



*The ship on the museum's tower*

## Nefyn Churches

**Eglwys Santes Fair (church of St. Mary) (Llŷn Maritime Museum) can be seen clearly from the B4417 (Nefyn – Pistyll) on the eastern periphery of Nefyn.**

**Eglwys Dewi Sant (church of St. David) up from the Groes crossroads on the B4417 (Nefyn – Morfa Nefyn)**

**Nefyn was known at one time as Llanfair yn Nefyn (St Mary's in Nefyn). This links two periods of time, that of Saintess Nyfain who established a church here originally and a period when the church was consecrated to Mary.**

Nyfain was one of a number of daughters of Brychan Brycheiniog, and sister of Tudwen (Llandudwen).

Although there is considerable mediaeval evidence of life in Nefyn the history of the church from this period is scarce. Gruffudd ap Cyfan bestowed the church and land to the Blackfriars from Haughmond Priory. Giraldus Cambrensis and Archbishop Baldwin stayed here overnight on Palm Sunday 1188.

Hyde-Hall visited Nefyn in 1809-11 but all he said about the church was that it was a rectangular shape and in acceptable condition. It had a pulpit inside, dated 1718.

A decade later, about 1825 St. Mary's Church was built of local stone and rubble, and improved in 1856, it is said with donations from generous distant gentry.

A new church was built in 1903/4 in a more modern part of Nefyn. The people from the grander houses of Nefyn didn't want to be worshipping in the older part of town.

St David's Church was designed by the architect John Douglas of Chester, and it was given a chancel and transept in 1903/4, on land donated by Lord Newborough, Glynllifon.

**Ffynnon Fair (Well of Mary) –** In Stryd y Ffynnon (street of the well), although there is some doubt whether this is its original location. The residents of Nefyn were supplied with water from here, since 1868 – the year the structure around it was built, and possibly earlier. It belongs to Nefyn Corporation.

**Ffynnon Cybi Bach (Well of Cybi, the lesser) (SH 30552040) –** This is on the western side of Ty'n Coed but has by now disappeared to all intents and purposes. There is no information about it. Cybi didn't establish a church in Llŷn but there are two rocks known as Carreg Gybi (rock + Cybi) near Aberdaron and one on Enlli / Bardsey Island. Over the border in Eifonydd, there is a Ffynnon Gybi in Llanygi.



## Pilgrimages in Llŷn



There was a monastery in Nefyn in the Middle Ages, so the pilgrims were sure to call here and rest on their journey.

For a pilgrim, experiences on the way and the end of the journey are more important than the starting point. Pilgrimage existed before the Christian period, and we can imagine that people would pay tribute to chieftains buried in dolmens, cairns and possibly under standing stones. They would visit at a particular time of the year, especially the summer solstice and when there were significant movements of the constellations.

Water in certain wells had particular healing powers or the gift of foretelling the future, and they became holy, because of either belief or superstition.

Gradually, with the spread of Christianity, the early Christians adopted the practices and traditions of the pagan community.

Superstition, legend, fear and naivety ruled people's lives, and they feared the uncertainty and fragility of life. They believed that illness and disability were a punishment for sins.

But the Christian priests, the 'early saints' came amongst them and offered hope. By visiting particular places and drinking water from a holy well, people believed their illnesses would be cured and their sins forgiven. If they punished themselves on the journey and were given penance by a priest, that would promote recovery.

It was easier to get their lives in order by severing the link with their community and isolating themselves for a while, to pray.

That was the attraction of the island on the horizon seen by Cadfan from his cell in Tywyn, Meirionnydd, and he managed to persuade his followers to withdraw

to Ynys Enlli – Bardsey Island. They undertook missionary work as they went on their journey and established 'llannau' communities here and there, more often than not within reach of wells.

A monastic cloister developed on the slopes of the mountain, Mynydd Anelog, priests were soon attracted to the far end of Llŷn, and Ynys Enlli developed as a holy place.

The influence of Cadfan's followers spread beyond Llŷn, and Beuno and his followers also came to have a great influence on the communities of Llŷn.

The churches and their saints, the holy wells and signs of early Christianity to be seen in Llŷn these days are evidence of these pilgrims in the early centuries, and their history continues to enrich the area.

## The Pilgrims Northern Route



The early pilgrims would congregate in Clynnog Fawr, (SH 41464970) to prepare for the tiring journey over the Eifl mountains to Aberdaron before crossing the Swnt (sound) to Ynys Enlli – Bardsey Island.

