



Medieval Monk

## St. Dogmaels Millennium Tapestry

The picturesque village of St. Dogmaels situated a mile or so from the Teify estuary, has a long and proud history. It takes its name from the Celtic Saint Dogmael who established his holy house on the left bank of the river, and in time a thriving community resided there.

**950AD** By this period of time the area was ruled by Hywel Dda, Prince of Deheubarth. Hywel called a meeting at Whitland (Hen Dy Gwyn a'r Daf), where laws were passed that gave the common man rights. These laws were to be recognised for centuries by the Welsh nation and Hywel was acclaimed as the first real law maker in the country.

**987AD** For the inhabitants of Wales, western seaboard life was one of great anxiety, as the area was being constantly attacked by Vikings. The raiders slaughtered and plundered the communities and nowhere was safe from their dreaded longboats. The abbey of St. Dogmaels was attacked by these northern invaders.

**1089AD** Martin of Tours and his Norman followers landed in North Pembrokeshire and proceeded to conquer the area. By 1091, after fierce fighting, he had reached the banks of the Teify. He erected a castle at Nevern and became the Master of Cemaes. Thus the Barony of Cemaes came into existence and has continued to the present day.



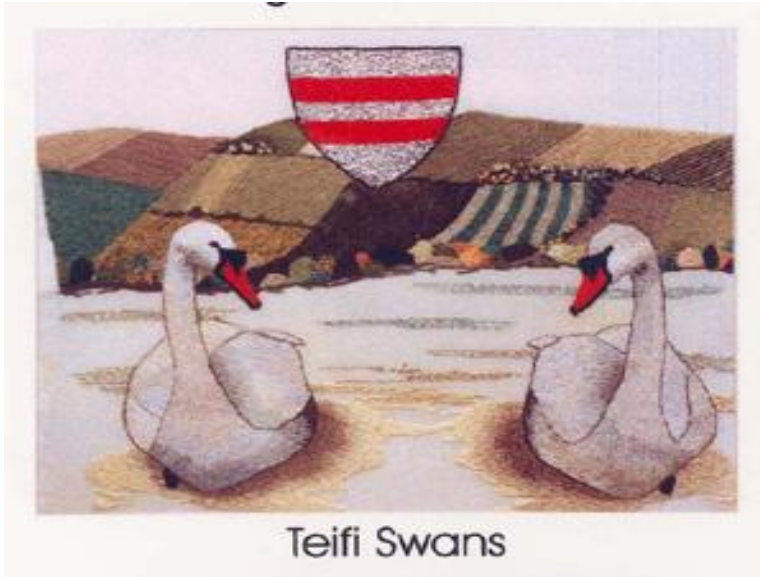
Marauding Vikings



The Mill

**1113AD** Martin was succeeded by his son Robert Fitzmartin who decided to establish a monastery near the ancient cell of Llandudoch, with which the C6th stone

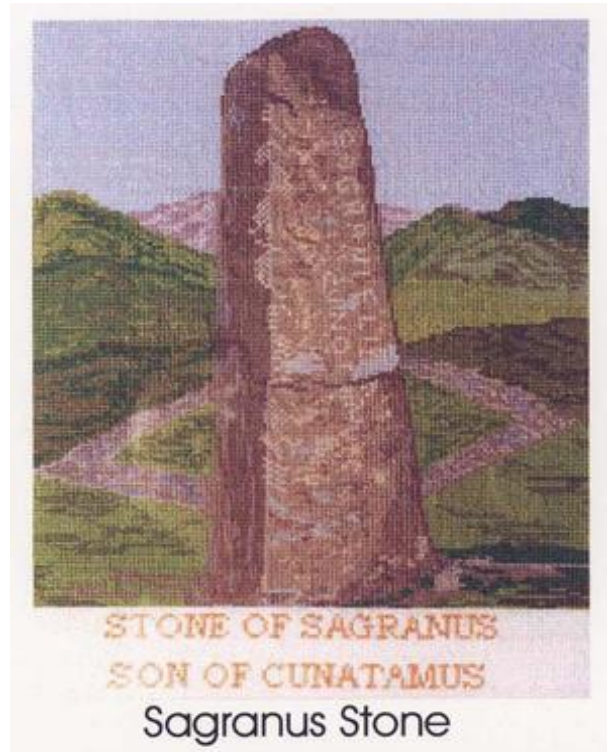
inscribed in Latin and Ogham to mark the grave of SAGRANUS, son of Cunotamus, is associated. The stone, now in the Parish Church, provided the key to the interpretation of the Ogham alphabet. By 1115 the building had been erected and housed a prior and twelve monks. These religious inhabitants were French, having been brought over from Tiron. Eight years later a further twelve monks arrived together with the first abbot named Fulchard. The church was given its charter and was raised to abbey status. These monks were credited with having introduced "Seine" fishing to



the local inhabitants and the industry has survived until recently. It is likely that the village mill dates from this period.

