*The Saints Pools - A hidden gem*

This year the longest day on the 21st of June falls on a Tuesday. It will doubtless, for most people be a normal day of commuting to work, harvesting in fields or busying oneself at home. Yet for over a thousand years and more this was always the busiest day of the whole year in Llanpumsaint, a day when people arrived in their hundreds, bent on visiting the five pools of the local Saints in the hope of being healed from the ailments of the day, be it rheumatism, toothache, sore eyes or whatever. Even as late as 1710 Archdeacon Tennison noted during his church Visitation, that between two and three hundred souls came to view and bathe in the sacred pools , one for each of the five saints – Gwyn, Gwynno, Gwynoro, Ceitho , Celynin.

It had been a long tradition, well established before the Saints arrived to found a church here in the 5th century, on the site of the Druids temple. Farm names like Derimysg and Pantydriw confirm a druidic connection and clues to Pre-Christian practices. Even today those brave enough to venture down the steep ravine, will find that on the shortest day of the year, the sun at noon shines directly down the waterfall above the pools. Here we have a local example to mirror similar significant celestial events at Stonehenge, Carnac in Brittany, Egypt, and further afield on the American continent. Christianity adopted the site and dedicated the pools to its own heroes.

Where exactly are these pools and how do I get there, you ask? At the top of Coopers hill as you leave Llanpumsaint, between Bronallt bungalow on the right and Gwarcwm , a hundred yards or so on your left, pause to peer into the steep ravine below. Yes! A good hundred feet below, oblivious to our traffic dominated modern busy world, you enter the tranquil past age. If feeling unwell, just go down, no appointment is necessary, there’s no waiting list, no prescriptions to collect and no cancellations; go directly down, bathe in the sacred waters of the Cerwyn to be cured at once. A word of warning though, the descent is treacherous.

All this leads one to plea. In this 21st century when we are encouraged to respect our past and persuade visitors to do likewise, why not secure a footpath with suitable signs and an Information Board so that all could savour this hidden gem of an experience. There must be many locals who’ve visited Devil’s Bridge and Bettws-y-coed and yet be unaware of the Saints Pools and Cwm Cerwyn. What about it?

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