**Place Names – their value. 2**

Trying to interpret the meaning of place names is very often a difficult and complex study. Nevertheless it can often prove to be vital to understanding and untangling our past history. On a local level it can deepen our knowledge and enhance our understanding of what happened long ago. There are contradictions, misconceptions and the unexplainable, but one must always persevere. That’s part of the challenge!

A word of advice to those newcomers in our midst, never cast aside an old Welsh place name in favour of the simple or easily pronounced, for you may be burying vital historical evidence. So many clues can be lost in this way, echoes which went back way before written evidence existed or survived. Place names can be a rare link to what went on centuries ago.

The Ogham Stone at the front of Llanpumsaint churchyard remains our earliest visible connection to the arrival of Christianity in the area. The inscriptions are in Latin and Ogham, the later being an ancient Irish script taking us back to the 5th and 6th centuries. Here lies the proof that the Irish had settled in this part of West Wales at that time. This fact can be confirmed by the evidence of place names. Midway between Bronwydd and Llanpumsaint the road for Nebo turns off left, and the old name for this junction was Cnwc-y-pistyll. At the other end of the parish there used to be a dwelling in the Ffynnonhenri area called Pencnwc, and there is still a farm in Abergwili parish also named Pencnwc. Cnwc comes from the Irish word Cnoc which means a hillock.(how many of you have flown to Knock airport in Ireland?) So Cnwcypistyll means the water spout on the hillock, still an apt description for that particular road junction. Similarly Pencnwc means the head or apex of the hillock.

Back now to the 8thcentury when Prince Caredig conquered a large piece of Wales which still bears his name –Ceredigion. Then in 730 his followers extended their conquest much further south as far as the river Tywi. Princes and armies came and went over the centuries as tales of the conflicts melted into oblivion, but place names stayed to divulge vital clues. Alltgaredig (Caredig’s wood) Farm in Llanpumsaint. Glyncaredig (Caredig’s dingle) Farm in Rhydargaeau and even the village of Nantgaredig (Caredig’s stream) way down by the Tywi, all bear witness that once upon a time they all belonged to that all conquering Prince. So there you are, both the Irish and the Cardis have been to Llanpumsaint before! *Arwyn 2015*