Clynnog Church was established by Beuno. He was a saint who had a great influence on early Christianity in north-west Wales. He had many followers and one of them was Aelhaearn, who established Llanaelhaearn Church. People would call in there and drink from the well, Ffynnon Aelhaearn before climbing the pass at Bwlch yr Eifl and then descending to Pistyll Church.

Another route would be to follow the edges of the mountain, Moel Carnguwch, and visit Carnguwch Church, one of the 'llan' establishments set up by Beuno.

The pilgrims who went through the pass of Bwlch yr Eifl (Yr Eifl Pass) could rest near the top at Eisteddfa – the seating place – a field now part of Pistyll farm.



That farm didn't have to pay a tithe, because it offered shelter for weary travellers.

Pistyll Church was also established by Beuno, and even now you can sense the atmosphere of the early centuries in the church.

On the hill, on leaving the church and heading towards Nefyn, there stands a stone with a cross on it. It may have been a site for prayer, or that the stone simply showed the way for the pilgrims on their journey.

There was a monastery in Llanfair in Nefyn in the Middle Ages where Giraldus Cambrensis and Bishop Baldwin stayed overnight on Palm Sunday 1188. Nefyn has Stryd y Mynach (street of the monk) and Llŷn Maritime Museum is housed in the old church. Saintess Nefyn was commemorated here originally, but it was later consecrated to Mary because of the influence of the Marian Cult. In Stryd y Ffynnon (well street), Ffynnon Fair is located (well of Mary), between the two churches of Nefyn.

The pilgrims could follow the coast from Nefyn to Aberdaron. They would go past Tudweiliog Church and the well Ffynnon Cwyfan then on to Llangwnnadr Church. From there, through Bodferin parish, the site of Bodferin Church, and then on to Aberdaron.

Alternately they could go past the well at *Ffynnon Gybi Bach* (well of Cybi, the lesser) at the foot of Garn Boduan, proceed towards Carn Fadrun and visit Llandudwen Church and its healing well. Then past Bryncroes Church – and on to Aberdaron and St. Hywyn's Church.

## Attractions for Pilgrims



The pilgrims could have come ashore easily in one of the creeks in this area, in boats similar to coracles. It was important to them to do missionary work on their journey, and then they could follow the paths leading to the Aberdaron area and through Anelog and Uwchmynydd.

They would wait at the far end of Llŷn before crossing the dangerous Swnt over the sea to Enlli, and usually had

to wait for favourable weather to get across. But there would be plenty of attractions in the area to deepen their religious experiences before they crossed the sea. Enlli was regarded as the Rome of Wales, and three visits to Enlli were equal to one visit to Rome.

The earliest pilgrims had found a particular place to retreat to on the slopes of the mountain in Anelog, and they established a clas there. This is probably the location of Capel Anelog (SH 15592745), one of the early lost chapels of Llŷn. This is where the stones, Cerrig Anelog, were discovered, evidence that Christianity had reached this area in the C5/6th. On one of the stones commemorates the priest Senacus and a 'host of brothers' and maybe many of the frail pilgrims who failed to complete the journey to Enlli are amongst them.

The river Afon Saint flows from Anelog to Aberdaron. There would be an opportunity to drink the medicinal waters of Ffynnon Saint

(SH 16542671) and meditate at the altar of Allor Hywyn. This was the large flat stone near the well, destroyed when the bridge nearby was built. Pilgrims would visit Ffynnon Fair (well + Mary) (SH 13952519) in Uwchmynydd, at the edge of the Swnt. There they would try to find the marks of the hooves of Ceffyl Mair (horse + Mary) and the marks of Mary's fingers in the rocks, before drinking the holy water and returning up the steps, Grisiau Mair.

The chapel of Capel Mair (SH 13922534) was on the flat land between Mynydd Mawr and Mynydd Gwyddel and there bodies of the dead were kept, waiting for good weather to be taken to Enlli for burial.

Accommodation was available at Gegin Fawr in Aberdaron or Cwrt, Uwchmynydd – a farm that did not have to pay the tithe because pilgrims were accommodated there.

When the weather allowed, boats would wait for people at Porth Meudwy (SH 16302552). This name (meudwy = hermit) and Bodermyd nearby refer to pilgrims and the time they spent living as hermits.

