

Pilgrimages Past!

So where shall we revisit this month?! 2008 was our 'from Liverpool' pilgrimage which finished with Communion in the Lady Chapel, but I just can't find any photos of our days out...so onto 2009.

This was our Welsh Pilgrimage based at Bangor University, and having our final Communion in Bangor Cathedral.

We'll start with a challenge. Anyone remember what this piece of ironwork was required for? The answer is at the end of this article.

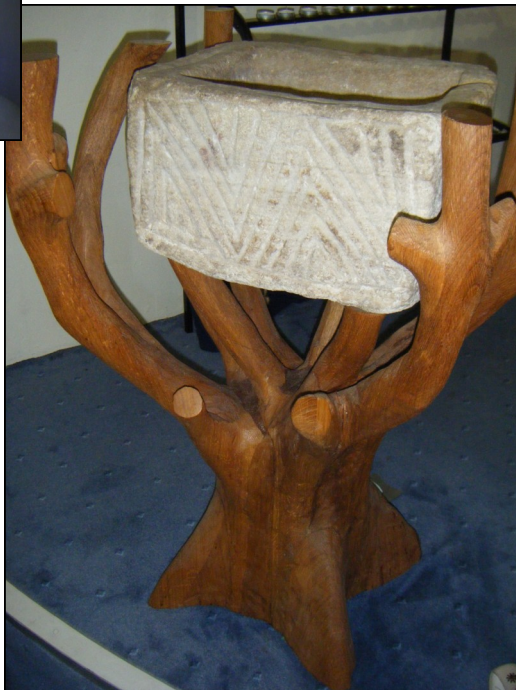
We took the scenic route to Bangor via Cholmondley where we visited the St Nicholas Chapel where the announcement of the engagement between Charles and Diana was made. Maureen and Graham re-enacted the scene.



Our second day was devoted to Anglesey. St Tysilio's is located on a tiny island connected by a narrow causeway to the mainland.



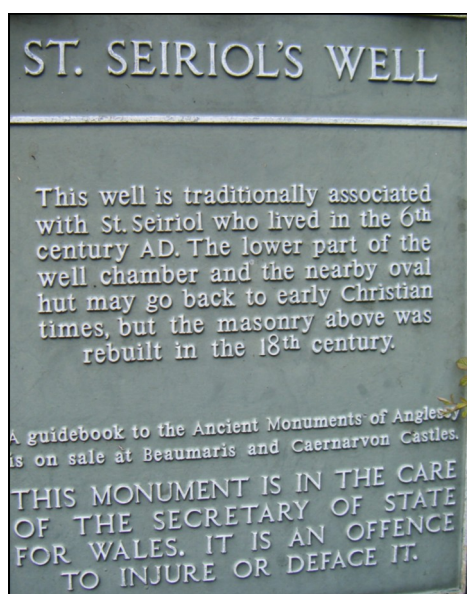
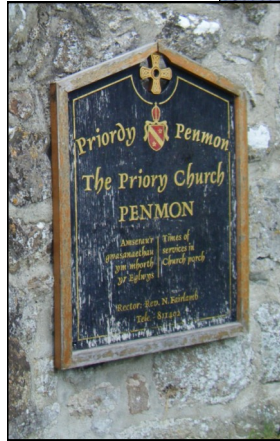
We were meant to be visiting Aberffraw, location of the 'Church in the Sea' but the weather and tail end of a hurricane prevented that. We visited St Maelog which had been extensively refurbished due to a generous legacy and it was beautifully done. I remember lunch being rather splendid and discovered that vegetable soup could have courgettes hidden in the ingredients, and ginger added a zing.



After lunch we headed off to Beaumaris to the Church of St Mary and St Nicholas where we were shown round by Neil Fairlamb.

He then took us to Penmon Priory which had lots of Celtic influences, and a dragon over the doorway.

Steps leading up to the altar often mean that a saint or relics are interred and it is here the remains of St Seiriol are located after being moved from Puffin Island in the middle ages.



On our third day we followed the Pilgrim Trail along the Llyn peninsula stopping at various places.

