

Take the tour: legendary Pembrokeshire

As you take a super-scenic road trip around Pembrokeshire, you'll encounter our prehistoric past, [our famous myths, legends and saints](#).

Here are some of the legends to look out for:

St David was credited with several miracles over his lifetime, and is usually depicted standing on a small mound with the dove of God on his shoulder. Apparently David was preaching in the village of Llanddewi Brefi when a white dove landed on his shoulder. The ground on which he stood then rose up to form a hill, enabling the assembled crowd to hear him much better. In the 12th century it was declared by the Pope that two pilgrimages to [St David's Cathedral](#) in Pembrokeshire were equivalent to a pilgrimage to Rome; three to St David's matched one to Jerusalem.



According to Gerald of Wales there was once a magical talking bridge over the River Alun near [St Davids](#). It was said to be a great slab of local volcanic rock that was ten feet long, six feet wide and one foot thick. It has been worn smooth by the many feet crossing it as it was used to transport coffins into the churchyard for burial. Gerald had heard that on one occasion, a corpse was being carried over the bridge when it suddenly burst into speech. From this time forward local people would not carry corpses over the stone, preferring instead to wade across the river. The bridge became known as Llechlafar or Bridge of Loquacity.

Do the Irish have St David to thank for their population of **bees**? The monk Modomnoc was a contemporary of St David. He decided to go to Ireland, and a swarm of bees settled on the boat with him. Apparently they supplied him with food during his Irish Mission, but he realised that being Welsh bees, they should be taken back to Wales. However the bees accompanied him three times to Ireland until on the third occasion holy David blessed them and sent Modomnoc on his way with the bees saying 'Henceforth bees should prosper in Ireland, and should no longer increase in Glyn Rhosyn'. And it seems from this time forward the bees decreased at St Davids, but thrived in Ireland.

Another tale connecting Wales and Ireland was told by the teller of very tall tales, Shemi Wad (James Wade), who died in **Goodwick** (near Fishguard) in 1897. He said that one day, he went fishing on the Parrog and put his nice strong line with a dozen hooks into the water – then fell asleep. Whilst he slept the tide receded, leaving the baited hooks exposed. Seagulls flew down and swallowed them hook, line and sinker! The birds then took to the air, taking the sleeping Shemi with them. They flew across St George's Channel and deposited him in Dublin's Phoenix Park. He woke up wondering where he was, but soon gathered this was Ireland. He spotted some cannons on the far side of the park and – as you do – slipped inside the barrel of one of the guns and promptly fell asleep again. However what he didn't realise was that a salute was fired from the guns every morning, and he was still sleeping when he was shot out of the gun. Over the channel he flew and landed on the grass of Pencw, just above his home!



Watch out for crazed canines in and around [Fishguard](#). Apparently an old sailor lodging in Lower Town was returning home one night when he encountered the black dog from hell on the bridge over the Gwaun River. The beast's fiery red eyes filled him with fear as it bounded towards him, chains rattling and roaring loudly. The man called out for God's help, and as

the words left his lips, the dog recoiled, howled loudly in rage and sprang away. His victim ran home and fell to the ground in a faint.

Travelling to Fishguard by rail? Well you might have Sarah Bevan to thank for that. Sarah was born in 1756, married Thomas Evans when she was older and became Sarah Evans. Known for her ability to foretell the future, Evans one day said she had seen a large number of heavily laden carts or wagons going very fast one after the other, and no bullock or horses drawing them – the first wagon appeared to be on fire, as there was a large amount of smoke rising from it. This was more than six decades before the introduction of George Stephenson's steam locomotive in 1825. Eventually Brunel wanted to extend his Great Western Railway to Fishguard but was almost persuaded to make the terminus in the south at [Neyland](#). However it was agreed that the terminus would be transferred to Fishguard after all. The new line went through Trefgarn Valley exactly where Sarah Evans had predicted.

Adam de Rupe, or Roche, was a Norman lord in the 13th century who built the splendid castle keep at **Roch**. Unfortunately, he managed to upset a local witch in the process. She cursed him, saying he would die within the year of an adder bite. Terrified, Adam shut himself in the castle's topmost room and refused to leave for 365 days. With just a day to go, he asked a servant to bring up firewood. Hiding among the sticks turned out to be – you guessed it – an adder, and the witch's prophesy was fulfilled Saint Brynach founded several churches, but unfortunately these attracted devils, evil spirits and witches! Luckily he had something of a gift with dark forces and subdued them, but God told him to move to the [Nevern Valley](#). This he did, building a monastic settlement and befriending Saint David, and communing with angels on the summit of Carn Ingli. Apparently he made friends with fierce animals and had his cow looked after by a tame wolf!

Carn Ingli's fascinating history includes 'getting in the way' when, in 1934, Captain George Pond and Lieutenant Cesare Sabelli crashed into the mountain on their way from Rome to the USA. Both aviators had minor injuries, but when knocking at a local farmhouse for help they were given short shrift by the owner, who thought they were tramps! The following day, however, they were welcomed like heroes.

Brynberian, in the Preseli Hills, was once home to an 'afanc', a terrible water monster that emerged at night to steal sheep and destroy land. The local population concocted a plan to do away with the beast, using a brave

young girl as bait to lure him out, before capturing and killing him. You can visit his grave – Bedd yr Afanc – to this day.

The giants of the [Preseli Hills](#) were known for their bad temper, which often culminated in fights to the death with one another. They seemed to have a penchant for throwing boulders at each other in a rage, hence the number of erratically-placed stones across the hills (though some people put that down to glacial activity thousands of years ago!). Their numbers duly dwindled until there were three brothers left, who got into an argument over the inheritance of their father's land. They ended up killing one another and were turned to stone, along with their dead father. There are four rocky outcrops above [Pentre Ifan](#) to prove it!



Some time ago a man was [walking on the Preseli Hills](#) near **Foelfeddau** when he was seized with a strange fear. Everything had become quiet around him and he felt that some terrible event was about to happen. He looked about, but there nothing but a heavy silence about the place... Suddenly he felt he was being watched and something close to him laughed. Feeling dizzy he sat down and closed his eyes, and when he opened them, he saw several small, hairy, naked men. They were goblins, carrying heavy clubs and walking towards him, seemingly oblivious to his presence. He tried to rise but felt himself bound by invisible bonds. Screaming, he closed his eyes and when he opened them once more he was alone, except for the singing larks, lambs and bees.

The last indictment for witchcraft in Pembrokeshire occurred at [Haverfordwest](#) in 1699. It seems a woman called Dorcas Heddin, who came originally from Cambridgeshire, was accused of bewitching sailors on a ship that was bound for Virginia, wanting revenge on those particular men for short-rationing her – she was tried at Haverfordwest Castle.



And watch out near the Monument Arch of **Old Haverfordwest Bridge**, where an evil spirit is said to have been hidden and bound to remain there for a thousand years. As soon as the time has passed, by all accounts, the spirit will be free to roam the earth to trouble people once more.

Pembrokeshire has so many myths and legends for you to explore. Why not take your time and spend 48 hours in St Davids to explore more of Pembrokeshire's wild stories and tall tales.

