales.

An ancient Twelfth Night Custom celebrated in Pembrokeshire as late as the 19th was the **Cutty Wren**. A wren was hunted and then placed in a little house or bier of paper or a box with glass windows, often decorated with coloured ribbons, and carried on 2 poles by 4 bearers. At each house they would groan as if the weight of the little captive was very great.

It was customary to sing a strange and very long song, which differed from area to area. The one sung in Tenby was most like that sung in all Wales. But in Marloes it was quite different. At Solva too there was another variation.

Some say that the procession visited the homes of couples married less than a year, who were also sprinkled with well water and money given in return for the visit.

Alternatively that the men with the 'Cutty Wren' were invited into houses they visited and plied with beer.

An example of a wren house made in 1869 at Marloes, can be seen in St Fagan's. At the end of the procession the bird was killed and roasted. Feathers were thought to be efficacious against shipwreck.

**Tooling** consisted of calling at various house and farmhouses and pretending to look for one's tools behind their beer cask. **Sowling or Souling** was practiced by poor women asking for "sowl," in other words food such as cheese, fish or meat.

It was also customary in parts of the counties of Pembrokeshire and elsewhere in Wales for poor people to visit the homes of the neighbourhood going from house to house with their **Wassail bowls**. Wassail meaning be whole, be healthy, toasting the health of all with the Wassail bowl.

On or near **Good Friday** in Tenby and other parts of South of Pembrokeshire there was once a custom called 'Making Christ's Bed'. People would gather long reeds from the river and weave them into the shape of a man. Then this was placed on a wooden cross, and laid in a field or quiet part of the garden.

It was common practice, especially at Tenby, to walk barefooted to church. This continued until the close of the 18th century.

**Hot Cross Buns** were eaten but a few were kept in a bag until the following year. It was believed that eating them cured diseases, of both humans and animals, and could keep away evil spirits.

There was also merrymaking and cock fighting and people also went to tea parties in either Gurfreston or Tenby, known as the '**Parish Clerks Meeting**'.

According to old Celtic tradition the first day of May was called **Calan Haf**, the calend of Summer. The first day of November was **Calan Gaeaf**, the winter calend. The Welsh name for November, **Tachwedd**, is thought to mean the primitive custom of slaughtering animals, for the winter stores.

**1st May** and **1st or 13th November** was the day when staff were hired, fairs took place, livestock was moved to either summer or winter pastures and tenancies ended.

The festival of **Beltane** commenced on May eve and continued to May Day.

Until World War I, St Ishmaels celebrated **Rice Pudding Day** on the 16th June. Every housewife would make rice pudding and put a bowl inside their front door. Local people would then go from house to house sampling as many as possible!

**All Hallows Eve** on the 31st October was one of the spirit nights when supernatural powers were unleashed and the dead roamed abroad at night. Bonfires were lit at both festivals.

In the mid 19th century **maypoles** could be found around the county. In Tenby there might be several rival maypoles with many coloured ribbons. The young people dancing would dance around the maypole then 'thread the needle' as it was termed. Groups of 50 -100 would wend their way from maypole to maypole. Forming a long chain of people, they might come upon an opposing team coming in the other direction. In the run up to Mayday rival teams would try to pull down the maypole of others, so that watch teams would be needed to guard them.

At harvest time it was customary to help neighbouring farms by providing work parties of men and women (**y fedel wenith**) that would cut and bind the wheat in one day, moving to another farm the following day. Each evening there was a festive harvest supper, with beer and dancing. In this way people were able to pay off debts, create good will, receive gifts and co-operation amidst a merry atmosphere.

The **gaseg fedi** was the last tuft of corn to be harvested. The tuft was divided into three, plaited and left standing, then from a distance of about 15-20 yards, the reapers threw their sickles at it until it was cut. The successful reaper would take it home and then



have to run the gauntlet past women throwing water and into house without the gaseg wedi getting wet. It remained in the house till the following harvest.

**Halloween** is the night of the dead when ghosts of the departed revisit the earth and witches and evil spirits wield their greatest power. The hounds of hell, the **Cwn Annwn**, great white dogs with fiery red eyes, or the **Gwrach y rhibyn**, a wailing witch or banshee were thought to hunt the souls of the dead on Halloween. Bonfires should be lit on all the hills and on no account allow the house fires go out tonight lest evil things gain entry.

At **Halloween** it was a trial of courage to stand at the door of the church and listen as the last stroke of midnight passed for then you would hear the names of those who will die in the parish over the coming year.

1st November is **Samhain**, the Celtic New Year. This is when stored fruits and crops are blessed and the dead are remembered.

**Tachwedd** was the month for slaughtering, the black month of blood and bonfires.

In 1910 the following custom was recorded in the "Western Mail": Apparently in **South Pembrokeshire**, it is customary to chalk the door-step, a tradition which dates back to the time of the ancient Druids. The aim of this chalking was to keep evil spirits out of the house. Elaborate patterns cover over and round the steps, the essential thing being that there should be no gap in them, because the evil spirits could enter into the house through the gaps.

### Legendary Creatures

In the Preseli Hills not far from **Brynberian** is **Bedd yr Afanc**. It is one of the many burial chambers to be found in the hills but is itself most unusual and unique in Wales. It comprises a long low gallery chamber approximately 35 feet long and probably dates to 2,500BC. The name Bedd yr Afanc means 'monsters grave', even though conversely 'afanc' is thought by some originally to have meant dwarf, and amazingly today means beaver in Welsh!

Long ago, local legend tells us that once there was a deep pool near the bridge at Brynberian and here dwelt the Afanc, a terrible and frightening water monster. Apparently the creature would come out at night and steal sheep and animals and cause great destruction on the area. It was decided the creature had to go and there was only one well known way to catch and kill the beast, luring it with a beautiful maiden.

The prettiest girl in the neighbourhood was selected and agreed to be the bait for the trap. At dusk a series of chain loops were set around the riverbank which were attached to a team of oxen. The girl then sat waiting in the light of the full moon with her long fair hair falling around her shoulders. Eventually the Afanc emerged from the water and was immediately dazzled by the girl's beauty. He lumbered towards her closer and closer, the girl screamed and ran off, the oxen were driven into action and the chain loops were

pulled tight around the legs of the Afanc. He howled and struggled and got into the water. But the oxen were strong, the men determined and gradually it was hauled to the shore where the men set about it with all the weapons and tools they could muster. At last the beast was slain, bloody and mutilated, its body was dragged to the moor and buried in a huge stone lined grave, known to this day as Bedd yr Afanc.

Before the **church of St Edren** was built there was a smaller building on the site and at that time the churchyard was full of snakes. Local people were well aware that if a snake drank the milk of a nursing mother and ate bread consecrated for communion it could grow to a huge size and develop wings, becoming a strange and fabulous flying beast called a **Gwiber**, very much like a dragon.

It was said that a local nursing mother went to draw water from the well at Grinston and spilled her breast milk upon the ground there. After she departed a snake slithered out from the undergrowth and drank the milk before making off in the direction of St Edren's Church. It arrived after communion just as the local priest was leaving with the congregation. Crumbs from the consecrated bread, which had lodged on their clothing, fell to the ground and on their departure were eaten by the snake. It immediately turned into a Gwiber or Dragon and climbed to the top of the church tower and then flew back to the well at Grinston. Here it remains, coiled at the bottom of the well, occasionally leaving its lair to hunt for beautiful virgins and golden treasure.

Once upon a time there were **giants** living in the **Preseli hills**. They threw lots of stones around which can still be found in the county today. One giant called Samson threw a stone called Maengwyn Hir from Freni Fawr which landed near Castell y Blaidd. Arthur threw the capstone of Coetan Arthur and placed the rocking stone on the top of Carn Arthur.

The last giants in the north of the Preselis were 3 brothers. Their father Owen who owned land around Tycannol and Cilgwyn sadly died without leaving a will. The brothers squabbled over the division of the land, their arguments eventually became a pitched battle and one by one they died. The three brothers were turned to stone and can still be seen at Carnedd Meibion Owen above Tycannol woods.