Our first stop was at the 'big church in a small village', St Beuno's church in Clynnog Fawr. This is where the mystery object was located.



Instructions had been given to Alison that we were to sit in silence in the chapel at Pistyll for fifteen minutes. I remember Alison being concerned that we wouldn't be able to stay quiet for the required length of time, but we settled into the chapel that was dimly lit by natural light through the small windows. The floor was covered with rushes containing fragrant herbs and the scent of the lavender became evident. As silence settled on our group the sounds of nature became audible, the wind through the trees, and the gurgle of water through the stream and fish pond. The graveyard contains one very smart headstone commemorating Rupert Davies, who

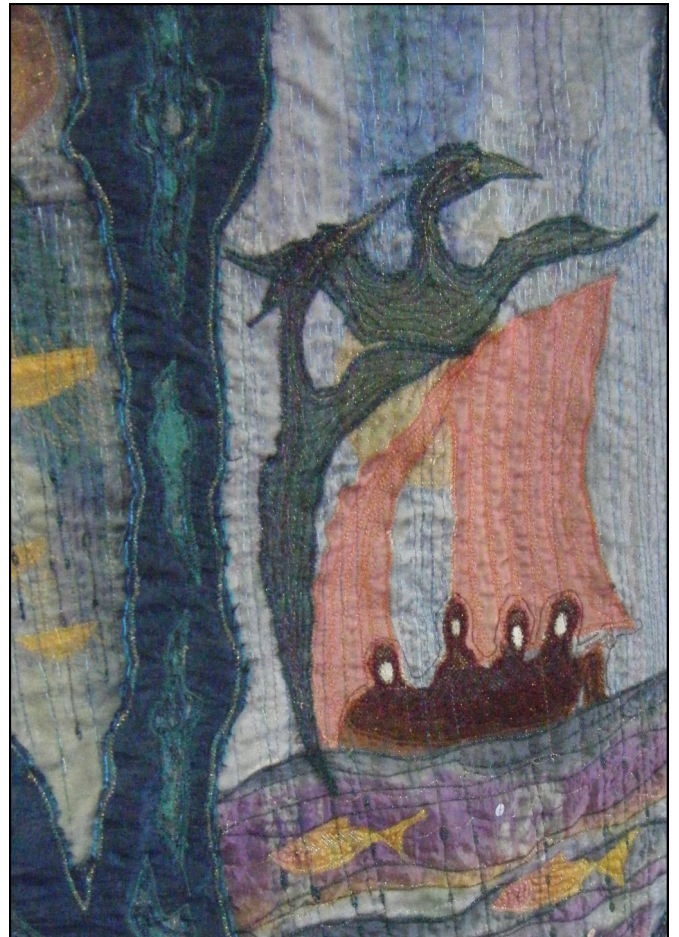


was one of the actors to portray 'Maigret'.

Pistyll is a very special chapel and yes, it made an impression!

At the end of the peninsula is Aberdaron and Saint Hywyn's church is literally at the seaside and sometime this century will probably be in the sea as erosion takes its toll on the land. Until then it is a sanctuary on

the pilgrim route. The history of the church building and the pilgrims was told to us and many of the features inside the church were explained. One feature which particularly appealed to us was the cairn of stones collected from the beach, many placed by visitors to supplement those of the parishioners. The stones are returned to the beach in the Autumn and the process starts again the following year. We added our stones to the cairn, and collected some to create a cairn back in Halewood. Aberdaron was the last place on the mainland before the pilgrims



set off for Bardsey Island. As the weather was grey and overcast, with gusting winds most of us were glad not to be planning any sailing!

We started the last day of our pilgrimage at Bangor Cathedral. The tour and talk was fascinating and showed us many 'hidden' features such as mice (five of them) and green men carved into the ends of choir stalls! The original site was settled about 525 AD and was enclosed with a woven fence called a 'Bangor'. Within this fence huts and cells housed Deiniol and his followers who were responsible spreading the word. 1870-1880 saw extensive restoration by Sir George Gilbert Scott (the tiles) and the most recent restoration, still ongoing, was begun in 1987.

