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Of Mermaids and Fairies

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Dublin Core

Title

Of Mermaids and Fairies | Môr-forynion a'r Tylwyth Teg

Subject

Fishguard

Abergwaun

Folk beliefs

Creddoau gwerin

Folklore

Chwedlau

Creator

Rita Singer

Publisher

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Date

2023

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Relation

<https://perma.cc/U3A5-VGT2>

Format

Curatescape story

Language

English

Welsh

Coverage

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Curatescape Story Item Type Metadata

Lede

Fairies are frequent characters in stories from across Wales. The fairies known as Plant Rhys Ddwfn sometimes appear as mermaids in Pembrokeshire folklore.

Lede (Welsh)

Mae'r Tylwyth Teg yn ymddangos yn aml mewn storïau o bob cwr o Gymru. Mae'r tylwyth teg sy'n cael eu hadnabod fel Plant Rhys Ddwfn weithiau'n ymddangos fel môr-forynion yn llên gwerin Sir Benfro.

Story

In Pembrokeshire, fairies are commonly known as Plant Rhys Ddwfn, the 'children of Rhys the Deep', 'deep' here referring to depth of character. This particular tribe or type of fairies are of diminutive size like that of a 5- or 6-year old child. Sometimes, the females are half human and resemble mermaids. They are said to live on a number of islands stretching across Cardigan Bay, from Pembrokeshire in the south to the Llŷn peninsula in the north. Rhys Ddwfn's island realm is invisible to the human eye, except when viewed from one particular spot at Pen Cemaes, about 20km north of Fishguard. According to legend, a special herb grows in a patch no more than a metre wide; from that viewpoint, the islands would uncover themselves to human eyes.

For a long time, the Plant Rhys Ddwfn went to market in Cardigan. No one ever saw them coming or going; they were just there, gladly paying the traders good money for the wares on offer. Whenever prices were high on market day, it was said that the Plant Rhys Ddwfn had been in town. This did not make them favourites with other buyers, who had trouble stretching their little money to make necessary purchases, and so the fairies started visiting Fishguard market instead. In 1896, the *Pembroke County Guardian* reported the statement of a Fishguard woman who acknowledged their presence, however further to the east, saying, 'There are fairies for they came to Ha'rfordwest market to buy things, so there *must* be.'

On other occasions, the Plant Rhys Ddwfn appeared around the Fishguard area as mermaids sitting on rocks and combing their hair. In 1858, Daniel Huws supposedly encountered a mermaid between St David's and Fishguard. Except for her fishtail she was said to look 'like the lasses of Wales' and spoke Welsh to the men who approached her, before she disappeared back into the sea. At another occasion, a mermaid was spotted outside Fishguard at Llanwnda, where in 1798 the French had made an unsuccessful attempt at invading Britain. The men who saw her abducted her and took her home with them. She only regained her freedom in exchange for three bits of advice which were remembered in the family ever afterwards.

In 1910, another local newspaper, *The Pembrokeshire Herald and General Advertiser*, reported a strange occurrence in Pencaer, Fishguard. A heavily veiled woman barged into

Garnfawr Cottage, which at the time was empty except for a little girl. The girl watched the woman go from room to room, rifling through all the family's possessions as if she was searching for a lost item, but taking nothing. She then climbed the ladder to the crog loft, but was trapped by the little girl removing the ladder. Despite this, the woman escaped by jumping through one of the windows and leaving no trace. Owing to her odd dress and behaviour, it was thought that Garnfawr Cottage had been visited by a mermaid who had emerged from the sea at nearby Pwll Deri.

Story (Welsh)

Yn Sir Benfro, mae'r tylwyth teg yn aml yn cael eu hadnabod fel Plant Rhys Ddwfn, a'r gair 'dwfn' yn cyfeirio yma at ddyfnder cymeriad. Mae'r tylwyth arbennig yma yn fach, yn debyg o ran eu maint i blentyn 5 neu 6 oed. Weithiau, mae'r menywod yn hanner dynol ac yn debyg i fôr-forwyn. Dywedir eu bod yn byw ar nifer o ynysoedd sy'n ymestyn ar draws Bae Ceredigion, o Sir Benfro yn y de i benrhyn Llŷn yn y gogledd. Mae ynysoedd Rhys Ddwfn yn anweladwy i'r llygad dynol, ac eithrio o un man penodol ym Mhen Cemaes, rhyw 20km i'r gogledd o Abergwaun. Yn ôl y chwedl, mae perlysiâu arbennig yn tyfu ar lain heb fod yn fwy na metr o led, ac o'r fan honno, byddai'r ynysoedd yn weladwy i lygaid dynol.