## Clynnog Church (SH 414649706)







**Directions: On the A499 (Caernarfon – Pwllheli).**  
**Turn off the main road, into Clynnog Fawr village. A prominent building in the middle of the village.**

Ffynnon Beuno (Well of Beuno): (SH 41333945) Follow the road (Wales Coastal Path) leading south from the village.

Beuno is the principal saint of north-west Wales. He was born in Powys in the C7th and he probably went northwards as a missionary, where he met Gwenffrewi in Holywell. Then he followed the Roman roads west to Segontium. He established himself in Clynnog and became the main religious leader in north-west Wales. He established a number of churches in Anglesey, amongst them Trefdraeth and Aberffraw, and some of his churches in Llŷn include Pistyll, Carnguwch, Botwnnog and the old church of Pwllheli in Deneio.

Close to the Church at Clynnog Fawr in Arfon is the well, Ffynnon Beuno (SH 41333945) where epileptic people and others suffering from disease would wash. The person would then sleep the night on rushes on Beuno's grave, in front of the altar in the Capel Beuno (chapel of Beuno). Before leaving, the sufferer would be expected to give four pennies as an offering in a chest (Cyff Beuno) and leave white stones in the church to prove they had been there. They would be allowed to scrape dust off one of the relics as a souvenir of their visit. People would mix the dust in water and drink it, to treat eye ailments.

Thomas Pennant called in at Clynnog Church and in front of the altar saw 'a feather bed on which a poor paralytic from Meirionethshire had lain the whole night'.

There are a number of other references in Clynnog to Beuno.

Clynnog Church was burnt during attacks by the Vikings in the Middle Ages in 978, and again a century or two later by the Normans.

In the cemetery there is a sundial from the C11th. Here also is the grave of Eben Fardd (1802 – 63) schoolmaster, bard and prominent character in the literary world.

There was a college in the Church in the C15th –one of six in Wales.

## References to Beuno



*Cyff Beuno*

There are a number of references to Beuno in Clynnog, which proves he was a prominent early Christian.

**Gored Beuno** (the weir of Beuno) – We are told in 'Cyff Beuno' (by Eben Fardd) that large rocks could be seen at times in Porth Clynnog and that it was possible to walk at low tide over to Clynnog Fechan in Anglesey. Beuno would go there to preach, and his book of sermons once fell into the water. The book was saved by a curlew that placed it on a rock, safe out of the reach of the tide. As a reward, the curlew was given the ability to hide its nest so that no one could find the eggs. The monks built a round enclosure of stone on the sea shore, to catch fish by keeping them there as the tide went out.

**Nod Beuno** (the mark of Beuno) : Calves would be born in Clynnog with a slit in their ears. These were very special animals, with Beuno's mark on them. They were taken to the church on Trinity Sunday and presented to the wardens, then sold and the money put in the chest, Cyff Beuno (the chest of Beuno)

**Beuno's Lick** (the lick of Beuno) – A mark on the backs of animals that were in particularly good condition.

**Maen Beuno** (stone of Beuno) – A Latin stone with the marks of Beuno's fingers on it.

It was probably moved to the riverside at Glan Beuno, Bontnewydd (SH 48106010). Then it was taken to Beddgelert before being returned to Clynnog Church in 1919.

**Carreg Fedd Beuno** (The Gravestone of Beuno) - This stone is decorated with a cross and can be seen at the western end of the church.

This is said to be the stone on Beuno's grave in the chapel of Capel Beuno. His grave was destroyed in 1856.



**Bugeiliaid Beuno** (the shepherds of Beuno) – There is a reference to them in the legend of St. Digwg. She was found by the shepherds with her head having been cut off, and they took her body to Beuno to be restored. A well sprang up on land at Pennarth, Brynaerau, where her blood fell.

**Ynys yr Arch** (the island of the coffin) - When Beuno died, his body was taken to the Bwlchderwin area. The retinue discussed where they should bury him, and it became a heated argument – either in Clynnog, Nefyn or on the island of Enlli /Bardsey.

Those carrying the coffin could not decide, and they fell asleep. When they awoke there were three identical coffins, so everyone got what they wanted, although the body, it is said, went to Clynnog!