**1137AD** Gruffydd ap Rhys, Prince of Deheubarth, rose against the Norman occupiers of his territory. The sons of Gruffydd, assisted by Owain and Cadwaladr, his sons in law, brought a fleet of 15 Danish ships up the Teify to assist in his attempts to capture Cardigan Castle. When they failed, wanting some reward for their endeavours, they attacked and plundered the abbey on their way home.

**1485AD** Henry Tudor entered Cardigan on his way to Bosworth Field, where he was later crowned. The Welsh prince was welcomed in the district and volunteers joined the army. Henry never forgot that support and he subsequently granted Cardigan a Charter which allowed ships to be built on the banks of the Teify and both St. Dogmaels and Cardigan became shipbuilding areas.





back timber for the shipbuilding industry. This industry with its ancillary trades employed some 1500 men. The St. Dogmaels fishermen were fully employed in catching salmon and in the late autumn, herring. Catches were excellent and large quantities of fish were exported to towns in England and Wales.

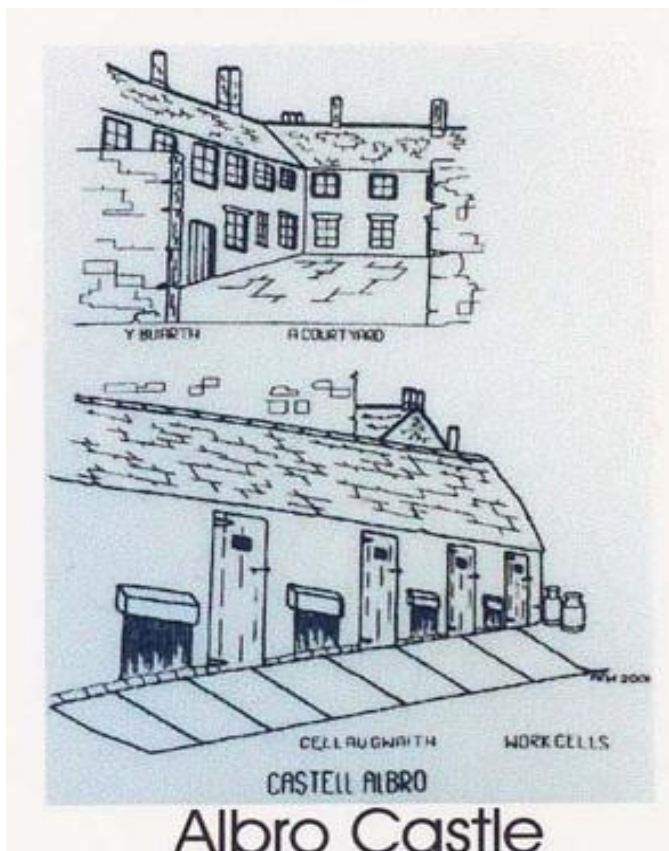
**1830AD** By now both St. Dogmaels and Cardigan were extremely busy maritime centers. This resulted in the newly formed Royal National Lifeboat Institution deciding to equip the Teify estuary with one of their boats. A lifeboat was allotted but was tragically wrecked during the voyage to the village.



The Albion

**1837AD** A meeting was called in Cardigan with the intention of establishing a Union Workhouse in the district to house the local paupers. Eventually a suitable site was found at Dancoed Farm, St. Dogmaels and was purchased for £75 per acre. Work commenced

in May 1839 and was completed in 1840. It was called Albro Castle and could house 120 inmates. When "Gentlemen of the Road" sought a bed for the night they were required, by way of payment for their board and lodging, to break stones to a certain size and pass them through a metal grid. Albro Castle would serve the area for 95 years, finally closing in 1935. American servicemen were housed there during the last war.



