

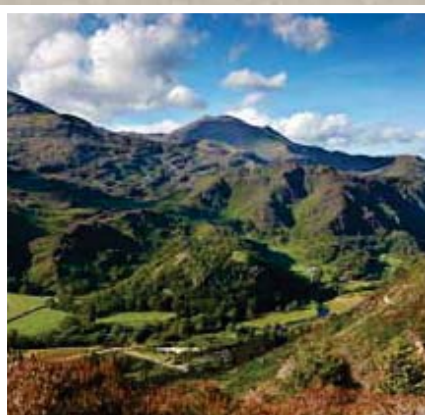


True myths

Just about every lake, rock and hill in Wales comes with its own legend attached. Many of the old stories go back for thousands of years, long before the idea of 'Wales' itself – back before the Normans, the Saxons, the Romans, deep into our Celtic past. Over the millennia, history and mythology have become impossible to separate – and that's the way we like it.

The Red Dragon Near Beddgelert, Snowdonia

The 5th-century King Vortigern was trying to build a castle at Dinas Emrys, but the walls kept mysteriously falling down. A boy wizard – Merlin – identified the problem: two dragons, one red and one white, fighting beneath the castle. The red dragon won, and became the symbol of Wales. nationaltrust.org.uk, visitsnowdonia.info



Southerndown Common Southerndown, Vale of Glamorgan

The Lord of Ogmore's daughter pleaded with him to allow local people a place to hunt deer. He agreed – but only an area as large as she could walk barefoot before dusk of that day. The area she walked is still common land today. visitthevale.com



Merlin's Oak Carmarthen

According to local legend, 'When Merlin's Oak shall tumble down, then shall fall Carmarthen Town.' In 1978 the last fragments of the tree were taken to the local museum and sure enough, shortly after, Carmarthen suffered its worst floods in living memory... carmarthenmuseum.com discovercarmarthenshire.com

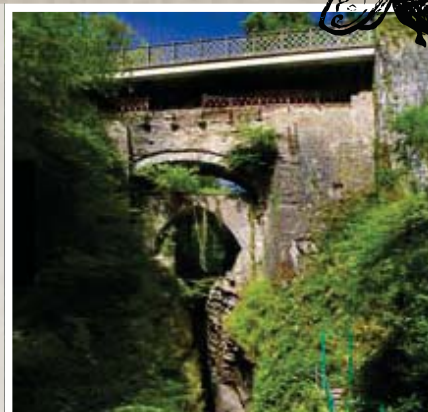
Nant Gwrtheyrn Near Pwllheli, Llŷn Peninsula

A game of pre-wedding hide-and-seek goes terribly wrong when the bride-to-be, Meinir, gets stuck inside an oak tree. Her skeleton is discovered 30 years later by heart-broken Rhys, and the couple still haunt the beach to this day. nantgwrtheyrn.org visitsnowdonia.info



Devil's Bridge Near Aberystwyth, Ceredigion

This dizzying ravine is spanned by three bridges, one on top of the other. The Devil supposedly built the 11th-century original in return for the first soul to cross it. He was tricked by an old woman who tossed a crust of bread onto the bridge, which her dog chased. rheidolrailway.co.uk discoverceredigion.co.uk





The Fairies of Pennard Pennard, Gower

The picturesque ruins of Pennard Castle were abandoned to wind-blown sand by around 1400, apparently caused by vengeful fairies.
visitswanseabay.com



Twm Siôn Cati Near Tregaron, Carmarthenshire

Born in Tregaron around 1530, Twm was a quick-witted rogue whose cave hideaway sits on a steep hillside overlooking the RSPB Gwenffrwd-Dinas nature reserve, which offers one of the most beautiful walks in Wales.
rspb.org.uk
discovercarmarthenshire.com



Lady of the Lake Black Mountain, Carmarthenshire

Llyn y Fan Fach is home to the beautiful Lady of the Lake, who married a local farm lad with a pre-nuptial clause that if he struck her three times, she would go straight back to her lake. The marriage ended in tears, but their sons went on to become the first of many generations of herbalists and healers, the Physicians of Myddfai.
myddfai.org
discovercarmarthenshire.com

Barclodiad y Gawres Near Rhosneigr, Isle of Anglesey

The stones that built this Neolithic burial chamber were supposedly dumped here by giants: its Welsh name means 'the giantess's apronful'.
cadw.wales.gov.uk, visitanglesey.co.uk



Afanc Near Betws-y-Coed, Snowdonia

The Afanc, a giant water-monster with evil supernatural powers, was captured and taken to Glaslyn, a lake high up on Snowdon, where he still lives.
eryri-npa.gov.uk, visitsnowdonia.info

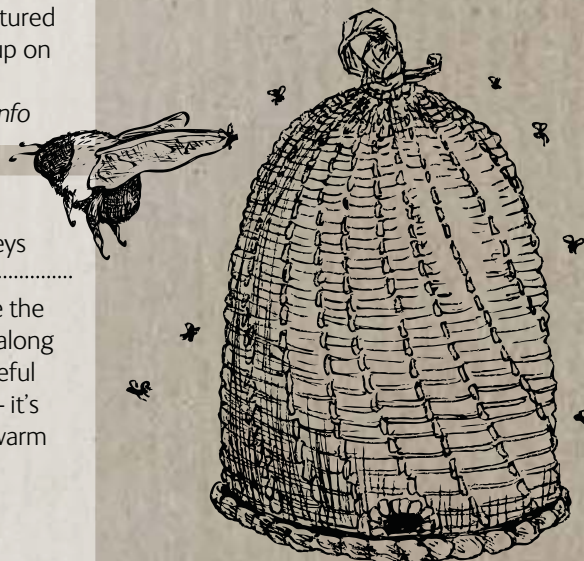


Angelystor Near Conwy, Snowdonia

Every Hallowe'en, the Angelystor appears at the 5,000-year-old yew in Llangernyw churchyard and, in a booming voice, announces the names of the parishioners who will die in the coming year.
churcheinwales.org.uk
visitsnowdonia.info

Twmbarlwm Near Cwmbran, South Wales Valleys

This Iron Age hill fort is said to be the grave of a giant, who was buried along with his horde of treasure. Be careful not to dig up the booty, though – it's said to be protected by a huge swarm of magical bees.
thevalleys.co.uk





i Rebel with a cause

Owain Glyndŵr is still the most iconic Welsh prince, leading a spectacular rebellion that briefly united Wales in the early 15th century. Owain was probably born at Sycharth, near Oswestry, in the 1350s. He studied law in London, and fought for the English king before retiring to his Welsh estates to live out his life peacefully. However, he was drawn into land disputes with a neighbouring baron, which by 1400 had grown into full-scale rebellion. His supporters proclaimed him Prince of Wales, and in 1404 Owain held his first Welsh parliament at Machynlleth. It wasn't to last. French support for the rebellion dried up, and Owain's armies were squeezed by economic blockades and ruthless counter-attacks. Owain Glyndŵr was never betrayed or captured: he vanished in 1412, and is believed to have lived out his life in Herefordshire.



Clockwise from top left: Memorial and standard of Llywelyn ap Gruffydd, Cilmeri; Pembroke Castle, Pembroke; Owain Glyndŵr memorial, Corwen; Royal St David's Golf Club, Harlech; Parliament House, Machynlleth; Prince Charles and the Duchess of Cornwall at Llwynywermod; Monnow Bridge, Monmouth; Llanddwyn Island, Isle of Anglesey.