This is the location of the old School at Ynys yr Arch. (SH 45604740)

## Eglwys Llanaelhaearn (SH 370448)



**Directions:** From the B4417 (Llanaelhaearn – Nefyn), turn eastwards into Llanaelhaearn village.

**From the A499 (Pwllheli – Caernarfon) in Llanaelhaearn village turn up the hill opposite Caffi'r Eifl.**

According to legend, Beuno was travelling near the foot of the Eifl mountains and saw what seemed to be a stranger being attacked. The man's body was cut up, and when Beuno got closer he saw it was one of his own followers. He put the body back together, but part of the forehead was missing. Beuno put a piece of iron in that gap and healed him completely. He was given the name Aelhaearn ('Iron brow') and he established a church where the attack happened. That is the site of Llanaelhaearn church.

The church is in the shape of a cross, and the oldest part of it was built in the C12th, the rest in the C16/17th and the high belfry in 1744.

In the church, there stands a stone from the C6th bearing the inscription 'ALITORVS ELMETIACO / HIC IACET' to show where Alitorius was buried – a man who moved here from Elmet in northern England.

At the edge of the cemetery path is a stone commemorating Melitorius, a person we know nothing else about, and the stone probably stands in its original location.

According to Nash-Williams, having these persons' names on the stones gives us a glimpse of the tribal divisions and the politics of that time.

Ffynnon Aelhaearn (the well of Aelhaearn) is about 200m from the church, on the B4417 road. The walls and roof are in good condition, having been restored by Llŷn AONB. Inside are stone benches around the well itself. People wanting to be cured would sit there, and when the water in the well was disturbed they would bathe in it.

## Carnguwch and Llithfaen Churches



**Carnguwch Churchm** (SH 37434182)

**Directions:** From Llithfaen: Take the unclassified road off the B4417 running south-eastwards (1km to the east of Llithfaen village) running along the foot of Moel Carnguwch and follow a path for 1.3km, running southwards and down to the church.

**From Llwyndyrus:** Near Yr Hen Felin, close to Llwyndyrus chapel (SH 3738441010) take the farm road to Penfras Uchaf and then the path northwards.

**(To reach Llwyndyrus: take the A499 (Y Ffôr – Llanaelhaearn) and within 1.3km of Y Ffôr follow the signs for Llwyndyrus.**

**Or follow the signs for Llwyndyrus from the unclassified road (Llithfaen – Pentreuchaf).)**

**Llithfaen Church** (SH 36004324)

**Directions:** Take the B4417 (Llanaelhaearn – Nefyn) to the site of the building (SH 3561243167) which is in a small valley 400m east of Llithfaen village.



Carnguwch Church is one of a number of churches established by Beuno in the C7th. There was a church here in 1284 according to the Valuation of Norwich.

When Hyde-Hall visited Carnguwch between 1809 and 1811 he saw the building was in the shape of a cross and in very poor condition. But in 1882 the present church was built following the designs of the architect Henry Kennedy. The eastern window dates from the C15/16th.

Some of the prominent features are the two storey pulpit and seats marked with Ld.N. (Lord Newborough) and '1815 I LL' (Isaac Lloyd, Plas Trallwm).

The church had a dish to hold water from a holy well (nearby) and the water would be sprayed with a special brush – 'Ysgub y Cwhwfan' over everyone who went to the service.

The church has by now been deconsecrated and the Friends of Carnguwch Church look after the site.

There was originally a round cemetery here, with a valuable collection of gravestone inscriptions in the form of 'englynion' - strict metre poetry.

The village of Llithfaen developed in the C19th when the Eifl quarries opened, but the villagers were unwilling to go to Carnguwch to worship. Services were held at the school to begin with, before St John's Church was built in the village. The architect was Henry Kennedy. Carnguwch Church closed soon after this church was opened in 1882. St. John's Church eventually closed, and was turned into a house.

## **Pistyll Church (SH 32844232)**



**Directions: Take the B4417 (Llanaelhaearn – Nefyn). There are signs 0.6km east of Pistyll village, showing the way to the church, towards the sea.**

This is a very prominent church established by Beuno and on the pilgrims' route. The name 'Pistibus' appears in the Valuation of Norwich in 1284.

The western end of the building dates from that time or earlier, and the eastern end from the C15th. The building has retained its Mediaeval simplicity – benches, bare walls, holes in the roof timbers for ropes, no electricity, straw and rushes on the floor. On the northern wall there are signs of a reddish colour, which suggests a mural. The font dates from the same period – the late C12th.

In the eastern end of the northern wall is the Lepers' Window. People with leprosy were not allowed to mix with the other pilgrims and would have to stand outside and watch through this window to see the altar and the sacrament being administered.