**1849AD** In May 1849 Captain Stewart RN Inspecting Commander of Coastguards wrote a letter to the Royal National Lifeboat Institution, requesting that a lifeboat be stationed at Cardigan. January of that year had witnessed a tragic shipwreck when the brig "Agnes Lee" foundered on the treacherous Cardigan bar with the loss of 10 lives,

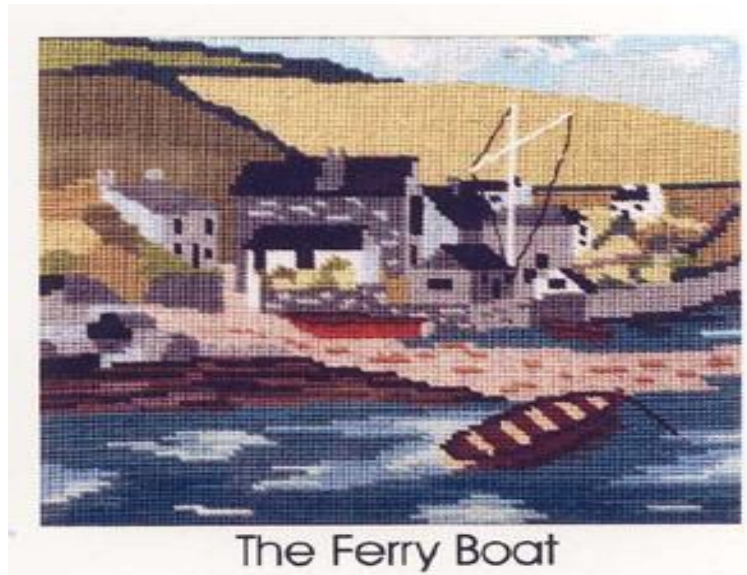
including the Captain and his young family. The RNLI agreed and the lifeboat reached her station at Traeth Bach, Poppit on the Pembrokeshire side of the Teify estuary. Although known as the Cardigan lifeboat she was manned from the outset by the hardy fishermen of St. Dogmaels. From 1849 to 1932 five sailing and pulling lifeboats were stationed at Traeth Bach. During those years 54 launches were made and 136 lives saved thanks to the volunteers from the village.



The Lifeboat

**1849AD** At the outbreak of the Great War many of the local men answered the "call to arms". A fair number of these volunteers were members of the Royal Naval Reserve, which had been stationed at Glanteifi. With their comrades from Cardigan they journeyed to Devonport to join their Warships. A fair number never returned to their village.

**1920AD** For decades there had been a ferry service, crossing the river from the Ferry Inn to the Old Castle shore on the Cardigan side of the river. This service was usually provided by a retired fisherman who charged a few pennies for the crossing. Many St. Dogmaels ladies used the ferry as it was the shortest route to Cardigan.



The Ferry Boat

**1939AD** When the second World War broke out many of the St. Dogmaels boys were members of the 407 R.A. Battery, and were on standby. St. Dogmaels and Cardigan were still producing mariners and many were to lose their lives to the U Boat menace. Women and men from the village served their country well whether they were members of the armed forces, the Merchant Navy or employed on the RNAS Trecwm.

**2000AD** A group of villagers decided to celebrate the Millennium by producing a "picture" of the village through the years.

We hope that you have enjoyed it.

# Acknowledgements

|  |   |
|--|---|
| The Artist – booklet pictures (booklet available from the Coach House) | Jeanne Notley, St. Dogmaels               |
| The Historical Notes   | Donald Davies, Cardigan                   |
| Design and Publication   | Gill Tyas, St. Dogmaels                   |
| Needlecraft Designs  | Southdown Needlecraft Designs, Flintshire |
| Picture Framing  | Christine & Barry Arnold, Llangrannog     |
| <b>THE STITCHERS: All from the village</b>                             |   |
| Swans /Robert Fitzmartin Coat of Arms                                  | Marie Devers                              |
| Prospect of the Abbey  | Marlena Paulett                           |
| Monk with fish and Mediaeval apples                                    | Pat & Sara Mace                           |
| The Sagraanus Stone  | Chris Watson                              |
| Seine Fishing  | Mary Thomas                               |
| The Marauding Norse  | Gill Tyas                                 |
| A Welsh Farm/Longhouse   | Mary Mossford                             |
| The Teify showing the Fishing Pools                                    | Penny Rees                                |
| Teify Boat Building  | Gill Tyas                                 |
| The Brig Albion  | Pam High                                  |
| The Blessing Stone   | Maureen Brown                             |
| “Cardigan” Lifeboat  | Doreen Francis                            |
| The River Ferry  | Gill Tyas                                 |
| The Mill   | Joan Ramsey                               |
| Albro Castle   | Arthur Walters                            |

The group would like to acknowledge all those people who helped with the project, in particular Tony Bowen and Jean Davies.

The work was sponsored by the National Lottery Charities Board -Small Grants Celebrating the Millennium Festival in Wales.



Abbey Ruins



Longhouse