The last giants on the south side of the Preselis were 2 giantesses and a giant. Both females were smitten with the giant but he could not make up his mind who he loved the best. This led to a terrible fight between the giantesses who hurled stones and boulders at each other, so that soon the surrounding countryside was littered with evidence of their terrible fight. Eventually both threw a massive stone at each other and struck their opponents simultaneously, killing them instantly. The giant survivor was distraught, but buried his dead suitors between the hills of Foel Dyrch and Crugiau Dwy and marked the spot with a massive cross, each arm being 17 yards long. Sadly he wasted away and died of his grief.

A **basilisk** was known to inhabit the woods at **Boulston Manor** near Haverfordwest. Another lived in its den on a hillside near Wiston. In the 11th century the area between

the Western and Eastern Cleddau rivers were the lands of Wizo the Fleming who built Wiston Castle. After his death many claimed a right to the estate.

Basilisks are quite small, only a foot or two long, but it was a fabulous monster, a reptile with a black and yellow skin, death-dealing breath and eyes in the back of its head as well as the front. One look from a basilisk is enough to kill you.

The only way to kill a basilisk is to see the basilisk first without being seen. It was agreed that anyone who could look at the Wiston basilisk without being seen should inherit Wizo's estate. This seemed quite reasonable as anyone who had first been seen by the monster would not live to inherit anyway. Several claimants tried unsuccessfully, until one thought of an idea. He took a barrel to the top of the hill and got inside. Then he let it roll down the hill past the spot where the serpent lived. As he passed he looked through the bung and called out, "Ha, bold basilisk. I can see you but you can't see me." In this way, he became owner of the Wiston estates. The Boulston basilisk was dispatched in a similar fashion.

Note: The current Manor House at Boulston is now run as a Country House B&B. The house is in a superb setting looking down across gently sloping parkland onto the Cleddau Estuary <http://www.boulstonmanor.co.uk>

The ruins of Wiston Castle can also be visited <http://www.castlewales.com/wiston.html>

Gerald of Wales related a strange story about a young man called **Seisyll Longshanks** who came from the area between Newport and Moylegrove and the farm once called **Trellyffant**. It seems the unfortunate young man became so ill that he had to take to his bed where he was persecuted by toads. So many in fact that it seemed like all the toads of the area had arranged to meet there. Although his friends and carers killed vast numbers, more and more of the creatures arrived to replace them, until there were so many, no one could count them! Eventually everyone was worn out from chasing the toads away, so they stripped a tree of its leaves and branches, put poor Seisyll in a kind of bag which they hoisted into the tree for his safety. But even here there was no respite from the venomous persecutors, who climbed up the tree to find him, kill him and eat him to the bare bones! Gerald could not explain the strange affair, but remarked that the judgement of God was never unjust, although sometimes it was hard to understand.

**The Ceffyl Dwr or Water Horse** was a small and beautiful horse that tempted unwary travellers to take a ride. However once seated, it would gallop off at a furious rate and then throw the rider, dashing them to death. It seems the only people who escaped this fate were ministers. The horses were described as being a light grey, dappled or sandy colour. Apparently one was seen in St Brides Bay after a terrible storm and a local farmer caught it and harnessed it to the plough. The Water Horse seemed to adapt to its new role, but then a few weeks later, for no apparent reason it suddenly galloped off dragging both the plough and ploughman down to the shore and into the sea, never to be seen again.

In 1782, a farmer called **Henry Reynolds** from Pen-y-holt, near Castlemartin was walking along the cliffs at **Linney Stack**, when he spotted what he thought was someone bathing in the sea, and curiously visible from the waist up, in what he knew to be very deep water. He approached cautiously and managed to get within about 10 to 12 yards of it and realised it was a youth, about 16 or 18 years old. The boy was sitting upright and floating on what looked like a brown substance below the water. The water was clear, so that when the boy moved, Henry could see that the brown mass was attached to this young man and that it resembled the tail of a large conger eel and moved continuously in a circular manner. The trunk and arms of the creature seemed entirely human, but the arms and hands shorter and thicker. The head seemed human too except that the nose was higher between the eyes, and seemed quite long. Its head was white like the rest of the body but without any hair as such, although there was a brownish ribbon like structure that went from his forehead, over his head and down his back, although it was loose from the neck down as the creature lifted it to wash under it and around his neck and arms. The creature swam about the rocks and stared intently at Henry, although it never smiled or made a gesture of any kind. Henry watched for about an hour and eventually decided to fetch his friends and show them this spectacle, but by the time he returned the Merman had disappeared.

#### Peregrine and the Mermaid

One fine September afternoon at the beginning of the 18th century a fisherman called Peregrine from St Dogmaels was rowing his boat out around the cliffs.

Suddenly amongst the rocks he saw a woman. Rowing closer he could see that above the waist she was a lovely maiden, but below the water he could see she had a fish's tail.

Combing her hair she had no idea she was being watched. Suddenly he rushed at her, caught her in his arms, hauled her into the boat and took her home. She wept and begged Peregrine to let her go, but all to no avail. Once home he locked her in a room and although he treated her kindly, she would not eat any of the food he brought her, eventually becoming pale, thin and ill.

One day the mermaid prisoner said to Peregrine "Let me go and I will give you 3 shouts in the time of your greatest need", so he took her to water and released her.

Suddenly weeks later, on a hot sunny afternoon, when it was calm with no clouds in the sky, the mermaid appeared.

"Peregrine, Peregrine, Peregrine, take up your nets, take up your nets, take up your nets!!"

He drew up his nets and rowed home - all the other fishermen jeering at him for leaving. But by the time he reached home a terrible storm blew up, the wind howled and the sea was wild. All of the other fishermen, 18 in total, who had stayed out in the bay were drowned but Peregrine had been saved by his mermaid friend.

Note: A statue of a mermaid has been erected alongside the Poppit Road on the western edge of St Dogmaels.

**Skomar Oddy** was a big friendly giant who lived in a large cave on Foel Cwncerwyn. However, he would sleep so soundly that he would only wake up every hundred years to undertake some amazing feat before returning to his cave and his bed!

On one occasion the people of the area were very much disturbed by the antics of two sea monsters that lived at the mouth of the Haven. They fought constantly, causing terrible storms and wild seas that affected the entire coastline and all the shipping. It also churned up the mud and silt in the Haven, destroying the homes of the sea sprites and mermaids and other creatures. So eventually Skomar Oddy was sent for. He woke reluctantly but agreed to help and arrived at Milford Haven in a flash with his great 3 mile strides. He scooped up the mud in great handfuls and spread it across the countryside. Just as he reached the open sea, one monster slew the other and immediately, everything calmed. Everyone and every creature was jubilant and Skomar Oddy went back to this cave and fell fast asleep once more.

On another occasion poor Skomar Oddy was blamed for the strange temporary disappearance of a local fisherman. Scolded on his return, the fisherman explained to his wife that he had been sailing along, when suddenly he found himself airborne, having been scooped up in the giant hands of Skomar Oddy. The giant deposited him far out at sea and he then had to swim to his boat before making the long journey home. En-route he landed on a hostile island south of St Brides Bay, where the locals spoke another language and bombarded him with questions he could not understand. Eventually they let him go and he sailed back into Milford.

Some time ago a man was walking on the **Preseli Hills** near Foelfeddau when he was seized with a strange fear. Everything had become quiet around him and he felt that some terrible event was about to happen. He looked about, but there nothing but a heavy silence about the place. Suddenly he felt he was being watched and something close to him laughed. Feeling dizzy he sat down and closed his eyes and when he opened them, he saw several **Goblins** - small, hairy, naked men. They were carrying heavy clubs and walking towards him, seemingly oblivious to his presence. He tried to rise but felt himself bound by invisible bonds. Screaming, he closed his eyes and when he opened them once more he was alone, except for the singing larks, lambs and bees.

**Hoyle's Mouth** is a curious cavern, which lies at the end of a long limestone hill, about a mile inland from Penally. The popular local legend was that it opened into natural subterranean chasm, terminating in the huge cave called the Wogan, under Pembroke Castle, eight miles away. In the mid 19th century it was reported that a dog had entered at one end and emerged from the other, with all his hair rubbed off. In days gone by some local people were nervous about exploring even its mouth, on the grounds that 'a wild pig' lived there.

