The Search for San Ffraid

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Abstract

The Welsh traditions related to San Ffraid, called in Ireland and Scotland St Brigid (also called Bride, Ffraid, Bhríde, Bridget, and Birgitta) have not previously been documented. This Irish saint is said to have traveled to Wales, but the Welsh evidence comprises a single fifteenth-century Welsh poem by Iorwerth Fynglwyd; numerous geographical dedications, including nearly two dozen churches; and references in the arts, literature, and histories. This dissertation for the first time gathers together in one place the Welsh traditions related to San Ffraid, integrating the separate pieces to reveal a more focused image of a saint of obvious importance in Wales. As part of this discussion, the dissertation addresses questions about the relationship, if any, of San Ffraid, St Brigid of Kildare, and St Birgitta of Sweden; the likelihood of one San Ffraid in the south and another in the north; and the inclusion of the goddess Brigid in the portrait of San Ffraid.

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Chapter 1 Introduction

Each area of Celtic influence has a tradition related to St. Brigid, also called Bride, Ffraid, Bhríde, Bridget, and Birgitta, among other names. An Irish saint, she is said to have traveled to numerous places, including the area now encompassing Wales; however, the Welsh traditions related to San Ffraid, the Welsh name for St. Brigid, have not been written down, and the evidence comprises a single fifteenth-century Welsh poem by Iorwerth Fynglwyd; numerous geographical dedications, including nearly two dozen churches; and references in the arts, literature, and histories dating from the earliest to most recent times.[1] No previous study has focused on the Welsh traditions relating to San Ffraid. It is difficult to draw conclusions about the Welsh San Ffraid. On the other hand, it is possible to draw conclusions based on what is known and unknown about her from the fragmentary evidence, collecting the evidence so as to view the veneration of San Ffraid more clearly.

This dissertation explores the Welsh traditions related to San Ffraid, including history, literature, art, folklore, religion, geography, and music, addressing questions about the relationship, if any, of San Ffraid, St Brigid of Kildare, and St Birgitta of Sweden; the likelihood of a San Ffraid in the south and a San Ffraid in the north; and the inclusion of the goddess Brigid in the portrait of San Ffraid. Chapter 1 presents the sources for the traditions relating to San Ffraid, beginning with St Brigid of Kildare, St Birgitta of Sweden, and the goddess Brigid, as well as the Lives of SS Monynna and Modwenna, which describe a St Brigid who traveled to Wales. Chapter 2 presents the poem *I San Ffraid* by Iorwerth Fynglwyd, identifying the elements attributable to Irish and Swedish tradition and those that appear only in the Welsh veneration of San Ffraid. Chapter 3 describes the geographic dedications and traditions such as customs, art, and music. The conclusion is followed by references and appendices that present source material central to the discussion, but not practical to include in the text.

The Current Discussion

A biography of San Ffraid derived only from the most complete written evidence, that is, Iorwerth Fynglwyd's poem *I San Ffraid*, reveals San Ffraid as a folkloric character woven from motifs gleaned from the Lives of the saints. At the same time, the imagery associated with the saint leads back to pre-Christian deities. In his glossary *Sanas Cormaic*, Cormac Mac Cuileannain, ninth-century scholar and king-bishop of Cashel, describes the goddess Brigit, drawing attention to the nature of her name:

[1] I. Fynglwyd, 'I San Ffraid', *Gwaith Iorwerth Fynglwy*, eds. H. LL. Jones and E. I. Rowlands (Caerdydd: Gwasg Prifysgol Cymru, 1975), pp. 94–95.

> *Brigit*, i.e. a female poet, daughter of the Dagda. This Brigit is a poetess, or a woman of poetry, i.e. Brigit a goddess whom poets worshipped, for very great and very noble was her superintendence. Therefore they call her goddess of poets by this name. Whose sisters were Brigit, woman of healing, Brigit, woman of smith-work, i.e. goddesses, from whose names with all Irishmen Brigit was called a goddess. Brigit then, i.e. *breo-ṡaigit*, a fiery arrow.[2]

Sabine Baring-Gould and Jon Fisher begin their discussion of St Brigid in the *Lives of the British Saints* with the explanation that 'it must be remembered that Brigid, which is the diminutive of Brig, is a common name'.[3] More than a common name, the name Brigid is a descriptor. In *Celtic Goddesses: Warriors, Virgins and Mothers*, Miranda Green offers this definition:

> The name Brigit comes from the Celtic word *brig* which is suggestive of power and authority and means 'High One' or 'Exalted One'. So in a sense, like many Celtic god-names, Brigid is a title rather than a true name.[4]

Green's explanation is helpful when considering the many saints named Brigid documented in the lives of the saints, martyrologies, and calendars. The name of Brigid may be attributable to the qualities of these women rather than to their individual identities, confirmed by the many saints named Brigid in early Irish hagiography and ritual, which will be discussed later in this chapter. However, the issue is important because of the ambiguous identity of the saint venerated in Wales as San Ffraid. Baring-Gould and Fisher assert that the Brigid in Wales is a separate person from the Brigid of Kildare, not only because Brigid is a common name, but also because many other Brigids are identified in other sources. Baring-Gould and Fisher draw a distinction between Brigid of Kildare and Brigid of Cill-Muine and propose a different, unrelated Brigid in the south in accordance with the Life of St Monynna and another one in the north in accordance with the Life of St Modwenna.[5]

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[2] *Three Irish Glossaries. Cormac's glossary codex A. O'Davoren's glossary and a glossary to the calendar of Oingus the Culdee*, ed. W. Stokes (London and Edinburgh: Williams and Norgate, 1862), pp. XXXIII–XXXIV.

[3] S. Baring-Gould, and J. Fisher, *Lives of the British Saints*, 4 vols (Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion: London, 1907–1913), vol. 1, pp. 285–6.

[4] M. Green, *Celtic Goddesses: Warriors, Virgins and Mothers* (New York: George Brizeller, 1995), p. 196.

[5] S. Baring-Gould, and J. Fisher, *Lives of the British Saints*, pp. 285–6. Also see *Vitae sanctorum Hiberniae. Ex codice olim Salmanticensi, nunc Bruxellensi*, ed. W. W. Heist (Bruxelles: Bollandiste Press, 1965), and Geoffrey of Burton, *Life and Miracles of St Modwenna*, ed. and trans. R. Bartlett,t (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002), pp. 85–93.

If Baring-Gould and Fisher separate the Welsh San Ffraid from St Brigid of Kildare and St Birgitta of Sweden, more recent authors combine them. In *Traditions of the Welsh Saints*, Elissa Henken states:

> St Brigid, as she is honoured in Wales, is a conglomeration of a number of Brigids, especially St Brigid of Kildare (who herself was probably a mixture of the ancient goddess Brigid and an historical nun of the same name, St Brigid of Cill-Muine), a St Brigid who lived in North Wales, and the Swedish St Brigid.[6]

She continues, 'it is not a matter of stray traditions from other Brigids accumulating around a central Brigid, but of all the Brigids fusing into a composite saint, the one commemorated in Wales, at least judging by the traditional information still available to us, which is essentially just one *cywydd* by Iorwerth Fynglwyd'.[7] More recently, in her book *Feminine Sanctity in Medieval Wales*, Jane Cartwright describes San Ffraid as 'a composite saint in Welsh tradition (that is a fusion of the Irish St Brigid of Kildare and the St Birgitta of Sweden)'.[8] Again, she bases this view on Iorwerth Fynglwyd's fifteenth-century *cywydd*:

> Yng nghywydd Iorwerth Fynglwyd 'I San Ffraid' cyfunir y traddodiadau am dair santes gwahanol sy'n dwyn yr enw Brigid: (i) Brigid/Bríd o Kildare, abades y fynachlog gyfun yn Iwerddon; (ii) Brigid o Cill-Muine (Mynwy) a hwyliodd Gymru gyda'r Santes Modwenna ar ddarn o dywarchen; a (iii) Birgitta o Sweden (1303–73), awdures y pymtheg gweddi a gyfieithwyd 'r Gymraeg yn y bymthegfed ganrif (Roberts, B. F. 1956a; 258).[9]

The view of San Ffraid as an uncertain figure is inevitable as long as her identity is established by Lives of the saints and martyrologies, which were written to support religious communities dedicated to a saint and, from there, larger parish communities. If any of these Lives were written, they have not survived. In this case, however, other kinds of information indicate long-standing communities associated with San Ffraid that date from the time near her purported lifetime. The goal of this dissertation is to connect this physical evidence to the written evidence. Figure 1 shows the sites associated with San Ffraid, which are described in detail in chapter 3, but introduced here to indicate the scope of the dedications.

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[6] E. Henken, *Traditions of the Welsh Saints* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1987), p. 161.

[7] Henken, *Traditions of the Welsh Saints*, p. 161.

[8] J. Cartwright, *Feminine Sanctity and Spirituality in Medieval Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2008),
p. 87.

[9] J. Cartwright, *Y Forwyn Fair, Santesau a Lleianod* (Caerdydd: Gwasg Prifysgol Cymru, 1999), p. 86–87.

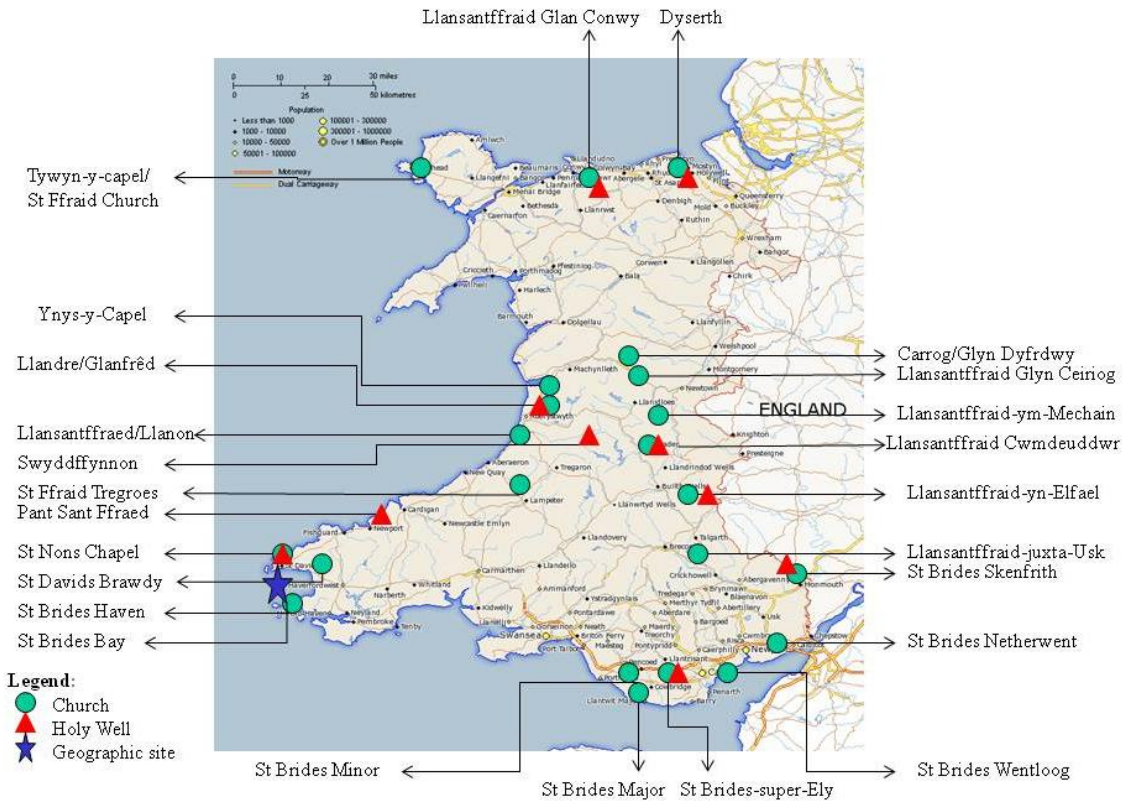

Figure 1. Geographic Dedications to San Ffraid in Wales

Figure 1 shows areas with dedications, and just as important are the areas without dedications. Nonetheless, they appear random unless connected in some way with other kinds of information. Figure 2 associates the earliest physical evidence with the written evidence to demonstrate that, while many sources were written long after St Brigid of Kildare's purported lifetime, a number of sites associated with her were active around that time. These sources are discussed more fully in the following sections and available for review in the appendices, but the overview shown in figure 2 connects indications of ancient religious activity (e.g., graves, tumuli, and yew trees growing on mounds) with sites associated with San Ffraid.

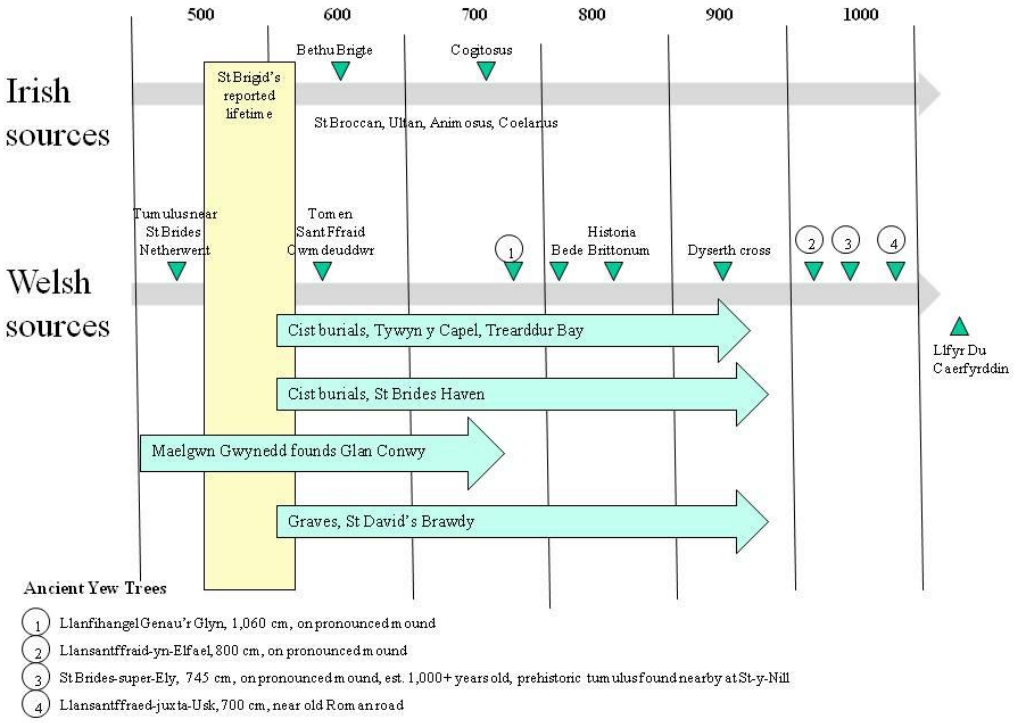

Figure 2. Early Indications of Religious Activity Near Sites Associated with San Ffraid

Figure 1 shows areas with dedications to San Ffraid, showing the configuration of sites, with groups of dedications in Ceredigion, Denbighshire, Glamorgan, Monmouthshire, Pembrokeshire, and Powys and single dedications in Anglesey and Flintshire. Aside from dedications in Trearddur Bay, Llansantffraid Glan Conwy, and Dyserth, no dedications exist in north Wales, where she was said to briefly live. Most dedicated sites are in mid and south Wales (with the exception of Carmarthenshire), where no record reports her visiting. Associating the saint with the physical sites dedicated to her is challenging, and so is determining the antiquity of the dedications based on written records. Most church records date from Norman times, and other written records are, if anything, later. Figure 2 shows another way to look at the question, by associating the reported lifetime of St Brigid of Kildare with recent archaeological data available for excavations carried out in Tywyn-y-Capel in Anglesey and at St Brides Haven in Pembrokeshire and the age of ancient trees in churchyards. Juxtaposition of the purported lifetime of the saint with this data establishes that, while it may not be possible to know when British communities began venerating San Ffraid, at least some of the sites now dedicated to her were active religious sites during or near the time of her life. Chapter 3 presents this information in more detail, but it is introduced now to demonstrate the nature of the evidence that is available at this time. St Brigid's life falls during the transition from the druid religion to Christianity, and this transition is reflected in the stories of her life, which include druid characters and miracles that

seem more magical than religious in nature. Ian Bradley quotes J. F. Kenny's descriptions of these early saints:

> Saintship itself was, to the popular mind, a concept of the magical order. Its essential characteristic was not moral goodness but the possession of that mysterious power which works miracles. The 'sanctifying grace' of the legendary saint neither arose from habitual virtue nor resulted primarily in holiness: it was the Christianised counterpart of the magic potency of the druid.[10]

Bradley associates the early saints with a golden age and goes on to state:

> The concept of Celtic Christianity is almost invariably associated with the notion of a golden age between the mid-fifth and mid-seventh centuries. This period saw the flourishing of the best-known Irish and British saints—Patrick, whose arrival in Ireland in or after 432 could be said to mark its start, Brigit, Ninian, David, Columba, Columbanus and Aidan, whose death in 651 perhaps marks its end.[11]

This point is worth discussing because the traditions related to San Ffraid hold much in common with traditions related to other characters associated with the Celtic golden age of the fifth through the seventh century, such as Taliesin, Arthur, Merlin, and the characters in the Mabinogion. With fragmentary written proof available, but geographic and historical echoes of an extensive tradition, these characters have shaped long-standing views of the Celtic character. The evidence may not be easily compressible into a logical chronology, but it does exist, and exists most pervasively in the Welsh landscape and traditions. Chapter 3 describes these dedications, images, customs, and traditions relating to San Fraid in more detail.

The Welsh tradition includes stories that San Ffraid traveled from Ireland to Wales. Some say she landed in the north of Wales; others say she landed in the south. She performed miracles and founded churches while in Wales. Some say she returned to Ireland to found her monastery in Kildare; there is also a tradition that her grave is in Rhayader at Tommen Sant Ffraid (ch. 3). Her primary characteristic is an unworldly holiness exemplified by her generosity. Her miracles relate to healing the sick and feeding the hungry. In images, she appears as an abbess, sometimes with animals and sometimes with fire.

The following sections describe the written traditions related to St Brigid of Kildare, followed by those of St Birgitta of Sweden. These are followed by other written documents that reference San

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[10] J. F. Kenny, *The Sources for the Early History of Ireland: Ecclesiastical* (Columbia University Press, 1929; reprinted by Shannon: Irish University Press, 1968), p. 303, in I. Bradley, *Celtic Christianity: Making Myths and Chasing Dreams* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1999), p. 8.

[11] I. Bradley, *Celtic Christianity: Making Myths and Chasing Dreams*, p. 1.

Ffraid, explaining how these records complement the information presented in chapter 3 and add to our understanding of the saint.

About St Brigid of Kildare

The written Lives of St Brigid have a complex history and a study of them is beyond the scope of this paper; however, a summary follows because the written stories about St Brigid of Kildare are integral to the Welsh traditions relating to San Ffraid. Many sources exist. The oldest is *Ultán's Hymn* (see app. A) by Ultanus, bishop of Ardbraccan in Ireland (*d.* AD 657), which can be found in the *Liber Hymnorum* (see app. A).[12] The monk Chilian (*d.* AD 740) wrote a Latin poem in hexameters about St Brigid. The monk Cogitosus (*d.* AD 835) wrote what is probably the most well-known version, the 'Life of St Brigit the Virgin'.[13] St Donatus of Fiesole (*d.* AD 877) wrote a 'Life of St Brigid'. St Broccan Cloen, Abbot of Ross Tuirc, Ossory, Ireland (*d.* AD 650) wrote a Latin poem in 53 quatrains about St Brigid. Ussher (*c.* AD 657) also wrote a life of the saint. At later anonymous poem was based on versions by Ultán, Elevan, and Animosus. A late Life is by Lawrence of Durham (*d.* AD 1154). Another is an anonymous version known as the 'Irish Life of St Brigid'.[14] *Butler's Lives of the Saints* bases description of St Brigid on the versions by Ultán, Chilian, Cogitosus, and St Donatus of Fiesole.[15] In *Trias Thaumaturga*, John Colgan bases his text on the lives of Chilian, Cogitosus, Ussher, Lawrence of Durham, and the two anonymous lives of St Brigid.[16] There is general agreement about the story of Brigid's life. She was born around the middle of the fifth century, daughter of a noble father and a slave mother in Leinster. She was raised by a druid, who foresaw and fostered her inherent holiness. From her earliest days, she was noted for her purity and generosity, and she rejected marriage to pursue a vocation as a nun. In time she became abbess of the monastery of Kildare and was known for establishing churches and monasteries for both men and women. During her long life, she remained known for miracles related to her piety, acts of charity, and healing. She was buried in Kildare.[17] Her relics have been lost, with the exception of her skull, which is kept at the church of St Joao Baptista in Lumiar, Portugal.

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[12] Ultán, 'Ultán's Hymn', *Celtic Spirituality*, ed. O. Davies (New York: Paulist Press, 1999), p. 121.

[13] Cogitosus, 'The Life of St Brigit the Virgin', *Celtic Spirituality*, ed. O. Davies, p. 122–139.

[14] Anonymous, 'The Irish Life of St Brigit', *Celtic Spirituality*, ed. O. Davies, pp. 140–154.

[15] 'St Brigid of Kildare', *Butler's Lives of the Saints*, 12 vols, rev. P. Burns, (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1998), February, pp. 1–5.

[16] 'St Brigid of Kildare', rev. P. Burns, p. 5.

[17] 'St Brigid of Kildare', rev. P. Burns, pp. 1–3.

Lives in which St Brigid Travels to Britain

None of the Lives of Saint Brigid suggest that she ever traveled to Britain, although William of Malmesbury believed the local legend that she traveled to Glastonbury Abbey:

> St Brigid, indeed, who came here A.D. 488, after a short stay in an island called Beckery, returned home, leaving behind some of her ornaments, to wit, a victual-bag, a necklace, a bell, and embroidering implements, which are here treasured to her memory.[18]

This local legend does not speak of St Brigid traveling to any other place in Britain. On the other hand, the following sections discuss two other lives of the saints that do describe St Brigid's travels in Britain. The Life of St Modwenna casts Brigid in a supporting role, in which she accompanied St Modwenna to Britain along with two other nuns, Luge and Athea.[19] The four began their journey, but found no ships. An angel marked out the land in a circle and turned it into an island (fig. 3). He raised the island and moved it to Britain, setting it down and securing it to the shore at a castle called Deganwy [in Caernarvonshire], where it stands to this day.[20]

Figure 3. San Ffraid Travels to Wales on a Turf

St Modwenna built a church there and arranged for Brigid and Luge to remain while she and Athea journeyed to England. There, St Modwenna's popularity made her impatient, so she decided to return to Ireland, leaving Athea in England and Luge in Britain and taking Brigid with her. St Modwenna restored her monastery of Killevy and then she gave permission for Brigid to

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[18] William of Malmesbury, *The Antiquities of Glastonbury*, trans. F. Lomax (facsimile published at Burnham-on-Sea: Llanerch Press, 1908), pp. 25–26.

[19] Geoffrey of Burton, *Life and Miracles of St Modwenna*, ed. and trans. R. Bartlett (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002), pp. 85–93.

[20] Geoffrey of Burton, *Life and Miracles of St Modwenna*, p. 85.

found the famous monastery of Kildare, where Brigid gathered many virgins to join her.[21] This story connects St Modwenna to the more famous Brigid, and makes Modwenna the senior during Brigid's youth. This version of events is confirmed in the nineteenth-century *Gossiping Guide to Wales* by Askew Roberts and Edward Woodall:

> The [Deganwy] Castle is mentioned in the old life of an Irish saint who settled in Mercia, St. Modwenna, as the place near which she, St. Bride (in Welsh called Sant Ffraid), and their companions, Luge and Athea, landed after their adventurous voyage from Ireland on a piece of ground bodily detached from the Emerald Isle. This got immovably fixed to the since "predominant" isle of Britain," apud castrum Dcanno nomine, juxta littus immense maris, viz., at Llan-sant-ffraid Glan Conwy, and remained there till it and St. Bride's old chapel thereon were washed away by the waves about 200 years ago. Here St. Bride and Luge were left by Modwenna, who, after building the chapel, moved on with Athea to Polesworth and the Forest of Arden. The Welsh tradition made St. Bride land in the estuary of the Dovey, perhaps at the place called Ynys-y-capel, near Tal-y-bont.[22]

This version offers interesting contradictions. Deganwy Castle is near the coast, but Llansantffraid Glan Conwy is located far upriver from the mouth of the Conwy, so the church may have been washed away, but probably not by waves. The attachment of the sods of land several miles up the Conwy River also seems contrived. Roberts and Woodall follow the story of St Modwenna with a variation they call 'the Welsh tradition' in which San Ffraid arrives at the Dyfi River. Iorwerth Fynglwyd's poem *I San Ffraid* also tells of San Ffraid's arrival at the mouth of the Dyfi River, and it is uncertain whether Fynglwyd derived his poem from the same Welsh tradition, or whether his poem is the tradition to which Askew and Woodall refer. Chapter 3 describes further the places Ynys-y-capel and nearby Glanfrêd and Llandre, locations by the Dyfi River associated with San Ffraid.

Another candidate for the landing place of San Ffraid is Tywyn-y-Capel in Anglesey, built on a sand dune by the sea and now washed away. This arrival of the Irish nuns on turfs of grass also appears in imagery in the stained glass window at St. Ffraid's Church at Trearddur Bay in Anglesey, near the ruins of the old chapel. In support of this view, Angharad Llwyd writes in 1833 that Brigid 'landed at Holyhead, and erected there Capel Sant Ffraid, which stood on an

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[21] Geoffrey of Burton, *Life and Miracles of St Modwenna*, pp. 85–93.

[22] A. Roberts, and E. Woodall, *Gossiping Guide to Wales: North Wales and Aberystwyth* (Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent, 1902), pp. 212–213.

artificial tomen or mount by the seaside on a sandy beach called Tywyn-y-Capel, about 2 miles from Holyhead; but there is not any of it now left'.[23] Chapter 3 describes Tywyn-y-Capel further.

A different explanation of San Ffraid's journey to Britain can be found in the Life of St Monynna, which describes Brigid as the disciple of St Monynna. In this version, spying one night when the abbess is at prayer, Brigid sees two swans fly away from the cell. When she tells Monynna what she has seen, Monynna sends her away to found a religious house of her own elsewhere, and decrees that she should be blind. Previously Monynna had sent her to Rosnat (i.e., Cill-Muine or St David's) to learn there the rules of monastic life; and there she remained some time 'in quondam hospiciolo'.[24] This places San Ffraid in the south of Wales, where there are many dedications to San Ffraid, from St Ffraid's Church at St Bride's Haven, St Davids Brawdy, a holy well at Henllys, and St Brides Bay. The *Martyrology of Gorman* describes a number of saints named Brigid separate from the St Brigid of Kildare whose feast day is February 1. November 12 is the feast day of 'gracious Brig with a (conventual rule)', noting that 'Brig and Duthract, from Cill Muine were they'.[25] This identification of a separate saint drives Baring-Gould and Fisher's assertion that multiple saints named Brigid were in Wales. In fact, that is possible. Another saint, St Birgitta of Sweden, is also referenced in Iorwerth Fynglwyd's poem *I San Ffraid* (see ch. 2). This saint is discussed next.

St Birgitta of Sweden

St Birgitta of Sweden was born in AD 1303 to well-born parents in the province of Uppland, Sweden. Mysterious prophecies attended her birth and she had her first visions as a child. Married at 13, she lived the life of a pious housewife and courtier until the death of her husband. At that time, she withdrew to an ascetic life, founded an order of nuns now called the Brigettines, traveled to Rome, and wrote a series of Revelations, which included a series referred to as the 'Fifteen Prayers', printed as early as 1492. She died in 1373 and was canonized in 1391. The Pope declared her 'Patron Saint of Sweden' in 1396.[26] Writing in the 1400s, Iorwerth Fynglwyd would be unlikely to confuse St Birgitta of Sweden with the sixth-century St Brigid of Kildare,

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[23] A. Lewis, *History of the Island of Mona* (Ruthin: no publisher, 1833), p. 203.

[24] 'Vita S. Monynnae', *Vitae sanctorum Hiberniae. Ex codice olim Salmanticensi, nunc Bruxellensi*, ed. W. W. Heist (Brussels: Bollandiste Press, 1965).

[25] *The Martyrology of Gorman*, ed. and trans. W. Stokes (London: Harrison and Sons, 1895), p. 217.

[26] *Revelations of St. Bridget on the Life and Passion of Our Lord and the Life of his Blessed Mother*, trans. from the 1611 Antwerp edition of the *Revelations* of St. Bridget (Rockford, Illinois: TAN Books and Publishers, Inc., 1984), pp. vii–xii.

especially if her *Revelations* were not printed until 1492; however, St Birgitta of Sweden's influence on the Welsh San Ffraid is discussed further in chapter 2.

Written References to San Ffraid

Other written evidence is scarce. Other than the poem *I San Ffraid*, San Ffraid is referenced occasionally, but rarely in a way clarifies her identity. The *Bonedd y Saint* [Pedigrees of Welsh Saints] describes San Ffraid as the 'daughter of Duthach, an Irishman', the name of the father of St Brigid of Kildare.[27] The collection of sermons by John Mirk include a reference to 'sain ffrait laian':

> Mi a gaf yssgrifenedic ymyched sain ffrait
> laian vod gwr gynt yn glaf ac y gweddioedd
> ef erni am help ac y gwnaeth y lan vorwyn
> honn ef yn holliach….[28]

The *Black Book of Carmarthen* includes a poem that connects San Ffraid with pilgrimages:

> From the progeny of the sovereign and victor,
> Gwosprid, and Peter chief of every language,
> Saint Ffraid, bless us on our journey![29]

Iorwerth Fynglwyd, whose poem I San Ffraid is the most complete record of the Welsh San Ffraid, concludes his elegy, 'Marwnad Iorwerth Fynglwyd', with hope that his loyalty to the saintwill bring him salvation:

> Os da fardd yn llys Duw fydd,
> San Ffred, os hwn *ei* phrydydd,
> I'r nef, at yr hynafiaeth,
> Angel Duw â'r Mynglwyd aeth.[30]
>
> [If a good bard in God's court will be,
> San Ffraid, if this her poet,
> To the heavens, towards antiquity,
> Angel of God took Mynglwyd to heaven.]

Lewis Glyn Cothi (*c.* 1420–1490), a representative of the Poets of the Nobility, swears by the grave of San Ffraid in the poem 'Marwnad Rhys ab Davydd ab Hywel Vain, O Vaelienydd':

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[27] W. W. Rees, *Lives of the Cambro-British Saints* (Llandovery: William Rees, 1853), p. 590.

[28] J. Mirk, 'Darn o'r Ffestifal', Hafod 22. In the *Historical Corpus of the Welsh Language 1500–1850.* <http://www.arts-humanities.net/projects/historical_corpus_welsh_language> [Accessed 18 October 2012].

[29] W. Skene, *The Four Ancient Books of Wales (*Edinburgh: Edmonston and Douglas, 1868), pp. 519–521.

[30] I. Fynglwyd, 'Marwnad Iorwerth Fynglwyd', *Gwaith Iorwerth Fynglwyd*, pp. 98–99.

Rhan darvu o'i lu roi'n welyaid
Cyweiriawdr I bawb o'r cywiriad;
Cerddoriaeth sy'n waeth, mỳn Croes naid!
Canu a phrydu, mỳn bedd Sain Fraid[31]

He makes another reference in the poem 'I Wilym Gwent, Rhyvelwr I Iasper Iarll Penvro':

Yn Ffrainc, mỳn eglwys Saint Ffraid![32]

Tudur Aled in the poem 'Cywydd I Syr Roser Salbri' refers to her generosity with food and drink and connects her to Gwynedd, the place where she was said to have arrived from Ireland:

'Ffrydiau gwin San Ffraid Gwynedd[33]

Volume 1 of the *Myvyrian Archaeology of Wales* includes this *awdl:*

O eisillit gwledig a gweith
Wdig wosprit, a Phedir penn pob ieith
Sanffreid fwyna de in imdeith.[34]

In the nineteenth century, William Parry's book called *Welsh Hillside Saints* includes two poems that refer to San Ffraid. The poem 'Folds' describes the pastoral world associated with San Ffraid, calling her 'Bride of the hills, who dost thy children lead, / With gentle hand and true maternal care'.[35] He refers to her generosity and motherliness again in 'Praise of the Lamb's Bride': 'How kindly I saw her on earth, / As the mother of souls born again'.[36]

Most recently, Ruth Bidgood published in the collection *Symbols of Plenty* the poem 'Hymn to Sant Ffraid', reprinted from the radio poem broadcast in 1979 by BBC Radio Wales in conjunction with the Welsh Arts Council.[37] This poem speaks of the Welsh traditions of San

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[31] L. G. Cothi, 'Marwnad Rhys ab Davydd ab Hywel Vain, O Vaelienydd', *The Poetical Works of Lewis Glyn Cothi* (Oxford: The Cymrodorion, 1837), pp. 237–241.