Approaching Pistyll from the north-east from the direction of the Eifl Mountains is Eisteddfa – a field where pilgrims would probably rest. It was listed in 1841. There was once a Cae Hosbis (field of hospice), with a hospital or accommodation in it, and Cae Hosbis Penlan where lepers would be looked after. There was a special garden there, for medicinal herbs.

There is mention that monks had diverted the stream to the pond near the church, as a fish pond. Opposite here was once a curved wall, part of the ruins of the monastery.

Pistyll farm, near the church, would not have to pay the tithe because it was expected to provide lodgings for pilgrims.

In the cemetery is the grave of Rupert Davies, who played the part of Maigret, the French detective on television in the early 1960s.

**Y Ffynnon Sanctaidd** (the sacred well) – This is to the left, towards the main road. (SH 32974225). There is no evidence of it being sacred.

**Croes Pistyll (the cross of Pistyll) –**  
(SH 31974182)

When going towards Nefyn, there is a stone inscribed with a cross that could be a site for prayer or to show pilgrims the way on their journey.





## Ceidio Church (SH 28773832)



**Directions:** Take the unclassified road towards the south-west from the crossroads near the Bryncynan inn where the B4412 (Morfa Nefyn- Bryncynan) meets the A497 (Nefyn – Pwllheli)

At Glanrhyd crossroads (SH 28303840) turn south, and the building is on the left.

Ceidio was the son of Madren, daughter of Gwrtheyrn Gwrtheneu (Vortigern) of Nant Gwrtheyrn. We don't know much about him or his mother, but it is said they escaped from Gwrtheyrn's castle when that caught fire and got away to Garn Fadrun.

In Oriol Plas Glyn y Weddw there's a marble carving portraying their escape. It was in Madryn mansion house previously, then in Glynllifon.

There was a church here in 1254, according to the Valuation of Norwich.

The building closed years ago. It is in private ownership.

## Boduan Church (SH 32523773)



The church is now closed and is private property.

**Directions:** Beside the A499 (Pwllheli – Nefyn) in Boduan. (Nefyn 6.5km, Pwllheli 6.5km)

The patron saint of Boduan is Buan and the parish and Garn Boduan are named after him. There is a cross to commemorate him at the roadside near the church, showing that he died on 4 August 595.

It was two sisters, Katherine and Elizabeth Wynne of Plas Boduan, who were responsible for giving land and contributing money to build the church in 1715. But it was in poor condition when Dr Johnson and Mrs Thrale – the daughter of Bodfel, Boduan – visited it in 1725. Edmund Hyde Hall made the same comments in 1809-11.

The present church was built in 1894. The architects of the Bangor diocese, Henry Kennedy and P S Gregory, used red sandstone from Cheshire. It cost over £5,000 to build it, a massive sum in those days, but the Wynn family of Plas Boduan were very generous and their influence is conspicuous in the Romanesque design. There is an entrance to the church from the gardens of Plas Boduan, with a private door and seats reserved for them.

Two of the seven bells came from the old church, and the sexton was given corn from the tithe 'Ysgub y Degwm' - the Tithe Sheaf as payment for ringing them.

Some of the Wynn family of Plas Boduan and Glynllifon are buried here.

In the church, there is a plaque to commemorate Sir John Wynn, 2nd Baronet Newborough (1701-73). He bought Enlli / Bardsey Island and ensured it remained the property of the Boduan / Glynllifon family for over two centuries. There is a window to commemorate Spencer Buckley Wynn (3rd Lord Newborough) (1803-88) who was buried on Enlli. Also the Cadfan window, to commemorate the island's first Abbot. The Bodfel family has another connection with Enlli in that John Wyn ap Huw was given the leasehold of Enlli for his services in bearing the banner of Edward IV, king of England, at the Battle of Norwich in 1549.



## Sacred Wells



*Ffynnon Beuno, Clynnog Fawr*

Along the Pilgrim Route from Clynnog, through Nefyn and on to the tip of Llŷn, there are a number of wells, and the pilgrims would certainly have visited them. They believed the wells had medicinal powers, and it's easy to imagine pilgrims trudging wearily towards them, and maybe not in the best of health. We know about some of the wells, but the secrets of the other ones have been lost for centuries.

The wells existed before Christianity arrived, and before the oldest church in Llŷn was established. They show where our pagan forefathers had their holy sites, and are evidence of Mediaeval beliefs and activities.