In the early 19th century, before its restoration, **Pembroke Castle**, lay in a terrible state of decay. Some young lads were walking by the cliff and the river when they drew near the entrance to the huge cavern called the Wogan that lies under the castle. Seeing a hole in the fence big enough to crawl through and being inquisitive boys, some of their number and a small dog made their way into the chamber. The dog, sensing something

unpleasant began to growl into the darkness. They then heard a strange dragging noise, something heavy moving closer amidst the incessant dripping sound. Suddenly they saw a long snout and then rows of sharp white teeth, which snapped, then closed over their little dog's leg as they pushed their way back through the fence. They went to the Castle watchman and reported what they had seen. A huge **Dragon** with scales and claws. Seeing the sad injured dog (which died shortly afterwards), the watchman assembled a group of armed men to attack the dragon. Making their way into the cave with torches blazing they found the beast in a corner. After a terrible battle they killed the creature, dragged it to the river and burned it. Not so much a dragon, more a small crocodile, presumably brought in on one of the trading vessels and having outgrown its owner.

Note: Pembroke Castle (birthplace of Henry VII) and the Wogan are open to the public <http://pembroke-castle.co.uk>

Long ago there was a **giant black snake** that lived in the **Preseli hills**. He would lay in the sunshine, dozing in the warm sunshine in a series of coils. But when lying like this, his head and tail did not meet and so it was possible to see inside the coils, where he had hidden all manner of treasure. One day a man decided he would steal some of the snake's treasure, just a little, but of course he must not wake the serpent! He walked through the gap in the coils, paused briefly to check the snake was still asleep and began to fill his pockets with coins. When they were full, he took off his jacket and filled that with more treasures. Suddenly there was a terrible roar. He dropped everything and ran, and when he looked back, he saw the snake disappearing into the hillside never to be seen again.

Could this be the same treasure that is said to be a golden hoard within a leaden chest, buried on the slopes of the Freni Fawr and guarded by a dragon?

Around the north coast of Pembrokeshire there are many hidden, secret bays and places that are much favoured by the mermaid. It seems in 1780 some quarry men from Penbiri found a **mermaid** at **Porth y Rhaw**. They had been going to the beach to have their lunch, when they saw her sitting on a rock combing her hair. Above the waist she was like any girl but below she had the tail of a fish. They got near enough so that they could talk with her, and indeed she seemed to understand Welsh. But all she would say is this puzzling and mysterious sentence "Reaping in Pembrokeshire and weeding in Carmarthenshire" before she disappeared into the sea again.

Sometime before the end of the 18th century and some time before the French landed at Carreg Wasted in 1797, a **mermaid** was discovered at **Llanwnda**. The men who found her took her home and placed her in a bath of salted water, even though she begged to be allowed to go home to the sea. She gave the people of the house three valuable pieces of advice, although only one is remembered or revealed. They were advised that they should always skim the surface of the pottage before adding sweet milk to it! Strange advice, but it was said that having returned her to the sea, they prospered forever after.

In the 19th century a farmer at Treseissyllt, whose farmland extended to cliff edge, went down to the **beach at Aberbach**, a fabulous sandy beach when the tide is out. The farmer went down to the limekiln, and was astonished to see a **mermaid** that he guessed must have been stranded behind the shingle bank, when the tide retreated. The mermaid was very beautiful and at once he decided to take her home with him. So he picked her up and despite all her struggling and loud protests, he took her back to the farm and placed in her bath of salt water. She pleaded to be allowed to go home, but he refused. In a rage she placed a curse on the farmer telling him that no child would ever be born on the farm again. Alarmed and fearful the farmer picked her up and returned her to the sea. But strange to say, the curse hung over the farmers of Treseissyllt for a hundred years.

Some people believe the **fairies** built **Pentre Ifan**. There have been eyewitness accounts of little people the size of small children wearing soldier's clothes and little red caps dancing around the stones.

Note: The Neolithic burial chamber or 'portal dolmen' of Pentre Ifan can be visited at any time. It is located a few miles west on Newport in north Pembrokeshire.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pentre\\_Ifan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pentre_Ifan)

## **Legendary Ghosts**

### **Carew Castle**

The wonderful castle at Carew has at least 2 resident ghosts and over the years there have been various paranormal investigations.

One of the hauntings concerns the Barbary ape. Sir Rowland Rees, a well travelled man and tenant of the castle in the 18th century, had visited the Barbary Coast, bringing back with him a Barbary ape he had rescued from a wrecked Spanish galleon which he trained, with a series of whistles, to perform various tasks. Sir Rowland had one son, who ran off with the daughter of a local Flemish merchant called Horowitz. One night, the girl's father arrived at the castle distressed and upset that his daughter had run away with the boy. Amidst a fierce argument Rowland released the ape from its chains and ordered it to kill Horowitz. The merchant fought off the ape and was badly injured, but managed to drag himself away. Horowitz cursed Sir Rowland to suffer the same evil fate.

There was a storm brewing. The wind whipped around the castle and the rain lashed at the windows. In the middle of the night, terrible screams were heard emanating from the tower. The servants, too terrified of their master and his ape, were unwilling to venture into the tower room to find out what had happened. However at first light, they entered the silent room and there, lying in a pool of blood was the body of Sir Rowland, amidst scattered belongings and burning tapestries, the dead ape beside him. Legend has it that the ghost of the ape returns to the castle, so on some dark, stormy night when passing look up to the North West Tower and be prepared to see the ghost of the savage Barbary ape!

The white lady of Carew has also been seen by visitors over the years. Almost certainly the ghost of Princess Nest, regarded as the Helen of Wales, a great beauty, she was the daughter of Rhys ap Tewdwr, King of Deheubarth.

Married off to Gerald de Windsor after bearing the future Henry I a son, she went on to have several other husbands and also lovers. Carew was part of her dowry, and by all accounts she loved the place, which became her main residence, whilst married to Gerald. Perhaps this is why she is sometimes seen floating happily amongst the rooms, exploring the parts of the castle that were built after her time.

### **Manorbier Castle**

Quite a number of reports have been made concerning a ghost at Manorbier Castle. The woman in black is quite tall and suddenly appears halfway along the path and walks quite purposefully towards the gate house before disappearing.

### **Roch Castle**

Now an elegant hotel, Roch Castle was built by the Normans and has an interesting past. One of its former occupants was Lucy Walters, former mistress of Charles II. She was born at the castle and went on to bear Charles an illegitimate son who would become the ill-fated Duke of Monmouth.

It is said that the white figure of a woman in flowing gowns can sometimes be seen passing through closed doors.

Note: Roch castle has recently been renovated and converted into a very smart and stylish hotel <https://www.rochcastle.com>

### **The Ghost of Haverfordwest Castle**

According to Gerald of Wales, the Normans took captive a Welsh chieftain whom they incarcerated in their castle. The poor man was tortured and blinded and suffered many terrible wounds. However the son of the castellan, a young lad, was intrigued with the stories of adventure that were told to him by the sad prisoner and he visited him in the dungeon regularly. Over time he became a less frightening spectacle and even trusted. But having never forgotten all the terrible injuries that he and his friends had suffered and in a moment of casualness when his cell was open, he grabbed the boy he had made his trusted friend and used him as a shield as he made his way up the tower.

Although the castellan begged for his son's life, the Welshman showed him no mercy and threw him from battlements, before jumping himself. Since that time the ghost of the Welshman has been seen occasionally, perhaps remorseful for the loss of his small friend.

### **Newport Castle (Pembrokeshire)**

At Newport, what was formerly a Norman Castle is now a much altered largely Victorian home. A white lady has been seen on a number of occasions around the banks of the castle around its entrance to Castle Street, interestingly where the original driveway once existed.

A former resident reported the smell of lavender in the castle, even though at that time, lavender was not flowering in the garden.



### **The Ghost of Lady Mathias at Stackpole**

A terrible and ghostly apparition once troubled the lanes around Stackpole. Two headless horses, a headless coachman and the ghastly form of a headless Lady Mathias in her carriage!

At Stackpole the **dancing stones** can be found. These three stones are scattered over several fields and farms and are known collectively as the Devil's Quoits. There is a local legend that these three stones, on a certain night, move and meet at Saxon's Ford where they dance. Later, their dance over, they resume their stations.

### **The White Lady of Ghyll, Prendergast/Haverfordwest**

Behind Prendergast Church is a winding road leading to Pendergast Place where once could be found the ruins of an Elizabethan mansion once the home the Stepney family. The walls were overgrown with moss and ivy and from here periodically can be seen the white lady of the Ghyll. She was said to float above the grass sometimes accompanied by small child, and upon her face was a terrible and sad look of mournfulness. She would then disappear into the grey mist that often filled the valley. No one knows who she is but it is thought that she was the widow of a former owner of the mansion. It was said that he was a royalist supporter of Charles I who fell in battle, and his poor widow waited in the Ghyll night after night for the return of a husband, which continued even after her death.