[32] L. G. Cothi, 'I Wilym Gwent, Rhyvelwr I Iasper Iarll Penvro', *The Poetical Works of Lewis Glyn Cothi*, p. 484.

[33] T. Aled, 'Cywydd I Syr Roser Salbri', *Gwaith Tudur Aled*, 2 vols, ed. T. G. Jones (Caerdydd: Gwasg Prifysgol Cymru, 1926), vol. 1, pp. 98–102.

[34] J. Thomas, O. Jones, E. Williams, and W. O. Pughe, 'Awdyl', *Myvyrian Archaeology of Wales: Collected out of Ancient Manuscripts*, 3 vols (Denbigh: Thomas Gee, 1870), vol. 1, pp. 136–137.

[35] W. Parry, 'Folds', *Welsh Hillside Saints* (Manchester: J. Roberts and Sons, 1896), pp. 35–53.

[36] Parry, 'Praise of the Lamb's Bride', pp. 255–258.

[37] R. Bidgood, 'Hymn to Sant Ffraid', *Symbols of Plenty* (Norwich: Canterbury Press, 2006), pp. 1–20.

Ffraid, of the conjunction between goddess and saint, and of her feast day at the end of winter, the same day as Imbolc:

> We call her now to walk on the riverbank,
> Brigid of Ireland, Ffraid of Wales, the saint, the golden one
> who breaks the ice, dipping first one hand, then two hands,
> freeing the river to flow into time of seed,
> time of ripening, time of harvest.
> We greet her now, as for so many centuries
> winter-starved people greeted her,
> from her churches and her wells,
> from the cold sea-coast and the doorstep of hill farms,
> with the immemorial cry—
> 'Ffraid is come! Ffraid is welcome!'[38]

The sources so far identify San Ffraid's importance in Wales as exemplified by the number of places where she is venerated and mention of her in early sources. So far, these sources have been vague about her life and miracles. The next chapter, which presents Iorwerth Fynglwyd's poem *I San Ffraid*, discusses the life and miracles attributed to San Ffraid, the sources upon which the poem appears to be based, and the themes and imagery derived from Fynglwyd's poem.

[38] R. Bidgood, 'Hymn to Sant Ffraid', p. 3.

Chapter 2, Iorwerth Fynglwyd, *I San Ffraid*

Iorwerth Fynglwyd (1480–1527) lived in Glamorgan in the parish of St Brides Major. In *Gwaith Iorwerth Fynglwyd*, editors Howell LL. Jones and E. I. Rowland describe him as a poet of his community with a particular affinity to San Ffraid:

> Yn Saint-y-Brid, Bro Morgannwg, yr oedd cartref Iorwerth Fynglwyd, fel y dangosir ym mhennawd gosteg o englynion a ganodd 'ar ddydd ei fabsant yn Saint-y-Brid' (cerdd 41).[39]

His poem *I San Ffraid* is a *cywydd* of 78 lines.[40]

> Y lleian, hardd yw llun hon, 1
> lle urddwyd holl Iwerddon, 2
> merch y gŵr mawrwych a gaid, 3
> Dipdacus, o dop duciaid. 4
>
> [The sister, lovely is her form,
> where honoured was all Ireland,
> girl of the great father was had,
> Dipdacus, from the highest lords.]

These lines identify the saint as she is most often described in Wales, as San Ffraid Leian or St Ffraid the nun. While images such as stained glass windows (see ch. 3) depict her as an abbess, in text she is called San Ffraid Leian. Her Welsh identity fits more closely the nun described in the Lives of SS Modwenna and Monynna, which describe her activities in Wales before she returned to Ireland to found her abbey at Kildare. These lines also immediately identify San Ffraid as the daughter of Dubtach, of the Irish nobility, who was the father of St Brigid of Kildare. This quatrain demonstrates that the Irish St Brigid of Kildare is Fynglwyd's San Ffraid, emphasizing her identity as a nun rather than her role as an abbess.

The next lines are more obscure, but introduce her miracles and her protection of the needy:

> Santes, ni'th oedes i'th ddydd, 5
> San Ffraid, Iesu na phrydydd, 6
> Wrth ddechrau dy wyrthiau i wan 7
> a'th fuchedd nid iaith fechan. 8
>
> [Saint, you did not delay in your day,
> San Ffraid, Jesus nor poet,
> As you began your miracles for the weak
> And your life no small language.]

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[39] *Gwaith Iorwerth Fynglwyd*, eds. H. Jones and E. I. Rowlands (Caerdydd: Gwasg Prifysgol Cymru, 1975), p. 3.

[40] *Gwaith Iorwerth Fynglwyd*, pp. 94–95.

While the lines are obscure, Fynglwyd refers to her 'miracles for the weak', generosity being a trait associated with St Brigid of Kildare, whose miracles often involved providing food without using up available stores and ministry to lepers, the poor, the sick, travellers, clergy, and parishioners. Fynglwyd continues to describe her 'miracles for the weak' in the next lines.

Y dydd—morwyn ddedwydd wyd— 9
o'th ddawn oll y'th enillwyd, 10
coes dy lysfam, gam ei gwaith, 11
draw, dâm, a dorrwyd ymaith: 12
tyfodd—mawr y gwnaud hefyd— 13
o'th rad goes a throed i gyd. 14

[The day—blessed maid are you—
through all your talents you were won,
your stepmother's leg, crooked its work,
was cut off, yonder, dame,
by your grace—great was it done as well—
all the leg and foot grew.]

This miracle does not appear in to the Irish or Scottish traditions about St Brigid. For that reason, this miracle may be considered part of the distinctly Welsh tradition, although this miracle does not appear in any other Welsh source. The association with healing is familiar, however. It also may be noted that San Ffraid shows magnanimity in healing the stepmother who insisted that her mother be sold before her birth, described in the Book of Lismore.

> Jealousy of the bondmaid seized Dubtach's consort, and she said to Dubthach: 'Unless thou sellest yon bondmaid in distant lands, I will exact my dowry from thee and I will leave thee.' Howbeit Dubthach was not desirous to sell the bondmaid.[41]

On the other hand, this story of the stepmother's leg does not appear in any stories of Brigid's life other than this poem. The next stanza introduces her miracles.

O Dduw, da iawn oedd d'eni, 15
achos dall iacheaist di. 16
Mynnaist, wen ei mynwes deg, 17
mal ar gŵyr, mêl o'r garreg. 18

[O God, good was thy birth,
because you healed the blind.
You obtained, blessed her fair bosom,
as though from wax, honey from the stone.]

St Brigid of Kildare does perform a number of miracles in which she heals the blind. Her miracle of getting honey from a stone, however, is limited to Fynglwyd's poem, and must be considered

[41] *Lives of the Saints from the Book of Lismore*, ed. W. Stokes (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1890), p. 183.

part of the Welsh tradition. St Brigid of Kildare did make salt from rock.[42] This miracle does not appear in any imagery in Wales associated with San Ffraid.

Treiglaist o bob tu i'r eglwys	19
trywyr gynt a fu'n troi'r gŵys,	20
a'th gogail i droi'r ail draw	21
y bu'r hwelydr heb hoeliaw,	22

[You travelled from all sides to the church
three men who formerly turned the furrow
and with your distaff turning the second one over
you used a mould-board without nails.]

Fynglwyd describes how San Ffraid attached her distaff to a plow in place of a mould-board. It is uncertain whether she is doing the plowing or just fixing the plow.

Note: A mould-board is a wedge formed by the curved part of a plow blade that turns the furrow. Figure 4 shows how a mould-board (labeled part 7) fits into a plow.

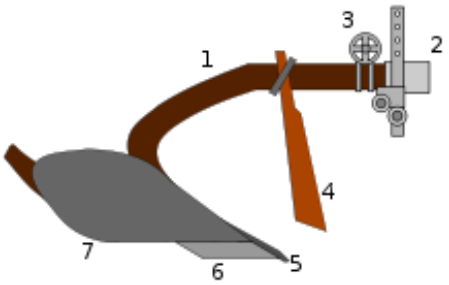

Figure 4. Example of a Mould-board (see part 7)

A distaff is a tool used for spinning that holds the raw fibers, preventing them from tangling during the spinning process. Fiber is wrapped around the distaff and tied in place with a piece of ribbon or string. Figure 5 shows a distaff.

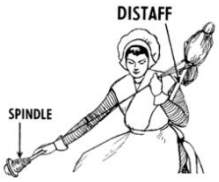

Figure 5. Example of a Distaff

Again, this story is unique to Iorwerth Fynglwyd's poem. While Brigid is described as having been born a slave and many stories describe her working on a farm, specifically in a dairy, she is

[42] O. Davies, *Celtic Sprituality*, p.126.

not associated with plowing the ground; however, she is associated with transforming common objects for her own purposes, as is shown in some of the other miracles in this poem, such as hanging the winnowing sheet to dry on a sunbeam in heavy rain, changing the rushes into fish, and getting honey from a stone.

Ymenyn gwyn am un gair 23
aeth yn lludw, waith anlladair: 24
y lludw a wnaud, lle dôi'n wyn, 25
yn y man yn ymenyn. 26

[White butter for a word
was made ashes, work of an evil word:
the ashes you made, where it became white,
into butter immediately.]

The transformation of butter to ashes and back again is an interesting change from the usual miracles in which St Brigid gives butter to the poor while still delivering full measure. This is the first of several miracles in the poem related to dairy products and cattle, typical of St Brigid's miracles.

Bwrud y nithlen wennaul, 27
bai law trwm, ar belydr haul. 28
A chwrw a wnaud, chwaer i Non, 29
mewn deugawg, mwy no digon, 30
i beri daioni dwys 31
dyn wiwglod deunaw eglwys. 32

[The winnowing sheet you hung,
if heavy rain, on a sunbeam.
And beer you'd make, sister to Non,
in two bowls, more than enough,
to cause intense goodness
girl of great praise at eighteen churches.]

These lines present a number of characteristics of San Ffraid: she hangs her winnowing sheet on a sunbeam when it rains, she is a sister to St Non, and she is praised at eighteen churches. Winnowing involves throwing grain in the air on a sheet so that the wind blows the lighter chaff away, leaving the heavier grain on the sheet. This miracle is similar to one in the Life of St Brigit the Virgin by Cogitosus in which St Brigid comes in from a rainstorm and hangs her wet clothes on a sunbeam.[43]

On several occasions in the Lives of St Brigid, the saint is able to create beer from water. In this poem she produces beer in two bowls for eighteen churches, and in the Irish Life of St Brigid, she

[43] O. Davies, *Celtic Spirituality*, p. 125.

uses two troughs and distributes the ale to seventeen churches.[44] From the poem, it is uncertain whether Fynglwyd is presenting a miracle that occurred in Ireland or in Wales. His next thought describes San Ffraid as 'sister to Non', the Welsh mother of St David. Dedications in both Pembrokeshire and Ceredigion connect the two, although no written explanation exists. The relationship is described further in chapter 3.

Rhoddaist i'r cantref hefyd	33
er Duw gaws y maerdy i gyd;	34
ac er rhoi caws y gŵr cau	35
dydd, nos, nid oedd un eisiau.	36

[You gave to the cantref, also,
for God's sake, all the cheese of the mayor's house;
and by giving the mean man's cheese
day and night, there was not one wanting.]

These lines introduce the first of two mayors in the poem. This mayor is identified as stingy, and San Ffraid distributes all his cheese to the cantref although none of it is found to be missing. This miracle echoes a number of similar stories in the Lives of St Brigid; for example, the *Life of St Brigid the Virgin* by Cogitosus begins with a story in which the saint gives away milk and butter without any of it being missing. Bacon is given away in the same manner. St Brigid's generosity follows her own impulses, and when she is in authority, as when she is an abbess, she is likely to enforce her will; in situations during her youth she is likely to give food away first and have it miraculously replaced so that no one can find fault.[45]

Gwyddud y pymtheg gweddi,	37
gwedd deg y gweddïi di.	38

[You knew the fifteen prayers,
Fair form suits you.]

The 'fifteen prayers' may refer to the Fifteen Prayers in the Revelations of St Birgitta of Sweden.[46] This reference brings into question whether Iorwerth Fynglwyd's concept of San Ffraid includes St Birgitta of Sweden. Since St Birgitta died on 23 July 1373 and was canonized on 7 October 1391, it is unlikely that Fynglwyd would confuse her with the St Bridget of Kildare who died AD 527. Nonetheless, the Fifteen Prayers were a popular spiritual exercise during Fynglwyd's lifetime. In *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England 1400–1580*,

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[44] O. Davies, *Celtic Spirituality*, p. 146.

[45] O. Davies, *Celtic Spirituality*, pp. 123–124.

[46] St Birgitta of Sweden, *Revelations of St. Bridget on the life and Passion of Our Lord and the Life of His Blessed Mother*, pp. 73–81.

Eamon Duffy describes this prayer as ‘certainly the most distinctive, and probably the most popular, of all prayers in late medieval England’.[47] His most persuasive point relates to the origin of the Fifteen Prayers:

> They are English in origin, probably composed either in the devotional world of the Yorkshire hermitages associated with figures like Richard Rolle and his disciples, or in the circle of the English Brigittines. In sheer comprehensiveness and eloquence they present an unrivalled epitome of late medieval English religion at its most symbolically resonant.[48]

Did Fynglwyd connect the Fifteen Prayers with a San Ffraid based on St Brigid of Kildare, as fits the other parts of the poem, or did he connect her with a saint who died within his own lifetime? It’s hard to imagine he would confuse the two, but, based on their ubiquity during his lifetime, it is impossible to know. Even so, would St Birgitta’s Revelations have reached Fynglwyd by the late fifteenth century, when he was writing this poem?

Y dydd y ceisiodd dy dad	39
wra yt, a’i roi atad,	40
un o’th lygaid a neidiawdd	41
o’th ben, hyn a’th boenai’n hawdd	42
a thrannoeth aeth yr wyneb	43
oll yn iach, ni bu well neb.	44

[The day your father attempted
to find you a husband, and give him to you,
one of your eyes jumped
from your head, and this pained you
and the next day the face was healed
completely, no one felt better.]

This miracle follows a pattern wherein a woman saint disfigures herself to avoid marriage. One item of interest is the avoidance of the gruesome detail often prevalent in other stories of saints’ devotion. Fynglwyd’s cryptic description leaves out the instigator of the miracle. Does San Ffraid pray for the disfigurement or does God bestow the miracle on seeing her quandry? In Fynglwyd’s poem, the eye itself appears to make the decision and he gives no explanation for her recovery. Compare this to the version in the *Book of Lismore*:

> Then she put her finger under the eye and plucked it out of her head, so that it lay on her cheek. When Dubthach and her brethren beheld that, they promised that she should never be told to go to a husband save the

[47] E. Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England 1400–1580*, 2nd edn (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2005), p. 249.

[48] E. Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England 1400–1580*, pp. 249–250.

husband whom she should like. Then Brigit put her palm to her eye, and it was healed at once.[49]

This story further clarifies that Fynglwyd's San Ffraid should not be confused with St Birgitta of Sweden, who was married and had a number of children. On the other hand, the Life of St Monynna states that the abbess directs that St Brigid go forth to found an abbey and states that she will be blind.

O Iwerddon ar donnen 45
i'r môr yn wir, morwyn wen, 46
da nofiaist hyd yn Nyfi,— 47
dull Duw ar dy fantell di: 48
ar lif y doethost i'r lan 49
o ffrwd loyw San Ffraid leian. 50

[From Ireland on a turf
to the sea, holy maiden,
you swam well to the Teifi,
God's image on your cloak:
you came ashore on the flow
of bright sunlight San Ffraid nun.]

In *Traditions of the British Saints*, Elissa Henken adds these lines from Theophilus Evans, *Drych Y Prif Oesoedd*:

Ni cheisaist lestri echwyn
dros Fôr o'th oror i'th ddwyn,
Ond dy Arch oedd Dywarchen,
Urddo'r Rhôs o'r ddaear hen:
A'th Forwynion, iaith freiniol,
Yn llawn dawn yn llywio'n d'ôl."

[You didn't seek borrowed vessels to take you over the sea from your border, but your request/ark was a sod; you dignified the moor from the old earth; and your maidens, privileged people, full of grace, steering behind you.][50]

She also notes that *Drych y Prif Oesoedd* uses 'eurwyn' (white/blessed golden) instead of 'echwyn' (borrowed).[51]

Gwnaethost o'r brwyn yng Ngwynedd 51
bysgod glân Basg i gadw gwledd; 52
bun iach deg, buon i'ch dwrn, 53
byw'n esgud heb un asgwrn; 54
bwriaist ymysg y berwr— 55

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[49] *Lives of the Saints from the Book of Lismore*, ed. W. Stokes, p. 188.

[50] *Drych Y Prif Oesoedd*, 2nd edn, S. J. Evans (Caerdydd: Gwasg Prifysgol Cymru, 1902), pp. 281–82.

[51] E. Henken, *Traditions of the Welsh Saints*, p. 164.

brwyniaid ŷnt—obry'n y dŵr. 56

[You made from the rushes in Gwynedd
fish for holy Easter to keep a feast;
fair, healthy maid, they were in your hand,
living actively without a bone;
you threw them among the cress—
they are sparlings—down below in the water.]

San Ffraid's creation of sparlings is a significant episode in the Welsh traditions relating to San Ffraid, inspiring a number of variations in details of the story, continuing to the present time. In 1983, an article in Country Quest magazine by Donald Dougall described the history and stories relating to 'Netting the Conwy in the Search for Ffraid's Fish'. At that time, the run of the small fish was nearly at an end:

> Only the old people of the Vale of Conwy, in North Wales, remember the prodigious Spring runs of the half-forgotten 'brwyniaid' or sparling. Great catches of this prized sea fish continued into the late 1950s. Then a mysterious decline set in. But they still net for 'Ffraid's Fish' each Spring.[52]

Dougall notes that the name 'brwyniaid' is still used by the local fishermen and means 'the rushy fish'.[53] He then introduces Fynglwyd's poem and describes the legend:

> Apart from changing ash into butter they included a famous and long-remembered miracle, which took place on the river banks at Glan Conwy where Ffraid arrived to find the whole district in the grip of a terrible famine.
>
> Ffraid plucked rushes from the riverside and cast them into the waters, whereupon they changed into hosts of delicate bwyniaid or sparling, so saving the population from certain starvation.[54]

Her motivation of preventing starvation during a famine is repeated in another version, reported by Elissa Henken from an oral history held at the Welsh Folk Museum, which has its own details:

> According to this story, centuries ago, during a famine in Wales, Sant Ffraid was walking along the shore, casually and unthinkingly tossing rushes into the sea. A few days later 'he' saw things like stars shining in

[52] D. Dougall, 'Netting the Conwy in the Search for Ffraid's Fish', *Country Quest: The magazine for Wales and the Border*, April 1988, vol. 28, num. 11, 33–34.

[53] D. Dougall, 'Netting the Conwy in the Search for Ffraid's Fish', 33–34.

[54] D. Dougall, 'Netting the Conwy in the Search for Ffraid's Fish', 33–34.

> the water, and realizing that they were fish, went down on 'his' knees to thank God for having brought sparlings to Conway.[55]

A history of the Parish of Llansantffraid-ym-Mechain offers a different rationale, stating that 'she there caused the rushes to be turned into trout for the sustenance of herself and her maidens'. A note elaborates that 'this fish is still known in some parts of Wales as *Brwyn bysc*, i.e., rush fish', confirming the meaning of the name, but using a different term.[56] Figure 6 shows the stained glass window of San Ffraid at St Non's Chapel in Pembrokeshire, which portrays her throwing sparlings into the water, a portrayal that does not support Baring-Gould's supposition that a southern tradition exists for a separate Welsh Brigid who studied at St Davids Cathedral as described in the Life of St Monynna.

Figure 6. San Ffraid and the Brwyniaid, Chapel of Our Lady and St Non, Pembrokeshire

[55] E. Henken, *Traditions of the Welsh Saints*, p. 166.

[56] T. G. Jones, 'A History of the Parish of Llansantffraid-ym-Mechain', *Collections Historical & Archaeological Relating to Montgomeryshire*, 100 vols, ed. Powysland Club (London: J. Russell Smith, 1871), vol. 4, 75–168.

The next lines describe that San Ffraid traveled to Rome on the feast of Candlemas. These lines link her travel with a vision of heaven and the nine grades of angels. Line 57 states that San Ffraid 'did not bear a grudge', but the nature of the grudge is not explained, although he connects it with her intention to go to Rome.

Amcenaist—ni ddygaist ddig— 57
weled Pedr o wlad Padrig: 58
gwelaist nef yn nhref Rufain, 59
gŵyl wen Fair, â'i gloywon fain; 60
a'r nawradd, morwyn wirion, 61
er rheolhau yr ŵyl hon: 62

[You intended—you did not bear a grudge—
to see Peter from Patrick's land:
you saw heaven in the town of Rome,
on the feast of holy Mary, with her slender brightness;
and the nine grades [of angels], innocent maiden,
for the rules of this feast:]

Did Brigid of Kildare travel to Rome? Birgitta of Sweden traveled to Rome and died there. This story could indicate that Fynglwyd confused his San Ffraid with St. Birgitta of Sweden. The feast of holy Mary refers to Candlemas, held on February 2, and the next lines describe how San Ffraid's feast day was established on the previous day, February 1.

a'th ŵyl osodes Iesu, 63
noswyl Fair, uwch no Sul fu. 64
Gwnaethost uddunt yn Llundain 65
y maer yn farch, morwyn fain. 66
Rhyddheaist, rhoddaist yn rhydd, 67
rhag y Pab wraig y pobydd. 68

[And your feast Jesus set,
eve of Mary's feast, higher than Sunday.
You made for them in London
the mayor into a horse, slender maiden.
You freed the baker's wife
from the Pope, you gave freely.]

Here is another situation in which San Ffraid chastises a mayor. The story stating that San Ffraid transforms the Lord Mayor of London into a horse is not repeated elsewhere, and neither is the tale in which San Ffraid frees the baker's wife from the Pope. These lines are odd enough to generate curiosity as to their source and purpose. No answers, however, are available. These lines do extend San Ffraid's influence beyond the realm of Wales to London and then Rome, if only in imagination. They also show San Ffraid flouting conventional authority and imply that the mayor and the Pope are in the wrong. The next lines extend her authority from punishing and contradicting earthly leaders to subduing Satan.

Rhwymaist y cythraul creulawn 69
rhod a'th Dduw o'th rad a'th ddawn. 70
Llawer a wnaeth Duw erod: 71
lle bych, och am allu bod. 72

[You tied the cruel devil
to a wheel and your God, by your blessing and gift.
God granted much because of you:
Where you may be, oh for being able to exist.]

Note: In the translation of this stanza, 'rhod' is a wheel but 'rho a'th Dduw' may have been 'rhodd o'th Dduw' or 'a gift from your God'. In any case, the meaning of these lines is obscure. The concluding lines beg for San Ffraid's intercession.

Rho Dduw finnau'n rhydd, feinir, 73
rhag pob diawl pan fo'r hawl hir. 74
Ffyrnig cŵn uffern y'u caid,-- 75
da Ffraid fwyn, diffryd f'enaid. 76

[May God free me, girl,
from every devil when the demand is long.
They have fierce hounds in hell,--
dear gentle Ffraid, protect my soul.]

This stanza may refer to the Cŵn Annwn or Hounds of the Otherworld [Annwn] of Welsh myth, in which the huntsman Gwyn ap Nudd led a form of the Wild Hunt, thought to foretell catastrophe such as war or plague, or at best the death of the one who witnessed it. Christians named these creatures 'the hounds of hell', assuming they were owned by Satan. In Wales they are associated with migrating geese, supposedly because their honking in the night is reminiscent of barking dogs.[57] In this context, the reference in the Life of St Monynna to Brigid seeing geese flying overhead may evoke thoughts of the Cŵn Annwn, or at least an ill omen that might lead St Monynna to send St Brigid away to found her own monastery and also to predict that she will be blind. A stained glass window in St Brides Church at St Brides Netherwent in Monmouthshire (fig. 7) portrays St Bride with three white geese flying overhead. In that window, nothing suggests that the appearance of the geese is ominous.

[57] D. Rankine and S. D'Este, *The Isles of the Many Gods* (London: Avallonia, 2007), p.154.

Figure 7. San Ffraid, St Brides Netherwent Church, Monmouthshire

In *I San Ffraid*, Iorwerth Fynglwyd leaves a portrait painted in headlines, implying that readers know the stories with all the details. Looking past the missing details, however, his portrait of San Ffraid shows a saint who is magnanimous, resourceful, and brave. She has a tendency to flout authority. Her conventional associations with agriculture and provender are in evidence, but her role as a leader of communities, her support of the religious hierarchy, and her youth living in a druid's household are not. Fynglwyd's imagery leaves an impression of gentleness and light, with vivid descriptions of sunbeams, small fish in the water, and of a woman arriving on the shores in Wales on a flood of water.

Chapter 3, Dedications, Traditions, and Customs

Introduction

This chapter describes the dedications, traditions, and customs related to San Ffraid. Appendix C contains detailed timelines for each church. The Lives of SS Modwenna and Monynna suggest that St Bridget traveled from Ireland to Wales and then returned to found her monasteries in Kildare, which are supported by the fifteenth-century poet Iorwerth Fynglwyd's poem *I San Ffraid.* Poems, both old and recent, indicate that San Ffraid has long been venerated in Wales. Balanced against the limited written material are the roughly two dozen geographic locations with dedications related to the saint. Writing about these dedications to San Ffraid in *The Settlements of the Celtic Saints in Wales*, E. G. Bowen points out that 'coastal chapels and inland churches occur in almost equal numbers'.[58] The geographic distribution of sites is shown in figure 8.

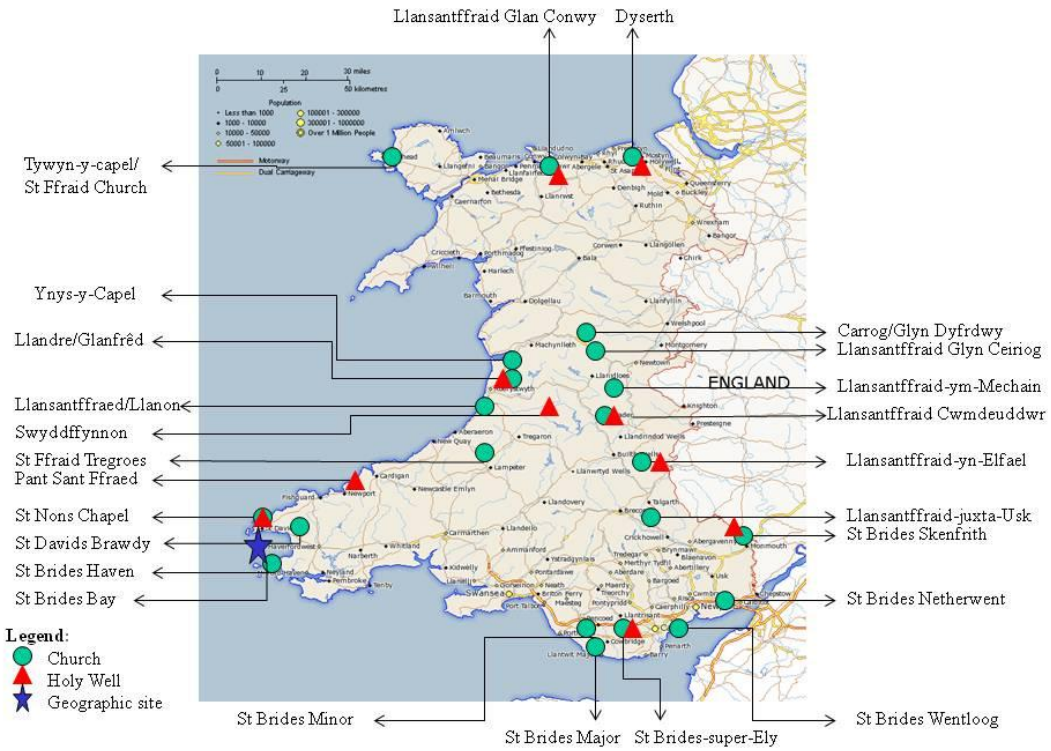

Figure 8. Dedications to San Ffraid in Wales

In *Saints in the Landscape*, Graham Jones associates the veneration of San Ffraid with meadows and with parishes dedicated to St Michael. He notes that dedications to San Ffraid are near water

[58] E. G. Bowen, *The Settlements of the Celtic Saints in Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1956), pp. 97–98.

meadows, which are not typical of the Welsh landscape, while St Michael dedications are near upland meadows.[59] For example, the church of Llanmihangel Genau'r Glyn is on the hill above Llandre while the farm of Glanfrêd is on the nearby flatland. Jones attributes the shared dedications to pastures, appropriate for San Ffraid, patron saint of cattle:

> These latter are typically upland parishes, so that a transhumance relationship might be suspected—though Brigid's feast is far too early for the start of summer pasturing. Rather, complementary pastures are indicated: lush water-meadows and sweet upland grazing. [60]

He also attributes the dedications to San Ffraid to a specifically British audience:

> Brigid's ancient religious sites total only about three dozen, but they form a very good—and exceedingly interesting—example of non-random distribution. Almost all occur in Wales and those western parts of England which to some significant extent remained for a long time culturally and/or linguistically British rather than English.[61]

E. G. Bowen also attributes devotion to San Ffraid to areas colonized by the Irish, such as Pembrokeshire:

> Her cult appears in Ireland, Wales, Cornwall, Devon, Brittany, Cumbria and Scotland, and most likely it belonged originally to the areas which were colonized by the Irish in the fifth and sixth centuries A.D., and spread subsequently over all the Celtic lands.[62]

It seems logical that followers of St Brigid traveled to Wales rather than the saint herself, and it would be equally logical to expect that these missionaries would dedicate Welsh churches to her. Are these dedicated churches evidence of her travels as a missionary in Wales? As described in the Life of St Modwenna, Tywyn-y-Capel is associated with her initial landing and Llansantffraid Glan Conwy is said to be the place where she and Luge settled while St Modwenna and Athea were traveling to the east. Nonetheless, only those churches in the area are associated with San Ffraid. More convincing is Iorwerth Fynglwyd's version, in which she lands at the Dyfi River at Ynys-y-Capel. Both Glanfrêd and Llandre are near the Dyfi River, as well as the cluster of churches directly east of the Dyfi (see fig. 8). If the Life of St Monynna is considered, where she was said to have traveled to Menevia, the churches in Ceredigion and Pembrokeshire could indicate her presence as a missionary in that area. Ultimately, no convincing evidence exists that

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[59] G. Jones, *Saints in the Landscape* (Chalford: Tempus Publishing, 2007), p.196–7.

[60] G. Jones, *Saints in the Landscape,* p.197.

[61] G. Jones, *Saints in the Landscape,* p.196.

[62] E. G. Bowen, *The Settlements of the Celtic Saints in Wales,* pp. 97–98.

any of these dedicated churches can be directly connected to missionary work by San Ffraid in Wales.

