**Around Graig hill or the hamlet of Nant Brechfa**

A tiny hamlet is centred on the junction of the Llanpumsaint road from Bronwydd with the B4381 towards Pontarsais. Not much here you think but 200 years ago more people lived around this spot than in Bronwydd itself. This hamlet of Nant Brechfa, christened after the stream which then flows under the bridge at Saint Celynin church to join the Gwili near White Water canoe centre. Back at the junction the house name plate reminds us that here stood the Clifford Arms (one of four in Bronwydd one time). It quenched the thirst of many travellers into the 1920s. The pub lasted much longer than the tollgate placed here in the early 1840s; Rebecca’s daughters soon removed that intrusion on local life.

One character came to dominate this meeting of roads during the latter half of the 20th century. Jennie Graig knew all the gossip going and if unsure of some fact thought nothing of stopping a car to enquire if someone had come out of hospital or was it true that so and so----?. Though she hardly ever visited Llanpumsaint she knew more about the goings-on there than most local. It became normal practice for the inquisitive to stop here for an up-date on the latest news or to check a current rumour. Jennie would know! In order to maintain this public service, more reliable than radio and juicier than the Journal, she kept her front door permanently open, all day, summer and winter, sun or rain, closing it only at nightfall. Not for her the police warnings of thieves and odd- bods, none ever ventured near the Graig. Amazingly her one and only intruder in sixty years was a frightened sheep, under pursuit from an errant dog. The poor thing burst through the door into her living room, to lodge itself in front of Jennie’s coal fire where lunch was being prepared, “Get out! My chips are burning”.

Above the two houses and way above the rocky escarpment behind them lies a 2000 year old sunlight Iron Age hill settlement, strategically dominating the whole valley. Pantglas castle, a Christmas pudding shaped mound, visible through the trees in winter, is situated at the back end of this fort on the edge of the forest. It enjoys a panoramic vista over the area. .Its history is shrouded in a lost age, but it could well have been an outpost to defend Dyfed or Widigada (which included Llanpumsaint) in the era of much menace. Parciau, situated beyond the impressive iron entrance gates, and once the home of an airline pilot, could well be associated with an early Celtic Christian settlement. The shape of its garden, in a prime sunny spot, with a vista directly down the valley, way beyond Bronwydd village, are all tell tale clues to some authentic past. Until the 20th century a standing stone near the hayshed, proving Parciau was on a ley- line, adds evidence Just up the hill again, inside the new agricultural entrance to Pantglas fields, a strong spring of water flows constantly out of the hillside. Only recently I discovered that this water supply was a holy well, dedicated to one of our foremost Saint s, - Teilo. During the Middle Ages it all lay in LlanTeiloPumsaint. Who’d like a bottle of holy water?

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