### **Black robed monk of Caldey**

The legend concerns a monk who was said to have been dispatched from Glastonbury at the time of the Reformation in the mid 16th century with a considerable quantity of the church plate and an item of great value. He had gone to Caldey Island, where it was thought the treasure would be safe. However upon discovering that Henry VIII's men were nearing the island the monk and the Abbott concealed the treasure in a secret place in the wall, where it remained until both men died, taking the secret of the hiding place with them to their graves.

Some people say that the monk from Glastonbury worked alone and, fearing discovery, had bricked himself up with that treasure, where he suffocated. The treasure was never found, but it is said that the place where it was hidden will glow with a ghostly light.

The monk's ghost is said to appear at a number of places around the Island and in the priory where he appears as tall cloaked monk, his features hidden by his hood.

Over the years there have been many sightings by both residents and visitors to Caldey of the ghostly Black Monk. He appears in various places and then disappears.

One encounter concerns Arthur Gay who told a well-known local historian Roscoe Howells that he had seen the ghostly apparition one evening. He had been working at the greenhouse boilers, when he saw a monk walking towards him. He greeted the monk but the man walked by with not a word, and disappeared through a wall. It transpired however, that where the monk vanished had once been the location of a doorway that was bricked up many years ago.

Note: Caldey Island can be visited throughout the summer except on Sundays. Boats leave from Tenby Harbour. <http://www.caldey-island.co.uk>

### **The Sagraanus stone at St Dogmaels**

The 4th century Sagraanus stone at St Dogmaels was formerly used as a bridge not far from the one used today. There was apparently an inscription underneath, so the sculpted surface was preserved against all the feet walking across the bridge. The bridge was also renowned for being haunted by a white lady who would be seen gliding across at midnight. No one would even touch the stone after dark!

Note: The Sagraanus stone is on display inside the church of St Thomas the Apostle next to the Abbey ruins. A further collection of inscribed Christian stones dating from early Celtic times are on display in the Coach House <http://www.stdogmaelsabbey.org.uk>

### **White Lady of Cilwendeg, Boncath**

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In 1990 the mansion house Rhosygilwen went up in flames and the shell of the building was purchased and lovingly restored by a group of people who have transformed it into a wonderful cultural and conference centre. However the faint shape of a female has been seen and one resident saw a woman reflected in a mirror. Local people say that she was Mary, a servant from the big house many years ago. Gladly she has not been seen for many years.

### **Ghost on the old Welsh Way**

Prior to the re-routing and building of the Tenby/New Hedges road, access to Tenby was by a now long forgotten route that has been absorbed into a modern housing estate. At the New Hedges end was 'The spirit gate' where neighbourhood children reported seeing the ghost of woman looking for the suitor who betrayed her in love.

### **Haverfordwest haunting near the crypt**

There have been some strange sightings in the vicinity of the crypt at the junction of Market and High Street in Haverfordwest. In 1860 a boy employed by a watchmaker was boarding up the shop for the night, when he saw a ghostly monk. Apparently shortly after this, when building work was being undertaken at the back of Commerce House, a skeleton was found in a well there.

In the 1920's a schoolboy saw the ghost of a monk standing on a wall near the crypt surrounded by blue light and there was another sighting by a workman. Possibly a monk thought to have been executed nearby.

### **The Orierton Poltergeist**

According to Gerald of Wales, there were people around Pembroke that were much troubled by the activities of poltergeists. By all accounts one of them even used to cut up someone's clothes. Poor Stephen Wiriet of Orierton had a poltergeist living at his house that had an annoying habit of arguing with humans. Apparently if provoked by someone, it would then reveal embarrassing and intimate secrets about them for all to hear. Gerald said they were mischievous rather than evil but were also extremely resistant to exorcism or the effects of crucifixes and holy water, and indeed the people trying to expel them might be pelted with filth.

Note: Orierton House is now run by the Field Studies Council and offers environmental & educational holidays <http://www.field-studies-council.org/centres/orielton.aspx>

### **Haunting at Little Milford by Caesar Mathias.**

At the Little Milford estate in the 18th century lived the Mathias family. Caesar Mathias was both Mayor and High Sherriff in his time and part of the Pembrokeshire gentry. His family eventually moved and the house became a rectory and during this time, visitors and staff reported that the place was haunted. It seems that a ghost would be heard in the cellar moving about and then emerge from behind a curtain that covered the stair.

By all accounts, Caesar Mathias had encountered a smuggler in a tunnel that extended from the cellar and running under the waterway to the 'Old Palace' near Boulston and killed him. Tied to the scene the ghost became more disruptive and being so frightened the poor rector was unable to keep any of his staff. In the end he had to perform an exorcism, going about the house with bell, book, candle and horsewhip! The hauntings decreased, but each successive family living there reported the ghostly noises coming from their cellar.

### **White lady at Lamphey Palace**

Jonathan Davies was a gardener at Lamphey Court and one evening in 1865 he was walking down to the village. As he passed the old palace, in front of him he saw a white lady, and civilly wished her a goodnight. She didn't respond, continued on a way and then disappeared.

Later that night and somewhat the worse for beer, he saw the white lady again. She moved ahead of him and this time he swiped at her with his stick. At this she turned, full of anger and made frightening satanic grimaces at him, which made his hair stand on end! He never saw her again.

Note: Lamphey Court is now run as a Country House Hotel and Spa <http://www.lampheycourt.co.uk> The ruins of Lamphey Bishops Palace are adjacent to Lamphey Court. The site is run by CADW and open from spring to autumn. There are several ghost stories associated with the old palace.

### **Haunting by spirits at Bowett**

Jonathan Davies who worked at Lamphey Court was courting a girl from Bowett near Hundleton. In 1855 he made his way over to the house, which he had heard was

haunted. Sure enough, no sooner had they sat down in the kitchen than there was a terrible crashing in the hall and pots and pans rattled. There was nothing to be seen so they resumed their courting, when it was disturbed by an eerie moaning and groaning. Again they found nothing but decided the evening had come to an end. However as Jonathan left he saw three spirits departing the house, flying through the air and suddenly disappearing in a cloud of smoke. From this time forward he never visited Bowett after dark and indeed many people of the neighbourhood knew the house was haunted and of the strange goings on there.

### **The Bush House Ghost**

The former home of the Meyrick family, Bush House was built around 1905, the original mansion having burned down some years earlier. The education authority bought the land around Bush House in the early 1950s, and the new Pembroke Grammar School was built there. Bush House was then made into residential accommodation for agricultural students.

Late one evening during the conversion, the night watchman, 84-year-old Mr. David James, of Pembroke Dock, saw a man aged around 65 to 70 years of age, approaching. He was carrying a double-barrelled shotgun and had three dogs at his heels. Mr James challenged him first in English and then in Welsh, but he didn't reply and suddenly disappeared into a pond nearby.

Later three workmen, George Hesketh, his son Roy and an Italian man named Tony reported strange and spooky goings on when they were staying there.

By all accounts their Tilley lamp would flicker and fade. There were continual bangings and noises on the doors and walls. Tony felt someone tugging at the overcoat he had over his bed. He was so alarmed that he bolted one of the doors and nailed the other shut.

The following night however, something terrible and unnatural occurred. Firstly they were surrounded by an eerie light, then a woman dressed in a crinoline walked slowly and silently up and down the path outside, then she appeared to melt into nothingness. Understandably, they grabbed their belongings and left the house.

Who could these people be? We may never know, but no doubt the conversion and alterations to Bush House seemed to have disturbed them and possibly they resented the intrusion of so many strangers!

### **Ghostly Monkton**

Many years ago, the Rev. Tudor Evans lived at the Old Hall, once an old priory, underneath which, he believed there was a groined and vaulted crypt where some of the nuns had lived. Every morning at 4.00 am he was disturbed by a loud knocking at his door, though they could never discover the cause. Whenever he got out of bed, the knocking stopped. The family dog absolutely refused to enter one of the rooms and in that same room, the vicar's daughter saw a glow and the head and shoulders of a hooded figure leaning out of the window, gesticulating to her. A friend who slept in the room found that the lit candles extinguished on their own and that there was a rustling around the bed all night.