The transition between pre-Christian and Christian religions

The churches and geographic areas dedicated to San Ffraid often indicate pre-Christian influences, and this chapter describes possible connections based on the presence of several indicators. The first element is a circular churchyard. In the article 'How old is this church?', D. Stedman Davies explains the evolution in Wales of the circular burial ground into a churchyard:

> The early Welsh Christianity adopted the circular form of the pagan burial place and many of the churchyards are the actual barrows of the familiar type. In these times a barrow was raised over an important grave, this grave was the 'mynwent,' around which the lesser folk were buried, it was to them a sacred place and when a Christian church was built later on it became a Christian graveyard.[63]

The second element is a churchyard that is considerably older than the church itself. Davies describes why the term 'llan' is an indicator of great age:

> The word "Llan" means a clearing, a level space, there is no suggestion of Church originally or of a building. It was the area where the founder desired to settle and was later consecrated by a burial. To all appearance the Welsh Llan is a copy of the Irish monastic settlement and cannot have been introduced into Wales much before the year 500 A.D. and Welsh tradition does not claim great antiquity. Before that date, the Christian place of meeting was not "Llan" but "Eglwys" a barrow.[64]

The conversion from pagan to Christian site was deliberately planned to avoid a change in location. In fact, St Gregory instructed the early Christians to transform pagan shrines into Christian places of worship:

> I have come to the conclusion that the temples of the idols in England should not on any account be destroyed. Augustine must smash the idols, but the temples themselves should be sprinkled with holy water and altars set upon them, in which the relics are to be enclosed. For we are to take advantage of the well-built temples by purifying them from the devil-worship and dedicating them to the true God.[65]

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[63] D. S. Davies, 'How Old is this Church', *The Radnorshire Society Transactions*, vol. 15 (1945), pp. 38-40. In *Welsh Journals Online* <http://welshjournals.llgc.org.uk/browse/viewpage/llgc-id:1191402/llgc-id:1192569/llgc-id:1192609/get650> [Accessed 18 October 2012].

[64] D. S. Davies, 'How old is this church', p. 39.

[65] E. Parry, *Churches in Wales and Their Treasures* (Llwyndyrys: Llygad Gwalch, 2011), p. 16.

Richard Haslam includes specific locations as an indicator of great age, stating: 'They are commonly either quite high up in the hills, or on the bank of a river'.[66] Graham Jones associates San Ffraid with water meadows and St Michael with hillsides. While a number of San Ffraid dedications are located in meadows and fields (e.g., St Brides Wentloog, St Brides Netherwent, Carrog, St Brides Skenfrith), numerous San Ffraid dedications are on hills (e.g., Llansantffraid Glyn Ceiriog, Llansantffraid Cwmdeuddwr, Llansantffraed-yn-Elfael, and Llansantffraid-ym-Mechain). Based on these criteria, the antiquity indicated by placement high on hills or by water seems more demonstrable at this time than a connection between St Michael and San Ffraid.

Another element that indicates pre-Christian use is the presence of ancient yews trees. D. Stedman Davies describes the meaning of yews growing in churchyards:

> A visitor to Llanyre, Cascob and Llansantffraed in Elvell will notice yews growing on mounds, and especially at Llantfihangel-nant-Mellan, where seven out of ten hollow trees stand on a slight mound. These remind us of the pre-Christian custom of erecting a mound over a grave, and when found in a circular churchyard, as at Llanyre, we have a double reminder of a burial within a circular enclosure which was so sacred to the early Celts and a place of meeting for the community, who, on becoming Christians, built a church of wattle and mortar within its confines, thus handing it down to us through the centuries.[67]

The last indicator of early Christian origins and the most widespread and familiar signs are the names of the Celtic saints to whom most of the churches on the most ancient sites are dedicated.[68] Based on this factor, the name of San Ffraid would indicate antiquity because it echoes the pagan goddess Bride or Brigantia. To summarize, factors that indicate age include a circular churchyard, a churchyard older than the church itself, a church high on a hill or by a river, the presence of ancient yew trees, and a saint associated with the pre-Christian era.

Another indicator of pre-Christian origins, perhaps even more significant than those related to churches, is the dedication of holy wells. Francis Jones, whose book *The Holy Wells of Wales* remains the authoritative source on the subject, explains their importance:

> The wells indicate where the sacred sites of our pagan and Christian forebears were; they tell us of medieval belief and practice, and they

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[66] R. Haslam, *The Buildings of Wales: Powys* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2003), p. 33.

[67] D. S. Davies, 'Yew trees in the churchyards', *The Radnorshire Society Transactions, vol. 15 (1945)*, pp. 33–38. In *Welsh Journals Online* <http://welshjournals.llgc.org.uk/browse/viewpage/llgc-id:1191402/llgc-id:1192569/llgc-id:1192609/get650> [Accessed 18 October 2012].

[68] R. Haslam, *The Buildings of Wales: Powys*, pp. 31–32.

> sometimes confirm and strengthen our imperfect knowledge of the areas where certain early saints labored or where their cults were popular.[69]

In a number of dedicated sites, both churches and holy wells are present. Figure 8 shows a full list, but Llansantffraid Glyndyfrdwy, St Brides Skenfrith, and St Brides-super-Ely are a few examples of these sites.

Anglesey

Tywyn-y-Capel

The ancient chapel of Tywyn-y-Capel was located on the beach at Trearddur Bay.[71] Richard Haslam reports that the walls were standing in 1780, but all traces of the chapel were destroyed in 1913 during a storm and only the mound remains.[72] The chapel may have vanished before that time. In the *History of the Island of Mona* published in 1833, Angharad Llwyd writes:

> Brigid landed at Holyhead, and erected there Capel Sant Ffraid, which stood on an artificial tomen or mount by the seaside on a sandy beach called Tywyn y Capel, about 2 miles from Holyhead; but there is not any of it now left.[73]

This report is well before the date when the church was said to have washed away. An eighteenth-century print (fig. 9) shows the chapel walls as somewhat intact.

Figure 9. Drawing of Tywyn-y-Capel in Angelsey[74]

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[69] F. Jones, *The Holy Wells of Wales,* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1992), p. 11.

[71] R. Haslam, J. Orbach, and A. Voelcker, *The Buildings of Wales: Gwynedd* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1994), pp. 222–223.

[72] T. John, and N. Rees, *Pilgrimage: A Welsh Perspective* (Llandysul: Gomer Press, 2002), pp. 143–144.

[73] A. Llwyd, *History of the Island of Mona,* p. 203.

[74] Drawing, 'Tywyn-y-Capel Excavations: Project No. G1746'. In *Gwynedd Archaeological Trust, Cadw Grant-aided Projects* <http://www.heneb.co.uk/cadwprojs/cadwreview2005/tywynycapel.html> [Accessed 18 October 2012].

Compare the view in the drawing to the same view of the mound in 1960 (fig. 10), which shows the extent of the erosion since the drawing was made.

Figure 10. 1960 Photograph of the Tywyn-y-Capel Mound[75]

Tiered cist burials revealed through erosion have led to recent archaeological excavations of the Tywyn-y-Capel mound. Following exploratory work in 1985 and 1997, more extensive excavations were undertaken in 2002 and 2003, which recorded over sixty burials dated from the seventh to the twelfth century.[76] CADW Project G1746, Tywyn-y-Capel Excavations, documents a complete excavation of the area conducted by the Gwynedd Archaeological Trust. Radiocarbon dates from the collagen remaining in the bone suggest burial dates from AD 630 to 780.[77] These dates are within 200 years of St Brigid of Kildare's lifetime. The book *Pilgrimage: A Welsh Perspective* explains that the ancient chapel was on the 'Monks' Path' from St Cybi's monastery to Rhoscolyn and cites the likelihood that pilgrims were drawn to the chapel:

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[75] No author (*c.* 1960), 'View of Towyn y Capel Mound, Holyhead Rural taken before 1960'. In the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales (*RCAHMW) General Scanned Image Collection*, <http://www.coflein.gov.uk/en/collection/552417/details/RCAHMW+General+Scanned+Image+Collection/ > [Accessed 18 October 2012].

[76] J. Wiles (2007), 'Towyn-y-Capel; Capel Sant Ffraid: Site of Chapel and Excavated Cemetery'. In the RCAHMW Site Details <http://www.coflein.gov.uk/en/site/43652/details/TOWYN-Y-CAPEL%3BCAPEL+SANT+FFRAID%3A+SITE+OF+CHAPEL+AND+EXCAVATED+CEMETERY/> [Accessed 18 October 2012].

[77] 'Tywyn-y-Capel Excavations: Project No. G1746'. In *Gwynedd Archaeological Trust, Cadw Grant-Aided Projects* <http://www.heneb.co.uk/cadwprojs/cadwreview/2005/tywynycapel.html> [Accessed 18 October 2012].

> The chapel of St Ffraid at Trearddur Bay, where St Bride and her maidens landed after crossing from Ireland on green turfs on their way to Llansantffraid (Glanconwy) must have been an attraction for Irish pilgrims and at one time pilgrims came here from France.[78]

The site continues to draw visitors. Near the vanished chapel, a stone Millenium Cross now stands, inscribed 'St Bride, pray for us' in Welsh, Irish, Latin, and English (fig. 11). The cross is 8 feet high, made from Anglesey limestone from Moelfre Quarry; halfway up the cross a carving shows a hand holding a flame. Superimposed on the cross is a St Brigid's Cross.

Figure 11. Millenium Cross, Trearddur Bay, Anglesey

[78] T. John, and N. Rees, *Pilgrimage: A Welsh Perspective*, pp. 143–144.

St Ffraid Church, Trearddur Bay, Anglesey

St Ffraid Church, Trearddur Bay, is in the parish of the Rectorial Benefice of Holyhead in the deanery of Llifon/Talybolion, in the diocese of Bangor. Efforts to replace the ruin of Tywyn-y-Capel with a new building began in 1898, when a small wooden church was built at Porth y Post. In 1918, the church was moved to the site of original chapel; in 1921, the church was moved to its present site, and a stone church was constructed from 1926 to 1932. St Ffraid's Church (fig. 12) was dedicated in 1957.

Figure 12. St Ffraid Church, Trearddur Bay, Anglesey

Afon Braint

The River Braint is associated with San Ffraid solely because of its name. The *Dictionary of the Place-Names of Wales* states that 'the name reflects divine associations and the phonological development was Br **Brigantia*>OW **Bryeint* >MW **Breint*> MnW *Braint* (a word which is also cognate with brenin 'king' and braint 'status').[79] While San Ffraid has been described as a Christian saint derived from the goddess Brigantia, this river has no real connection with the saint.

[79] H. W. Owen and R. Morgan, *Dictionary of the Place-Names of Wales* (Llandysul: Gomer Press, 2005), p. 44.

Ceredigion

The dedications to San Ffraid in Ceredigion speak to her connection to the west coast of Wales, where shipbuilders and mariners have gathered since the voyages of the Phoenicians and where missionaries arrived from Ireland during the lifetime of Brigid of Kildare. The coast of Ceredigion is also associated with the ancient city of Mynyw, home of St David and his mother St Non.

The Pilgrim Routes

The shoreline community and church of Llansantffraed by the town of Llanon lies on the pilgrim route from Holywell to St Davids:

> A pilgrim track traditionally runs to and beyond St Ffraid's parish church. Llanon and Henfynyw had strong links with St David who was educated at Henfynyw, Old Menevia, and whose mother, St Non, is commemorated in Llanon, which also has a tradition of being a station on the road to St Davids.[82]

Other churches and landmarks in Ceredigion and Pembrokeshire tell of a connection between St David, his mother St Non, and San Ffraid. As stated in chapter 1, the Life of St Monynna reports that San Ffraid was sent to Menevia to study, which connects her to St David, as evidenced by dedications in Pembrokeshire and Ceredigion. Although no particular story connects San Ffraid with St Non, a stained glass window of San Ffraid is part of St Non's Chapel in Pembrokeshire, and a stained glass window of St Non with the young St David is part of Llansantffraed Church in Ceredigion, with the town of Llanon nearby.

Because of shipping lanes and the proximity of Ceredigion to Ireland, the connection to Irish saints makes practical sense. [83] The west coast of Wales in this area was once a center for shipbuilding and travelers. Graham Panes describes activities in the area:

> Aberarth, now a small village, is certainly one of the oldest ports in Ceredigion, and low tide reveals the remains of ancient stone fish weirs built by Cistercian monks. Aberarth was likely to have been the port at which many Celtic saints would have landed, and there are a number of

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[82] T. John, and N. Rees, *Pilgrimage: A Welsh Perspective*, p. 162. Note: See pp. 161–162 for an explanation and illustration of the map made by John Ogilvy, cosmographer to Charles II, in 1674, which detailed the pilgrim route between Holywell and St Davids.

[83] E. G. Bowen, 'The Celtic Saints in Cardiganshire', *Ceredigion: Journal of the Cardiganshire Antiquarian Society*, vol 1. nos. 1–2 (1950–1951), p. 13.

> churches in the area dedicated not only to Padarn, but also to Tysilio, Ffraid, Crannog, and Ceitho.[84]

While no record states that San Ffraid ever visited the Llansantffraed area, she may have visited the town of Henfynyw, the original home of St Non and her son St David. St Non is venerated in the area, as well.

> The town of Llansantffraed, with its church dedicated to San Ffraid, is close to the town of Llanon, where a chapel, now ruined, was dedicated to St Non.[85]

As discussed in *Feminine Sanctity and Spirituality in Medieval Wales* by Jane Cartwright, this chapel was pulled down in 1906 and a house was built on the site.[86]

St Bridget Church, Llansantffraed

St Bridget Church (figs. 13 and 14) in the parish of Llansantffraed is in the benefice of Llansantffraed and Llanddeiniol in the deanery of Glyn Aeron in the archdeaconry of Cardigan in the Diocese of St Davids. Llansantffraed adjoins the town of Llanon, where a chapel to St Non once stood, connecting the two saints geographically.

Figure 13. St Bridgets Church, Llansantffraed

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[84] G. Panes, *Voyages of the Celtic Saints* (Llanrwst: Gwasg Carreg Gwalch, 2007), p. 160.

[85] Mark McDermott, 'The rebuilding of Llansantffraid Parish Church', *Ceredigion: Journal of the Ceredigion Historical Society*, vol. 14, no. 3, 2003, 47–60. In *Welsh Journals Online* <http://welshjournals.llgc.org.uk/browse/viewpage/llgc-id:1109629/llgc-id:1109751/llgc-id:1109804/get650> [Accessed 18 October 2012].

[86] J. Cartwright, *Feminine Sanctity in Medieval Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2006), p. 101.

Figure 14. Norman Tower, St Bridgets Church, Llansantffraed

The Church probably spans at least 1,300 years, incorporating the life histories of anything from four to six successively erected buildings on the site.[87] In *c.* 1158, Roger de Clare, Earl of Hertford, made a grant of the church to the Slebech commandery of the Knights of St John.[88] During the Commonwealth years the building was desecrated by Cromwell's soldiers, and the tower was shelled by sailors. A cannon ball from a small ship's cannon, found in the graveyard, is stored in the church safe.[89] In 1838 to 1840 the church was rebuilt, except for the tower.[90] The Reverend John Timothy Lewis wrote a poem about Llansantffraed Tower, which is documented in appendix C.

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[87] *Llansantffraed Parish Church*, brochure, 2012.

[88] J. Rees, 'Slebech Commandery and the Knights of St John', *Archaeologia Cambrensis*, XIV (1897), 85–228.

[89] *Llansantffraed Parish Church*, brochure, 2012.

[90] *Llansantffraed Parish Church*, brochure, 2012.

Llansantffraid Priory and Nunnery

Samuel Lewis quotes *The Itinerary of John Leland* when explaining that Llansantffraed in Cardiganshire may have been the site of a priory and nunnery.[91] Leland, however, is uncertain whether the nunnery is in Cardiganshire or near Cwmdeuddwr:

> Ther is a church caullid Llansanfride (* vii. miles from Aberustwith upper to Cairdigan on the se side, and ther hath bene great building. But wither this was the Abbay of Llanfride of the wich mention is made in the booke " De Dotatione Ecclesiae S. Davidis," or no, I can not telle.
>
> Ther is a nother Llansanfrid in Comytother,' and peraventure this is that Llansanfnde Nunneri made in a newer world, of the which Giraldus spekith, Ther halh bene great building atLlannjstyt,*a mile lower on the se hanke then Llansanfride Cairdigan shire, and sum suppose that ther hath bene a nunnery, Ustwith risith owt of a mares grounde cauUid Blaine Ust- with iii. miles from Llangibike" on Wy. Itis inComeustwith, and so rennith good vi. miles thorough Comeustwith, and a vi- or vii, mo miles to Abreustwith.[92]

The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales (RCAHMW) offers a map reference of SN56NW and grid reference of SN51006700 for the medieval Llansantffraed Priory and Nunnery in Ceredigion.

St Ffraid Church, Tregroes

St Ffraid Church, Tregroes, is in the parish of Llandysul in the benefice of Llandysul with Bangor Teifi with Henllan and Llanfairollwyn with Llangynllo in the deanery of Emlyn in the Diocese of St Davids. Originally this was a small chapel of ease in the hamlet of Tregroes, one of six that were part of St Tysul parish. Ieuan T. Hughes and J. Raymond Jenkins report:

> In some cases their ruins remained till 1783 but now no trace remains except for surface irregularities. They were Llanffraed at Dyffryn Llynod, Tregroes, St. Sulfed, Pontshaen; St. Winifred near Castell Gwynionydd; Llanfair, near Llanfair Manor; Capel Dewi, near Gwarcoed-isaf; and Capel Borthyn, near Bryn Martin Farm.[93]

The chapel of Llanffraed served a specific area:

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[91] S. Lewis, *A Topographical Index of Wales*, 2 vols (London: S. Lewis and Co., 1833), no page numbers are provided in this publication.

[92] J. Leland, *The Itinerary of John Leland in or around the years 1535-1543* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1906), <http://www.archive.org/stream/itineraryjohnle00lelagoog/itineraryjohnle00lelagoog_djvu.txt>, [Accessed 17 August 2012].

[93] I. T. Hughes and J. R. Jenkins, 'The Church of St Tysul, Llandysul', *Ceredigion: Journal of the Cardiganshire Antiquarian Society*, vol. 5, nos. 1–4, 1964–1967, p. 426.

> Llanffraed (St. Bridget, St. Bride, Santes Ffraed), in a field named Cae Capel, ministered to the spiritual needs of a large part of the parish—Fforest Cerdin, Ffoshelig, and Dyffryn Llynod to Blaen Cerdin, Nantcwnstabl, and Gwarllwynoedos to the borders of Capel Cynon.[94]

The current church having been built in the nineteenth century in a different spot than the last church, and little remains to indicate the age or location of the old chapel. No trace of this original church remains except for the medieval font.[95] The current church (fig. 15) was built in 1858. The church is built on a hill, as shown in figure 16, which shows the view from the churchyard.

Figure 15. St Ffraid Church, Tregroes, Ceredigion

[94] I. T. Hughes and J. R. Jenkins, 'The Church of St Tysul, Llandysul', p. 426

[95] T. Lloyd, J. Orbach, and R. Scourfield, *The Buildings of Wales: Carmarthenshire and Ceredigion* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2006), p. 585.

Figure 16. Vista from the Churchyard, St Ffraids Church, Tregroes, Ceredigion

Llanfihangel Genau'r Glyn

In Llandre, north of Aberystwyth, St Michaels Church (in Welsh, Llanfihangel Genau'r Glyn) is associated with San Ffraid. In *A Brief History of Llanfihangel Genau'r Glyn*, Randall Enoch Evans states:

> God has been worshipped in this valley for well over a thousand years. A 2000-year-old yew to the north east of the church points to a possible earlier pagan site. According to tradition, the original church was to built near Glanfrêd, but every night the builders' work was destroyed by a supernatural power which was heard to proclaim: "Llanfihangel, yn negenau'r glyn, ond Glanfrêd fawr gaiff fod fan hyn", St Michael's Church in the opening of the valley, only Glanfrêd can be here.[96]

St Michaels Church (fig. 17) is in the parish of Llanfihangel Genau'r Glyn and Llangorwen in the diocese of St Davids. The lychgate of the church (fig. 18) is listed, and at the bottom of the hill below the church is a restored holy well (fig. 19).

[96] R. Enoch, *A Brief History of Llanfihangel Genau'r Glyn* (Llandre: Randall Evans Enoch, 2002).

Figure 17. St Michaels Church, Llanmihangel Genau'r Glyn (Llandre)

Figure 18. Lychgate, St Michaels Church, Llanmihangel Genau'r Glyn (Llandre)

The well is close by the east wall of the churchyard. In the early twentieth century, a small building (now gone) stood next to the well, and claims of miracles were recorded from this period. The well and its surroundings have been refurbished.[97]

Figure 19. Holy Well, St Michaels Church, Llanmihangel Genau'r Glyn (Llandre)

The fragment of an ancient yew tree with three remaining stems is located in the churchyard. The tree is 1060+ cm in girth, and it is considered the largest yew in the west of Wales.[98] Figure 20 shows the ancient yew tree.

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[97] A. Morton, *Trees of the Celtic Saints: The Ancient Yews of Wales* (Llanrwst: Gwasg Garreg Gwalch, 2009), p. 113.

[98] A. Morton, *Trees of the Celtic Saints: The Ancient Yews of Wales*, p. 131.

Figure 20. Ancient Yew Tree With Three Trunks, Llanmihangel Genau'r Glyn Church, Llandre, Ceredigion

Fferm Glanfrêd

Although no church or dedication to San Ffraid is at Glanfrêd, the name indicates an association with the saint, and the farm is near Ynys-y-Capel, described by Angharad Llwyd as the place by the estuary of the Dyfi River where San Ffraid landed after her journey from Ireland.[99] This is fits Iorwerth Fynglwyd's poem 'I San Ffraid', in which he writes:

> O Iwerddon ar donnen
> I'r mor yn wir, morwyn wen,
> Da nofiaist hyd yn Nyfi
>
> From Ireland on [a piece of] turf
> To the sea truly, holy maiden,
> You floated as far as Dyfi.

Figure 21 shows the entrance to the farm.

[99] A. Llwyd, *History of the Island of Mona,* p. 203.

Figure 21. Fferm Glanfrêd, Ceredigion

Swyddffynnon

St Fride's Well is located on Gwenhafdre Farm, one-half mile northwest of the village of Swyddffynnon.[100] Swyddffynnon is south-west of Ystrameurig Village, on the B4340 Tregaron to Aberystwyth road. Passing through the village, a visitor should take the first right turn and then the second right turn, which leads to the farm.[101]

The abbey of Strata Florida held land at Ffynnon Oer (Fenaunoyr 1181–2, Ffynnaun Oyr 1202, de Fonte Frigido 1291) and subsequent deeds link two small holdings, Managhtie Heane 1616–17, Mynachty-hen 1635–6 (*mynachty* 'monastery', *hen* 'old') and Ffinnon Oyre (1616–17, Suidd-y-fynon-oer 1635–6, *oer* 'cold').[102]

A small bee-hive shaped building (fig. 22) covers the well.[103] It is too small to allow access. The water rises in a circular pool and flows into a modern cistern outside.[104]

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[100] H. Owen, and R. Morgan, *Dictionary of the Place-Names of Wales* (Llandysul: Gomer Press, 2005), p. 448.

[101] P. Davis, *Sacred Springs: In Search of the Holy Wells and Spas of Wales* (Abergavenny: Blorenge Books, 2003), p. 69.

[102] H. Owen, and R. Morgan, *Dictionary of the Place-Names of Wales*, p. 448.

[103] E. Gruffydd (2004) 'Ffynnon Ffraid, Swyddffynnon, Ceredigion' [line drawing]. In *Llygad y Ffynnon: Cylchlythyr Cymdeithas Ffynhonnau Cymru, Rhif 17*, <http://www.ffynhonnaucymru.org.uk/17_Nadolig_2004.htm> [Accessed 18 October 2012].

Figure 22. Ffynnon Ffraid at Gwenhafdre Farm, Swyddffynnon, Ceredigion

©Eirlys Gruffydd 2004

[104] P. Davis, *Sacred Springs: In Search of the Holy Wells and Spas of Wales*, p. 69.

Denbighshire

St Ffraid Church, Llansantffraid Glan Conwy

St Ffraid Church is in the parish of Llansantffraid Glan Conwy in the benefice of Llanrwst, Llanddoged with Capel Garmon, Llansantffraid Glan Conwy, and Eglwysbach in the deanery of Llanrwst and Rhos in the diocese of St Asaph. The church is located on a hill above the river where San Ffraid was said to have landed after her journey from Ireland on a turf. In 1943 a stained glass window was added on the south wall of the nave, showing a standing figure of Bridget.[106] This window is described in the section on iconography that follows. Figures 23 and 24 show views of the church. Another sign of antiquity is the holy well that is in the area, described next.

Figure 23. St Ffraid Church, Llansantffraid Glan Conwy, Denbighshire

[106] E. Hubbard, *The Buildings of Wales: Clwyd* (London: Penguin Books/University of Wales Press, 1994), p. 238.

Figure 24. Side View, St Ffraids Church, Llansantffraid Glan Conwy

Llansantffraid Glan Conwy Holy Well

Samuel Lewis notes that 'in a wood near Brỳn y Bobtŷ is an entire cromlech of considerable size', adding that 'in the farm-yard of that place is a copious spring of water, strongly impregnated with saline particles, and, within a few feet of it, a strong chalybeate spring, which deposits also a considerable quantity of sulphur on the sides of the well'.[107] Francis Jones describes Ffynnon St Ffraid as being within one-quarter mile from Llansantffraid parish church, as reported in the *Parochialia* of Edward Lhuyd written from 1695 to 1698.[108]

St Ffraid Church, Carrog

St Ffraid (or St Bridget) Church, Carrog, is in the parish of Llansantffraid Glyn Dyfrdwy in the benefice of Corwen with Llangar with Glyndyfrdwy with Llansantffraid Glyn Dyfrdwy with Gwyddelwern in the deanery of Penllyn and Edeirnion in the archdeanery of Wrexham in the diocese of St Asaph. The village and church are on the north bank of the Dee. The original church

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[107] S. Lewis, *A Topographical History of Wales*, vol. II, no page numbers are provided in this publication. As a note, the Canon of St Asaph, Robert Williams, mentions the cromlech, giving it the name *Allor Moloch*, but he makes no mention of a nearby holy well. See R. Williams, *The History and Antiquities of the town of Aberconwy and its neighborhood, with notices of the natural history of the district* (Denbigh: Thomas Gee, 1835), p. 114.

[108] F. Jones, *The Holy Wells of Wales*, p. 174.

was lost in 1601 when it was washed away.[109] Thomas Evans of Hendreforfydd wrote about the loss:

> Dyfrdwy, Dyfrdwy fawr ei naid
> Aeth at Eglwys Llansanffraid,
> Y Llyfrau bendigedig
> A'r Gwppan Arian hefyd.
>
> The Dee of the great leaps
> Took Llansanffraid church,
> The sacred books
> and the Silver Chalice also.[110]

Some evidence indicates that the site may have pre-Christian origins. First, in the churchyard are three ancient yew trees.[111] Figure 26 shows the yew trees in the churchyard.

Figure 25. St Ffraid Church, Carrog, Parish of Llansantffraid Glyn Dyfrdwy

[109] History, Carrog Church web site, <http://www.carrogchurch.co.uk/history.htm> [Accessed 18 August 2012].

[110] History, Carrog Church web site, <http://www.carrogchurch.co.uk/history.htm> [Accessed 18 August 2012].

[111] S. Lewis, *A Topographical Dictionary of Wales*, vol. II, no page numbers are provided with this publication.

Figure 26. Ancient Yew Trees, St Ffraids Church, Carrog, Denbighshire

Second, the deed of a gift of land in Llansantffraid Edeyrnion was recorded earlier than 1190.[112] Third, the church was originally built close to the water. Fourth, a holy well is located in the area.

Ffynnon St Ffraid, Llansantffraid Glyn Dyfrdwy

Francis Jones notes that the *Parochialia* of Edward Lhuyd describes 'Fynnon Sanfraid a qr of a mile above ye church' of Llansantffraid Glyndyfrdwy.[113] When the Clwyd Archaeology Service explored the area, local sources told researchers that the well was in a corner of a field at SJ 1051 4409, but they found one 23 meters to the northwest at SJ 1051 4411 with two phases of construction, which they were inclined to believe was Ffynnon Santffraid. They concluded: 'This well is likely to remain lost'.[114]

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[112] *Carrog Church: History* <http://www.carrogchurch.co.uk/history.htm> [accessed 18 August 2012].

[113] F. Jones, *The Holy Wells of Wales*, p. 193.

[114] R. Silvester, R. Hankinson, W. Owen, and N. Jones, 'Medieval and Early Post-Medieval Monastic and Ecclesiastical Sites in East and North-East Wales', *Cadw Report 1090* (2011). In *Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (CPAT) Reports*, <http://www.cpat.org.uk/resource/reports/cpat1090.pdf> [Accessed 18 October 2012].

St Ffraid Church, Llansanffraid-Glyn-Ceiriog

St Ffraid Church, Glyn Ceiriog, is in the parish of Llansantffraid Glyn Ceiriog in the benefice of Llansantffraid Glyn Ceiriog and Llanarmon Dyffryn Ceiriog and Pontfadog in the deanery of Dee Valley in the archdeaconry of Wrexham in the diocese of St Asaph. Four signs indicate that the church may have pre-Christian origins. First, the church is located high on the hill above the village (figs. 27 and 28). Second, the churchyard may have been circular originally.[115] Third, the churchyard features many large yew trees, shown in figure 29. The fourth sign is a possible holy well, discussed in the following section.

Figure 27. View From the Front Gate, Llansantffraid Glyn Ceiriog, Denbighshire

[115] E. Hubbard, *The Buildings of Wales: Clwyd*, p. 168.

Figure 28. Llansantffraid Glyn Ceiriog

Figure 29. Large Yews Surrounding Llansantffraid Glyn Ceiriog Church

Glyn Ceiriog Holy Well

Samuel Lewis reports 'a chalybeate spring in this parish, formerly in great repute for its medicinal efficacy, now nearly lost by drainage'.[116] At the back of the church, a walled-up and fenced area looks as though it could once have been a well or spring, but no record identifies it further (fig. 30). Francis Jones does not include an entry about this well in *The Holy Wells of Wales*.

Figure 30. Northwest Churchyard Corner, Llansantffraid Glyn Ceiriog Church,

Flintshire

The Church of St Bridget and St Cwyfan, Lower Dyserth

St Bridget and St Cwyfan Church, Lower Dyserth, is in the parish of Dyserth in the benefice of Dyserth and Trelawnyd and Cwm in the deanery of St Asaph in the archdeanery of St Asaph in the diocese of St Asaph. In addition to other indicators of pre-Christian origins, the church in Dyserth is documented in the Domesday Book, establishing it as being built before 1086:[117]

> In Dyserth and Bodfari and "Ruargon" there is land for 1 plough. There is [1 plough] in demesne and 2 slaves, and a church with a priest, and 2 villans, and a mill rendering 3s, and 2 bordars.[118]

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[116] S. Lewis, *A Topographical Dictionary of Wales*, vol. II, no page numbers are provided with this publication.

[117] *The Parish of St Bridget and St Cwyfan Dyserth* (2012) <http://www.stbridget-dyserth.co.uk/patron.html> [Accessed 9 June 2012].

[118] *Domesday Book: A Complete Translation*, eds. A. Williams and G. H. Martin (London: Penguin Books, 2003),
p. 736.

The oldest structure in the church is the 6-foot, 7¼-inch cross (fig. 31) covered with late Celtic interlacing once located in the churchyard, but now kept inside the church. This cross dates from *c.* 800 to *c.* 900.[119] Another cross is kept with it, of a later date, and only its base remains (fig. 32).

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Figure 31. St Bridget and St Cwyfan Church

©Peter Robinson 2006

Figure 32. Medieval Cross Base, St Bridget and St Cwyfan Church

The chief treasure of the church is the stained glass window (fig. 33) above the altar, which has been described as the finest medieval Jesse window in north Wales.[120] In 1430 the first part of the Jesse window was added, in 1450 an inscription was added, and in 1530 the second part of the window was installed.[121]

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[119] RCAHMC, *An Inventory of the Ancient Monuments in Wales and Monmouthshire, II—County of Flint* (London: His Majesty's Stationery Offices, 1912), pp. 28–29.

[120] *The Parish of St Bridget and St Cwyfan Dyserth* (2012) <http://www.stbridget-dyserth.co.uk/patron.html> [Accessed 9 June 2012].

[121] *The Parish of St Bridget and St Cwyfan Dyserth* (2012) <http://www.stbridget-dyserth.co.uk/patron.html> [Accessed 9 June 2012].

© The Parish of St. Bridget and St Cwyfan Dyseth 2012

Figure 33. Jesse Window, St Bridget and St Cwyfan Church[122]

During the 1500s, a group of tomb-chests and table tombs were placed in the east side of the churchyard, two of them of the hooded type.[123] The antiquity of this site is demonstrated by the dedications to British saints, by its placement near the waterfall, and by the near-circular churchyard.