Our forefathers believed in the powers of the wells' waters, and that was tightly woven into their religious beliefs. But by now, because of the influence of Puritanism, this is seen as superstition. Ieuan Llŷn wrote a letter to Dafydd Ddu Eryri in 1796 where he describes Ffynnon Fair (well of Mary) Uwchmynydd and the mark of a horse's hoof in the rock. This is Ceffyl Mair (horse of Mary) and Ieuan Llŷn refers to this as one of the 'remnants of Papism'.

Ritual and ceremony were essential when drinking the water or bathing in it, as at Ffynnon Gybi and Ffynnon Beuno. Doctors understand why the Meddyges (Woman Doctor) of Bryn Canaid in Uwchmynydd used water from Ffynnon Saint and the watercress that grew in it to cure depression.

Wells were important in cultures and civilizations worldwide. The belief was that gods lived in wells and lakes, and they and rivers were worshipped. As a result, they were sites for giving offerings, places to hold ceremonies, and water was often believed to be medicinal. The rivers Dwyfor and Dwyfach were 'Duwies Fawr' (goddess + the great) and 'Duwies Fach' (goddess + the lesser).

There is a very interesting variety in the wells of Llŷn – in their names, their nature and characteristics.

It's worth noting how close to each other the wells and churches of the area are:

**Ffynnon Beuno** (well of Beuno), Clynnog (SH 41334945)

**Ffynnon Aelhaearn** (well of Aelhaearn), Llanaelhaearn (SH 38434462)

**Ffynnon Sanctaidd** (holy well), Carnguwch (SH 37564184)

**Ffynnon Sanctaidd Pistyll** (holy well of Pistyll), Pistyll (SH32974225)

**Ffynnon Fair** (well of St. Mary), Nefyn (SH 3072 4057)

### Local Sacred Wells



*Ffynnon Fair, Nefyn*

**Ffynnon Fair** (well of Mary), Nefyn SH 30724057

This is in Well Street, although there is some doubt whether this was the original location of the well. The





people of Nefyn got their water supply here, from at least 1868 – the year the structure around it was built. It belongs to Nefyn Corporation and was recently restored.

**Ffynnon Cybi Bach** (well of Cybi the lesser), Nefyn SH 30603965

This well is on the western side of Ty'n Coed but has by now disappeared to all intents and purposes. There is no information about it. St. Cybi didn't establish a church in Llŷn but there are two rocks known as Carreg Gybi near Aberdaron and one on Enlli / Bardsey Island. Over the border in Eifionydd, there is a Ffynnon Gybi well in Llangybi.

There are a number of holy wells on the Pilgrims' Trail in the area of Nefyn and the Eifl mountains.

**Ffynnon Aelhaearn** (well of Beuno), Clynnog Fawr SH 41334945

The well of Ffynnon Beuno is located about 250m south of Clynnog Church. It's protected by walls and has seating around it and steps leading down to the water. People with epilepsy or suffering from diseases would bathe in it and then go to the church for the rest of the treatment. There the patient would spread rushes on Beuno's grave, which is in front of the altar in Capel Beuno (chapel of Beuno) and sleep on it overnight. In the morning, they would be expected to give four pennies as an offering in a chest (Cyff Beuno) or leave white stones behind them in the church. They could also scrape dust off the church column and take it with them on their journey.

**Ffynnon Beuno** (well of Aelhaearn) Llanaelhaearn SH 38434462

The well of Ffynnon Aelhaearn is about 200m from the church, on the B4417. Its walls and roof are in good condition, having been restored by Llŷn AONB. Inside there are stone benches surrounding the well. People would sit there and when the water was disturbed they would bathe in it. This is where the residents of Llanaelhaearn would get their drinking water. There is a plaque on the well to show that it was roofed in 1900.

**Ffynnon Sanctaidd**, ( holy well) Carnguwch SH 37564184

This well, Ffynnon Sanctaidd (Holy Well) is to the east of the church. Its condition has deteriorated greatly but clear water can be seen flowing from it into the Erch River near Sarn y Geifr. There would have been walls around it and steps leading down to the water.

This was one of the main medicinal wells in the area, and could heal a variety of illnesses.

In Carnguwch Church, there was a vessel to hold water from this holy well, which would be scattered over everyone who came to the service, using a special brush called 'Ysgub y Cwhwfan'.