The Rev. Tudor Evans said that one day, he had a visit from a tall young man whose name was Nordin, and that he was a medical student from Stockholm. He said his Viking ancestors had visited Monkton 1000 years ago and curiously, that he had been born there. Evans took him to the top of the church tower and the young man was able to point out places he remembered and where there had once been walls that were now gone and other changes. Indeed his remembrances were correct in every detail and he was able to say how the hall had been altered quite accurately. He reflected that in the old days it had been a nunnery. Nordin told Evans he had saved up for years to visit Monkton such was his compulsion to visit the place. Had he born in 1000 year ago?!

During its restoration, at the end of the 19th century, Priory Church revealed many secrets. Gruesome discoveries were made. Very large quantities of human bones were found under the floor and a skeleton of a monk or possibly a nun was found walled up above the porch, in such a position to suggest they had been buried alive. The Rev. Evans believed that she had been the nun responsible for waking the others at 4.00am and that she would continue to do that until such time an exorcism took place.

Note: Monkton Old Hall, the former prior's house, is available as a Self Catering holiday property renovated and let by The Landmark Trust

<http://www.landmarktrust.org.uk/search-and-book/properties/monkton-old-hall-9444>

### **Monkton Priory Farm**

Priory Farm is where at one time the Prior's house would have been in the days when Monkton had its mediaeval monastery, and is one of the oldest buildings in Pembroke. There have been ghostly sightings around Priory Farmhouse, a monk-like figure gliding by, that felt like a wind was rushing past. There was a terrifying atmosphere, so terrible at one time that a former resident slept with a shotgun by her side. Things were moved around the house, bedclothes pulled off, doors rattled, so that in the 1920s the building was eventually exorcised.

Possibly the source of these ghostly goings on might have been a rather macabre discovery made many years previously. A former owner discovered a discrepancy in the dimensions of the building,

the exterior did not correspond to those of the interior. Realising there must be a hidden passage or room, he knocked through a wall and discovered a concealed passage.

There lay a skeleton surrounded by oyster shells, possibly of a monk.

Although the exorcism helped a bit, the ghost continued to walk about the house!

### **Tolaeth at Milford**

During the construction of the railway in 1859, many workers were drafted in to act as navvies and lived in lodgings around the area. At Thornton, a number of Irish navvies were resident at a farm and one evening, were enjoying a noson lawen (happy evening). Suddenly the dogs in the yard began to bark and howl, and the merriment within the house stopped and all present listened intently. There then followed a heavy knocking at the door and shuffling outside. One Irish man leapt to his feet and was intent on discovering the identity of the visitors, but was restrained by the farmer. They

continued to listen and heard the shuffling steps come into the house and into the parlour, where something heavy had clearly been placed on the table. Everything became silent again and they nervously explored the hall and parlour, but there was nothing to be seen.

The following day there was a terrible accident on the railway line and the Irish navy who had wanted so badly to see the cause of the noises the previous night was killed. Because of the proximity of the farmhouse lodgings, he was taken there by his colleagues. The farmer realised as they placed his lodger's coffin on the parlour table that all the noises from the previous night were the same as he heard now.

### **The hooded Monk at The Priory ruins Haverfordwest**

A well known haunting in Haverfordwest concerns a hooded monk regularly seen walking silently along Union Hill. Sometimes he is only visible from the waist up, as he seems to walk along an older deeper lane. The first reported sighting of him was made in 1729, a cowed and dark apparition making its way to the old Augustinian priory. He appears to have been seen in various places in the vicinity, although perhaps one of the most nerve-wracking occasions occurred in the 1950's.

One evening, two women were making their way down the Union Hill when they became aware of a ghostly figure by the entrance to the Priory. It started as a glowing light and then took on the form of a spectral monk in a long habit and cowl over his head. To their horror he moved ever closer to them and beckoned with a clawed finger. The black hood fell back and revealed a man with dark eyes. One woman fainted and the other ran off screaming. She returned a little later to collect her friend, but neither of them would ever pass the old priory again.

Note: The Priory ruins have been restored and can now be visited. The riverside setting is very pleasant.

### **Unsuccessful ghost haunting at Crymych**

In the 19th century somewhere in the vicinity of Crymych was a haunted house. The ghost was called Gwilym and although he certainly spent a good deal of time walking through walls, wailing and knocking and clanking, unfortunately his visits were so frequent the family took hardly any notice of him. As an object of derision he lost weight and became paler and quite miserable. In the end the family sat him down and suggested that the element of surprise had been lost and they were now used to all his antics, but that if he could consider returning every seven years, it would give them all a real fright when he suddenly turned up! He agreed and so appears every seventh year, possibly to this day!

### **White Lady of Cilwendeg, Boncath**

Apparently the White Lady seen here has been reported to be quite friendly, there were sightings of her in a white dress, young and pretty. Some years ago when the house was being used a residential home, staff reported strange occurrences like noises from empty rooms, taps on shoulders and a general sense of a presence about the house. Local tradition says she is a young woman who was about to be married when she had a fatal riding accident.

Note: Cilwendeg House is currently being renovated and has plans to reopen as a hotel

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Note: Rhosygilwen is now run as a hotel with a fabulous music and events venue called Neuadd y Dderwen (The Oak Hall) <http://rhosygilwen.co.uk>

### **Ghost on the old Welsh Way**

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In the 1920's a schoolboy saw the ghost of a monk standing on a wall near the crypt surrounded by blue light and there was another sighting by a workman. Possibly a monk thought to have been executed nearby.

### **Haunted house at Newport**

Once upon a time a doctor and his wife lived in Newport (Pembrokeshire) in a large house with their maid and housekeeper. The housekeeper had a formidable reputation and ruled the house with a rod of iron so that all were extremely wary of her. Eventually the old doctor died, followed by the housekeeper and then after living alone for a few years the wife followed.

The house passed to a young couple who began to renovate the old place, meanwhile living in the attic, the place where the severe old housekeeper had lived. After a short time and many 'disturbances' later the family moved out.

Then a local couple bought the house and spared no expense in the renovation of their dream home. But no sooner had it been completed than the wife moved out, having decided that she did not like the house after all.

Empty and on the market, an electrician experienced some unusual occurrences in the house, and was quite convinced there was someone who watched him and his every move. Relating his story later, neighbours wondered whether the cantankerous old

housekeeper had actually ever left the property and was continually overseeing the changes in her charge!

### **Ghosts in The Castle, Little Haven**

Over the years it seems ghostly visitors have frequented The Castle at Little Haven. The White Lady is thought to be the ghost of a woman who owned the property in the 18th century. She died under mysterious circumstances, her body washed up on the beach nearby, was she pushed or did she fall? Nobody knows.

Also a dark man in modern clothing appears in the bar, but curiously appears to be standing on a lower floor as his feet are below the current ground level.

People have described the antics of an invisible cat, which leaps onto their hotel beds. One resident at the hotel was awoken one night when she heard the door handle turn and someone entering her room. The 'person' walked across the room, the floorboards creaking heavily beneath its footsteps, then it turned, and left the room. The following day, when recounting the story and walking around the room, none of the boards creaked. Having brought the events to the attention of the landlord they were informed that the room had been renovated but that prior to this time the boards creaked very badly!

Note: The Castle in Little Haven is still a very attractive bar and restaurant on the seafront. <http://www.thecastlelittlehaven.co.uk>

### **Haunted House at Little Haven**

The house built in 1890, purchased by a new owner in 1993, was told by an 85 year old local woman that he had a friendly spirit living in his new home.

The first thing he noticed was that when he went to bed and switched the lights off, he would hear the switches click and some lights would come back on.

He attempted to fit a new lock to the kitchen door and whilst the mortise would turn in the unfitted lock, the moment it was put into place on the door, it would not turn and the key broke.

In one of the bedrooms, in the dead of night, suddenly the hot tap would be turned on and then be turned off just as quickly.

One day, the owners were in the kitchen cooking breakfast when they saw a dark shadow, a maid in Victorian clothing, glide through the back door, pass in front of the cooker and go into their lounge.

Later the same day the owner went up to see the local vicar, who told him that he had wondered how long it would be before he would make his way to the vicarage.