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[122] 'Jesse Window', In *The Parish of St Bridget and St Cwyfan Dyserth* <http://www.stbridget-dyserth.co.uk/patron.html> [Accessed 9 June 2012].

[123] E. Hubbard, *The Buildings of Wales: Clwyd*, pp. 343–344.

St Brides Well [Ffynnon Ffraid]

Another sign of pre-Christian religious activity in the Dyserth area is the presence of a holy well. Francis Jones reports that St Bride's Well is located 'in Disserth parish', but gives no source for this information.[124] However, the book *Sacred Welsh Waters* reports the well as 'located directly at the roadside just 100m east of the junction for Dyserth on the A547 (OS Map 116 – GR 005798). A low, grey stone wall about 4m long with a small square portal at one end will be seen at the edge of the pavement'.[125]

Glamorgan

Churches are dedicated to San Ffraid at St Brides Major, St Brides Minor, and St Brides-Super-Ely, all of them early sites. In GGAT report 2003/030, 'Early medieval ecclesiastical sites in southeast Wales', Edith Evans states that incontrovertible indicators demonstrate that St Brides-super-Ely is an early medieval church site. Evans also believes there is possible evidence that St Brides Major and St Brides Minor are also early medieval church sites based on their dedication to a British saint.[126] These churches are described in the following sections.

St Bride Church, St Brides-super-Ely [Llansanffraid-ar-Eláí]

St Bride Church is in the parish of St Brides-super-Ely in the benefice of Peterston-super-Ely with St Brides-super-Ely in the deanery of Vale of Glamorgan in the archdeaconry of Margam in the diocese of Llandaff. The church is rural, north of a stream crossed by means of a bridge that leads from the parking lot to the gate (figs. 34 and 35). A holy well near the church is said to predate the present church.[127] The holy well, along with the presence of an ancient yew tree on a pronounced mound, indicate that the site is likely to be a pre-Christian religious site. The site is also placed next to water and lush meadows.

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[124] F. Jones, *The Holy Wells of Wales*, p. 178.

[125] C. Thomas, *Sacred Welsh Waters*, ed. P. Mitchell (Online: Kindle, 2011).

[126] E. Evans (2003), 'Early medieval ecclesiastical sites in southeast Wales'. In the Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust Reports <http://www.ggat.org.uk/cadw/cadw_reports/pdfs/GGAT%2073%20Early%20Medieval%20Ecclesistical%20Sites%20Yr1.pdf> [Accessed 18 October 2012].

[127] Valeways (2009) 'Walk No. 38 & 39, Peterston-super-Ely: The Three Saints Walk', *Make Tracks With Valeways* < http://www.valeways.org.uk/files/walks/26.pdf> [Accessed 18 October 2012].

Figure 34. Gate to St Bride Church, St Brides-super-Ely

Figure 35. Approach to St Bride Church, St Brides-super-Ely

The church is believed to be Norman.[128] The church consists of chancel, nave, south porch, and western tower containing one bell. The church features a saddleback west tower (fig. 36), described as 'probably of the late thirteenth century'.[129]

Figure 36. Bell Tower, St Brides-super-Ely

The church was rebuilt in 1849, when the Norman outer arch was added to the south porch as well as the pseudo-Norman chancel arch, and the east window. This Norman outer arch of the South porch (fig. 37) was imported, having been found previously in 1840 reused in an almshouse at Margam Abbey.[130]

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[128] Valeways, '*Walk No. 38 & 39, Peterston-super-Ely: The Three Saints Walk'*.

[129] J. Newman, *The Buildings of Wales: Glamorgan* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1995), pp. 551–52.

[130] J. Newman, *The Buildings of Wales: Glamorgan,* pp. 551–52.

Figure 37. Norman Arch, South Porch, St Brides-Super-Ely

Figure 38 shows an exterior view of the stained glass window on the southeast end of the church. The window shows San Ffraid standing, holding her crozier with both hands.

Figure 38. San Ffraid Stained Glass Window, St Brides-super-Ely

As noted previously, the large yew tree that stands on a prominent mound in the southeast part of the churchyard and overshadows the church, suggests use as an early place of worship (figs. 39 and 40). Andrew Morton states that the tree ‘was once larger than its 7-metre size of today: over

the years bits have broken off the trunk, so reducing girth measurement'.[131] He assesses the tree as 745 cm in girth.[132]

Figure 39. Ancient Yew, St Bride Church, St Brides-super-Ely (View Looking From the Church)

Figure 40. Ancient Yew, St Brides-super-Ely (Looking From the Yew Toward the Church)

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[131] A. Morton, *Trees of the Celtic Saints: The Ancient Yews of Wales* (Llanrwst: Gwasg Carreg Gwalch, 2007),
p. 101.

[132] Morton, Andrew, *Trees of the Celtic Saints: The Ancient Yews of Wales*, p. 130.

St Bride Church [St Brides Minor, Llansanffraid-ar-Ogwr][133]

St Bride Church, Aberkenfig, is in the parish of Llansantffraid, Bettws and Aberkenfig in the benefice of Llansantffraid, Bettws, and Aberkenfig in the deanery of Bridgend in the archdeaconry of Margam in the diocese of Llandaff. The church is located at the west end of Sarn, now barred from the A4063.[134] Rather than being at the center of a community, the church now seems to be out of the way. Newman calls it 'inconspicuous'; nonetheless, the church has a long history. The *Glamorgan Village Book* connects the church to Margam Abbey:

> Ynysawdre was a separate hamlet and the present farmhouse of Wern-Du was a medieval grange of Margam Abbey, closely involved with the adjacent 13th century church of St Bride (Bridget), Llansantffraid. This is the parish church of St Brides Minor, a widespread parish which includes only part of the present-day Aberkenfig.[135]

Its next major renovation is described as taking place in 1896 when the church was restored and the north aisle was added (fig. 41).[136] Figure 42 shows the south view of the church and figure 43 shows the south porch.

Figure 41. View of North Aisle Added in 1896, St Brides Minor

[133] J. Newman, *The Buildings of Wales: Glamorgan*, p. 551.

[134] J. Newman, *The Buildings of Wales: Glamorgan*, p. 551.

[135] Glamorgan Federation of Women's Institutes, *The Glamorgan Village Book* (Berkshire: Countryside Books, 1993), p. 10.

[136] J. Newman, *The Buildings of Wales: Glamorgan*, p. 551.

Figure 42. South View, St Brides Minor, Glamorgan

Figure 43. Porch, St Brides Minor, Glamorgan

Figure 44 shows the pathway that leads from the carpark through the churchyard to the porch entrance.

Figure 44. Path from Carpark, St Brides Minor, Glamorgan

St Bridget Church, St Brides Major [Saint-y-Brid]

St Bridget Church, Bridgend, is in the parish of Ewenny and St Brides Major in the benefice of Ewenny and St Brides Major in the deanery of Bridgend in the archdeaconry of Margam in the diocese of Llandaff. The church was located on the ancient track-way of Heol-y-Milwr used by the Romans and later by the Normans to link with Ogmore Castle.[137] Geoffrey Orrin describes the church's origins:

> The church was built in the early part of the twelfth century but most of the remaining architectural features are either fourteenth-century Decorated or Second Pointed Victorian. The chapel of Lampha was apparently attached to St Brides Major church in 1141 and with it given to Ewenny Priory by the Lord of Ogmore.[138]

Many elements of the church are Norman, including the chancel arch, the inner porch door, and the tub font with a cross inscribed on the side.

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[137] W. Rowlands, *St Bridget's Church St Bride's Major* (Glamorgan: W. Rowlands, 1995), p. 5.

[138] G. Orrin, *Medieval Churches of the Vale of Glamorgan* (Bridgend: D. Brown & Sons Ltd, 1988), p. 335.

In 1226 Gilbert, Earl of Clare, Lord of Glamorgan, confirmed the gifts to the church of St. Peter of Gloucester, and in 1291 the church was included in the *Taxatio Ecclesiastica*.[139] The chancel was rebuilt during the 1300s, and soon after 1335, a monument was added for John le Botiler of Llantwit, a retainer of the Berkeleys and Despensers.[140] The church is shown in figure 45.

Figure 45. St Bridget Church, St Brides Major, Glamorgan

During the 1400s the west tower was built (fig. 46). Iorwerth Fynglwyd (see chs. 1 and 2) was a parishioner. In 1540 the tomb-chest of John Butler and his wife Jane Bassett of Beaupre was added (fig. 47).

[139] W. Rowlands, *St Bridget's Church St Bride's Major,* p. 5.

[140] J. Newman, *The Buildings of Wales: Glamorgan,* p. 551.

Figure 46. Norman Tower, St Bridget Church, St Brides Major, Glamorgan

Figure 47. Butler Tomb-Chest, St Bridget Church, St Brides Major, Glamorgan

On 1851 Egbert Moxham restored the church, updating the vestry, nave windows, stone pulpit, and the north porch.[141] In 1919 the church clock was dedicated to the twenty-three men from the parish of St Brides Major who died in the First World War.[142] In 1939 a new ring of six bells was added, discussed later in the section about bells.[143] The churchyard includes a sixteenth-century medieval preaching cross, restored in 1985 (fig. 48).[144]

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[141] J. Newman, *The Buildings of Wales: Glamorgan,* p. 551.

[142] W. Rowlands, *St Bridget's Church St Bride's Major,* p. 6.

[143] W. Rowlands, *St Bridget's Church St Bride's Major,* p. 16.

[144] W. Rowlands, *St Bridget's Church St Bride's Major,* p. 15.

Figure 48. Preaching Cross, St Bridget Church, St Brides Major, Glamorgan

This parish continues to incorporate veneration of San Ffraid in its practices. The February 2012 parish magazine for St Brides Major presents a meditation that associates St Brigid's attributes to five ancient stones located in a small park near St Brigid's Well in Kildare and describes their relevance to current economic, social, and family concerns in the community:

> **The Five Stones of St Brigid**
>
> *The First Stone – Brigid, a woman of the land*
> How do we value and care for God's Creation?
>
> *The Second Stone – Brigid, the Peacemaker*
> How can we bring peace, justice and reconciliation to the world today?
>
> *The Third Stone – Brigid, the Friend of the Poor*
> How can we challenge the poverty gap between nations and within our nation?
>
> *The Fourth Stone – Brigid, the Hearthwoman*
> Hospitality is at the heart of Christian living – how can we make welcome 'the stranger in our midst'?
>
> *The Fifth Stone – Brigid, a Woman of Contemplation*
> Time to remember, to awaken, to reflect as we approach Holy Week and Easter.[145]

[145] *The Parish of Ewenny and St Brides Major*, ed. C. Halsall (Parish Magazine, February 2012), p. 18.

The bulletin concludes that 'We will begin our Lent Course by hearing the poet Ruth Bidgood's major work, Hymn to Sant Ffraid (Bride, or Brigid), commissioned by the BBC in 1979, in which all the strands of life and work of our village saint are woven together in dramatic form'.[146] This parish bulletin demonstrates that San Ffraid is still considered a village saint whose life is a model for parishioners.

Monmouthshire

The churches of Skenfrith, Llansantffraed, St Brides Netherwent, and St Brides Wentloog are located in Monmouthshire, on the border between Wales and England. GGAT report 2003/030, 'Early medieval ecclesiastical sites in southeast Wales' by Edith Evans, establishes that there is possible evidence that these churches are also early medieval church sites. The report also mentions an Ecclesia Santbreit or Ecclesia Brigida may have existed at Ifton or Rogiet dated *c.* 895. With a St Michael Llanfihangel Church also at Rogiet, this may be another example of a San Ffraid dedication located near a church dedicated to St Michael.[147]

St Bride Church, Skenfrith (in Welsh, *Ynysgynwraidd*)

St Bride Church is in the parish of Skenfrith, in the benefice of Grosmont and Skenfrith and Llangattock Lingoed with Llanfair Chapel in the deanery of Abergavenny in the archdeaconry of Monmouth in the diocese of Monmouth. Cadw describes the castle as Norman, constructed by Hubert de Burgh between 1219 and 1232.[148] Skenfrith was one of the Three Castles brought together into a single lordship by King Stephen in 1138. They remained in common ownership for nearly eight centuries, until 1902.[149] The church is sheltered by the castle from the main road. The ground must have a tendency to settle, as the lantern tower is supported by a large buttress. In addition to its dedication to San Ffraid and its position near water, the church (fig. 49), is surrounded by a large, roughly circular churchyard. The presence of holy wells nearby adds to the evidence that this site may have been a religious site before Christianity reached Britain.

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[146] *The Parish of Ewenny and St Brides Major*, ed. C. Halsall, p. 18.

[147] E. Evans, *Early medieval ecclesiastical sites in southeast Wales*, p. 38.

[148] J. Newman, *The Buildings of Wales: Gwent/Monmouthshire* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000), p. 531.

[149] *Skenfrith Castle*, (2011) <http://cadw.wales.gov.uk/daysout/skenfrithcastle/?lang=en> [Accessed 24 August 2012].

Figure 49. St Bride Church, Skenfrith, Monmouthshire

Holy Wells Near Skenfrith

Francis Jones describes two wells dedicated to San Ffraid in the area near Skenfrith. The first is St. Fraed's Well near the church at Skenfrith.[150] The RCAHM describes it as 'a copious spring associated with the nearby church, probably once filled a pool which must have had a retaining wall, now destroyed, although there are stones in the stream bed that may have belonged to such a structure'.[151] The second is in Bridewell Wood in Llanvaches parish.[152]

Llansantffraed House and St Bridget's Church

St Bridget Church, Llansantffraed is in the parish of Llansantffraed in the benefice of Llanddewi Rhydderch and Llangattock-juxta-Usk and Llanarth with Clytha and Llansantffraed in the deanery of Abergavenny in the archdeaconry of Monmouth in the diocese of Monmouth. The original seat of the Herbert family, Llansantffraed House by the River Usk had its own church, dedicated to St Bridget. The church (figs. 50, 51 and 52) is now on the grounds of the Llansantffraed Court Hotel,

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[150] F. Jones, *The Holy Wells of Wales*, p. 194.

[151] J. Wiles, *'St Ffraed's Well, Skenfrith', 2012* <www.conflein.gov.uk/en/site/32402/details/ST+FFRAED'S+WELL%2C+SKENFRITH/> [Accessed 18 October 2012].

[152] F. Jones, *The Holy Wells of Wales* p. 194.

a Georgian-era building that replaced the original house. J. H. Clark describes the history of the house and church in his book *Usk Past and Present*:

> Llansantffraed Church, which signifies the Church of St Bridget, stands on the demesne to the South of the mansion: a small edifice, consisting only of a nave, fourteen yards long by four wide, with a lofty vaulted and ceiled roof, apparently appropriated (when erected), solely to the family here resident.[153]

The earliest monument in the church dates from 1438.[154]

Figure 50. St Bridgets Church, Llansantffraed Court Hotel, Monmouthshire

Figure 51. Interior, St Bridgets Church, Llansantffraed Court Hotel, Monmouthshire

[153] J. H. Clark, *Usk Past and Present* (Usk: County Observer Office, 1891), pp. 40–46.

[154] J. H. Clark, *Usk Past and Present*, pp. 40–46.

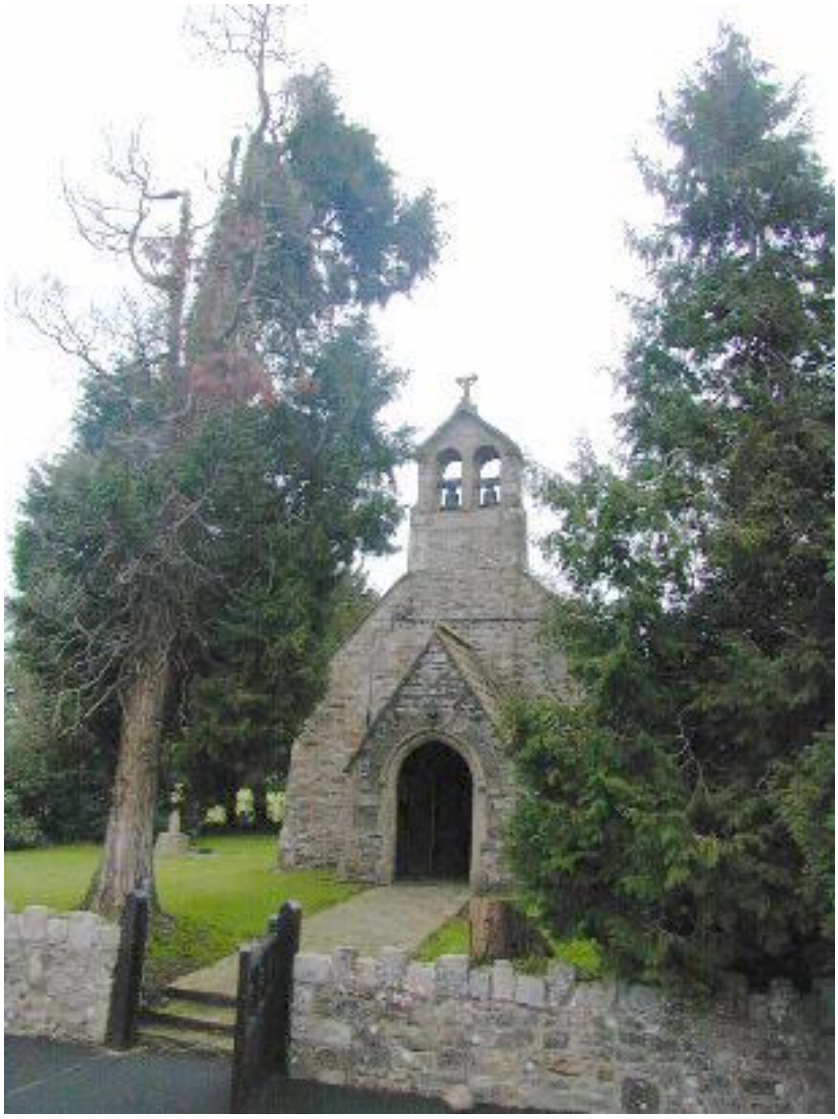

Figure 52. St Bridgets Church, Llansantffraed Court Hotel, Monmouthshire

St Bridget Church, St Brides Netherwent (in Welsh, *Sant-y-brid*)

St Bridget Church is in the parish of St Brides Netherwent in the benefice of Penhow and St Brides Netherwent with Llandavenny and Llanvaches and Llandevaud in the diocese of Llandaff. The thirteenth- or early fourteenth-century church, with its low, saddle-back-roofed west tower, is surrounded by a walled circular churchyard and many old trees, standing in the middle of an open field and reached by means of an unpaved road (fig. 53). Near the gate to the churchyard are depressions in the ground left from the now-vanished village.[156]

[156] J. Newman, *The Buildings of Wales: Gwent/Monmouthshire*, p. 521.

Figure 53. St Bridgets Church, St Brides Netherwent, Monmouthshire

In 1290, the Ave Maria bell was added.[157] By the beginning of the nineteenth century, the church was in ruins. In 1790, the north aisle of the nave collapsed, followed by the south aisle of the nave in 1812.[158] However, in 1848 the church was restored.[159] At that point, a new nave and north porch were built.[160] A stained glass window of St Bridget is described in the section on iconography that follows. Many large yew trees and elms grow in the churchyard, which includes an ancient preaching cross (fig. 54).

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[157] 'Tuesday, July 29, 2008: Sant y Brid -St Bride's Netherwent and the Ave Maria Bell 1290', *Mary in Monmouth* <http://maryinmonmouth.blogspot.com/2008/07/llansantffraed-gwent-iscoed-st-brides.html> [Accessed 30 June 2012].

[158] J. Newman, *The Buildings of Wales: Gwent/Monmouthshire*, p. 521.

[159] *Kelly's Directory for Monmouthshire*, (1901), <http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~familyalbum/ksbriden.htm> [Accessed 9 June 2012].

[160] J. Newman, *The Buildings of Wales: Gwent/Monmouthshire*, p. 521.

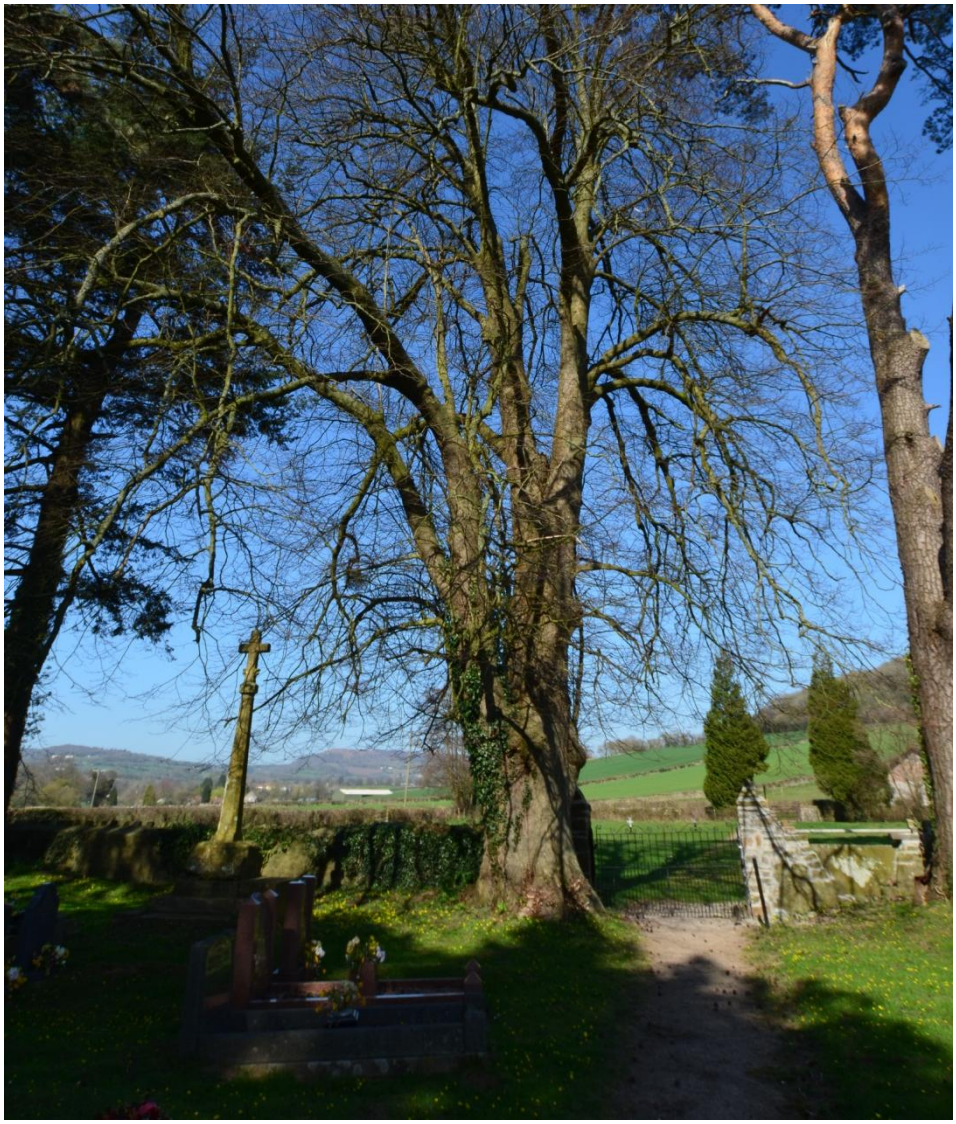

Figure 54. Churchyard Preaching Cross, St Bridget Church, St Brides Netherwent, Monmouthshire

St Bridget Church, St Brides Wentloog

St Bridget Church is in the parish of St Brides Wentloog (in Welsh, Llansanffraid Gwynllŵg) in the benefice of Marshfield with St Brides Wentloog in the diocese of Llandaff.[161] The large church was built on marshy ground, the marshland reaching to the edge the churchyard, surrounded by large trees. The church's most memorable feature is an impressive tower, now visibly sinking (see fig. 55).[162] This church, set near the water, with its circular churchyard and dedication to St Bride evidences a pre-Christian religious site.

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[161] J. Newman, *The Buildings of Wales: The Buildings of Wales: Gwent/Monmouthshire,* pp. 521–522.

[162] M. Hall, *Monmouthshire Curiosities* (Brimscombe Port: The History Press, 2010), p. 69.

Figure 55. Bell Tower, St Bridget Church, St Brides Wentloog, Monmouthshire

In 1606, the church was flooded, memorialized in a tablet on the porch that shows the height to which the water rose.[163] By 1993, the church was under threat of demolition, but from 1995 to 1997 the church was stabilized and repaired.[164] Figure 56 shows the church and figure 57 shows the porch.

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[163] J. Newman, *The Buildings of Wales: Gwent/Monmouthshire*, pp. 521–522.

[164] J. Newman, *The Buildings of Wales: Gwent/Monmouthshire*, pp. 521–522.

Figure 56. St Bridget Church, St Brides Wentloog, Monmouthshire

Figure 57. Porch, St Bridget Church, St Brides Wentloog, Monmouthshire

Pembrokeshire

With dedications of St Brides Bay and St Brides Haven at the coast and Pant Sant Ffraed at Henllys, the importance of San Ffraid in Pembrokeshire is obvious. The cause, however, is much more difficult to determine. While the Life of St Monynna indicates that St Brigid was sent to Menevia, no other corroborating story suggests that St Brigid of Kildare ever visited southwest Britain. Of course, as E. G. Bowen continues, 'it would be absurd to think that the present-day dedications to Celtic saints are all originally associated with the saint concerned, or that they can always be taken to indicate either his own travels or those of his immediate followers'.[165]

St Davids, Brawdy

St David Church, Brawdy, is in the parish of Rectorial Benefice of Dewisland in the benefice of Rectorial Benefice of Dewisland in the deanery of Dewisland/Fishguard in the archdeaconry of St Davids in the diocese of St Davids. Damian Davies and Ann Eastham suggest that the dedication was changed from San Ffraid to St David at some point:

> The name Brawdy—probably an anglicized form of the Welsh 'Breudeth'—suggests that the original church was dedicated not to St David but to the Irish saint, Brigid.[166]

The raised circular churchyard suggests a pre-Norman foundation, and Brawdy may have been the site of a Dark Age Christian burial-ground.[167] The weeping chancel inclines north, and it has been suggested that the nave is aligned to the St Brigid's Day sunrise on February 1 and the chancel to the St David's Day sunrise on March 1.[168] Figure 58 shows the entrance to the church and figure 59 shows the bell tower.

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[165] E. G. Bowen, Saints, *Seaways and Settlements*, p. 69.

[166] D. Davies and A. Eastham, *Saints and Stones* (Llandysul: Gomer Press, 2002), p. 90.

[167] D. Davies and A. Eastham, *Saints and Stones*, p. 90.

[168] D. Davies and A. Eastham, *Saints and Stones*, p. 92.

Figure 58. St Davids Brawdy Church, Pembrokeshire

Figure 59. Bell Tower, St David Church, Brawdy, Pembrokeshire

On the floor by the door, is an inscribed stone from the fifth to sixth century. In the porch are three more inscribed stones that were moved to the church from other locations.[169] Figure 60 shows one of the stones on the porch.

Figure 60. Stone With Ogham Script, Porch, St Davids Brawdy Church, Pembrokeshire

St Brides Haven

St Brides Haven is a small community by the Pembrokeshire shore. Ordnance Map OL 36 identifies a St Brides Cross, St Brides Farm, St Brides Green, and St Brides Church in the immediate area, as well as the presence of a possible abbey and the ruins of an old church now lost.[170] H. Thornhill Timmins in *Nooks and Corners of Pembrokeshire* describes the approach to St Brides in 1895:

> To the right is seen a glimpse of the tiny haven, famous in bygone times for its productive herring fishery. The little structure close beside the water occupies the site of an old fishermen's chapel, which, falling into ruins, was put to the degenerate use of a salt-house. From that time forth, as the old story runs, the herrings deserted their accustomed haunts, and the fishing trade dwindled away:
>
> > When St Bride's Chapel a salt-house was made,
> > St Bride's lost the herring trade.[171]

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[169] T. Lloyd, J. Orbach, and R. Scourfield, *The Buildings of Wales: Pembrokeshire* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2004), p. 134.

[170] *South Pembrokeshire/De Sir Benfro*, Ordnance Survey No. 36 (Southamptom: Ordnance Survey, no date).

[171] H. Timmins, *Nooks and Corners of Pembrokeshire* (London: Elliot Stock 62, 1895), p.118.

Lord Kensington's residence has been renamed St Brides Castle and now is a holiday resort. The small roofless building described as a possible abbey by Timmins is 'not monastic' according to *The Buildings of Wales: Pembrokeshire*. The authors suggest that the building is 'possibly the remains of the house of John de St Bride, a powerful supporter of Henry VII'.[172]

The issue of the ruined chapel is more complex. As with Tywyn-y-Capel in Trearddur Bay in Anglesey, the presence of stone-lined cist graves has been long known and became the subject of an exploration in 2009 by the Dyfed Archaeological Trust. Their description of the site's history is worth quoting in full:

> St Brides church is dedicated to Saint Bridget (aka St Fraed, St Bridig), who is thought to have come to Pembrokeshire with St David c.550-600AD and possibly to have established a nunnery at St Brides. The Brigid dedication has long been associated with the survival and translation of a pre-Christian water cult (Ludlow 1995). St Brides was possibly mentioned in an early 13th century source, as rendering a pension to Ewenny Priory, Glamorgan (Conway Davies 1946, 336). There are no known earlier documentary references. The fabric of the church is probably 14th century at the earliest, but an 'Ecclesia de Sancta Brigida' was listed in the Taxatio of 1291 (Record Commission 1802). The church underwent a 'very full' restoration in 1868 (Anon. nd.) but still contains several objects and features that point to its antiquity (Ludlow 2000). A Group I inscribed stone (PRN 46854), of probable 5th-7th century date (Edwards 2008) is recorded by or on behalf of Edward Lhuyd (in about 1698) as having been found 'On ye sea shore near St Brides Pembrokeshire'. The record includes a sketch of the stone which appears to be a flat slab with vertical downwards lettering that appears to read 'Awaaos' or 'Avvaos'. The letters have no known meaning, but may be incomplete (Edwards 2008). The stone is now lost. The churchyard (PRN 27990) is represented as a roughly rectangular enclosure on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey map. By the 2nd edition, the churchyard had been enlarged to its present size. The earlier churchyard boundary is still visible as an earthwork within the churchyard (Photo 2).[173]

St Brides Church, St Brides Haven

St Brides Church (fig. 61) is in the parish of St Brides in the benefice of Dale and St Brides with Marloes and Herbrandstone and Hasguard with St Ishmael's with Robeston West in the deanery of Roose in the archdeaconry of St Davids in the diocese of St Davids. The current church is difficult to date.

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[172] T. Lloyd, J. Orbach, and R. Scourfield, *The Buildings of Wales: Pembrokeshire*, p. 384.

[173] D. Schlee, 'The Pembrokeshire Cemeteries Project: Excavations at St Brides Haven, Pembrokeshire', Dyfed Archaeological Trust Report No. 2009/39, Project Record No. 94896, 2009, <http://www.dyfedarchaeology.org.uk/projects/stbridescompletereport.pdf> [Accessed 24 August 2012].

Figure 61. St Brides Church, St Brides Haven, Pembrokeshire

The earliest elements of the church, three mutilated slabs, all with carved draper, date from the 1300s. A damaged recumbent effigy is from 1792. From 1881 to 1981, Celtic memorials (see examples in fig. 62) were placed in the churchyard to the Lords Kensington of St Brides Castle.[174]

Figure 62. Late Celtic Memorials to the Lords Kensington of St Brides Castle, St Brides Churchyard, Pembrokeshire

St Nons Chapel

The ruined chapel of St Non (fig. 63) and its nearby holy well (fig. 64) are said to be the birthplace of St David. The chapel was constructed *c.* 600 to *c.* 900 based on the age of a stone with an incised cross inside the ruined chapel.[175] Although the ruins now stand in an open field, when St Nons Chapel was first mentioned during the 1300s, it was described as being located within a stone circle.[176] These structures are located in an open field near St Brides Bay near the cathedral town of St Davids.

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[174] T. Lloyd, J. Orbach, and R. Scourfield, *The Buildings of Wales: Pembrokeshire*, p. 383.

[175] T. Lloyd, J. Orbach, and R. Scourfield, *The Buildings of Wales: Pembrokeshire*, p. 430.