Am gyfnod hir, byddai Plant Rhys Ddwfn yn mynd i'r farchnad yn Aberteifi. Fyddai neb yn eu gweld yn mynd neu'n dod; rywsut roedden nhw yno, yn falch o dalu arian da i'r masnachwyr am y nwyddau oedd ar gael. Pryd bynnag roedd y prisiau'n uchel ar ddiwrnod y farchnad, dywedid bod Plant Rhys Ddwfn wedi bod yn y dref. Oherwydd hyn, doedden nhw ddim yn boblogaidd iawn ymysg y prynwyr eraill, oedd yn ei chael yn anodd cael dau ben llinyn ynghyd, ac felly dechreuodd y tylwyth teg fynd i farchnad Abergwaun. Ym 1896, cofnododd y *Pembroke County Guardian* sylwadau menyw o Abergwaun a oedd yn cydnabod eu bod yn bresennol, ond yn bellach i'r dwyrain, gan ddweud, 'There are fairies for they came to Ha'rfordwest market to buy things, so there *must* be.'

Ar adegau eraill, ymddangosai Plant Rhys Ddwfn o amgylch ardal Abergwaun ar ffurf môr-forynion yn eistedd ar greigiau ac yn cribo'u gwallt. Ym 1858 yn ôl y sôn, daeth Daniel Huws ar draws môr-forwyn rhwng Tyddewi ac Abergwaun. Heblaw am ei chynffon pysgodyn dywedwyd ei bod yn edrych 'fel merched Cymru' a'i bod yn siarad Cymraeg â'r dynion a aeth ati, cyn diflannu yn ôl i'r môr. Ar achlysur arall, cafodd môr-forwyn ei gweld y tu allan i Abergwaun yn Llanwnda, lle'r oedd y Ffrancwyr wedi gwneud ymdrech aflwyddiannus ym 1798 i ymosod ar Brydain. Cafodd ei chipio gan y dynion a'i gwelodd hi, ac aethon nhw â hi adref gyda nhw. Dim ond ar ôl rhoi tri chyngor iddyn nhw y cafodd ei rhyddhau, ac fe gofiodd y teulu'r cynghorion hynny am byth wedyn.

Ym 1910, soniodd papur newydd lleol arall, *The Pembrokeshire Herald and General Advertiser*, am ddiwyddiad rhyfedd ym Mhen-caer, Abergwaun. Rhuthrodd menyw dan orchudd i Fwthyn Garnfawr, a oedd ar y pryd yn wag heblaw am ferch fach. Gwyliodd y ferch wrth i'r fenyw fynd o'r naill ystafell i'r llall, gan chwilio drwy holl eiddo'r teulu fel pe bai'n chwilio am eitem a gollwyd, ond heb gymryd dim. Yna dringodd yr ysgol i'r groglofft, ond cafodd ei dal yno gan y ferch a dynnodd yr ysgol. Serch hynny, dihangodd y fenyw drwy neidio drwy un o'r ffenestri heb adael dim olion. Oherwydd ei gwisg a'i hymddygiad rhyfedd, roedd pobl yn meddwl mai môr-forwyn oedd wedi ymweld â Bwthyn Garnfawr, ar ôl dod o'r môr ym Mhwllderi gerllaw.

Factoid

Rhys Ddwfn's invisible island realm roughly overlaps with Gwyddno Garanhir's ancient drowned kingdom, the famous Cantre'r Gwaelod of Cardigan Bay.

Mae teyrnas anweladwy Rhys Ddwfn yn cyffinio'n fras â Chantre'r Gwaelod, teyrnas enwog Gwyddno Garanhir a foddwyd o dan donnau Bae Ceredigion.

There have been suggestions that the Plant Rhys Ddwfn are, in fact, Irish traders who crossed the Irish Sea to sell their wares at Welsh markets.

Awgrymwyd mai masnachwyr o Iwerddon oedd Plant Rhys Ddwfn mewn gwirionedd, wedi croesi Môr Iwerddon i werthu eu nwyddau ym marchnadoedd Cymru.

The island Grassholm, in Welsh Gwales, is one of the mythical islands in the Mabinogi. According to legend, Bendigeidfran's head rested here for 80 years after his battle against the Irish King Matholwch. Grassholm is believed to be part of Rhys Ddwfn's kingdom.

Ynys Gwales yw un o ynysoedd hud y Mabinogi. Yn ôl y chwedl, bu pen Bendigeidfran yn gorffwys yno am 80 mlynedd ar ôl ei frwydr â brenin Iwerddon, Matholwch. Credir bod Gwales yn rhan o deyrnas Rhys Ddwfn.

Related Resources

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Official Website