Firstly a blessing was performed in a room that always remained cold no matter what the conditions or heating, but sadly the blessing didn't help. The vicar came back to hold a communion a couple of weeks later. From that time onwards the room would warm, but a presence could still be felt. The strange occurrences with the lighting and water tap continued from time to time, but not as frequently, and as for the maid, she has not been seen since.

### **Spectral Pirate ship, Tenby**

In 1558 a ghostly ship was seen amidst a terrible storm in Tenby one night. There was no crew visible, but only spectral forms and firelights, as it moved ominously toward the



rocks. It was dashed to pieces and the town's people fully expected to see wreckage the following day, but there was nothing to be seen on the beach except a man dressed in strange clothes. He refused to live in Tenby, preferring to stay on St Catherine's Island, scanning the horizon. Eventually, a shepherd decided to go and invite the visitor to his own home. Taking food and water he arrived and begged the man to return with him. He declined the hospitality but told the young shepherd his story. He said he had been a pirate chief and had committed terrible deeds, that in a jealous rage he had killed his lover, and could find no rest. He said that sea maidens came to the island and beckoned to him, telling him that his dear love was now at peace. He pointed to a white wave and declared that these were the maidens and throwing his arms in the air he implored, 'Receive me spirits blessed' and threw himself into the foaming sea. The astonished shepherd returned to Tenby, told the local people what had happened and they hoped that the pirate had now found peace at last.

### **Mayor Athoe, Holloway Bridge Penally**

In 1722 after visiting Tenby for the evening, a fight ensued between the Athoes and the Marchants. George and Thomas Marchant were the nephews of Mayor Thomas Athoe and cousins to his son Thomas the younger. They had bad blood between them owing to the fact that George had humiliated young Thomas in a previous fight and married his sweetheart. Added to which they had failed to vote for them in the mayoral elections, and had bid against them for cattle at the Wiston Fair the previous month. The Marchants departed Tenby on their way home to Manorbier, but were hotly followed by the Athoes who caught up with them at the Holloway Bridge and beat them remorselessly about the head, back, breast and genitals with George finally being strangled by his own neckerchief. The men were tried first in Hereford and then London, and in a very weakened condition Thomas was able to bear witness against them. Found guilty, they were both hanged for their terrible crimes, even though locally it was thought a fair fight. But since that time the ghost of Mayor Athoe has been seen often, haunting the scene of his terrible crime.

### **Ghosts and Hobgoblins at Stepside**

In 1820 a man called Joshua Davies living in Stepside was very troubled by ghosts after dark as soon as he went to bed. A local witch told him that he must get dressed and follow the ghost. The ghost arrived that night and Davies followed it out of the house, down the garden and over the hedge where he indicated a certain spot. Taking up a mattock, he dug down and eventually came upon a pot buried in the earth. Inside was a fabulous silver inkstand. The ghost disappeared and Davies made his way to back to the house. But before he could open the door he was attacked by two hobgoblins throwing stones. Wisely he decided to keep the inkstand in the house, vowing never to dispose of it, and fortunately he never saw any of them again.

### **Lady Margaret of Llandawke**

Lady Margaret Marloes founded St Odoceus Church at Llandawke in the 13th century, where she is commemorated as a stone statue at prayer with wimple and flowing robe. She met a grisly end, murdered by robbers who cut her body into three parts. Her effigy in the church named after her is made in three parts to highlight her sad end. She is one

of three female ghosts seen in the road nearby. One ghost is a 16th century woman, killed by her jealous lover, who buried her body at the side of the road. The last ghost, a young bride of the 19th century, married at the church and killed by a jealous rival for her hand in marriage. Her body was thrown in to the pond behind the church and then he murdered her new husband. As recently as 1870 people reported seeing the ghost of the young bride, leaning over the gate near the pond dressed in white, with a lilac sash, straw hat and lilac ribbons.

### **The Parsons beer Tregynon**

The house at Tregynon in the Gwaun Valley was built in the 16th century, and was a farmhouse for many years. Quite a few visitors have seen ghostly figures over the years although by all accounts, the house always feels friendly and not at all spooky. More than one visitor noted that the figure they saw was a man in a dark, old fashioned suit and that he carried a cask on shoulder or under arm. The owner of the building started researching to find out who his ghost might be. A local woman told him that it was almost certainly the old parson who had lived there in the early 1900s, renowned for his own home brewed beer. He maintained that the quality of the beer lay in the quality of the cask, preferring small vessels that could easily be turned and carried.

### **Ghost in St Florence**

The local people of St Florence were much disturbed by a ghost in the area, and having tried various methods in vain, took the advice of someone who had opined that only an Oxford man would be able to manage the task. Armed with this information they arrived at the home of the Rev. Huntington, the Rector of Tenby. They explained they needed someone to exorcise the troublesome ghost. And Huntington expressed surprise that they had come so far when there was a perfectly suitable person in St Florence. They revealed that they had been advised that only an Oxford man would do, at which Rev. Huntington breathed a sigh of relief and informed them that he was actually a Cambridge man!

### **The squire of Llanrheithan House**

Although now lost, this was once the mansion of John Laugharne. He was the last squire in the county to employ a Jester. Experiencing financial problems he also had his own private army of thugs, hired to repel creditors and officers as his estate dwindled. He went into hiding on more than one occasion and would then return to take over his property once more. He died in 1755 and was buried at the local church in Llanrheithan, his ghost haunting a footbridge nearby.

### **Some More Legendary Tales**

#### **The secret passage at Slebech**

Around 1200 and the Knights of St John (Previously the Knights Templar) had made a permanent headquarters on the banks of the Eastern Cleddau river at Slebech. Although now lost it is believed to have been on the same site as Slebech Hall. Next to the hall is the remains St John's Church and it is still possible to discern the old causeway that connected the Commandery to the knights farm on the other side of the

river. The Knights were able to grant sanctuary and to this end secret tunnels were dug from the Commandery to the river bank. One of these can apparently still be seen in a wall above the high water mark, no doubt used as a means of escape by various people over the years. During WWII, when Picton Castle was used as a military hospital, some of the soldiers explored the tunnel and found themselves in Slebech Hall where they were arrested by American troops who were stationed there. Accused of being spies, they remained under arrest until an officer was sent to identify them

Note: The old stable block at Slebech has been converted into a fine hotel and restaurant. <http://www.slebech.co.uk>

#### The Golden Treasure of Trewern

Everyone locally knew that the house was haunted with strange unnerving noises and the ghost of a woman in a long dress was often seen there. The big ancient house of Trewern was owned by the Warren's, but by the beginning of the 19th century the family had become extinct in the male line and it passed to new owners. By 1840 it was in the ownership of a farmer and Baptist minister, David George. He lived in the house with two old servants, and between them, they eked out a living.

Suddenly to everyone's surprise in the neighbourhood, George began to spend money. He bought fine clothes, he and his servants began to live a more luxurious life, the farm was improved and the buildings developed, all was going very well. Curiously though, he would leave Trewern for a few weeks at a time and then there would be more lavish spending.

Time passed and sadly in 1875 David George died. However, it was then that one of the servants revealed the secret of his success. It seems that one of the ghosts in the house told Mr George the whereabouts of a golden image of great value that was sealed within one of the walls immediately above the main entrance. The idol was made of solid gold and every time they needed money he would break off a piece of the gold, have it smelted into nuggets which he then sold in London. After the idol was melted and gradually disappeared, so did the ghosts.

#### The Bell of Treindeg

A young man of Lochmeyler fell in love with a young woman from Treindeg when they were visiting the fair at Tancredston. They began courting and one day the lad promised the young woman a bell for one of her new lambs. The Civil War encroached on their love and Roch Castle nearby had been taken by Cromwell's troops, who were stationed about the area, threatening to shoot anyone out after curfew. Being very much in love, he was desperate to see his sweetheart, and risking all, set out after dark. During the course of his journey he fell and the little silver bell rang out. He could now see the lights of his destination in the distance but as he grew nearer he was challenged by the parliamentary troops. Foolishly he did not stop, instead running ahead, the bell ringing furiously and giving away his location with every stride. Shots rang out and he fell dead, the commotion drawing out the residents at Treindeg. The young woman saw her lover and kissing his head, she retrieved the bell that had been his downfall. A few short months later she died of a broken heart and following the tragedy the house itself burned down a few years later. Amongst the mess and ashes a workman clearing the

remains found a little fire damaged bell and took it home where it remained with his family. But various members of his family reported hearing the bell ring, and the person who related this story maintained he heard it only once, at midnight on the anniversary of the young man's death, when he removed the tongue of the bell to lay it's spirit.