[176] T. Lloyd, J. Orbach, and R. Scourfield, *The Buildings of Wales: Pembrokeshire*, p. 430.

Figure 63. St Nons Chapel, Pembrokeshire

Figure 64. St Nons Well, Pembrokeshire

In 1934 the Roman Catholic Chapel of Our Lady and St Non (fig. 65) was built nearby. The church serves as the chapel to St Non's House, a Roman Catholic Retreat House established in 1939.[178]

Figure 65. Chapel of Our Lady and St Non, Pembrokeshire

In 1939 the house was converted to a Roman Catholic retreat house, which it remains today.[179] Of particular interest is the stained glass window of St Bride, described in detail in the section on iconography that follows.

Church of St Katherine and St Peter, Milford Haven, Pembrokeshire

The Church of St Katherine and St Peter is in the parish of Milford Haven in the benefice of Milford Haven in the deanery of Roose in the archdeaconry of St Davids in the diocese of St Davids. On the east chancel wall, a stained glass window portrays Brigitta, Nicholas, Catherine, David, and Botolph.[180] The image of Brigitta is described further in the section about iconography.

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[178] T. Lloyd, J. Orbach, and R. Scourfield, *The Buildings of Wales: Pembrokeshire*, p. 430.

[179] T. Lloyd, J. Orbach, and R. Scourfield, *The Buildings of Wales: Pembrokeshire*, p. 430.

[180] M. Crampin (2011) 'St Catherine and Saints'. In *Stained Glass in Wales* <http://stainedglass.llgc.org.uk/object/2374> [Accessed 19 October 2012].

St Brides Catholic Church, Saundersfoot, Pembrokeshire

In this modern church built in 1966, an image of St Brigid hangs on the wall above an altar in a side chapel (fig. 66). She holds a pen in her right hand and a book in her left hand. A Brigid's Cross is next to the image.

Figure 66. St Bridget, St Brides Roman Catholic Church, Milford Haven, Pembrokeshire

Ffynnon Ffraid, Castell Henllys

In the *Holy Wells of Wales*, Francis Jones identifies a well associated with San Ffraid, describing it as '*Pistyll San Ffred* near the old chapel of St Ffraid, near Henllys, Nevern parish', noting that the field on the northwest and next to the Castell Henllys is called Pant Sant Ffraed. He reports that George Owen mentioned in his book, *The Descriptions of Pembrokeshire.*[181]

Powys

Llansanffraid Cwmdeuddwr

St Bride Church is in the parish of Cwmdeuddwr in the benefice of Gwastedyn in the deanery of Maelienydd in the archdeaconry of Brecon in the diocese of Swansea and Brecon. The nineteenth-century hilltop church is surrounded by its irregular churchyard (see fig. 67), surrounded by the village on three sides and an open field on one side. Below the hill, an open area called Y Gro; beyond it, the River Wye. The town of Rhayader adjoins this area. The military importance of this vantage point is obvious, but the connection to religious activity is just as deep.

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[181] F. Jones, *The Holy Wells of Wales*, pp. 207–208. Also see G. Owen, *The Description of Pembrokeshire*, ed. H. Owen, 2 vols (Llanerch: Gomer Press, 1892–1936), vol. 2, p. 509.

Figure 67. St Bride Church, Llansantffraed Cwmdeuddwr, Powys

Tomen Llansantffraid

The towns of Rhayader and Llansantffraid Cwmdeuddwr face each other across the River Wye. Rhayader was once the site of a castle, while Llansantffraid Cwmdeuddwr has a small earthwork called Tomen Llansantffraid. It has been surmised that this earthwork was constructed earlier in

the twelfth century to command the ford across the Wye.[182] The current church stands on this spot, near the foundation of an older church. The original motte is almost invisible, unless viewed from the air, as shown in figure 68.

Slide of RCAHMW colour oblique aerial photograph of Tomen Llansantffraid, taken by C.R. Musson, 20/12/1998

Figure 68. Aerial View, Tomen Llansantffraid, Llansantffraid Cwmdeuddwr, Powys[183]

The RCAHM suggests that Tomen Llansantffraid could be the castle built by Rhys ab Gruffudd in 1177, destroyed in 1190, rebuilt and again destroyed in 1194, however, these events are usually linked to the castle site across the river (i.e., the castle at Rhayader).[184]

The Clwyd Powys Archaeological Trust Historic Settlements Survey - Radnorshire records that the church is first referenced in 1368 as *Launsanfret by Raeyrdyr*, but the site is likely to be much older.[185] St Bride Church was rebuilt in 1778, and then rebuilt slightly to the north in 1866.[186]

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[182] R. J. Silvester, 'Tomen Llansantffraid, a Motte Near Rhaeadr, Powys', *Medieval Archaeology* (1991). *Archaeology Data Service*, <http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/catalogue/adsdata/arch-769-1/dissemination/pdf/vol35/35_107_109.pdf> [Accessed 25 August 2012].

[183] C. R. Musson, (1998) RCAHMW colour oblique aerial photograph of Tomen Llansantffraid'. In the RCAHMW <http://www.coflein.gov.uk/en/collection/61096/details/RCAHMW+Colour+Oblique+Aerial+Photographs/> [accessed June 2, 2012].

[184] *Tomen Llansantffraid, RCAHMW*, <http://www.coflein.gov.uk/en/site/304969/details/TOMEN+LLANSANTFFRAID/> [Accessed June 1, 2012].

Tomen-San-Ffraid

Several sources describe a cairn called Tomen-San-Ffraid claimed to be the burial place of San Ffraid. Theodore Fielding places the cairn south of Rhayader Castle. [187] Stedman Davies places it in Cwmdeuddwr.[188] Jacob Lloyd describes it as one of several cairns or barrows in the area and places it west southwest of the town and calls it the 'cemetery of Saint Ffraid'. [189] The relationship between this cairn called Tomen-San-Ffraid and the mound called Tommen Llansaintffraid is unclear. No corroborating legends, tales, or poems locate the the grave of San Ffraid in Llansantffraid Cwmdeuddwr. Both the Lives of SS Modwenna and Monynna report that she returned to Ireland from Wales to build monastic houses and was buried in Kildare.

Possible Monastery

Samuel Lewis describes the possibility of a monastery in the Cwmdeuddwr area:

> 'The name of a neighbouring farm, called Coed-y-Mynach, or "the monks' wood," has led to an opinion that there was anciently a monastery at this place; but no satisfactory account of any establishment of that kind can now be obtained; and it is more probably that the farm was an appendage to the abbey of Strata-Florida, in the adjacent county of Cardigan, to which a road may still be traced over the mountains.[190]

A report from the Clwyd Powys Archaeological Trust Historic Settlements Survey – Radnorshire updates this view:

> A Dominican friary cell (3529) is said to have existed at the west end of Rhayader Bridge until the Dissolution, but its existence has been refuted by more recent writers than antiquaries such as Samuel Lewis and Williams. However, the latter claimed that a map of *c*.1770, no longer

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[185] *Llansantffraid Cwmdeuddwr: Clwyd Powys Archaeological Trust Historic Settlements Survey - Radnorshire*, <http://www.cpat.org.uk/ycom/radnor/llansantffraedcwmdeuddwr.pdf> [Accessed 25 August 2012].

[186] *Llansantffraid Cwmdeuddwr: Clwyd Powys Archaeological Trust Historic Settlements Survey - Radnorshire*, <http://www.cpat.org.uk/ycom/radnor/llansantffraedcwmdeuddwr.pdf> [Accessed 25 August 2012].

[187] T. H. Fielding, *A Picturesque Description of the River Wye* (London: Ackerman & Co., 1841), p. 5.

[188] D. Davies, 'How old is this church?', p. 39.

[189] J. Lloyd, *The history of the princes, the lords marcher, and the ancient nobility of Powys, Fadog, and the ancient lords of Arwystli, Cedewen and Meirionydd*, 6 vols (London: Whiting & Co., 1887).

[190] S. Lewis, *A Topographical Dictionary of Wales*, no page numbers are provided in this publication.

traceable, showed a tenement and small field on the east bank of the river which was called 'The Black Friars'.[191]

Llansantffraed-yn-Elfael

St Bridget Church, Llansantffraed-yn-Elfael is in the parish of Colwyn in the benefice of Colwyn in the deanery of Bulith in the archdeaconry of Brecon in the diocese of Swansea and Brecon. The church is located in an area of mountains and farmland. The churchyard is considered pre-Norman because of its circular shape and the almost complete ring of 14 ancient yews that surround the church. [192] The largest yew is a 7-metre male tree with a pronounced mound around its base (figs. 68 and 69).[193]

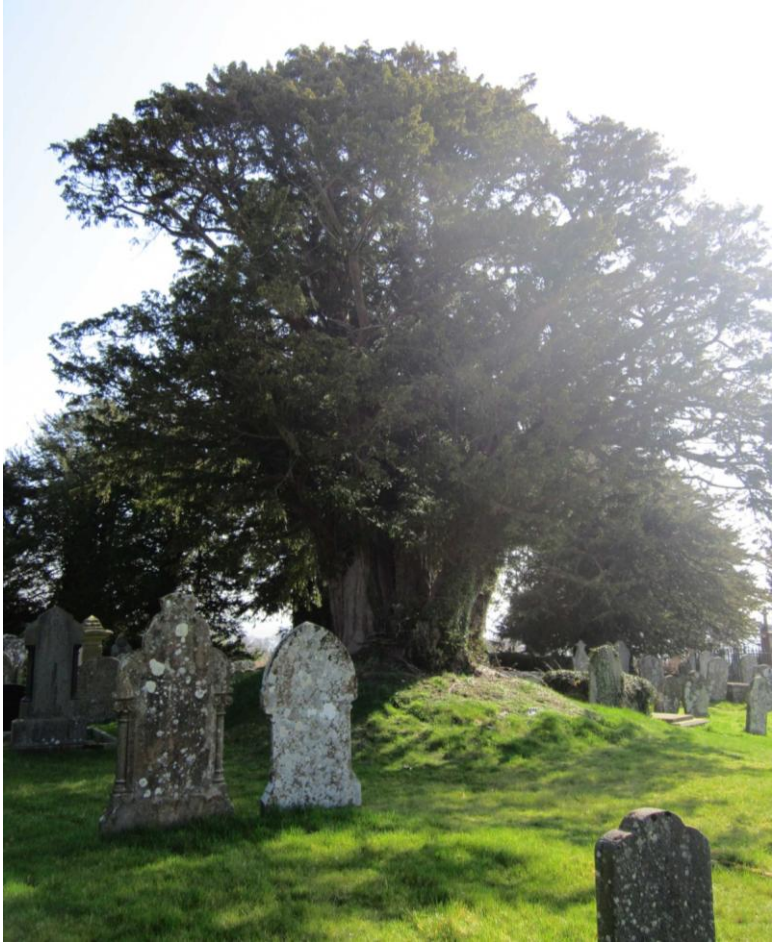

Figure 68. Ancient Yew Llansantffraed-Yn-Elfael

[191] *Llansantffraid Cwmdeuddwr:, Clwyd Powys Archaeological Trust Historic Settlements Survey - Radnorshire* <http://www.cpat.org.uk/ycom/radnor/llansantffraedcwmdeuddwr.pdf> [Accessed 15 September 2012].

[192] A. Morton, *Trees of the Celtic Saints: The Ancient Yews of Wales,* p. 120.

[193] A. Morton, *Trees of the Celtic Saints: The Ancient Yews of Wales,* p. 85.

Figure 69. Another View of the Ancient Yew on a Mound, Llansantffraed-yn-Elwfael Churchyard

Figure 70 shows a view of the churchyard with its circle of yews from the road below. Figure 71 shows an aerial view of the church and churchyard.

Figure 70. Llansantffraed-yn-Elfael Hilltop

Figure 71. Aerial View, Circle of Ancient Yew Trees, Llansantffraed-yn-Elfael, Powys[194]

Richard Haslam describes the church as a long, single chamber with old timbers in the south porch roof, and two bells hung in the window recesses in the west wall.[195] The church dates from the 1200s as the *Taxatio Ecclesiastica* refers to 'Ecclesia de Lansanfreyd'.[196] In 1895 the church was demolished and then rebuilt.[197] Figure 72 shows the proximity of the ancient yew to the church.

Figure 72. Ancient Yew and Church, Llansantffraed-in-Elfael, Powys

[194] R. Haslam, *The Buildings of Wales: Powys* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2003), p. 254.

[195] R. Haslam, *The Buildings of Wales: Powys*, p. 254.

[196] *Church of St Bridget, Llansantffraed-yn-Elfel, Radnorshire Churches Survey, CPAT*, (2007) <http://www.cpat.demon.co.uk/projects/longer/churches/radnor/16888.htm> [Accessed 25 August 2012].

[197] R. Haslam, *The Buildings of Wales: Powys*, p. 254.

Llansaintffraed in Elvel Priory/Llanllugan Nunnery

Based on a story told by Giraldus Cambrensis a Cistercian nunnery was founded at Llansantffraed before 1176 by an early abbot of Strata Marcella. After founding the nunnery, Giraldus reports that he seduced one of the nuns, eloped with her, repented, and then returned to his abbey.[198] On the other hand, Jane Cartwright states in *Feminine Sanctity and Spirituality in Medieval Wales* that this story is unlikely. She notes that a Cistercian house for women at Llanllugan in Powys was under the jurisdiction of Strata Marcella.[199] The Llanllugan nunnery does have connections to San Ffraid. Its property includes a meadow called Lowes Senefroid, as described by Edward Owen:

> In the 37th Henry VIII (A.D. 1546), the property was "particularized" for grant to Sir Arthur Darcy as—The site of the abbey, etc., with 1 acre of meadow land called Court fold, and 1 other acre of meadow called Lowes Senefroid [Lluest San' Ffraid], & 1 clause of arable called Pemon Llanllugan infra silvam; the Rectory of Llanllygan, together with all tithes, &c.[200]

Corroborating this association, the Powysland Club states that 'evidently' San Ffraid is the patron saint of the nunnery, but not the parish.[201] (It should be noted as counterpoint that nunneries were dedicated solely to the Virgin Mary.) Thomas Griffith Jones states that Llanllugan is in fact the Llansantffraid nunnery that Leland attributes to Ceredigion:

> The nunnery of "Llansanfrid in Powisia," was doubtless an offshoot—and probably the first—of this house. It has been attributed by Leland to Llansantfrid in Cardiganshire, but that idea is negatived by Bishop Tunner, who states that he thought it must be some other Llansanfride, because Caridganshire was not in Powisia. We submit that the nunnery established by Enoch was Llanllugan, the only nunnery in Powisia, and we have elsewhere stated our view that Llanllugan was probably called originally "Llansanfraid Lleian," and in the course of time "San fraid" was dropped out of the name and then it became "Llanlleian," and afterwards "Llanllugan".[202]

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[198] R. Haslam, *The Buildings of Wales: Powys*, p. 254.

[199] J. Cartwright, *Feminine Sanctity and Spirituality in Medieval Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2008), p. 178.

[200] E. Owen, 'The Cistercian Nunnery of Llanllugan', *Collections, historical & archaeological relating to Montgomeryshire*, 100 vols, ed. Powysland Club (London: J. Russell Smith, 1915), vol. 37, p. 9.

[201] 'Report of the Forty-sixth Annual Meeting', *Collections, historical & archeological relating to Mongomeryshire*, 100 vols, ed. Powysland Club (London: J. Russell Smith, 1915), vol. 37, p. xvi.

[202] T. Jones, 'A History of the Parish of Llansantffraid-yn-Mechain', *Collections, Historical & Archaeological relating to Mongomeryshire*, vol. 4, pp. 134–135.

Llansantffraid-ym-Mechain

St Ffraid Church is in the parish of Llansantffraid-ym-Mechain in the benefice of Llansantffraid-ym-Mechain and Llanfechain in the deanery of Mathrafal in the archdeaconry of Montgomery in the diocese of St Asaph. The church is located at the west end of the village in an elevated position above the valley bottom.[203] A story describes that supernatural forces determine the location of the church (similar to the story of the church of Llanmihangel Genau'r Glyn in Llandre):

> Legend has it that when the village inhabitants came to build their Church, they chose the Foel Hill as being the highest and therefore nearest to God. One day they dragged huge stones up to the summit. Next morning all were found on the top of a rise, the other side of the road. They spent the next day hauling them back only to find the same thing to happen the following night—this happened for many successive days and nights. It was decided that it must be the will of God and the church was built where it now stands.[204]

The exterior of the church shows evidence of repeated reconstruction. Figure 73 shows the extensive changes to the church fabric that have taken place over the years. While figure 74 shows an exterior view of the rose window. Figure 75 shows the interior. First mention of the church was in the *Ecclesia Taxatio* of 1291.[205] The stained glass window of San Ffraid is described in the section on iconography that follows.

Figure 73. St Bridget Church, Llansantffraid-ym-Mechain

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[203] *The Life and Times of Llansantffraid-ym-Mechain*, ed. B. Brown (Welshpool: Welshpool Printing Group, 2006), p. 17.

[204] *The Life and Times of Llansantffraid-ym-Mechain*, ed. B. Brown, p. 97.

[205] *The Life and Times of Llansantffraid-ym-Mechain*, ed. B. Brown, p. 17.

Figure 74. Rose Window, St Bridget Church, Llansantffraid-ym-Mechain

Figure 75. Interior, St Bridget Church, Llansantffraid-ym-Mechain

Llansantffraed-juxta-Usk

St Bridget Church is in the parish of Llansantffraed-juxta-Usk in the benefice of Llanfeugan with Llanthetty with Llansantffraed-juxta-Usk in the deanery of Crickhowell in the archdeaconry of Brecon in the diocese of Swansea and Brecon. The church is located at Talybont where a road bridge crosses the Usk to join the old Roman route (now the A40), by the banks of the river.[206] Figure 76 shows the octagonal tower and figure 77 shows the churchyard.

Figure 76. St Bridget Church, Llansantffraed-juxta-Usk, Powys

Figure 77. Churchyard, St Bridget Church, Llansantffraed-juxta-Usk

[206] A. Morton, *Trees of the Celtic Saints: The Ancient Yews of Wales*, p. 92.

Thomas and Henry Vaughan

Llansantffraed-juxta-Usk is known as the home of the Reverend Thomas Vaughan and his brother Henry Vaughan, M.D. The Reverend Thomas Vaughan was rector of the parish, but lost his living during Cromwell's rule, at which time he 'became eminent for his skill in experimental philosophy, chemistry, and oriental literature'.[207] He died in Oxfordshire. Henry Vaughan was buried in the Llansantffraid-juxta-Usk churchyard in 1695. A poet of the metaphysical school, he is said to have composed *The Palm-Tree* about the great yew tree at Llansantffraed-juxta-Usk (fig. 78).[208] Appendix C includes Vaughan's poem in full, but the following quatrains show that he connects the ancient tree with the saints.

> Here is the patience of the Saints: this tree
> Is watered by their tears, as flowers are fed
> With dew by night; but One you cannot see
> Sits here and numbers all the tears they shed.
>
> Here is their faith too, which if you will keep,
> When we two part, I will a journey make
> To pluck a Garland hence, while you do sleep
> And weave it for your head against you wake.[209]

Figure 78. Ancient Yew, Llansantffraed-juxta-Usk

[207] S. Lewis, *A Topographical Dictionary of Wales*, no page numbers are provided in this publication.

[208] A. Morton, *Trees of the Celtic Saints: The Ancient Yews of Wales*, p. 27.

[209] H. Vaughan, *Henry Vaughan: The Complete Poems*, ed. A. Rudrum (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1976), p. 254.

Traditions Related to San Ffraid

This section describes the traditions related to San Ffraid's veneration in terms of geographic locations, imagery, liturgy, feastday customs, music played in her honor, and associated lore.

About the Dedications

All the churches dedicated to San Ffraid are small, medieval, and made of stone. Many include features that indicate pre-Christian origins. While the number of dedications indicates her importance in Welsh, expressions of veneration do not take the form of cathedrals or foundations in highly populated areas. Most are parish churches. Many have been so extensively renovated that little, if any, of the original building remains and in several cases the original church has disappeared entirely. Examples include Tywyn-y-Capel in Anglesey and the original chapel in St Brides Haven, which have eroded and were washed away by the sea, as well as the original church at Llansantffraid Glyn Dyfrdwy, which was washed away by the nearby river.

Churches dedicated to San Ffraid are rarely associated with beliefs that she visited that precise spot. Although Ynys-y-Capel in Gwynedd is described as the place where San Ffraid landed on the Dyfi, no church is built there, although Fferm Glanfrêd and Llandre are nearby. On the other hand, she is also said to have landed at Llansantffraid Glan Conwy, and there is a dedicated church at that spot.

A number of holy wells are dedicated to San Ffraid, but none are marked and few can be identified with certainty. Some of the holy wells that Francis Jones lists in his book *Holy Wells of Wales* are lost. On the other hand, the well at Swyddffynnon was recently excavated, and others may be restored in the future.

Iconography

San Ffraid is depicted as a nun, and almost always as an abbess, shown standing with her crozier. Her image is sometimes juxtaposed with that of St Non. The following sections describe this imagery, supported when possible by photographs.

In St Ffraid Church, Trearddur Bay, Angelsey, a stained glass window portrays her traveling from Ireland to Wales on a turf. No photograph is available. The nearby Millenium Cross, shows the image of a Brigid's Cross, with the words 'St Bride Pray for Us' carved on each side of the cross in Welsh, Gaelic, Latin, and English (fig. 79).

Figure 79. Millenium Cross, Trearddur Bay, Anglesey

At St Bridget Church, Llansantffraed, Ceredigion, two south windows installed in 1973 by Celtic Studios show St Non with the young St David on the left and St Bridget on the right (fig, 80).[210] St Bridget wears a dark blue habit, white wimple and veil, and golden girdle. Eyes cast down, she holds a brown book in both hands. She stands on grass, and a brown cow stands behind her. A goose is shown above her, an image similar to the stained glass window of San Ffraid in the church at St Brides Netherwent shown later in this section.

[210] T. Lloyd, J. Orbach, and R. Scourfield, *The Buildings of Wales: Carmarthenshire and Ceredigion*, p. 532.

Figure 80. Stained Glass Windows Showing St Non, Dewi Sant and Sant Ffraed Leian, St Ffraid Church, Llansantffraid, Ceredigion

In St Ffraids Church, Llansantffraid Glan Conwy, Denbighshire, a stained glass window on the south wall of the nave is attributed to Edward Woore, installed in 1943 (fig. 81).[211] She stands, wearing a black habit, white wimple, and black veil. In her right hand she holds a lantern; in her left, a crozier. The background is green and brown foliage.

[211] E. Hubbard, *The Buildings of Wales: Clwyd*, p. 239. Note: The *Stained Glass in Wales Project* reports that Hubbard's attribution to Woore may be an error. See M. Crampin, 'St Bridget' (2011). *Stained Glass in Wales* <http://stainedglass.llgc.org.uk/object/2106> [Accessed 14 October 2012].

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Figure 81. Saint Bridget, St Bridget Church, Llansantffraid Glan Conwy, Denbighshire

In The Church of St Bridget and St Cwyfan, a painted icon (fig. 82) depicts the saint wearing a dark blue habit, red at the neck, and a pale gold veil. In her right hand, she holds a Brigid's Cross; in her left, she holds a bowl of fire.

Figure 82. St Bridget Icon, Church of St Bridget and St Cwyfan, Flintshire

In the Church of St Matthew, Buckley, Flintshire, a stained glass window in the porch with two lights shows St Bridget on the left and St Matthew on the right (fig. 83).[212] Designed and built by Bryony Benwell and painted by Lindsay Abbot, the windows do not depict her as a nun. Instead, she has loose, reddish hair and wears a pale blue dress and pink girdle. A red fox sits at her feet on her right, reminiscent of a story in 'St Brigid the Virgin' by Cogitosus. In this story, St Brigid saves a man who inadvertently kills the king's pet fox by producing another fox with the same attributes. The king frees the man, and St Brigit wins increased praise.[213]

© Martin Crampin 2011

Figure 83. St Matthew and St Bridget, Church of St Matthew, Buckley, Flintshire

[212] M. Crampin (2011) St Matthew and St Bridget. In the *Stained Glass in Wales Collection*. <http://stainedglass.llgc.org.uk/object/92> [Accessed 14 October 2012].

[213] O. Davies, *Celtic Spirituality*, pp. 129–130.

In St Brides Church, St Brides Major, Glamorgan, a small statue of St Bride shows her wearing a Tudor headdress and gown (fig. 84). She holds a pen in her left hand and a book in her right.

Figure 84. Statue, St Brides Major, Glamorgan

© Evelyn Nicholson 2008

Figure 85. Brigid of Kildare, Stained Glass Window, St Bridgets Church, St Brides Netherwent

In a stained glass window in St Bridget Church, St Brides Netherwent, the saint stands, face cast down to the left, wearing a brown robe over a longer, white habit, with white wimple and veil and red shoes. Her right hand holds a golden crozier; her left holds a red book.[214] Above, a window shows three white geese flying overhead, reminiscent of the Life of St Monynna. She appears to be in a church in front of an altar carved with a design on which flames burn (fig. 85).

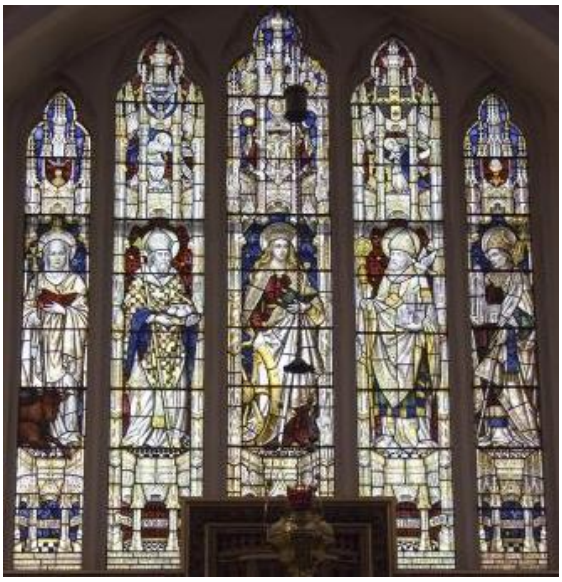
[214] E. Nicholson (2008) 'St Brigid of Kildare'. *In Mary in Monmouth* <http://maryinmonmouth.blogspot.com/2008/07/llansantffraed-gwent-iscoed-st-brides.html> [Accessed 19 October 2012].

A window in the Church of St Mary the Virgin, Talbenny, Pembrokeshire, shows a figure of St Bride by Frank Roper, installed in 1978 (fig. 86).[215] She is barefoot and wears a gray habit, white wimple, and veil.

© Martin Crampin 2011

Figure 86. St Bride Window, Church of St Mary the Virgin, Talbenny

In a window (fig. 87) added in *c.* 1910 above the altar in St Katherine's Church, Milford Haven, Pembrokeshire, St Birgitta holds an open book with a brown cover in her left hand; in her right, she holds a gold-cross-topped crozier.[216] The other saints are Nicholas, Catherine, David, and Botolph. A horned brown cow lies at her feet.



© Martin Crampin 2011

Figure 87. St Birgitta, St Katherines Church, Pembrokeshire

[215] M. Crampin (2011) St Matthew and St Bridget. In *the Stained Glass in Wales Project.* <http://stainedglass.llgc.org.uk/object/436> [Accessed 19 October 2012].

[216] M. Crampin (2011) 'St Catherine and Saints'. In the *Stained Glass in Wales Project.* <http://stainedglass.llgc.org.uk/object/2374> [Accessed 14 October 2012].

In the Chapel of Our Lady and St Non in Pembrokeshire, a window created in 1934 by William Morris Studios shows St Bridget turning rushes into sparlings (fig. 88), described in Iorwerth Fynglwyd's poem *I San Ffraid* (see ch. 2).[217]

Figure 88. St Bride Changes Rushes to Sparlings, Chapel of Our Lady and St Non

In St Bridget Church, Llansantffraed-juxta-Usk, a painted icon (fig. 89) shows the saint wearing a black habit, white wimple, and a cream veil. She looks straight ahead. In her right hand, she holds a green Brigid's cross; in her right, a blue bowl filled with flames; gold background, red border.

[217] T. Lloyd, J. Orbach, and R. Scourfield, *The Buildings of Wales: Pembrokeshire*, p. 430.

Figure 89. St Brigid Icon, Llansantffraed-juxta-Usk

In Llansantffraid-ym-Mechain Church on the north wall over the altar, St Bridget appears on the left window, with St David on the right, and Christ enthroned in the center. She wears a black habit, white wimple, grey veil and cloak, red girdle and shoes; her eyes are cast down (fig. 90). In her left hand, she holds a book; in her right, she holds a golden crozier topped with a shepherd's crook.

Figure 90. St Bridget Window, Llansantffraid-ym-Mechain

Church Traditions

The identity of the Welsh San Ffraid has been described as a conflation in which a number of identities merge, and the same can be said for the celebrations in her honor. The feast day of St Brigid is February 1 and said to replace the pagan feast of Imbolc that venerated the goddess Brigid (see ch. 1). February 2 is Candlemas, the feast the Purification of the Virgin, and also a celebration of the presentation of the child Jesus in the temple. These days are celebrated in different ways in Ireland, Scotland, and Wales. These sections describe church traditions, followed by local customs. Full documentation of liturgy related to San Ffraid's veneration is contained in appendices. Appendix A documents the *Breviary Offices from Lauds to Compline Inclusive* for St Brigid's feast day.[218] Appendix B documents early hymns to Brigid, and appendix C includes musical notation for more recent hymns.

The *Sarum Missal in English* includes the following liturgy for the feast day of St Brigid:

> **S. Bridget, Virg.**
>
> *The* Office *Comm. Many Virg.*; Alleluia iii. *and* Comm. V., *Comm. Virg. Mart.*; Epistle and Grad. i., Gospel and Offert. Ii, *in the Common.*
>
> *The Collect.*
>
> We beseech Thee, O Lord, let the prayers of S. Bridget, Thy Virgin, which are pleasing to Thee, aid us, and never cease to entreat Thy loving-kindness towards us. Through.
>
> *Secret.* We beseech Thee, O Lord, that, being reconciled unto Thee by the Sacrifice we have offered, Thou wouldst, at the intercessions of S. Bridget, Thy Virgin, graciously succor us in our time. Through.
>
> *P. Comm.* Let the gifts we have received, O Lord, commend to Thee Thy faithful, for the sake of blessed Bridget, Thy Virgin, and let her who pleased Thee implore aid for us. Through.[219]

The purpose of the ritual is for participants to request St Bridget to intercede for them. More recent liturgy for St Brigid's feast day has a different emphasis. In the book *Exciting Holiness,* February 1 is still celebrated as the feast day of Brigid, Abbess of Kildare.[220] The day is

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[218] *Breviary Offices from Lauds to Compline Inclusive, Translated from the Sarum Book, and Supplemented from Gallican and Monastic Use*s (London: J. T. Hayes, 1874), pp. 230–233.

[219] *The Sarum Missal in English*, trans. A. H. Pearson (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2004), pp. 344–345.

[220] *Exciting Holiness*, 4th edn, eds. Brother Tristram SSF and S. Kershaw (Norwich: Canterbury Press, 2012),
pp. 79–81.

categorized as a commemoration in England and Scotland, a festival in Ireland, and voluntary in Wales. The description of Brigid explains why there is little information about her, but confirms her as a second patron saint in Ireland. The text emphasizes that her story includes pagan elements, but that her leadership in a male-dominated church is convincing proof that she must have been a holy leader. The ritual lists two collects: one for use in Ireland and another for use in Wales. The differences highlight the differences in the tradition:

> **Collect (Ireland)**
>
> Father,
> by the leadership of your blessed servant Brigid
> you strengthened the Church in Ireland:
> as we give you thanks for her life of devoted service,
> inspire us with new life and light,
> and give us perseverance to serve you all our days;
> through Jesus Christ your son our Lord,
> who is alive and reigns with you,
> in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
> one God, now and for ever.
>
> **Or (Wales)**
>
> Almighty God,
> who enkindled in the heart of Bridget
> the living flame of your love:
> stir the cold embers of our hearts
> and lead us to the well-springs of eternal life;
> through Jesus Christ our Lord,
> to whom with you and the Holy Spirit
> be all honour and glory
> now and for ever.[221]

The *Collect* for use in Ireland speaks of a strengthened Church, service, inspiration, and perseverance. The Welsh version uses the elemental symbols of fire and water associated with the Welsh San Ffraid. Individual parishes may use their own liturgy for the feast day of the saint. The Church of St Bridget and St Cwyfan, Lower Dyserth, uses this *Collect*:

> Almighty God, by whose grace Bridget, kindled with the holy fire of your love, became a burning and shining light in the church: inflame in us the same spirit of discipline and love, that we may walk before you as children of the light; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever, Amen.[222]

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[221] Exciting Holiness, 4th edn., eds. Brother Tristam SSF and S. Kershaw, p. 79.

