**Place names along the river Gwili. 1**

Our oldest place names are those of our rivers and streams. Locally, there is no doubt that the name of the river Gwili was being uttered around here centuries before anyone thought of names like Llanpumsaint, Cynwil or Bronwydd. Derived from the Brythonic tongue, from which Welsh descended, it means a pleasantly flowing river. That is an apt description of its journey all the way from Brechfa forest through Llanllawddog down to Llanpumsaint, then bending towards Cynwil, and out towards Bronwydd. Aber means the mouth of a river, either where it flows into the sea as at Aberconwy or Aberteify (Cardigan), or where it joins another larger river as at Aberhonddu (Brecon) where the Honddu flows into the Wye. So the very name Abergwili tells us that this is where the Gwili ends its journey and is swallowed by the Tywi.

Over the centuries this river has lent its name to numerous settlements along that picturesque route, of which Nantcwmgwili in Llanllawddog is a good example. Two historical mansion estates at Glangwili (16th century) near Llanllawddog church and Cwmgwili (15th century) below Bronwydd proudly adopted the name. The woolen industry thrived in the 19th century in the shape of factories at Cwmgwili Mill in Llanpumsaint and Gwili Lan and Cwmgwili factory at Bronwydd. Gwili Terrace was built in the village and a shop opened at Gwili Vale opposite Llanpumsaint church. Half a mile to the north Uwchgwili declared it was above the flood plain.

Half a mile eastwards and upriver from the village lay Glangwili farm a very old estate dating back to Elizabethan times, now sadly deprived of its name. Out westwards the Gwili flows past Tredarren into a hidden valley before swallowing the Duad near old Cynwil station, where more names are added – Dolgwili (meadow of ) and Tirgwili (land of). Then down in Bronwydd another Glangwili farm overlooks the meandering river through that village.

Those smaller rivers and streams which flow into the Gwili are remembered in the names of farms and other dwellings - Ystradcorrwg (the vale of the Corrwg) above Llanllawddog – Lanboncath, (beside the Boncath (buzzard) stream, towards the end of its journey from Alltwalis) - Gerwyn Villa and the recent Ty Nant Cerwyn echoe the name of the wildly rushing Cerwyn tumbling down from the Saints pools - Glanyrynys mill and the new Glanyrynys estate in Llanpumsaint (Ynys is the name of the steam which flows past both towards the Gwili) – Blaenduad (source of..) and Cwmduad (the valley of...) reveal the path of the Duad, which means a dark water. It flows through a lot of peat!. Throughout time people have worshiped and respected their rivers and the fact that so many modern dwellings continue to attract the name of the Gwili, proves the point. Bryngwili (hill above ..), Swn y Gwili (sound of..), Dyffryn Gwili (valley of..), Berllan Gwili (orchard of..), are all modern dwellings proudly proclaiming their allegiance. When British Rail gave up, Gwili Rail arrived to breathe new life into the valley, and then the ruling authorities finally became tired of that tiresome mouthful – West Wales General Hospital Carmarthen – and echoed at last the two words uttered in waiting rooms – Glangwili Hospital.

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