#### Premature funeral at Mynachlog-ddu

In 1890 Doctor Rowland Jones was a doctor at Boncath. One day he went to attend a funeral of a local farmer's wife at Mynachlog-ddu. On the completion of funeral service the coffin bearers lifted the coffin onto their shoulders and made their way towards the church door. Suddenly there was a great thud as the coffin hit the doorpost. At this, the lid flew off the coffin and the deceased farmer's wife sat up very much alive. She was furious that she had missed her own funeral and several important events. Some thought it a miracle! The old lady went back to her sickbed where she remained for several more weeks making her poor husband's life a misery and she couldn't believe the mistake made over her 'death'. Soon she died and very great care was taken to ensure she really was dead this time. For her second funeral there was an even bigger congregation than the first! As they left the church the old farmer said "For God's sake, mind the door post!"

#### Sad event at Pen-y-Bryn

Not far from Cilgerran at Pen-Y-Bryn at beginning of the 20th century, lived an old man in a simple little cottage. At the bottom of his garden he had a Ty Bach (toilet). It was a very sturdy and impressive structure made of timber and corrugated iron sheets. One day the neighbours noticed they had not seen the old man for a few days. They looked everywhere for him and finally someone realise he could possibly be in the Ty Bach. The door was locked but looking through the gaps in the walls, they could see the elderly man sitting on the loo, his trousers around his ankles. The door opening inwards and his feet against the door meant they had a devil of a job to get him out, and had to cut him out of his Ty Bach with axes and saws. He was now as stiff as a plank in a sitting position and local children joked that he would be the first local person buried in a square coffin.

#### The East Wind –Gwynt traed y meirw Moylegrove & Newport

Around North Pembrokeshire, Moylegrove, Newport and Welsh speaking parts of the county and as far as neighbouring Cardigan, sometimes the name used for the East Wind is 'Gwynt traed y meirw' (wind from the feet of the dead). This is from the custom of burying the dead in churchyards stretched with their feet and faces turned to the east.

#### Hangstone Davy - Broad Haven and Haverfordwest

Late one evening Davy set out in the darkness to steal a sheep. He travelled far from home and into the countryside in the hope that he would not be discovered, eventually arriving at a remote farm. The sheep huddled in the corner of the field and so he had no difficulty catching one, and soon the captive was strung across his brawny shoulders. Hour after hour he trudged back with the heavy sheep seeming to get heavier with every step. He was nearing home, having reached the great stone halfway between Broad Haven and Haverfordwest. By now he was very tired and decided to rest his

heavy load on top of the rock, just for a short moment. Unfortunately the tethered animal fell over the other side of the stone, the rope caught around the robber's neck as it went and strangled poor Davy. Since that time no boy would pass the 'Hangstone' without throwing a stone at it, otherwise bad luck would surely follow!

#### Odd happening at Castlebythe

One night a family was sitting by the large chimney in their farmhouse, when the silence was broken by an unfamiliar voice. It seemed to come from outside, and was followed by a strange rattling that appeared to be coming from the shed. The family froze for a minute then rushed outside to see what was causing the noise and were surprised to see a butter churn rolling and moving around the yard in a most unnatural manner. The thing inside it that was making the loud clattering was a large stone that was very difficult to get out.

This same series of events occurred many times over, and in the end neighbours and strangers came to see the peculiar spectacle. However no one could ever decipher the words that were spoken by the ghostly voice.

A group of men decided to wait outside with their guns to shoot anything that might be causing the nuisance. Nothing happened, so they repeated the exercise over several nights eventually shooting out into the darkness at any slight movement.

One evening though, the farmer noticed something strange, unlike everyone else, Mair the serving girl was unaffected by the events and sat serenely and calmly knitting in the corner as if nothing was happening. He sent her away and from that day onwards there were no ghostly or peculiar happenings at the Castlebythe farm.

#### Death Omen or Tolaeth in St Brides Bay

Near St Brides Bay a fisherman and his wife were sleeping one night when they were woken by strange sounds coming from the kitchen below. It sounded like shuffling feet, doors opening and closing, and as though some spectral men were carrying a heavy load. The same noises happened over three nights. Sadly a few weeks later their son was drowned and they were astonished and alarmed when his body was brought back to the cottage and all the sounds matched those they had heard a few weeks before.

#### Exorcism at Thorn Farm Cresselly

In the 18th century a poor old widow and her family were living at Thorn Farm in Cresselly. Unfortunately every night they experienced a terrible haunting of unearthly sounds that would emanate from one of the bedrooms upstairs. The local priest assured the widow that he could help her by performing an exorcism and that he would stay in the farmhouse alone.

That evening he arrived and took residence in one of the upstairs room, laid fully clothed on the bed and read aloud from one of his prayer books by candle light. Half an hour later there was a great crash followed by loud creaking on the stairs. Closer and closer it came and when he looked up there was a horse in the room. He invoked his Lord and dismissed the animal, which suddenly disappeared. A while later the quiet of the night was shattered with another crash, and again a creature ascended the stairs. When he looked up he saw a bullock, he repeated the words he had used for horse and again the animal disappeared. Just as he thought the events of the night must be over,

he heard the largest crash and greatest commotion. He heard what seemed like human footsteps coming up the stairs and was surprised to see that when the door opened, there was a small man dressed in gold. He bowed to the priest who greeted him and invited him to take a seat. The little man sat on the bed and the priest exclaimed, "In the name of the Lord speak!" and to his surprise the man began to talk. He wondered why no one had ever asked him to speak to him before, he told the priest he had been visiting for a very long time and had they only spoken to him, he would have ceased troubling them long ago. He wanted the priest to take a message to the poor widow, that her ancestor had buried treasure in the house under the staircase in an earthenware pot, a yard beneath the biggest flagstone. The widow herself must dig it up and then divide the money in two parts, half for herself and half for her children. The grains at the bottom were to be given to the priest. The little man in gold departed from the house amidst the most terrible and explosive noises.

The following morning, the priest relayed the instructions from the little visitor and the widow began to dig. Exactly where he had indicated they found the pot of gold and at the bottom, the grain. The spoils were divided according to their instructions and from this day forward the family of the widow prospered. As for the priest, when he arrived home he discovered that the grains had turned to gold guineas!

#### Tea money

The Fortune family lived at Molleston near Narberth in a cottage called The Pools. Mr Fortune worked in the Pembroke dockyard and only came home at the weekend. Their neighbours were an elderly couple called Ben and Betty Davies and sadly one Monday morning, old Betty died. She was buried on the Wednesday, but on Wednesday night there was a terrible commotion at the cottage. The following morning poor Ben Davies arrived at his neighbours and proceeded to tell the Fortunes that something had been making a terrible noise all night. The following day on Thursday the same thing happened and Ben, when arriving at the Fortune household, expressed his concerns that Betty's spirit must be coming to haunt him. After a terrible Friday night he declared he could bear it no more and intended to leave his cottage.

Mr Fortune arrived home for the weekend and was sorry to hear the sad and terrible news but said that he would stay in the cottage himself that night to see if he could find out what was happening. That night, again around midnight, there were frightening noises coming from the Davies' cottage. The following day a very pale and subdued Mr Fortune handed his wife eight pence halfpenny. He explained that the money had been in a hidden drawer and that it must be paid to the tea man on Monday. When the tea man arrived, Mrs Fortune asked if Betty Davies owed him any money. He stated that she had indeed owed him eight pence halfpenny from the previous week. Clearly poor Betty could not rest until she had settled her debts and presumably her troubled spirit had confided her concerns to Mr Fortune!

#### The Evil Spirit at Cilgerran

In the mid 19th century a farmer was making his way home after a spending a happy and successful day at the Ffair Laurens in Cilgerran. He was walking alone through Glanpwllafon when he became aware that there were heavy footsteps just behind him. He stepped aside to let whoever it was pass, but no one passed and the sound of

footsteps stopped. He resumed walking, and the footsteps behind him also resumed. He stopped but there was only silence. Frightened he walked quickly now, but so did the something following him. He dared to look over his shoulder and saw, lurking under the trees a little way back, a huge shadowy figure not far behind him. He ran towards a nearby cottage, the heavy steps following, were now pounding. He banged on the door and fell through it. The 'presence' disappeared immediately, but he showed the astonished occupant the mess over his back where the giant pounding feet chasing, had flung splashes of mud all over him.