[222] 'The Feast of St Bridget, Abbess, February 1st, *Parish Feast Day Liturgy* (Dyserth: Church SS Bridget and Cwyfan, 2012).

This version uses the same fire imagery, but adds the note of discipline from the version used for Irish congregations.

Local Customs

In the *Chronicle of Celtic Folk Customs*, Brian Day introduces Celtic customs related to St Bride's Day on February 1 with their link to Imbolc and the Festival of Lambing. He notes that the holiday marked the end of winter. He describes St Bride's attributes of generosity and her association with the goddess Brigid's association with the hearth, smithying, poetry, healing, and marriage.[223] In Ireland and Scotland, specific rituals are associated with the feast day of St Bride and Candlemas.

In Ireland, the festival of Bride included separate rituals for the eve and the day of her feast which emphasize fertility and the return of spring. The Brat Bride was a piece of cloth left out on the eve of St Bride to be blessed by the saint and then given to the women in the household as protection.[224] A *brídeog* was made of straw, dressed, and brought to the house to be invited in and given a special bed by the fire. A feast was held that featured dairy products, especially butter. Brigid's Crosses were made during the evening. Sometimes boys dressed specially (called Biddy Boys) carried the brídeog from house to house to be greeted and invited in for songs and games. Divination was practiced on Bride's morning.[225]

In Scotland, on the eve of Bride's Day, women and girls dressed a corn dolly, decking it with ornaments. This was followed by a feast. Seeing Bride placed in the window, men came to the door and asked admittance. They greeted Bride and dancing and games followed. Bride was given a special bed. The next day the women sought omens by searching the ashes of the fire. Candlemas featured a torchlight procession, bonfires, cockfights, and special school customs.[226]

In Wales, the festival of Candlemas takes on many of the characteristics of St Bride's feast day.

> We have already seen how the seventeenth-century wassail song referred to this day as 'Gwyl Fair forwyn ddechre gwanwyn' (the Feast of the Virgin Mary at the beginning of spring) partly, no doubt, to distinguish it from the other festivals of Mary, but also because of its special association with the impending approach of spring. Candlemas, Gwyl Fair y Canhwyllau (Mary's Festival of the Candles), the popular names

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[223] B. Day, *Chronicle of Celtic Folk Customs* (London: Hamlyn, 2000), p. 43.

[224] S. Ó Catháin, *The Festival of Brigit* (Dublin: DBA Publications Ltd., 1995), pp. 2–3.

[225] S. Ó Catháin, *The Festival of Brigit*, pp. 8–26.

[226] S. Livingstone, *Scottish Festivals*, (Edinburgh: Birlinn Limited, 1997) pp. 1–7.

> of the Feast of the Purification of the Virgin, were derived from the pre-Reformation ceremony of blessing the candles and distributing them amongst the people by whom they were afterwards carried lighted in solemn procession.[227]

The following description of Welsh Candlemas carolers is similar to the traditions on St Bride's Eve in Ireland and Scotland.

> In a rite similar to those for Brigid in Scotland, north Wales had Candlemas carolers. Groups of young men came singing of the doors of the cottages; to gain entry they would have to answer a set of riddles posed by the householder, and on this night they minded their manners. When they were admitted there was a young woman seated in a chair with a child in a candlelit room. The young men came in and bowed to the 'Virgin,' before making their way back into the night.[228]

The following record of the feast day of San Ffraid comes from Llansantffraid-ym-Mechain:

> The feast began on the Sunday, and high holiday was kept until Wednesday night—sometimes until Thursday night. Friends and relatives visited each other, and were entertained with the playing of harp or fiddle (for a harper or fiddler was always engaged); an 'interlude' or two was played during the festival; the morris dancers went from house to house; a day for hunting was appointed, and the huntsmen and their friends of both sexes met at one of the village public-houses, where a grand ball was held in the evening. Nor were the poor forgotten, for there was a particular portion provided for them called 'the wakes' meat.'[229]

This account includes the emphasis on generosity to the poor and celebration of the dairy products associated with San Ffraid. Nonetheless, it is impossible at this stage to be certain which customs are associated with San Ffraid as opposed to Candlemas.

Bells

This section lists bells associated with churches dedicated to San Ffraid. These bells were important to communities and were used to mark emergencies and important occasions.

> Bells were introduced into the Celtic church in the sixth century and came into general use in the eighth century. In the medieval period, the bells of parish churches marked the canonical hours and summoned the faithful to worship. They tolled the curfew and the angelus, warned of

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[227] T. Owen, *Welsh Folk Customs*, 5th edn. (Llandysul: Gomer Press, 1997), pp. 70–71.

[228] C. Hill, *Holidays and Holy Nights: Celebrating Twelve Seasonal Festivals of the Christian Year* (Wheaton and Chennai: Quest Books, 2003), p. 113.

[229] *Collections, Historical & Archaeological relating to Mongomeryshire*, 100 vols, Powysland Club, (London: J. Russell Smith, 1871), vol. 4, pp. 134–135.

> invasion and alarm, and announced the death of parishioners. They celebrated baptism, weddings and feast days.[230]

St Gildas was reputedly an expert bell-founder and made his own bell and bells for Saints Cadoc, Illtud, and Brigid of Kildare.[231] Bells are often named and have interesting histories. Bells in Wales associated with San Ffraid dedications are described next.

The Church of St Bridget and St Cwyfan, Lower Dyserth, is described as 'surmounted by a small bell-cote containing a single bell'.[232] In St Bride Church, Skenfrith, maintenance of the bells is important:

> Here in Skenfrith are meadows named Ynys yr Eglwys (Church Island) and Ynys y Gloch (Bell Island) dedicated to church and bell-rope maintenance.[233]

The church at Llansantffraid-ym-Mechain has three bells:

> Ihesus be Oure Spede 1618.
> God Save His Chirche 1618.
> Peace and Good Neighbourhood A (bell) R 1718.[234]

The following poem, written by Judith Jones, tells a related legend about the bells at nearby Llanfechain Church:

> They'd built the church and furnished it (or so the story tells)
> And all Llanfechain waited the arrival of the bells
> The rutted roads were deep in mud along the valley floor
> The wagons creaked, the horses strained, the draymen cursed and swore.
> From Oswestry they struggled on, through mud and mire and muck
> Across Meredith's ford they plunged—at Llansantffraid they stuck
> The axles broke beneath the weight (beneath the mud as well)
> But locals flocked to help unload—a crowd to every bell.
> They sent the carters home again
> The bells, all four, they kept.
>
> So is that how Llansantffraid Church got its bells?[235]

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[230] E. Parry, *Churches in Wales and Their Treasures*, p. 20.

[231] T. John, and N. Rees, *Pilgrimage: A Welsh Perspective*, p. 65.

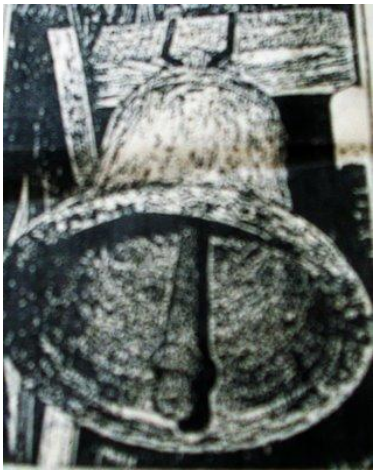
[232] The RCAHMC, in Wales and Monmouthshire, *An Inventory of the Ancient Monuments in Wales and Monmouthshire, II—County of Flint*, pp. 28–29.

[233] F. Hando, *The Pleasant Land of Gwent* (Newport: R. H. Johns Limited, 1944), p. 79.

[234] *The Life and Times of Llansantffraid-ym-Mechain*, ed. B. Brown, p. 97–98.

[235] *The Life and Times of Llansantffraid-ym-Mechain*, ed. B. Brown, p. 97–98.

The church at St Brides Netherwent has a famous bell called the Ave Maria (fig. 91) with a diameter of 22 inches, considered the most interesting bell in Gwent and the earliest one in the United Kingdom. Dated AD 1290, the bell is inscribed +AVE MARIA GRATIA PLN+. There are only six other such bells in the United Kingdom.[236]



© E. Nicholson 2008

Figure 91. Ave Maria Bell, St Brides Netherwent, Monmouthshire[237]

The tower of St Brides Major holds a ring of six bells (originally five). The inscriptions are as follows:

Treble	E.	TAYLOR LOUGHBORO 1939
No. 2	D.	ANNA MARIA BENNETT CAST 1851 TAYLOR LOUGHBORO RECAST 1939
No. 3	C.	THOMAS WYNDHAM CAST 1851 TAYLOR LOUGHBORO
RECAST 1939		
	NO. 4	B. CAST 1851 TAYLOR LOUGHBORO RECAST 1939
	NO. 5	A. CAST 1851 TAYLOR LOUGHBORO RECAST 1939
TENOR	5 BELLS RECAST INTO 6 AND BELFRY RESTORED 1939 TAYLOR LOUGHBORO	

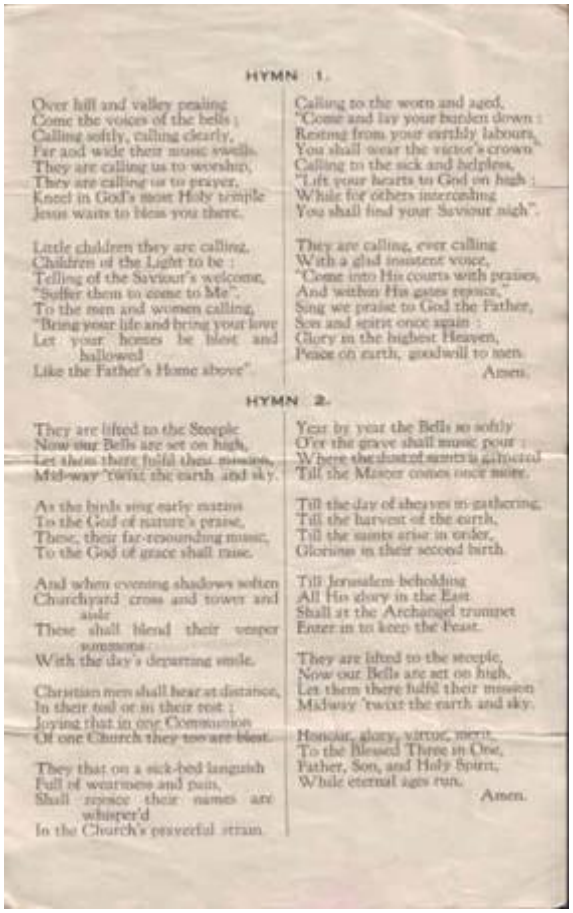
[236] E. Nicholson, 'Tuesday, July 29, 2008: Sant y Brid -St Bride's Netherwent and the Ave Maria Bell 1290'. In *Mary in Monmouth* <http://maryinmonmouth.blogspot.com/2008/07/llansantffraed-gwent-iscoed-st-brides.html> [Accessed 30 June 2012].

[237] E. Nicholson, 'Tuesday, July 29, 2008: Sant y Brid -St Bride's Netherwent and the Ave Maria Bell 1290'. In *Mary in Monmouth* < http://maryinmonmouth.blogspot.com/2008/07/llansantffraed-gwent-iscoed-st-brides.html> [Accessed 30 June 2012].

PROMOTED BY SUBSCRIPTIONS
DAVID J. WILLS. VICAR
JOHN EVANS CHURCHWARDENS
HUBERT E. TAYLOR
CAST 1851
RECAST 1939[238]

Music

Limited references are available for songs and hymns related to San Ffraid. The following Welsh hymns do not mention the saint, but celebrate the churches dedicated San Ffraid; for example, the Church of St Brides Major in Glamorgan offers these two hymns, written about their bells (fig. 92).[239]



HYMN 1.

Over hill and valley pealing
Come the voices of the bells;
Calling softly, calling clearly,
Far and wide their music swells.
They are calling us to worship,
They are calling us to prayer,
Kneel in God's most Holy temple
Jesus waits to bless you there.

Little children they are calling,
Children of the Light to be;
Telling of the Saviour's welcome,
"Suffer them to come to Me".
To the men and women calling,
"Bring your life and bring your love
Let your homes be blest and hallowed
Like the Father's Home above".

Calling to the worn and aged,
"Come and lay your burden down;
Resting from your earthly labours,
You shall wear the victor's crown"
Calling to the sick and helpless,
"Lift your hearts to God on high;
While for others interceding
You shall find your Saviour nigh".

They are calling, ever calling
With a glad insistent voice,
"Come into His courts with praises,
And within His gates rejoice,"
Sing we praise to God the Father,
Son and spirit once again;
Glory in the highest Heaven,
Peace on earth, goodwill to men.
Amen.

HYMN 2.

They are lifted to the Steeple
Now our Bells are set on high,
Let them there fulfil their mission,
Mid-way 'twixt the earth and sky.

As the birds sing early matins
To the God of nature's praise,
These, their far-resounding music,
To the God of grace shall raise.

And when evening shadows soften
Churchyard cross and tower and aisle
These shall blend their vesper summons
With the day's departing smile.

Christian men shall hear at distance,
In their toil or in their rest;
Joying that in one Communion
Of one Church they too are blest.

They that on a sick-bed languish
Full of weariness and pain,
Shall rejoice their names are whisper'd
In the Church's prayerful strain.

Year by year the Bells so softly
O'er the grave shall music pour;
Where the dust of saints is garnered
Till the Master comes once more.

Till the day of sheaves in-gathering,
Till the harvest of the earth,
Till the saints arise in order,
Glorious in their second birth.

Till Jerusalem beholding
All His glory in the East
Shall at the Archangel trumpet
Enter in to keep the Feast.

They are lifted to the steeple,
Now our Bells are set on high,
Let them there fulfil their mission
Midway 'twixt the earth and sky.

Honour, glory, virtue, merit,
To the Blessed Three in One,
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
While eternal ages run.
Amen.

© St Bridget's Church, St Brides Major 2012

Figure 92. Two Hymns to the Bells, St Bride Church, St Brides Major, Glamorgan

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[238] G. Orrin, *Medieval Churches of the Vale of Glamorgan*, p. 341.

[239] 'Hymns Sung at Rededication of the Bells, St Brides Major' (2012). In the St. Bridget's Church, St. Brides Major in the Parish of Ewenny and St. Brides Major website <http://www.stbridesmajor.co.uk/Shared_pages/church_sb_as/st_bridgets_church.htm> [Accessed 19 October 2012].

The hymnbook *Y Caniedydd* also includes the following hymn titled St Bride:[240]

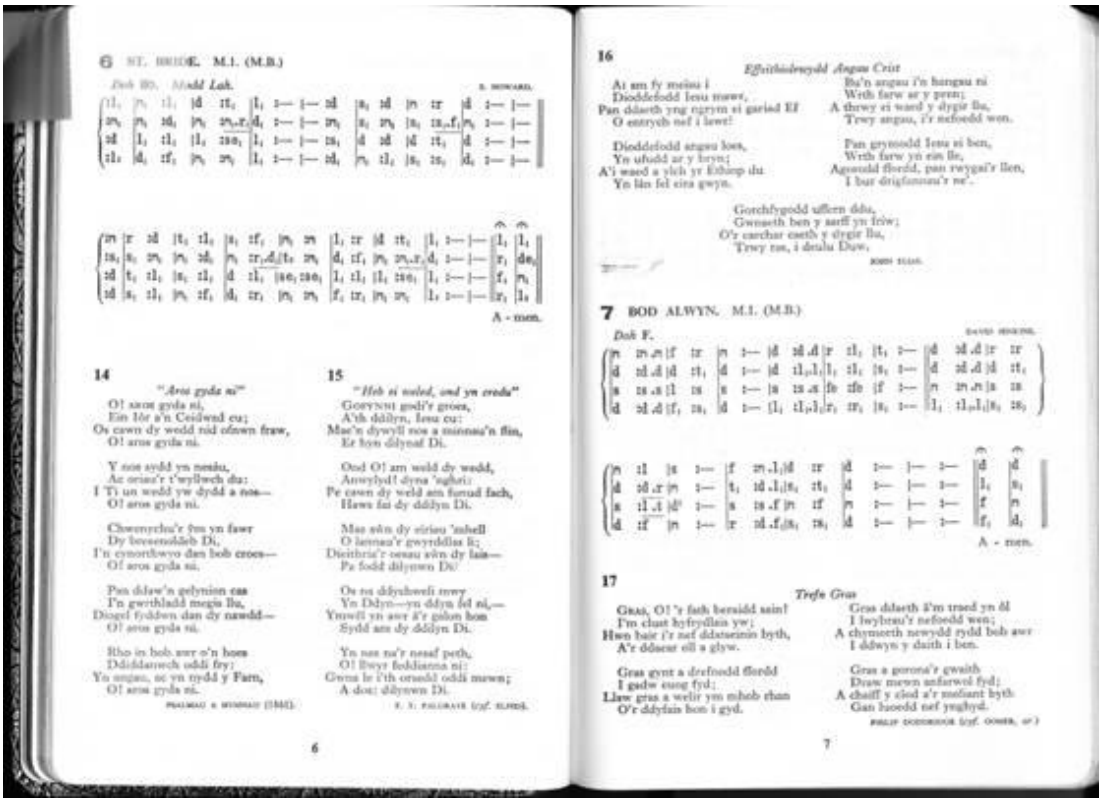

Figure 2. St Bride, Hymn

Because the feast of Candlemas takes the place of the feast of St Brigid in Wales, dance tunes and songs are not available related to San Ffraid. On the other hand, San Ffraid's association with beer for festivals appears in the feast of Candlemas, as does the ritual of wassailing. The following seventeenth-century wassail song commemorates Candlemas:

> Roedd yn ddefod mynd a gwirod A gwyryfon o'r cwmpason
> Gwyl fair forwyn ddechre gwanwyn Ai canhwylle i gyd yn ole.
>
> Pob dyn dedwydd, trwy lawenydd Puredigaeth Mair yn odieth,
> A garo goffa Mair merch Anna... Pawb ai wirod iw chyfarfod.
>
> Fe aned i hon fab Duw Cyfion Os rhydd Duw tad ini genad
> Ddydd Nadolig Gwyl Barchedig. Ni yfwn wirod hyd y gwaelod.
>
> Gwyl fair hefyd sydd wyl hyfryd Ni yfwn Iechyd haelion hefyd
> Mair yn gymwys aeth i'r Eglwys. Heb fod mor son am gybyddion....[241]

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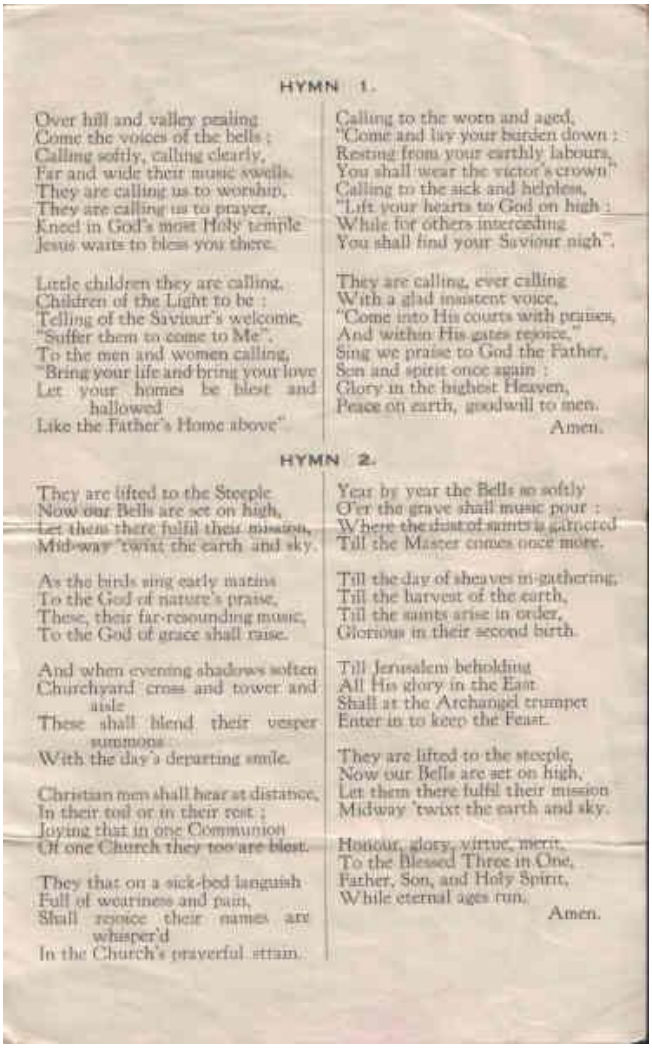
[240] *Y Caniedydd* (Abertawe: Undeb Yr Annibynwr Cymraeg, 1960), pp. 6–7.

[241] H. Wood, *Imbolc in Wales* (2000) <http://www.applewarrior.com/celticwel/ejournal/imbolc/wales.htm> [Accessed 19 October 2012]

> [It was a custom to bear drink at the Festival of the Virgin Mary at the beginning of Spring. Every happy man loves to remember with joy Mary the daughter of Anna....To her was born the Son of the Just God on Christmas Day, revered festival. Mary went meetly to the church, with virgins from the locality, their candles all alight. The purification of Mary, all with their drink meeting her. If God the Father gives us permission, we shall drink to the dregs. We shall drink the Health of the generous without any mention of misers….]

An interesting note is the 'mention of misers', which is reminiscent of Iorwerth Fynglwyd's miracle in which San Ffraid gave away the stingy mayor's cheese and also echoes other miracles of St Brigid of Kildare in which she forces generosity on those who would not share.



HYMN 1.

Over hill and valley pealing
Come the voices of the bells ;
Calling softly, calling clearly,
Far and wide their music swells.
They are calling us to worship,
They are calling us to prayer,
Kneel in God's most Holy temple
Jesus waits to bless you there.

Little children they are calling,
Children of the Light to be :
Telling of the Saviour's welcome,
"Suffer them to come to Me".
To the men and women calling,
"Bring your life and bring your love
Let your homes be blest and hallowed
Like the Father's Home above".

Calling to the worn and aged,
"Come and lay your burden down :
Resting from your earthly labours,
You shall wear the victor's crown"
Calling to the sick and helpless,
"Lift your hearts to God on high :
While for others interceding
You shall find your Saviour nigh".

They are calling, ever calling
With a glad insistent voice,
"Come into His courts with praises,
And within His gates rejoice,"
Sing we praise to God the Father,
Son and spirit once again :
Glory in the highest Heaven,
Peace on earth, goodwill to men.
Amen.

HYMN 2.

They are lifted to the Steeple
Now our Bells are set on high,
Let them there fulfil their mission,
Mid-way 'twixt the earth and sky.

As the birds sing early matins
To the God of nature's praise,
These, their far-resounding music,
To the God of grace shall raise.

And when evening shadows soften
Churchyard cross and tower and aisle
These shall blend their vesper summons
With the day's departing smile.

Christian men shall hear at distance,
In their toil or in their rest ;
Joying that in one Communion
Of one Church they too are blest.

They that on a sick-bed languish
Full of weariness and pain,
Shall rejoice their names are whisper'd
In the Church's prayerful strain.

Year by year the Bells so softly
O'er the grave shall music pour :
Where the dust of saints is gathered
Till the Master comes once more.

Till the day of sheaves in-gathering,
Till the harvest of the earth,
Till the saints arise in order,
Glorious in their second birth.

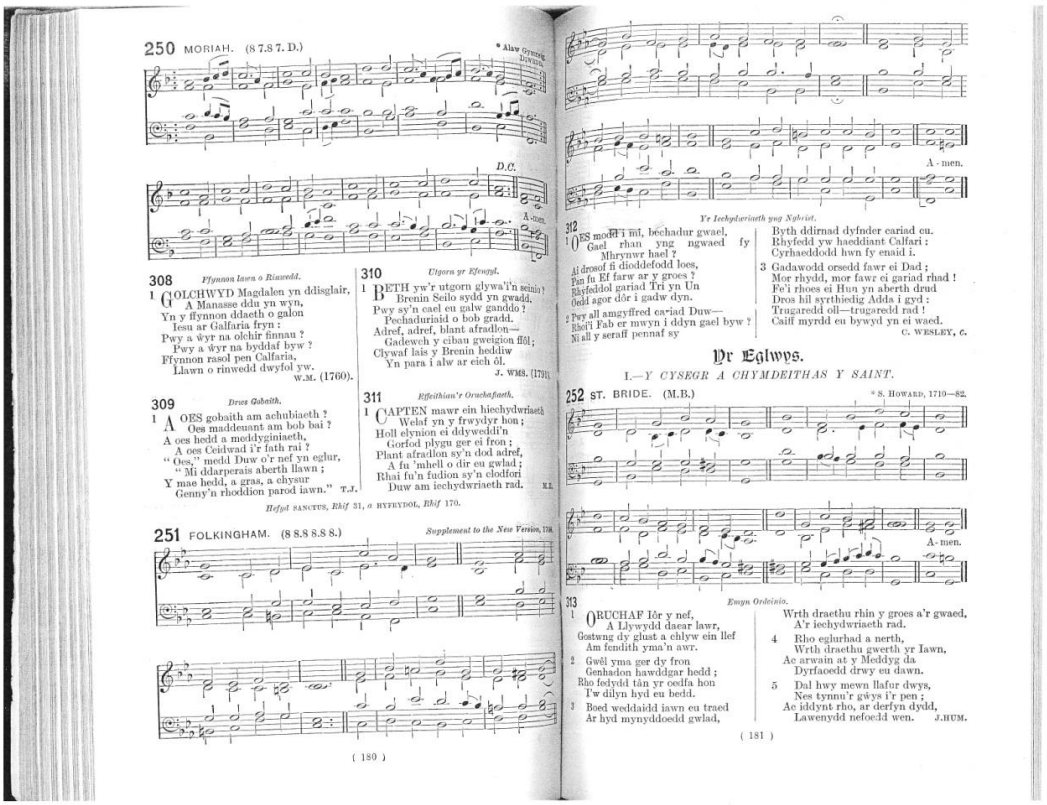
Till Jerusalem beholding
All His glory in the East
Shall at the Archangel trumpet
Enter in to keep the Feast.

They are lifted to the steeple,
Now our Bells are set on high,
Let them there fulfil their mission
Midway 'twixt the earth and sky.

Honour, glory, virtue, merit,
To the Blessed Three in One,
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
While eternal ages run.
Amen.

Figure 93. Two Hymns to the Bells, St Bride Church, St Brides Major, Glamorgan

Another hymn titled ‘Yr Eglwys’ is set to the tune of St. Bride (fig. 93). This hymn appears in *Emynau a Thonau: Y Methodistiaid Calfinaidd a Westleaidd*, published in 1929.[242]



250 MORIAH. (8 7.8 7. D.)

308 *Ffynnon lawn o Rinwedd.*

1 GOLCHWYD Magdalen yn ddisglair,
A Manasse ddu yn wyn,
Yn y ffynnon ddaeth o galon
Iesu ar Galfaria fryn :
Pwy a wyr na olchir finnau ?
Pwy a wyr na byddaf byw ?
Ffynnon rasol pen Calfaria,
Llawn o rinwedd dwyfol yw.
W.M. (1760).

309 *Drios Gobaith.*

1 A OES gobaith am achubiaeth ?
Oes maddeuant am bob bai ?
A oes hedd a meddyginiaeth,
A oes Ceidwad i'r fath rai ?
"Oes," medd Duw o'r nef yn eglur,
"Mi ddarperais aberth llawn ;
Y mae hedd, a gras, a chysur
Genny'n rhoddion parod iawn." T.J.

Hefyd SANCTUS, *Rhif* 51, *a* HYFRYDOL, *Rhif* 170.

251 FOLKINGHAM. (8 8.8 8.8 8.)

Supplement to the New Version, 170.

(180)

Yr Iechydwriaeth yng Nghrist.

2 Pwy all amgyffred cariad Duw—
Rhoi'i Fab er mwyn i ddyn gael byw ?
Ni all y seraff pennaf sy
Byth ddirnad dyfnder cariad cu.
Rhyfedd yw haeddiant Calfari :
Cyrhaeddodd hwn fy enaid i.

3 Gadawodd orsedd fawr ei Dad ;
Mor rhydd, mor fawr ei gariad rhad !
Fe'i rhoes ei Hun yn aberth drud
Dros hil syrthiedig Adda i gyd :
Trugaredd oll—trugaredd rad !
Caiff myrdd eu bywyd yn ei waed.
C. WESLEY, *c.*

Yr Eglwys.

I.—*Y CYSEGR A CHYMDEITHAS Y SAINT.*

252 ST. BRIDE. (M.B.)

* S. HOWARD, 1719—82.

313 *Emyn Ordeinio.*

1 ORUCHAF Iôr y nef,
A Llywydd daear lawr,
Gostwng dy glust a chlyw ein llef
Am fendith yma'n awr.

2 Gwêl yma ger dy fron
Genhadon hawddgar hedd ;
Rho fedydd tân yr oedfa hon
I'w dilyn hyd eu bedd.

3 Boed weddaidd iawn eu traed
Ar hyd mynyddoedd gwlad,
Wrth draethu rhin y groes a'r gwaed,
A'r iechydwriaeth rad.

4 Rho eglurhad a nerth,
Wrth draethu gwerth yr Iawn,
Ac arwain at y Meddyg da
Dyrfaoedd drwy eu dawn.

5 Dal hwy mewn llafur dwys,
Nes tynnu'r gŵys i'r pen ;
Ac iddynt rho, ar derfyn dydd,
Lawenydd nefoedd wen. J.HUM.

(181)

Figure 94. Yr Eglwys, to the tune of St Bride

Medicine

In Wales the herb Betony [Betonica officinalis] is called Cribau San Ffraid, or the Combs of San Ffraid. David Hoffman describes betony as a plant ‘of wide application, having sedative, astringent, vulnerary, diuretic, carminative, and expectorant properties. It is of use in treating headache, vertigo, anxiety, hysteria and neuralgia’. He also recommends it for asthma, bronchitis, and heartburn. The juice can also be used heal wounds, such as cuts, external ulcers, and sores. He concludes that Betony was a holy plant, supposedly having many magical properties, and is also

[242] ‘Yr Eglwys’, *Llyfr Emynau a Thonau y Methodistiaid Calfinaidd a Westleaidd* (Caernarfon: Llyfrfa’r Methodistiaid Calfinaidd, 1929), p. 181.

used in herbal tobacco.[245] Uses for Betony are included in the collection of medieval medical advice attributed to the Physicians of Myddfai:

> THESE ARE THE VIRTUES OF BETONY
>
> He who will habituate himself to drink the juice, will escape the strangury. If it is boiled in white wine, and drank, it will cure the colic, and swelling of the stomach. Pounding it small, expressing the juice and apply it with a feather to the eye of a man, will clear and strengthen his sight, and remove specks from his eye. The juice is a good thing to drop into the ears of those who are deaf.
>
> The powder mixed with honey is useful for those who cough; it will remove the cough and benefit many diseases of the lungs. If boiled with leek seed, it will cure the eye, and brighten as well as strengthen the sight.[246]

Weather Lore

A number of sayings relate to the time of San Ffraid's feastday on February 1. Here are some examples:

Chwefror a chwyth; os cwyd neidr o'i nyth ni ddych yno byth.	It blows in February; If a snake comes out of its hole it will never return.[248]
Chwefror shwyth Neidr o'i nyth.	February will blow the snake from its hole.[249]
(34) Chwefror deg A ddifetha'r un ar ddeg.	A fine February Spoils the eleven (i.e., the other months).[250]
(35) Mae pob mis yn y flwyddyn yn melltithio Chewfror teg.	All the (other) months of the year curse a February that is fine.[251]
Bys yw Chwefror, ond hire i anghysuron.	February is short, but its discomforts are long.[252]

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[245] D. Hoffman, *Welsh Herbal Medicine* (Aberteifi: Abercastle Publications, 2007), p. 33.