**Ffynnon Sanctaidd**, (holy well), Pistyll SH 32974225

This well (Ffynnon Sanctaidd) is found on the left on leaving the church heading towards the main road. It has been modernized and a plaque shows its location.

It would certainly have been an important well, but there is no evidence of its holiness.

## Early Christian Remains



*Early gravestone showing pilgrim's costume (Ynys Enlli)*

At the side of the road leading down from Pistyll to Nefyn stands the Pistyll Cross Stone (SH 31974182) and in Llanaelhaearn the Alitorius and Melitus Stones (SH 37004480).

This is evidence that Christianity had reached Llŷn by the end of the 5th, after the Romans had left Britain.



Christianity spread to Llŷn because of missionary work by the 'saints'. They were the missionary pilgrims who would travel about, setting up 'llan' (religious enclosures) establishments here and there. The holy wells and the early Christian stones are evidence of that. Not every stone commemorates Christians, and it was also usual to turn a site into a Christian one by placing an inscription and a cross on stones from an earlier age. Nash-Williams refers to these two groups of stones.

Gravestones are stones with an inscription on them, usually to commemorate a priest or man of high rank. The languages used were Latin or Ogam, and these stones tell us something about the lives of the generations of Early Christians. However there are no Ogam inscriptions in Llŷn.

In Llŷn there are a number of other stones from the early Christian period.

- **Cerrig Alitorius and Melitus** (Stones of Alitorius and Melitus), Llanaelhaearn Church (SH 387448)
- **Carreg Plas Bach** (stone of Plas Bach), Ynys Enlli (SH12072214)
- **Cerrig Anelog** (stones of Anelog), Aberdaron Church, (SH17332637)
- **Penprys Stones**, (stones of Penprys), Plas Glyn y Weddw, Llanbedrog, SH 328314)
- **Carreg Melus**, (stone of Melus), Llangian Churchyard (SH29562894)
- **Llannor Stone**, (stone of Llannor), Llannor Church (SH35393727)

Examples of stones with crosses inscribed on them are rare in Llŷn. These date from the C7th to the C9th, when Christianity had spread throughout Wales.

- **Carreg Groes Llanaelhaearn**, (cross stone of Llanaelhaearn) (SH 387448)
- **Carreg Croes Pistyll** (cross stone of Pistyll) (SH 31974182)
- **Carreg Hendy** (stone of Hendy), Ynys Enlli (SH12072214)
- **Carreg Croes Goch**, (red cross stone), Llangwnnadr

## Cerrig Alitorius and Melitus



**Directions:** *In the middle of Llanaelhaearn village. Off the A499 ('Caernarfon' to Pwllheli) – on the hill towards the west. Or on the B4417 (Llanaelhaearn to Nefyn) – towards the east.*

### Carreg Alitorius (stone of Alitorius)

This stone is in the northern wall of Llanaelhaearn Church and commemorates Alitorius, a man from Elmet (Eldred), in northern England. On it are the words:

ALITORVS / ELMETIACIO / HIC IACET

Alitorius was an early incomer, and this explains something about modern society and the politics of northern Britain in this age.

### Carreg Melitus (stone of Melitus)

The Melitus Stone is at the edge of the cemetery path and less than 1m high.

The only legible letters, running downwards, are:

ME\_LL\_TV, namely Melitus.

That's all the information we have.

### Carreg Croes, Llanaelhaearn (cross stone of Llanaelhaearn)

This stone is about 1m tall and in a wall near the south side of the church. When Nash-Williams recorded this, there was a cross on the stone. But by now it's not visible – worn away by the weather over the years, or hidden by lichen.



## Carreg Croes Pistyll (Pistyll Cross Stone)



**Directions:** *This is on the left, on the hill when leaving Pistyll for Nefyn (B4417), where there is a wide area of grassland. It's slightly higher up than the entrance for Tir Bach.*

**(Safety:** *Park in the layby higher up and take care.)*

**Carreg Croes Pistyll** (Pistyll cross stone) SH 31974182

The stone, inscribed with a cross, can be seen with a lintel above it at the base of the stone wall where there is a wide roadside verge. It's 0.3m across and is dated to the C 8th or C 9th. This could be a site for prayer or simply to guide pilgrims on their journey – The Pilgrims' Route to Enlli.



### Follow the Story

Find out more about sacred places by visiting Pistyll Church - A church of Celtic origins that was once used by pilgrims for worship on their way to Bardsey Island.