#### The seven gold coins

Around 1700 a serving girl from a local farm was making her way home when she found a shadowy figure following her. If she varied her route the figure would do the same. The farmer suggested the girl should ask the figure what he wanted. She reluctantly agreed and the following night spoke to him. First he bade her follow him to a field. He told her that on the next night she should come to the same spot with a shovel and that she was not to tell anyone of their conversation. The next night she returned with a shovel and began to dig in the place he indicated. She dug down and found a pot of gold coins. The person told her that she must always keep 7 coins and that these should be passed down through the family and that it would ensure they remained prosperous and healthy.

Shortly after the farmer's wife died and a short while after he married the serving girl. The strange visitor appeared to her for a last time and told her to be careful with the coins, ensuring that she passed them down through the family, father to son, or mother to daughter, or else the prosperity and even ownership of the farm would change. She shared the secret with her husband and the 7 gold coins remained always with the family and the farm became a great and prosperous estate, and the family the wealthiest in Pembrokeshire!

#### Three fools

In the 18th century there were three fools who lived at Llanwnwr near Strumble Head. They bought themselves a lovely round cheese at Fishguard Fair and set off for home. Unfortunately one fool dropped the cheese and it rolled down the hill and down the road and straight off the cliff and into the sea. The fools decided they could retrieve the lost cheese by hanging over the cliff with one holding the ankles of the other. The biggest fool thought he might get a better grip if he spat on his hands and down they all went, never to be seen again. But the bay is still called **Pwll Ffyliaid** (Bay of Fools)

#### Skeletons on the Cleddau

During the construction of the Cleddau Bridge, workmen found the skeletons of approximately 12 people who had been buried above the high-water mark. It has been thought that perhaps these were 17th century plague victims who died on a ship and were secretly buried.

#### Ogo'r March near Pencaer (SM8838)

The cave was said to be the place where a force of Danish Warriors were buried in full amour.

### Visionary dream of J Ceredig Davies

The well known writer of Folk-Lore of West and Mid Wales, the Rev. J Ceredig Davies also recorded a dream he had one night that foretold a sad event.

He dreamed one night in January 1910 that he was walking near St. Bride's, when he ran into the owner Lord Kensington. He told Rev. Davies to go to the house saying that Lady Kensington was at home and that he would himself return in a few minutes. So he went to the house and rang the bell and the butler took him into the drawing-room. After waiting in the room for some time, very strangely all the servants of the house arrived as a group, dressed in their holiday clothes. They informed him that Lady Kensington was not home after all, that her Ladyship was lost somewhere and Lord Kensington was looking for her everywhere, but failing to find her. When he awoke from his dream he felt certain that something awful had happened to one of the Kensington's. A day or so later, he read in the paper that a cablegram from Calcutta was received in London, announcing the death of Lady Kensington in India. Her death took place on the very date of his dream. It seems that a few days earlier Lord Kensington had left for India having received news of Lady Kensington's serious condition.

Note: St Brides Castle, The Kensington's home, is now a luxury self catering complex operated by Holiday Property Bond. <https://www.hpb.co.uk/property-portfolio/st-brides-castle/details>

### Disaster in Landshipping 1844

There were records of mining in the area since the Middle Ages but at this time, work was seasonal. In 1800, Sir Hugh Owen installed the first steam engine in the Pembrokeshire coalfield, at his mine in Landshipping and this resulted in over 10,000 tons of coal and culm being produced each year.

Garden Pit, being so near the river, suffered badly from water logging. The shaft was approx. 67 yards deep and some workings ran out for a quarter of a mile underneath the eastern branch of the Cleddau River. The level where the disaster occurred, had previously been noted to have a leak in the roof of the tunnel and hadn't been worked for two or three years. However, in February 1844 it was considered safe and on the afternoon of 14 February 58 miners were employed in digging and transporting coal. The first hint something was wrong came when a powerful blast of air suddenly shot up the shaft. Above ground violent eddies like whirlpools could be seen close to the shore. Several miners appeared at the bottom of the shaft, screaming for help and 4 men and 14 boys were hoisted up, but behind them the pit filled up at a rate of seven fathoms a minute. Nobody else got out. There were reports that some miners had already left the pit once that day because they were concerned about safety, only to be sent back to finish their shifts.

Many of the dead miners were related to each other - sons and fathers, possibly also wives or daughters as several of the names on the memorial plaque say simply "Miner" after legislation preventing the employment of women below ground had recently been passed in Parliament. Others lost were children as young as 9, one listed only as a "child".

### Pembrokeshire Woman's Prophecy fulfilled



On a farm near Spittal in Pembrokeshire, a child was born on 3rd November 1756. Thomas Evans, the eldest of five, in the fullness of time married Sarah Bevan and they lived on a small farm near Treffgarn Rocks, called Penyfeidr. Mrs. Evans was noted for her piety, and for her visions and her ability to foresee and foretell future events. One day, upon entering the house, she told those present that she had just seen a most remarkable sight below the house in Treffgarn Valley. She described seeing a large number of heavily laden carts or wagons going very fast one after the other, and no bullock or horses drawing them. The first wagon appeared to be on fire as there was a large amount of smoke rising from it. This was 65 years before the introduction of George Stephenson's steam locomotive in 1825.

Eventually Brunel wanted to extend his Great Western Railway to Fishguard but was persuaded to make the terminus in the south at Neyland. However soon it was agreed that the terminus would be transferred to Fishguard after all. The new line was to go via Letterston but this subsequently proved unsuitable and so they ran it through Treffgarn Valley exactly where Sarah Evans had predicted all those years earlier. Thus her prophecy was fulfilled.

#### Vision at Morvil

In the year 1835 a man named John Meyler was walking home from Morvil one night. It was a lonely walk through the moorland. On his left was Mynydd Cilciffeth and on his right the Preselis. As he approached Pentwin he was very surprised to see the image of an army in the sky. There were battalions of soldiers, indeed two opposing forces that could be seen fighting right across the heavens. The battle was resulting in men falling, horses charging and a substantial battle ensuing across the sky. He was so amazed at this spectacle that he called at Pen y Banc, so he could show his friend, Mr Morris, the strange phenomenon, which they watched for 2 hours!

#### Anne Beach's role in the escape of prisoners at Pembroke

After the abortive landing and attack by the French ships in 1797 near Fishguard many soldiers were taken prisoner. They were distributed to gaols and secure places around the county, 500 of them ending up at the infamous Golden Prison in Pembroke. Amongst their number were a young Marquis de Saint- Armand and a grenadier named Roux who planned to break out of the gaol. They were being attended by two local girls, Anne Beach and Eleanor Martin, who brought them provisions in pails and baskets. Having fallen in love with these 2 handsome Frenchmen they decided to help them escape. In their provisions they provided animal bones that the French used to cut a 60ft tunnel under the wall. In all 31 prisoners escaped and made their way to the harbour where they stole a yacht. It got them as far as Linney Head where, by pretending to be wrecked, they captured a brig. The captured helmsman took them to St Malo.

#### The Fools of Strumble Head

Back in the 18th century there were three fools who lived at Llanwnwr near Strumble Head. They bought themselves a lovely round cheese at Fishguard Fair and set off for home. Unfortunately one fool dropped the cheese and it rolled down the hill and down the road and straight off the cliff and into the sea. The fools decided they could retrieve

the lost cheese by hanging over the cliff with one holding the ankles of the other. The biggest fool thought he might get a better grip if he spat on his hands and down they all went, never to be seen again! But the bay is still called Pwll Ffylliaid (Bay of Fools)

#### Camrose Mill

During the 16th century the mill at Camrose was one of the possessions of Anne Boleyn when Marchioness of Pembroke.

#### Llangwm

Llangwm (pronounced Langum) is a place well known locally for the dominant nature of its womenfolk. With their colourful dresses and shawls they were a common sight in markets and towns selling their fish, oysters, shrimps and cockles caught by their husbands, often walking many miles to reach them. By all accounts it was usual for a woman to choose her husband.

#### Fortunes Frolic, Haverfordwest

Fortunes Frolic was said to be the place where the last duel in the county was contested. Apparently one of the Fortune family of Leweston at Camrose was shot by his fiancée's brother.