[246] 'Meddygon Myddfai' Jesus 111 (Llyfr Coch Hergest), pp. 231R–233V, cols. 928–939. In the *Oxford Jesus College: An Electronic Edition Collection* <http://www.rhyddiaithganoloesol.caerdydd.ac.uk/en/ms-page.php?ms=Jesus111&page=231r> [Accessed 19 October 2012].

[248] D. Ellis, 'A miscellany of Welsh weather-lore', Collections, *historical & archaeological relating to Mongomeryshire*, vol. 47, p. 78.

[249] D. Ellis, 'A miscellany of Welsh weather-lore', p. 78.

[250] D. Ellis, 'A miscellany of Welsh weather-lore', p. 78.

[251] D. Ellis, 'A miscellany of Welsh weather-lore', p. 78.

[252] D. Ellis, 'A miscellany of Welsh weather-lore', p. 78.

Conclusion

The Welsh Tradition

This dissertation, which gathers together for the first time and focuses attention on the strictly Welsh traditions related to San Ffraid, can clarify some issues related to her veneration. Welsh traditions about San Ffraid associate her with the Irish St Brigid of Kildare. In no place can a location, tradition, or custom relating to San Ffraid be traced to a veneration of St Birgitta of Sweden. Any ambiguity on this issue can be attributed solely to Iorwerth Fynglwyd's reference to the Fifteen Prayers in his poem 'I San Ffraid'; however, this reference may refer to the Fifteen Oes prayers popular in Fynglwyd's lifetime. The miracles he includes in his poem fit St Brigid of Kildare rather than St Birgitta of Sweden. In any case, nearly all dedicated churches in Wales date to Norman, and in many cases, pre-Norman times, well before the life of St Birgitta of Sweden in the 1400s.

Although the Welsh San Ffraid has the attributes of St Brigid of Kildare, some stories about her exist only in the Welsh tradition. Two strictly Welsh stories about San Ffraid, often repeated, are the notions that she and her maidens arrived from Ireland on turfs of grass and that she turned rushes into sparlings. Both these stories are documented in the Life of St Modwenna. In spite of a strong southern Wales tradition of veneration of San Ffraid, no legends speak of her spending time in Menevia with St David, as reported in the Life of St Monynna.

The mound called Tommen San Ffraid near Llansantffraid Cwmdeuddwr lacks a corresponding legend to explain why this geographic feature is associated with the grave of San Ffraid. This issue must remain unresolved, but with the likely explanation that the term refers to a graveyard near the church rather than the grave of San Ffraid herself.

Some stories mentioned in Iorwerth Fynglwyd's poem *I San Ffraid* do not appear in the Lives of St Brigid of Kildare, but neither do they appear in other Welsh stories. Included in this collection are the story of San Ffraid turning the Lord Mayor of London into a horse and the tale of San Ffraid freeing the baker's wife before the Pope.

Feast Day

The Welsh tradition lacks a strong feastday ritual for San Ffraid. Many of the traditions in Ireland and Scotland associated with St Brigid exist, but are instead celebrated on Candlemas, the day after San Ffraid's feastday. Nonetheless, there are indications that these traditions existed at one time; for example, the Fox and Hounds pub in St Brides Major still holds a St Brigid's Day celebration on February 1, and the Church of St Brigid and St Cwyfan in Lower Dyserth follows a special liturgy on St Brigid's feast day (see app A). Some traditions in Scotland and Ireland are

not present in Wales. The house-to-house visiting with singing and dancing, special foods, and a doll that represents the saint are like Irish and Scottish customs, but celebrated on Gwyl Fair in Wales, not on San Ffraid's feast day. This change may indicate that pre-Christian customs related to the goddess Brigantia or Brigid were passed to St Brigid, and the focus changed over time to the Virgin Mary, but they also could indicate that that these customs were passed directly to the Virgin Mary when Christianity was introduced.

Music

Hymns are associated with the churches dedicated to San Ffraid; however, as with the lack of folk customs in general, folk tunes do not mention San Ffraid. This lack may be attributed to the emphasis on Candlemas as the Welsh feast that celebrates the coming of spring rather than San Ffraid's feast day.

Summary

Collection and integration of the evidence in the written sources with the dedications and traditions related to San Ffraid makes it possible to evaluate the issues posed in chapter 1. Based on the Iorwerth Fynglwyd's poem *I San Ffraid*, which has been considered the primary source in lieu of a Life of San Ffraid, there is ambiguity as to the identity of the Welsh San Ffraid; however, based on the dedications and traditions, the Welsh veneration of San Ffraid is clearly based on St Brigid of Kildare, with some Welsh traditions added related to her short sojourn in Wales described in the Life of St Modwenna. The dedications in Pembrokeshire and Ceredigion offer some leeway that parishioners also may have connected her with St David and St Non, possibly because they believed the version in the Life of St Monynna where Brigid went to Menevia to study with St David. Neither the source nor the tradition, however, provides enough detail to trace cause and effect in subsequent observances. A confusion of San Ffraid with St Birgitta of Sweden exists in the poem *I San Ffraid*, but is not evidenced in other dedications or traditions related to the saint. While the dedications confirm the written sources that identify San Ffraid with St Brigid of Kildare, with local variations, the written sources fail to confirm in any way the dedication of Tomen San Ffraid in Cwmdeuddwr as the grave of San Ffraid. This name may instead refer to the graveyard of St Ffraid Church.

Traditions related to San Ffraid appear to be much more limited in Wales than they are in Ireland and Scotland, and Candlemas is the Welsh festival held in early February that celebrates fertility, light, and the end of winter. It is possible that post-Reformation suppression of traditions may account for the difference, but additional research is required to pursue that thought.

It is hoped that this collection of the geographic, religious, and cultural aspects of her veneration adds to the general understanding of a woman saint who demonstrated leadership and conviction during the fifth and sixth centuries, a time during which many valued aspects of Welsh cultural identity were forged and which continue to offer inspiration.

Appendix A: Liturgical References to St Brigid of Kildare

The following ceremonies celebrate St Brigid of Kildare, enumerating the virtues for which she was honored. The Sarum Missal[254] feastday prayers and the rites for St Brigid's feastday from the Divine Office[255] are ancient ceremonies, but the ceremony from the Church of St Bridget and St Cwyfan Lower Dyserth[256] is in current use.

The Sarum Missal

S. Bridget, Virg.

The Office *Comm. Many Virg.*; Alleluia iii. *and* Comm. V., *Comm. Virg. Mart.*; Epistle and Grad. i., Gospel and Offert. Ii, *in the Common.*

The Collect.

We beseech Thee, O Lord, let the prayers of S. Bridget, Thy Virgin, which are pleasing to Thee, aid us, and never cease to entreat Thy loving-kindness towards us. Through.

Secret. We beseech Thee, O Lord, that, being reconciled unto Thee by the Sacrifice we have offered, Thou wouldst, at the intercessions of S. Bridget, Thy Virgin, graciously succor us in our time. Through.

P. Comm. Let the gifts we have received, O Lord, commend to Thee Thy faithful, for the sake of blessed Bridget, Thy Virgin, and let her who pleased Thee implore aid for us. Through.

Breviary Offices from Lauds to Compline Inclusive

I. Common of Holy Days

Every Ant. And R. is said with Alleluia in Easter-tide.

Common Memorials of Saints Said at First Vespers and Lauds.

Of a Virgin and Martyr (pp. 205-206)

[254] *The Sarum Missal in English*, trans. A. H. Pearson (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2004), pp. 344–345.

[255] *Breviary Offices from Lauds to Compline Inclusive, Translated from the Sarum Book, and Supplemented from Gallican and Monastic Uses*, anonymous (London: J. T. Hayes, 1874).

[256] Canon Robert Rowland, Vicar of Dyserth, Trelawnyd and Cwm, *St Bridget's Feastday* (Dyserth: Church of St Bridget and St Cwyfan, Lower Dyserth, 2012).

Vespers.

Ant. The kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind: which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away.

V. Full of grace are thy lips.

R. Because God hath blessed thee for ever.

Collect.

Hear us, O God of our salvation, that as we rejoice in the feast of blessed N., Thy Virgin [and Martyr]' sp pf Thy mercy we may be taught the spirit of devotion; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Lauds.

Ant. When the Bridegroom came, the wise virgins, being ready: went in with Him to the marriage.

V. The virgins that be her fellows shall bear her company.

R. And shall be brought until Thee.

Collect as at Vespers.

Of a Virgin not Martyr, the Memorial is the same, except that in the Collect the words, and Martyr, are omitted.

Of a Virgin and Martyr. (pp. 230-233)

First Vespers.

Ant. This is the wise virgin, whose lamp was ready when the Bridegroom came: she went in with the Lord to the wedding.

Psalms of the Feria.

Chapter. Ecclus.li.

Then lifted I up my supplication from the earth, O Lord my God, and prayed for deliverance from death.

R. The kingdoms of the earth and all the glory of the world I despised for the love of my Lord Jesus Christ: Whom I have seen, Whom I have loved, in Whom I have believed, Whom I have desired. *V.* My heart is inditing of a good matter. I speak of the things which I have made unto the King. *R.* Whom I have seen, Whom I have loved, in Whom I have believed, Whom I have desired. *V.* Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. *R.* The kingdoms of this earth, and all the glory of the world I despised for the love of my Lord Jesus Christ, Whom I have seen, Whom I have loved, in Whom I have believed, Whom I have desired.

Hymn. *Virginis proles opifexque matris.*

Child of the Virgin, Maker of thy Mother,
Virgin-engendered, of the Virgin Son,
Virgin is she of whom we sing another Victory won.
[Double the palm of triumph which she beareth,
Strove she to vanquish woman's fear of death:
Quelled now the hand of death and hell appeareth
Her feet beneath.
Death won no conquest, nor the thousand terrors.
Kindred of death—fierce torments bravely borne:
Gave she her blood: that blood the radiance mirrors
Of life's new morn.]
When she pleads for us, at her sweet petition,
That we may sing with consolence pure of sin,
From debt of guilt O grant us Thy remission,
And peace within.
Glory to Thee, O Father, Son, and Spirit,
Glory co-equal on the Throne on high,
Equal in power, in unity of merit,
Eternally. Amen.

V. Full of grace are thy lips.

R. Because God hath blessed thee for ever.

Ant. to Mag. The kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind: which when it was full, they drew it to shore, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away.

Collect.

Hear us, O God of our salvation, that as we rejoice in the feast of blessed *N.*, Thy Virgin [and Martyr;] So of Thy mercy we may be taught the spirit of develotion; through Jesus our Lord. Amen.

Lauds.

V. God hath given her the help of His countenance.

R. God is in the midst of her, therefore shall she not be removed.

Psalms of Sunday.

Ant. 1. This is the wise virgin: whom the Lord found watching.

Ant. 2. This is a wise virgin: and of the number of the prudent.

Ant. 3. This is a virgin holy and glorious: for the Lord of all things hath chosen her.

Ant. 4. I bless Thee, O Father of my Lord Jesus Christ: because, through Thy Son, the fire of temptation is extinguished round about me.

Ant. 5. Come, bride of Christ, receive the crown: which the Lord hath prepared for thee for ever.

Chapt. Ecclus li.

Then lifted I up my supplication from the earth, O Lord my God, and prayed for deliverance from death.

R. Thanks be to God.

Hymn. *Jesu, corona Virginum.*

Jesu, the Virgins' Crown, do Thou
Accept us as in prayer we bow;
Born of that Virgin, whom alone
The mother and the maid we own.

Amongst the lilies Thou dost feed,
With virgin choirs accompanied;
With glory decked, the spotless brides
Whose bridal gifts Thy love provides.

They, wheresoe'er Thy footsteps bend,

With hymns and praises still attend;
In blessed troops they follow Thee,
With dance, and song, and melody.

We pray Thee therefore to bestow
Upon our senses here below,
Thy grace, that so we may endure
From taint of all corruption pure.

All laud to God the Father be:
All laud, Eternal Son, to Thee:
All laud, as for ever meet,
To God the Holy Paraclete. Amen.

V. The virgins that be her fellows shall bear her company.

R. And shall be brought unto Thee.

Ant. to Ben. When the Bridegroom came, the wise virgins: being ready, went in with Him to the marriage.

Collect as at the First Vespers.

Prime.

Ant. This is a wise virgin: whom the Lord found watching.

Tierce.

Ant. This is a wise virgin: and of the number of the prudent.

Chapter. Ecclus. Li.

Then lifted I up my supplication from the earth, O Lord my God, and prayed for deliverance from death.

R. Full of grace: are thy lips. *V.* Because God hath blessed thee for ever. *R.* Are thy lips. *V.* Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. *R.* Full of grace: are thy lips.

V. In thy glory and thy beauty.

R. Go forth, proceed, and reign.

Sexts.

Ant. This is a virgin, holy and glorious: for the Lord of all things hath chosen her.

Chapter. Ecclus. Li.

I will praise Thy Name continually, and will sing praise with thanksgiving; because my prayer was heart.

R. In thy glory: and thy beauty. *V.* Go forth, proceed, and reign. R. In thy beauty. *V.* Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. *R.* In thy glory: and thy beauty.

V. God hath given her the help of his countenance.

R. God shall help her, and that right early.

Nones.

Ant. Come, bride of Christ, receive the crown: which the Lord hath prepared for thee for ever.

Chapter. Ecclus. Li.

Thou savedst me from destruction, and deliveredst me from the evil time: therefore will I give thanks, and praise Thee, and bless Thy Name, O Lord.

R. God hath given her: the help of His countenance. *V.* God shall help her, and that right early. *R.* The help of His countenance. *V.* Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. *R.* God hath given her: the help of His countenance.

V. The virgins that be her fellows shall bear her company.

R. And shall be brought unto Thee.

Second Vespers.

Ant. to Psalms. This is the wise virgin: whom the Lord found watching.

Chapter. Ecclus. Li.

Then lifted I up my supplication from the earth, O Lord my God, and prayed for deliverance from death.

R. Thanks be to God.

Hymn, V. and R., and Ant. To Magnificat as at First Vespers.

[*On the Feasts of* S. Agnes, S. Agatha, *and* S. Katharine, *these Chapters*.

Both Vespers, Lauds, and Tierce.

Chapter. Ecclus. Li.

I will thank thee, O Lord and King, and praise Thee, O God, my Savious: I do give praise unto Thy Name. For Thou art my defender and helper, and hast preserved my body from destruction.

Sexts.

Chapter. Ecclus. Li.

My soul praised the Lord, even unto death, and my life was near to hell.

Nones.

Chapter as of the Common.]

Of a Virgin Not Martyr.

The Office is the same, except the Chapters, the second and third verse of the Hymn at Vespers being omitted.

Both Vespers, Lauds, and Tierce.

Chapter. II Cor. X.

He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord. For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth.

Sexts.

Chapter. II Cor. Xi.

I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.

Nones.

Chapter. Wisdom vii. Viii.

Vice shall not prevail against wisdom. Wisdom reacheth from one end to another mightily: and sweetly doth she order all things.

Proper of Saints (p. 279)

Feasts of February *[On the first day unhindered is said the Office of the Dead.]*

February 1.

Festival of S. Bridget, Virgin.*

All of the Common of a Virgin, p. 233.

St Bridget's Feastday Service, Church of St Bridget and St Cwyfan, Lower Dyserth

THE FEAST OF ST BRIDGET, ABBESS
FEBRUARY 1ST

THE COLLECT
Almighty God, by whose grace Bridget, kindled with the holy fire of your love, bec
burning and shining light in the church: inflame in us the same spirit of disciplir
love, that we may walk before you as children of the light.; through Jesus Chri
Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and
AMEN

THE OLD TESTAMENT LESSON
A reading from the Book of the prophet Jeremiah (17:7-10)

Blessed are those who trust in the Lord, whose trust is the Lord. They shall be like
planted by water, sending out its roots by the stream. It shall not fear when heat c
and its leaves shall stay green; in the year of drought it is not anxious, and it do
cease to bear fruit. The heart is devious above all else – it is perverse – wh
understand it? I, the Lord, test the mind and search the heart, to give to all accord
their ways, according to the fruit of their doings.

This is the word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM 119:57 -64

The Lord / is my / portion: I have / promised . to / keep your / words.
I have sought your favour with my / whole / heart: O be gracious to me ac/cordir
your / word.
I have taken / stock of . my / ways: and have turned back my / feet to / your com/m
I made haste and did / not de/lay: to / keep / your com/mandments.
The snares of the / wicked . en/compassed me: but I did / not for/get your / law;
at midnight I rise to / give you / thanks: for the / righteous . ness / of your / judgem
I am a friend to / all who / fear you: to / those who / keep your / precepts.
The earth O Lord is full of your / loving/ mercy: O / teach me / your / statutes.

THE NEW TESTAMENT LESSON
A reading from the first letter of St John (2: 12- 17)

I am writing to you, little children, because your sins are forgiven on account
name. I am writing to you, fathers, because you know him whom is from the begin
am writing to you, young people, because you have conquered the evil one. I w
you, children, because you know the Father. I write to you, fathers, because you
him who is from the beginning. I write to you, young people, because you are stror
the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one.

Appendix B: Sermons

The following text, with its reference to San Ffraid, would have been used as source material for sermons.

Darn o'r Ffestifal[257]

[td. 144]
y mae duw yn gwnaythyr y chwarav hynn a mi
Beth a wnaythym mi yn erbyn duw Yn wir y
mae yr haini mewn perigl mawr kans y ryw
beth a hynny a wna y ddyn golli gorchafiaeth
nefoedd yn vnwedic a wnelych di yn erbyn duw

Mi a gaf yssgrifenedic ymyched sain ffrait
laian vod gwr gynt yn glaf ac y gweddioedd
ef erni am help ac y gwnaeth y lan vorwyn
honn ef yn holliach Ac wedy hynny y by ef yn
kerdded y vynydd ac y waered ac y diolches ef
y dduw ac y 'r santes vendigedic hynny Ac velly
val yr oedd ef nosswaith yn y wely yn kysgv
ac erbyn trannoeth yr oedd ef yn gwaiddi
ac yn gridvan yn dost val y byddai othrwm
y wrando Ac a ovynnodd iddo pa beth a wnathoedd
pan ddoyth y klefyd arno yr eilwaith
Ac ni ddywad ef ddim Ac yno y gofynnodd
y mynach iddo a vyssai yn kyffessv Ac y
dywad yntav na byssai ac nad oedd raid
kans ni ddygym i na march nac eidion
yn lledrad ac ni veddyliais i bechod arythr
Ac yna y dywad y mynach er na wnaethost
di vn pechod marwol ti a allyd wnaythyr
llawer o van bechode val y gallai yr haini C
oll vod yn bechod marwol Kans ti a elly lennwi
ffettan o 'r manyd llaia ac a vo

[257] Mirk, John, 'Darn o'r Ffestifal', Hafod MS 22. In the *Historical Corpus of the Welsh Language 1500-1850*. Online <http://www.arts-humanities.net/projects/historical_corpus_welsh_language>. Accessed 18 October 2012.

Appendix C: Additional Poetry References

This appendix presents some poems in full whose full content add to the view of San Ffraid, but were too long to present in text or which were quoted in part. For example, the Reverend John Timothy Lewis wrote the following poem about Llansantffraed Tower, now posted on the Llansantffraed/Llanon Community web site:

Llansantffraed Tower[258]

They raised a shrine when faith was new
Of oaken stakes and boughs of yew
Of sunbaked clay and fashioned sod
To honour Ffraed and worship God.
They knew the dread of sword and flame
When Saxon, Dane, or Norman came,
They knew the loss of home and kin
When Vikings steered for Maesgwyn
But when there dawned a brighter day,
And rovers ceased to raid the bay,
They built a church on that old site
With massive tower of noble height.
And still the tower stands to-day
Glorious above the restless bay;
Where Sarn Cadwgan churns the deep
And Cantref Gwaelod lies asleep.
And still it proudly lifts its head
Fond guardian of the dear dead
A symbol of eternity
And a promise of a life to be.
And still on Sabbaths rich with grace
O'er Morfa Esgob's chequered face
The challenge of its pleading bell
Choose you heaven or choose you hell.

It is said that Henry Vaughan's poem *The Palm-Tree* was written about the yew tree at Llansantffraed-juxta-Usk. An excerpt is included in chapter 3, but this is the entire poem

The Palm-Tree[259]

Dear friend, sit down, and bear awhile this shade
As I have yours long since; this plant, you see
So pressed and bowed, before sin did degrade
Both you and it, had equal liberty

With other trees: but now shut from the breath

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[258] *Llansantffraed Parish Church* <http://www.llanon.org.uk/jimweb/churchhome.HTM> [Accessed 21 October 2012].

[259] H. Vaughan, *The Palm Tree*, pp. 253–254.

and air of Eden, like a malcontent
It thrives no where. This makes these weights (like death
And sin) hang at him; for the more he's bent

The more he grows. Celestial natures still
Aspire for home; this Solomon of old
By flowers and carvings and mysterious skill
Of Wings, and Cherubims, and Palms foretold.

This is the life which hid above with Christ
In God, doth always (hidden) multiply,
And spring, and grow, a tree ne'er to be priced,
A tree, whose fruit is immortality.

Here spirits that have run their race and fought
And won the fight, and have not feared the frowns
Nor loved the smiles of greatness, but have wrought
Their master's will, met to receive their Crowns.

Here is the patience of the Saints: this tree
Is watered by their tears, as flowers are fed
With dew by night; but One you cannot see
Sits here and numbers all the tears they shed.

Here is their faith too, which if you will keep,
When we two part, I will a journey make
To pluck a Garland hence, while you do sleep
And weave it for your head against you wake.

The following poem, quoted in chapter 3 because of its line 'San Ffraid, bless us on our journey', is included here in full, using the translation by William Skene in the *Four Ancient Books of Wales*.[260]

1. The first word that I will utter
In the morning when I get up,
"May the Cross of Christ be as a vesture around me."

II. What belongs to my Creator I will put on
To-day, in one house will I attend.
He is not a God in whom I will not believe.

III. I will dress myself handsomely,
And believe in no omen which is not certain;
He that created me will strengthen me.

IV. I have a mind to see sights,
Intending to go to sea;
May a useful purpose become a treasure!

V. I have a mind for an advice,
Intending to go to sea;
May the purpose be useful, Lord!

VI. Let the raven uplift its wing,
With the intension of going far away;
May a useful purpose become better!

[260] W. Skene, *The Four Ancient Books of Wales*, pp. 519–521.

VII. Let the raven uplift its wing,
With the intention of going to Rome;
May a useful purpose become glorious!
VIII. Saddle thou the bayard with the white bridle,
To course Hiraethawg with its quaking grass:
Creator of Heaven! God must be with us!
IX. Saddle thou the bayard with the short hair,
Free in the conflict, quick in his pace;
Where the nose is, there will be snorting.
X. Saddle thou the bayard with the long bound,
Free in the conflict, pleasing in his pace;
The sneering of the vicious will not check the brave.
XI. Heavy the consistence of the of the earth, thick leaves its cover;
Bitter the drinking-horn of sweet mead;
Creator of Heaven! Prosper my business!
XII. From the progeny of the sovereign and victor,
Gwosprid, and Peter chief of every language,
Saint Ffraid, bless us on our journey!
XIII. Thou, Sun, to him intercession and vows are made,
Lord, Christ the Mysterious, the pillar of beneficence!
May I make satisfaction for my sin and actions.

II.

I asked to secular priests,
To their bishops and their judges,
"What is the best thing for the soul?"
The Paternoster, and consecrated wafers, and a holy
Creed, he who sings them for his soul,
Until the judgment will be accustomed to the best thing.
Smooth the way as thou goest, and cultivate peace,
And to thee there will be no end of mercy.
Give food to the hungry and clothes to the naked,
10 And say thy devotions:
From the presence of devils thou hast escaped.
The proud and the idle have pain in their flesh,
The reward of going to excess:
Beware of sifting what is not pure.
Excess of sleep, and excess of drunkenness, and too much beverage
Of mead, and too much submission to the flesh,
These are six bitter things against the judgment.
For perjury in respect of land, and the betrayment of a lord,
And the scandalizing of the bounteous.
20 At the day of judgment let there be repentance.
By rising to matins and nocturns,
Awaking and interceding with the saints,
Shall every Christian obtain forgiveness.

This poem is included to demonstrate the continuing popularity of San Ffraid as a subject for poetry.[261]

Ni Fedraf fyth Anghofio

Ni fedraf fyth anghofio hen ddyddiau'r crywd rhydd,
Pan welais ar fynyddoedd hen Gymru oleu'r dydd,
Mor ifanc ac mor gynnes bryd hynny oedd fy ngwaed,

[261] I. Rhys, 'Ni fedraf fyth anghofio', *Y Traethodydd - Cyf. LXXXXII (XV)*, 1927, 362–365.

A chlychau grug yn borffor glân ymhobman wrth fy nhraed.

Fe rodiwn i yn unig liw nos i wel'd y lloer
Fel gloyn Duw'n breuddwydio uwchben y clochdy oer;
'Roedd murmur afon Peris yn esmwyth dros bob rhan,
A mynwent dawel, hoff Sant Ffraid yn huno ar ei glan.
Mi welwn las y gorwel yn un a glas y bau,

A'm calon innau'n dysgu mor annwyl oedd y ddau,
Fy nghalon yno ddysgodd ei chan anfarwol hi,
Ac nid les dim all dorri'r gan a ddysgais ger y lli.
Ni fedraf fyth anghofio pentrefi'r fangre hon,--

Llanrhystyd, Pennant, Nebo, Talbont, a'r clws Lanon,
Ac ambell bentref arall, a Llansantffraid, hardd fro,
Mor annwyl gan fy nghalon i fynd trwyddynt yn ei tro!
A hawdd yn wir yw cofio hen lannau Cledan fwyn,

Ei lliw a'i llun a erys yn anghymarol swynb;
A hithau Beris hudol, a lif rhwng llwyni drain,
Dros rael man ei gwely ddyry imi felys sain.
Gofynnaf i bob cornant, wrth wel'd pentrefi glân,

Pa beth yw hanes Peris, a pheth yw hynt ei chân,
A daw atgofion annwyl am fro Llanon yn stôr,
A Chledan mewn cyfaredd dwys yn murmur tua'r môr.

Appendix D: Martyrology References to San Ffraid

These references to St Brigid in the Irish martyrologies demonstrate how the idea of multiple Brigids in Wales emerged. For example, the reference to Brigid of Cill Muine in the *Index of All Places in the Martyrology of Tallagh* does speak of a Brigid in southern Wales. Like the many other Brigids mentioned, without corroborating information this reference introduces issues without resolving them.

The Martyrology of Tallagh[262]

February.
Kal. Februaril.
Dormitatio S. Brigitae lxx.
anno aetatis suae.
Derlugach
Beon, Vir.
Cinni sac.
Airennanh. Foduibh.

Catalogue of Irish Saints from the Martyrology of Tallaght[263]

Feb. 1 Brigitta, Vir. Dormitatio.
Feb. 7 Brigit Inghen Drona.
Mar. 9 Brighit, Inghen Doma Maigh Liphi (the valley of the Liffey).
Mar. 9 Brigit, Mona Milain.
May 21 Brighit, Inghen Dimmain.
Aug. 13 Brigittae, Cluana Diailama.
Sep. 30 Brigittae

Index of All Places Named in the Martyrology of Tallaght[264]

Cill Dara, 9, 30.
Cill Muine, 11, 31, 33 (Menevia or St. David's in Wales).

Patron Saints of Ireland, from Aenghus Ceile De[265]

Feb. 1 The Calends of February are magnified
By a galaxy of martyrs of great valour;
Bridget, the spotless, of loudest fame,

---

[262] *Martyrology of Tallagh*, ed. M. Kelly in *Calendar of Irish Saints, the Martyrology of Tallagh, With Notices of the Patron Saints of Ireland, and Select Poems and Hymns* (Dublin: J. Mullany, 1847?), pp. x–xlii.

[263] *Catalogue of Irish Saints from the Martyrology of Tallaght*, ed. M. Kelly in *Calendar of Irish Saints*, pp. 1–30.

[264] *Index of All Places Named in the Martyrology of Tallaght*, ed. M. Kelly, in *Calendar of Irish Saints*, pp. 37–46.

[265] *Patron Saints of Ireland, from Aenghus Ceile De*, ed. M. Kelly in *Calendar of Irish Saints*, pp. 153–161.

Chaste head of the nuns of Erinn.

Cuimin of Connor, Characteristic Virtues of Irish Saints[266]

Bridget of the benedictions, loved
Perpetual mortification beyond womanhood,
Watching and early rising,
Hospitality to saintly men.

[266] Cuimin of Connor, *Characteristic Virtues of Irish Saints*, ed. Kelly, M. in *Calendar of Irish Saints*, pp. 161-171.

Appendix E: Hymn References to San Ffraid

The following hymns[267] are not a complete list, but offer examples of early hymns written about St Brigid of Kildare. The following hymn is taken from a supplement (not approved) of the Irish Breviary, published in Paris, in the year 1769.

In Festo S. Brigidae

Haec nuptialis est dies,
Quae longa post suspiria,
Clarissimae dat Virgini,
Sponso frui jam plenius.

Coelestis aula panditur,
En sponsus! Exi Brigida,
Coelo licet perennibus
Ejus potiri gaudiis.

Quae casta tibi gaudia,
Quos afflet ignes, indica,
Ab ore cujus purior
Torrens voluptas effluit?

O Virginales Nuptiae,
Per quas caro fit spiritus!
O dulce vinclum, jungitur
Quo mens Deo, menti Deus!

Sit laus Patri, Ieus Filio:
Sit par tibi laus, Spiritus,
Divina qui perennibus
Firmas sigillis faedera. Amen.

Hymnus.
O Brigida, cui sacrum
Amoris expers improbi
Pectus, suis adoribus
Sanctus perussit Spiritus.

Non te voluptas dulcibus
Fallax venenis mollit,
Solas amantem persequi
Coelestis agni nuptias.

Sic ille natus Virgine
Suo decore coeperat;
Ute jus ardens ignibus,
Mundana cuncta temnerea.

[267] *Hymns*, ed. M. Kelly in *Calendar of Irish Saints*, pp. 173–189.

Beat cui nunc coelium
Inter canentium choros,
Coelo licet perennibus
Sponsi potiri gaudiis.

Aeterne sponse Virginum,
Jesu, tibi sit Gloria
Cum Patre, cumque Spiritu,
In sempiterna saecula. Amen.
In Inventione SS. Patricii Brigidae et Columbae
Ad Laudes.
Sacrae, Patrici, Brigida,
Columba, dcus Insulae,
Ossa pie dum colimus,
Votis favete supplicum.

Non illa, quanquam tristibus
Imum redacta in pulverem
Dudum sepulcris lateant,
Divina virtus deserit.

Sed sancta praesenti fovet
Impletque templa numine,
Sed et future spiritus
Post secla servat gloriae.

Hinc ille qui nostris latet
Cinis sub aris conditus,
Aegris medetur efficax,
Torquet fugatque Daemones.

Sit summa, Christe, laus tibi,
Venture Judex saeculi,
Cum Patre et almo Spiritu,
In saeculorum saecula. Amen.

From the Antiphonary of Bangor, published by Muratori from the original MS in the Ambrosian Library, Milan. They belong to the seventh century, the most ancient liturgical monuments of the Irish Church; hymns sung, probably by St. Columbanus, and by all the great saints who studied in Bangor.

To St. Bridget

Alta audit eta erga toto mundo micantia
Brigitae lctissimae in Christo coruscantia.
Caeli conscendit culmina caritatis dementia
Desponsata sanctissima Domino ab infantia.
Electa apta alumna Patricii cum prudential
Factis erat clarissima Spiritus Sancti cum gratia,
Gestis fulsit gratissima arca et urna aurea
Haec quae habebat insita sancta sanctorum omnis.
Jhesus unxit vestimina illius myrra et cassia.
Kastaque thuris pectora timiatis incendia.

Lucerna lucis lucida resplendens in ecclesia
Mira civitas consita supra montis cacuminal.
Nota et apostolic signa atque prodigia
Optima egit opera secundum evangelia.
Parte? Pascebat admina pauperum de inopia
Quantum sanabat mobida corporrrra quiescentia.
Regina austri addita Salomonis scientia
Sancta adepta opima Patricii patrocinia.
Tuebatur tutissima Rebecca verecundis,
Virginitate florida custodiebat praecordia.
Christum in Dei dextera collaudat cum Victoria
Ymnizans voce consona coelorum inter millia.
Zona praecinxit latera sancta cum stola aurea
Et nunc manet per aeterna saecula in aula regia
Quae consedit in cathedra cum matre Maria.
Item, Christus in nostra insula quae vocatur beatissima.

Appendix F: References to San Ffraid in Martyrologies and Lives of the Saints

The Martyrology of Donegal[268]

Introduction[269]

The Martyrology of Donegal was written in the Franciscan Convent of Donegal on the 19th of April 1630. It was written by Michael O'Clery, chief of the celebrated antiquaries known by the name of "the four masters." He was a lay brother of the convent of the Order of St. Francis of Strict Observance in Donegal; and was called Michael in religion, although his original baptismal name was "Tadhg-ant-deibhe" or Teige of the Mountain. Sources from which this volume is derived:

1. Metrical Calendar, or Festilogium, of Aengus Ceile De, commonly called the Felire of Aengus. Its was a monk, first of Chain-idnech, and then of Tamhlacht, now Tallaght, near Dublin, which latter monastery was then under the government of St. Maolruain, its bishop and abbot. The martyrology of Aengus must be referred to the beginning of the ninth century.

2. The Martyrology of Tallach, contained in the Book of Leinster, a MS of the twelfh century, preserved in the Library of Trinity College, Dublin, but has disappeared from that volume. Author found 11 missing leaves in documents located in St. Isidore's convent in Rome.

3. The Calendar of Cashel, no longer known to exist, but then available to Michael O'Clery.

4. The Martyrology of Maolmuire (or Marianus) O'Gormain. Composed in the times of Gelasius, archbishop of Armagh, or about AD 1167. Taken from the Martyrology of Tallaght.

5. The Book of Hymns: two ancient copies exist, one in the library of St. Isidore's at Rome; the other in the library of Trinity College, Dublin.

6. Poems.

7. The Poem of S. Caimin of Condeire, describes virtues of each saint in four-line stanzas. St. Cuiman flourished in the middle of the seventh century.

8. The Naoinsheanchus, or poetical history of the saints of Ireland. Authorship attributed to Sellach; early in the 10th century.

9. The poem of St. Moling of Ferus.

10. Minor poems.

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[268] *The Martyrology of the Saints of Ireland*, trans. J. O'Donovan, eds. J. Todd and W. Reeves (Dublin: Irish Archaeological and Celtic Society, 1864).

[269] *The Martyrology of the Saints of Ireland*, trans. J. O'Donovan, eds. J. Todd and W. Reeves, p. xiii.

11. The Lorien of Columcille

12. Biblioteque, including Book of Lecan, Leabhas huidhre, and the Book of Mac Carthaigh Riabhach, also called the Book of Lismore.

13. Lives of Saints, including Brigid, 111, 331.

    Although the Martyrology of Donegal is not an original authentic course of history, it is nevertheless of inestimable value.

1.D. Kalendis Februarii 1.[270]

Brighit, Virgin, abbess of Cill-dara. She was of the race of Eochaidh Finnfuathairt, son of Feidhlimidh Reschtmhar, son of Tuathal Teachtmhar, monarch of Erinn. Broiccaeach, daughter of Dallbronach, son of Aedh Meamhair, was her mother, and she was the sister of Ultan of Ard-Breccain, and it was Ultan that collected the virtues and miracles of Brighit together and who commanded his disciple Brogan to put them into poetry, as is evident in the Book of Hymns, i.e., "The victorious Brighit did not love," &c.

When Moling was returning from the king of Erinn, after obtaining the remission of the Borumha from Fionnachta, king of Erinn, the people of the king were seized with regret, and they followed him to kill him. When Moling saw this he had recourse to the protection of the saints, and he implored Brighit first, and said: "O Brighit, bless our path," &e.

A very ancient old book of vellum, in which is found the Martyrology of Maelruain of Tanihlacht and the saints of the same name, and the names of many of the mothers of the saints, states that Brighit was following the manners and the life which the holy Mary, mother of Jesus had.

It was this Brighit, too, that did not take her mind or her attention from the Lord for the space of one hour at any time, but was constantly mentioning Him, and ever constantly thinking of Him, as is evident in her own life, and also in the life of Saint Brenainn, bishop of Cluain-fearta. She was very hospitable and very charitable to guests and to needy people. She was humble, and attended to the herding of sheep and early rising, as her life proves, and as Cuimin of Coindeire states in the poem whose beginning is, "Patrick of the fort of Macha loved," &e. Thus he says: —

> "The blessed Brighit loved
> Constant piety, which was not prescribed;
> Sheep-herding and early rising—
> Hospitality towards men of virtues."

She spent indeed 74 years diligently serving the Lord, performing signs and miracles, curing every disease, and sickness in general, as is evident in her own life, until she yielded her spirit, after having completed seventy-four years, as we have said before, A.D> 525, and she was buried at Dun, in one tomb with Patrick, where Colum Cille was afterwards interred. The life of Ciaran of Clunin states, chap. 47, that the Order of Brighit was [one] of the eight Orders that were in Erinn.

Derlughach, Abbess of Cill-dara [next] after Brighit.

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[270] *The Martyrology of the Saints of Ireland*, trans. J. O'Donovan, eds. J. Todd and W. Reeves, p. 34–37.

7.C. Septimo Idus Februarii 7.[271]

Brighit, daughter of Domma.

6.B. Pridie Nonas Marth. 6.[272]

The Daughters of Leinin, of Cill-inghen-Leinin, in Ui-Briuin Rionhtach, in Cill-na-ningen in Ui-Briuin-Cualann; they were the children of Leinin, son of Gannchu, i.e., the sisters of Brighit, daughter of Leinin, as shall be said presently.

Odhran.

Brighit, daughter of Leinin, at Cill-ingen-Leinin in Ui-Briuin-Cualann. She was of the race of Aenghus, son of Mogh Nuadhat.

9.E. Septimo Idum Marth. 9.[273]

Brighit, of Moin-Miolain.

Brighit.

21.A. Duodecimo Kal. Jun11. 21.[274]

Brighit, daughter of Diomman.

30.G. Pridie Kal. Octobris. 30. [275]

Brighit.

12. A. Pridie Idus Novembris 12.[276]

Brigh, Virgin. Duthracht. They are of Cill-muine.

Table of the Martyrology[277]

Brighit, virgin, abbess, of Cill-dara [daughter of Broicsech; her mother was Brocercha,], 1 Feb.
Brighit, daughter of Domma, 7 Feb.
Brigit, daughter of Lenin, 6 Mar.
Brighit, of Moin-miolain, 9 Mar.
Brighit, 9 Mar.

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[271] *The Martyrology of the Saints of Ireland*, trans. J. O'Donovan, eds. J. Todd and W. Reeves, p. 41,

[272] *The Martyrology of the Saints of Ireland*, trans. J. O'Donovan, eds. J. Todd and W. Reeves,p. 65.

[273] *The Martyrology of the Saints of Ireland*, trans. J. O'Donovan, eds. J. Todd and W. Reeves, p. 73.

[274] *The Martyrology of the Saints of Ireland*, trans. J. O'Donovan, eds. J. Todd and W. Reeves, p. 135.

[275] *The Martyrology of the Saints of Ireland*, trans. J. O'Donovan, eds. J. Todd and W. Reeves, p. 203.

[276] *The Martyrology of the Saints of Ireland*, trans. J. O'Donovan, eds. J. Todd and W. Reeves, p. 305.

[277] *The Martyrology of the Saints of Ireland*, trans. J. O'Donovan, eds. J. Todd and W. Reeves, p. 369.

Brighit, daughter of Diomman, 21 May.
Brighit, virgin, of Cill-muine, 30 Sept.
Brigh, of Cairbre, 12 Nov.

Martyrology of Gorman

January 7.G.[278]

Bríg…

Note: of Coipre.

February. 1.D.[279]

On February's white calends Brigit the chief virgin of Ireland (and) Der-lugdach: let us mention with them Pionius, Ignatius, Ephrem, Beoin, dear-white Cinne, Airennan whom we supplicate, Cattan the abstinent, stern warrior, (and) my Celloc the holy-slender.

Notes:
Der-lugdach was abbess of Kildare after Brigit.
Beoin and Cinne are virgins.
Airennan is Oidab's (leg. Fodub's?) great-grandson.
Cattan is Biáán's tutor.

February 7.C.[280]

…chaste Brigit…

Note: daughter of Domma.

March 9.E. [281]

…two Brigits with vigorous fame…

Note: Brigit of Móin Miláin is one of the twain.

May 21.A.[282]

…Brigit

Note: Dimman's daughter.

September 30.G.[283]

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[278] *Martyrology of Gorman*, ed. W. Stokes, pp. 10–11.

[279] *Martyrology of Gorman*, ed. W. Stokes, pp. 28–29.

[280] *Martyrology of Gorman*, ed. W. Stokes, pp. 32–33.

[281] *Martyrology of Gorman*, ed. W. Stokes, pp. 50–51.

[282] *Martyrology of Gorman*, ed. W. Stokes, pp. 100–101.

…On the same dear day Brigit…

November 12.A.[284]

Aemilianus and Eusebius…pure-coloured Duthracht,and gracious Bríg with a (conventual) rule….

Note: Bríg and Duthracht, from Cell Muine were they.

Lives of Saints, from the Book of Lismore

This gloss of the text is offered to present a full range of the miracles attributed to St Brigid of Kildare.[285]

1144. Now a multitude of holy and righteous men fulfilled this commandment of virginity, even as the holy maiden fulfilled it, for whom there is a festival and commemoration on the occurrence of this season and time, even Sancta Brigida, virge Dei, that is Saint Brigit, the virgin of the Lord of the Elements.

1148. Festal day of the holy Brigit on the calends of February as regards the day of the solar month.

1151. Here are some of the miracles of Brigit and her genealogy: Brigit, daughter of Dubthach, son of Demre, son of Bresal, of the sept of Echaid Find Fuarthnairt.

1154. Dubtach bought a bondmaid named Broisech, daughter of Dallbronach of Dal Conchobair in the south of Bregia. He joined himself in wedlock to the bondmaid and she became with child. Dubtach's consort was jealous and threatened to leave with her dowry unless he sold the bondmaid. He didn't want to sell her.

1161. He and the bondmaid went in a chariot to the house of a wizard named Maithgen. The wizard says "marvelous will be the child in her womb, her like will not be on earth." Dubtach says his wife compels him to sell her. The wizard says through grace of prophecy: "The see of thy wife shall serve the seed of the bondmaid, for the bondmaid will bring forth a daughter conspicuous, radiant, who will shine like a sun among the stars of heaven." Dubtach was thankful, for until then no daughter had been born to him.

1174. They both gave thanks. Two bishops of the Britons named Mel and Melchu came from Scotland to prophesy of her and to bless her. The consort moped. They said: "Sell the bondmaid, do not sell the offspring." That's what he did. A wizard went from Tirconnell to the house of the poet and bought the bondmaid, but not the offspring and the wizard went home with her.

1192. The wizard had a feast and the king of Conaille came; the king's wife had a stillborn child. The next morning, when the bondmaid went at sunrise with a vessel full of milk in her hand, and when she put one of her two footsteps over the threshold of the house, the other foot being inside, then she brought forth the daughter, even Saint Brigid.

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[283] *Martyrology of Gorman*, ed. W. Stokes, pp. 186–187.

[284] *Martyrology of Gorman*, ed. W. Stokes, pp. 216–217.

[285] *Lives of Saints from the Book of Lismore*, ed. W. Stokes, pp. 182–200.

The maidservants washed Saint Brigit with the milk. That was in accordance with her merit. She was taken to the queen's dead son, and when the girl's breath came to the son, he arose out of death.

1205. The wizard went to Connaught. Mother was from Connaught; father of Munster.

1207. While mother out, house caught fire. Neighbors came, the fire "appeared not, but they said that the girl was full of the grace of the holy spirit."

1212. Wizard sitting with mother; cowdung was ablaze before the girl; when they stretched out their hands to it, the fire appeared not.

1215. Wizard was sleeping, he saw three clerics in shining garments who poured oil on the girl's head and baptized her. Those were three angels; the third angel said to the wizard that her name was Sancta Brigida.

1220. The infant was crying and she said, "Meum eril hoc," that is, this will be mine. Wizard affirms this. When the indwellers heard this, they ordered the wizard out of the country, so he went to his own patrimony.

1225. Brigid reared on different food; could not consume unclean food, threw up the wizard's food. Then he entrusted a red-eared cow to give milk separately to Brigit, milked by a faithful woman.

1231. Everything she set her hand to increased. She tended sheep, satisfied birds, fed poor. She went to see Dubthach; he learned of her miracles and came to meet her joyfully. They go to Offaly with her nurse. Nurse got sick. Brigit asked ale from Baethehu, he refused. She went to a well, filled her vessel, blessed it, and it became ale, gave it to the nurse, who was healed. As for the place where it was refused, they got none.

1244. Dubtach went on a journey, left his daughter with his pigs. Robbers carried off two boars. Dubtach took them back, asked her and she said, "count them." None was missing.

1250. Noble guest came to Dubtach's house, five pieces of bacon given to Brigit to be boiled. Hungry hound came and Brigit gave him the fifth piece of bacon and then another. Dubtach asks about whether it's done and all of it is there. She says, "Count them." All the pieces were there. The guest says what she had done. Guests did not eat it, they were unworthy, and the meat was dealt out to the poor and needy.

1260. A certain faithful woman invited Brigit to go with her into Moy Liffy for a gathering of the Synod of Leinster. The Bishop says: This is the Mary whom I beheld;' and the whole host blessed Saint Brigit. Wherefore Brigit is henceforth called the "Mary of the Gael."

1266. Brigit went to visit her mother in bondage. Her mother was sick at a mountain-dary,having 12 cows, and she is collecting butter. Brigit set the dairy to rights, dividing the butter into 12 parts, with the 13th part larger than the others and given to the poor and guests. She said: Christ was in the person of every faithful guest. The neatherd marveled and went to the wizard. He didn't tattle about her giving away butter, but said she was taking care of the cattle. Wizard and his wife came to take away the butter. There was only one and a half churnings worth. Brigit prayed and started bringing butter out of the kitchen and filled all the hampers. The wizard and his wife marveled. They gave her the butter and the kine, but she asked instead for her mother's freedom. They gave her the mother's freedom and also the kine.

1306. Brigit gave the kine to the poor and the needy; she baptized the wizard and he stayed in Brigit's company.

1308. Brigit went with her mother to her father's house. She gave his property to the poor and needy. He was displeased and wanted to sell her to the king of Leinster. Outside the castle, he left her in the chariot and she promptly gave his sword to a leper. She explained this to her father and the king and she was saved from bondage.

1332. A man asked for Brigit as his wife. Brigit refused and plucked out her eye. Dubtach and her brothers promised that she should go to no husband but one she would like.

1341. Brigit and other virgins went to take the veil from Mishop Mel in Telcha Mide. A fiery pillar rose from her head to the roof-ridge of the church. The form of ordaining a bishop was read out over Brigit. For this reason, the men of Ireland give Episcopal honor to Brigit's successor. She was born on the 8th of the month; died in the 88th year, was consecrated with 8 virgins, according to the 8 beautitudes which she fulfilled and she chose the beatitude of mercy.

1355. Near Easter once she wanted to brew ale for the many churches near her. There was scarcity of corn and Brigit had only one sieve of malt and only two troughs as vessels. They made ale and gave 17 churches ale from Maundy Thursday to Low Sunday.

1363. A leper came to Brigit to ask for a cow. She said: would you like the cow or to be healed? He'd rather be healed, so she healed him and he stayed to serve her.

1368. A nun in Brigit's household was sick and wanted milk; there wasn't a cow so Brigit turned water into milk and the nun was healed.

1372. When Brigit was famous, two blind men of the Birtons and a leper came to be healed. Brigit told them to wait and they complained that they were being stalled off so she healed them immediately.

1377. After Easter, Brigit asked her maidens if they still had the leavings of the Easter ale. They came in with a pail of water and she changed the water into choice ale and gave it to Bishop Mel and to the virgins.

1383. Brigit's eyes became diseased. Bishop Mel suggested they go to a doctor. Brigit blamed her illness on Bishop Mel's disobedience, but agreed to go. She fell out of the chariot and hit her head on a stone and the blood gushed out. The blood healed two dumb women and also Brigit.

1394. The king of Teffia came for a banquet; a man broke the king's covered vessel. Bishop Mel tried to beg for the man's life, but all he got was the broken pieces. Brigit fixed it and the captive was released.

1409. Brigit went to see another virgin, Brigit, daughter of Conaille. The water put over Brigit's feet healed another virgin who was sick in the house. At dinner Brigit saw the devil on the table. Brigit forced it to admit it was here as a companion of one of the virgins due to her sloth and negligence. Brigit urged her to repent and was healed of the demon.

1424. A woman brought Brigit a hamper of apples. Lepers asked for them and Brigit told the woman to give the apples to them. She refused. Brigit was annoyed and she cursed the trees and when the woman got home, her barn was empty and the trees were barren thenceforth.

1431. Brigit went to Teffia with great hosts and two lepers behind her had a dispute. When they attempted to smite each other, their limbs were withered. They repented and Brigit healed them.

1435. Brigit went to Teffia for Easter; prioress of the church couldn't get her maidens to minister to the old men and weak and feeble persons there; Brigit did service to them and they were healed.

1442. Brigit went to a house and healed a dumb lad.

1449. There was an assembly of men in Teltown to deal with the parentage of a child; she forced the mother to tell the truth and Bishop Bron was saved from ignominy.

1460. A man came to Brigit to consecrate his house; she pointed out he was a heathen and Bishop Bron baptized him.

1467. A man from the south of Bregia brought his mother on his back to Brigit to be healed; he put her on Brigit's shadow and when the shadow touched her, she was whole.

1470. They saw Patrick coming to them. Lassair said: what shall we do for this multitude? There is only one sheep, 12 loaves, and a little milk. Brigit said that the preaching of God's word would be sufficient. After the preaching, food was brought it it was more than enough, with more left at the end than was there at the beginning.

1478. A man came to Brigit to ask for a spell to make his wife love him. Brigit blessed water and the woman became intensely devoted to him.

1488. A woman came to Brigit to beg for food; Brigit gave her girdle to her saying it would heal disease and illness and the woman used it thereafter to make her livelihood.

1492. During high tide, friends visited Brigit; while they were out, robbers carried off their oxen; the river Liffey rose against them so they put their clothes on the horns of the oxen; the oxen turned back to where Brigit was.

1497. Brigit went to see Patrick; she fell asleep while he was preaching because she had a vision.

1501. Patrick asks to hear the vision. Four ploughs in the SE ploughed the whole island; harvest ripened before sowing was done, white garments on the sowers and ploughmen. 4 other ploughs in the N sewed oats, black garments.

1509. Patrick said: first four ploughs are 1 and thou, who sow the 4 books of the Gospel. 4 ploughs in the north are false teachers and liars who will overturn our work.

1515. Two people carrying a tub of water asked Brigit for a blessing. The tub fell, but did not break or lose a drop because of the blessing. Then Patrick said, deal out the water to Armagh and Airhir and all the diseases and ailments in the land were healed.

1520. Brigit went to Fir Rois to release a captive. The king refused; but Brigit finds a way to free him.

1527. Brigit went to Sliab Fuait, where the congregations were being harried by a madman. Brigit asked the madman to preach to them. He says he can't refuse because of her mercy.

1533. The madman preaches: Love the Lord, O Nun! And every one will love thee. Revere the Lord and everyone will revere thee. Pray unto the Lord, and everyone will pray unto thee.

1536. Her father asked Brigit to go to the King of Leinster to ask for transfer of ownership of the sword he had previously given him. Brigit asked for the sword and also freedom for a slave who promised to become a Christian.

1543. King said: why? Brigit said: you will get excellent children, kingship for your sons, and heaven for yourself. He said: I don't want the kingdom of heaven or kingship for my sons. Give me a long life and victory in battle over Conn's Half.

1550. Okay, said Brigit and it was so. After he died, invaders were driven off when the Leinstermen carried his body to the battle.

1554. Brigit was with her sheep in Curragh and saw Nindid the scholar. Why are you unsedate, she said. He said: o nun, I am going to heaven. She said: happy is he that goes the journey; pray that it will be easy for me to go. He said: I have no leisure. The gates of heaven are open and they may close. If you are hindering me, pray for me and I'll pray for you.

1566. She recited the paternoster with him and he was pious thereafter. He gave her sacrifice and communion when she was dying. After that the comradeship of the world's sons of reading is with Brigit, and the Lord gives them, through Brigit's prayer, every perfect good that they ask.

1570. Brigit asked Bishop Mel to mark out her city. When they came to Kildare, Ailill son of Dunlang was coming with a hundred horseloads of peeled rods. Maidens came from Brigit to ask for some of the rods and he refused. The horses were struck down and they didn't arise until he offered the rods to Brigit. These were used to build her great house in Kildare, and Ailill fed the wrights and paid them wages. As a blessing, she left the kingship of Leinster to Ailill until doomsday.

1579. Two lepers asked Brigit alms. There was nothing but a cow, but she gave it to them. One of the lepers gave thanks; the other was ungrateful. Brigit asked the humble leper to stay and sent the other one away with the cow. The haughty one could not drive the cow by himself and had to come back for the other leper and he blamed Brigit. The two lepers left with the cow; the river rose up and drowned the haughty one.

1595. The queen of Crimthan offered Brigit a silver chain. Brigit gave it to the virgins, who stored it rather than giving it to the poor. Brigit gave the chain to a leper, making the virgins angry. Brigit tells them to go to the church, where they will find the chain.

1606. The king of Leinster came to Brigit on Easter day. At dinner, Brigit's leper announced that he wouldn't eat until he was given the king's armor, spears, shield and sword. Brigit sent a messenger after the king. The king couldn't get anywhere, so he took the armor and gave it to the leper.

1614. Brigt saw a man passing her with salt on his back. She said: what's that? He said: Stones. She said: They shall be stones. The same man came back. This time he told her they were salt and so they were.

1620. Two lepers came to Brigit to be healed. She had one leper wash the other and he was cleansed. She then asked him to wash the other one and he refused. So she returned his leprosy.

1630. When Brigit went to the bishop to receive the Sacrement, she seemed to see a he-goat's head in the chalice and refused it. The bishop inquired and learned that the altar boy had stolen and eaten a goat. He did penance.

1637. Guests came to Brigit; she ordered a man of her household to go to the sea and catch fish. He speared a seal, which dragged him out to sea and to Britain, and marooned him on a rock. The fishers of Britain gave him a boat and he returned, found his seal, and took it to Brigit. Everyone was amazed.

1651. A nun in Brigit's community craved salt, so Brigit prayed and turned stones to salt, curing the nun.

1653. A churl of Brigit's household was chopping wood and he killed a pet fox belonging to the king of Leinster. The king seized the churl. Brigit ordered the fox to come out of the wood and played for them and for the king.

1659. Bishops came to Brigit and she had nothing to give them, the cows having been milked twice. The cows came to be milked a third time.

1662. Brigit had a band of reapers reaping. A rainstorm poured on the plain of Liffey, but not on her field.

1664. She blessed the blind table-faced man and gave his eyes to him.

1665. Brigit went to the widow who killed the calf of her only cow for Brigit and burnt the beam of her loom thereunder. The beam was whole on the morning, and the cow was licking her calf.

1668. Brigit and Bishop Eirc were in Leinster. She said: Your people are fighting. A cleric in his household said: Not likely. Brigid sained his eyes and he recanted and repented.

1673. Brigit was herding sheep and a robber took seven. When the herd was counted, they were all there.

1676. A man of Brigit's household made mead for the king of Leinster. When the king got there, it was gone, but Brigit restored it.

1680. Seven bishops found Brigit; she asked her cook if she had food. She had none, and Brigit was ashamed and prayed. The angels told her to milk the cows for the third time that day. They filled the tubs, all the other vessels and there was a lake thereof, whence Loch in Ais, the 'lake of milk.'

1689: God granted Brigit's requests. She wanted to satisfy the poor, expel hardships, spare every miserable man. She was bashful, modest, gentle, humble, sage, and harmonious. She never washed her hands, feet, or head among men. She never looked at the face of a man. She blushed when she spoke. She was abstinent, innocent, prayerful, and patient. She was a temple. She was simple.

1703. She helped people in trouble and in danger, drove off pestilence, quelled anger and storms at sea. She is the prophetess of Christ: she is the Queen of the South: she is the Mary of the Gael.

1706. Colomb Cille made this hymn for Brigit because he was caught in a storm and Brigit saved him.

1709. Brocan Cloen may have made the hymn.

1711. Three of Brigit's household may have made the hymn when they went to Rome. After going home with a host, they met a student who warned them that the host killed his guests. They were given poison in ale, they praised Brigit, drank the ale, and it did them no harm.

1728. Brennain may have made this hymn. He asked Brigit why the monster in the sea honored Brigit more than other monks. She said that he should confess first and then she would. They did and he agreed with the monster.

1738. Ultan of Ard Brecain may have made this hymn. The hymn was made in the time of the two sons of Aed Slaine.

> Brigit, excellent woman, a flame golden, delightful,
> May she the sun dazzling, splendid guide us to the eternal kingdom!
> May Brigit save us beyond throngs of demons!
> May she break before us the battles of every disease!
> May she destroy within us our flesh's taxes,
> The branch with blossoms, the mother of Jesus!
> The true virgin, dear, with vast dignity;
> May I be safe always, with my saint of Leinster!
> One of the columns of the kingdom with Patrick the pre-eminent,
> The vesture over liga, the Queen of Queens!
> Let our bodies after old age be in sackcloth:
> With her grace may Brigit rain on us, free us!

1755. The lord wrought many miracles for Brigit.

1759. After founding and helping cells and churches, altars, miracles and marvels, charity and mercy, her ending days came. Nindid Pure-hand came from Rome. He gave communion and sacrifice to Brigit, and sent her spirit to heaven. Her relics are on earth. Her soul is in heaven.

1772. Through Brigit's intercession, may we deserve mercy and unity.

Life and Miracles of Saint Modwenna

The following text is a gloss of the sections in the Life of St Modwenna that mention St Brigid.[286]

Ch. 6: The eight virgins who gathered under her and of Luger the widow's son. St. Patrick tells St. Modwenna that before he will consecrate her, she should gather other virgins, and among them Brigid and Orbila were outstanding.

Ch. 7: Luge founds the church of Roosky in Cooley among Brigid's kindred.

Ch. 10: St. Modwenna puts Orbila in charge, one of the eight along with Brigid who first joined her.

Ch. 20: St. Modwenna decides to go to Britain, taking with her Luge, Athea, and Brigid. They set out, but found no ships. An angel marks out the land in a circle and turns it into

[286] Geoffrey of Burton, *Life and Miracles of St Modwenna*, pp. 91–111.

an island. He raises the island and moves it to Britain, setting it down and securing it to the shore at a castle called Deganwy (Note: Caernarvonshire). It stands there to this day. Modwenna builds a church there and arranges for Brigid and Luge to remain there while she and Athea journey to England.

Ch. 21: St. Modwenna's popularity made her impatient, so she decided to return to Ireland, leaving Athea in England and Luge in Britain, and taking Brigid with her. She restored her monastery of Killevy and then she gave permission for Brigid to found the famous monastery of Kildare, gathering many virgins.

Ch. 25: St. Modwenna visits Brigid's monastery and bestows garments.

Ch. 26: Brigid gives St. Modwenna a vessel of silver; St. Modwenna is too virtuous to accept it, so she hides it among Brigid's things; when Brigid finds it she throws it in the Liffey, where it travels until it came to Carlingford Lough, where Bishop Ronan found it and gave it to Modwenna. Each one tries to outdo the other in virtuous behavior.

Appendix F: Locations Dedicated to San Ffraid

The following gazetteers present names, locations, and alternate names for sites associated with San Ffraid in Wales.

National Gazetteer of Wales Place Name Index[287]

PLACE NAME	GRID	COUNTY	ALTERNATIVE PLACE NAME
Llansanffraid	SN5167	Cardiganshire	Llansantffraed
Llansanffraid	SO1223	Brecknockshire	Llansantffraed
Llansanffraid Cwmteuddwr	SN9667	Radnorshire	Llansantffraed-Cwmdeuddwr Cwmteuddwr
Llansanffraid Glan Conwy	SH8075	Denbighshire	Glanconwy
Llansanffraid Glynceiriog	SJ2038	Denbighshire	Glyn Ceiriog
Llansanffraid Gwynllwg	ST2982	Monmouthshire	St. Brides Wentlooge St. Bride's Wentlooge
Llansanffraid-ar-Elái	ST0977	Glamorgan	St. Brides-super-Ely St. Bride's-super-Ely
Llansanffraid-yn-Elfael	SO0954	Radnorshire	Llansantffraed-in-Elvel Llansantffraed-in-Elwell Llansantffraed-in-Elwel
Llansantffraed	SN5167	Cardiganshire	Llansanffraid
Llansantffraed	SO1223	Brecknockshire	Llansanffraid
Llansantffraed-Cwmdeuddwr	SN9667	Radnorshire	Llansanffraid Cwmteuddwr Cwmteuddwr
Llansantffraed-in-Elvel	SO0954	Radnorshire	Llansanffraid-yn-Elfael Llansantffraed-in-Elwell Llansantffraed-in-Elwel
Llansantffraid ym Mechain	SJ2220	Montgomeryshire	Llansantffraid-ym-Mechain
Sain Ffraid	SM7910	Pembrokeshire	Sain Ffred St. Brides
Sain Ffred	SM7910	Pembrokeshire	Sain Ffraid St. Brides
St. Brides	SM7910	Pembrokeshire	Sain Ffraid, Sain Ffred
St. Brides Major	SS8974	Glamorgan	Saint-y-brid
St. Brides Netherwent	ST4289	Monmouthshire	Saint-y-brid St. Bride's Netherwent

[287] *Place Name Index, National Gazetteer of Wales* <http://homepage.ntlworld.com/geogdata/ngw/l.htm> [Accessed 21 October 2012].

A Gazetteer of Welsh Place Names[288]

Name	Alternate Name	Descriptors	County	National Grid Ref.
Afon Braint			Môn	23/4567 or SH4567
Llansanffraid		plwyf, pentref	Ceridigion	22/5167 or SN5178
Llansanffraid		plwyf, pentref	Brycheiniog	32/1223 or SO1223
Llansanffraid		eglwys, plas, Llan-arth Fawr	Mynwy	32/3510 or SO3510
Llansanffraid-ar-Elái	St. Bride's-super-Ely	plwyf, pentref	Morgannwg	31/0977 or ST0977
Llansanffraid-ar-Ogwr	St. Bride's Minor	plwyf, pentref	Morgannwg	21/9184 or SS 9184
Llansanffraid Cwmteuddwr		plwyf, pentref	Maesd.	22/9667 or SN9667
Llansanffraid Deuddwr	Deythur	plwyf	Tfn.	33/2118 or SJ2118
Llansanffraid Glan Conwy	Glanconwy	plwyf, pentref	Dinb.	23/8076 or SH8076
Llansanffraid Glynceiriog	Glyn Ceiriog	plwyf, pentref	Dinbych	33/2038 or SJ2038
Llansanffraid Glyndyfrdwy		plwyf	Meir.	33/0944 or SJ2038
Llansanffraid Gwynllŵg	St. Bride's Wentlloog	plwyf, pentref	Mynwy	31/2982 or ST2982
Llansanffraid-ym-Mechain	*nid* Ll. Pool	plwyf, pentref	Trefaldwyn	33/2120 or SJ2120
Llansanfraid-yn-Elfael	Llansantffraed-in-Elwell	plwyf, pentref	Maesyfed	22/9954 or SN9954
Sain Ffred	St. Brides, Ffraid	plwyf, eglwys	Pembrokeshire	12/8010 or SM8010
Saint-y-brid	St. Brides Major	plwyf, pentref	Morgannwg	21/8974 or SS8974
Saint-y-brid	St. Bride's Netherwent	Ardal, eglwys, Caer-went	Mynwy	31/4289 or ST4289

[288] Davies, Elwyn, *A Gazetteer of Welsh Place Names*, 3rd edn (Caerdydd: Gwasg Prifysgol Cymru, 1967, reprinted 1975).

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