

## Introduction

Download the LearnEnglish Themes podcast. You'll find more information on this page:  
<http://www.britishcouncil.org/learnenglish-podcasts-themes.htm>

This support pack contains the following materials:

- the article that you can listen to in the podcast
- an optional comprehension activity based on the article
- links to other activities on the LearnEnglish website on this theme (Wales).

## Read the article

### Wales and St. David

by John Russell

*Gwnewch y pethau bychain*

*Do the little things (that you have seen me do and heard about)*

(Famous saying by St. David)

March 1st is St. David's Day. In this week's Learn English magazine we look at who St. David was, and the country of his birth over 14 centuries after he lived - the great country of Wales - Cymru in Welsh.

### Who was St. David?

St. David (*Dewi Sant* in the Welsh language) was the grandson of Ceredig, King of Ceredigion and son of Non, who was said to be King Arthur's niece. In his life he was a Celtic monk who helped to spread Christianity through the West of Britain. He founded many religious centres in Wales and even travelled on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, where he was made an Archbishop.

### Why was he famous?

He and his followers were famous for being ascetics – which meant they abstained from any pleasures to help make themselves closer to God. He was given the name *Dewi Ddyfrwr* (David the Water Drinker) because of this – it was said that he only ate simple food and drank only water all his life. Although he lived in the 6th Century most stories about him were written over 500 years later. One famous story describes when he was speaking to a large crowd in Llandewi Brefi and he made the ground rise up so everyone could see him.

### Where was he buried?

He was made a saint in 1123 and St. David's day has been celebrated in Wales since this point. St.

David is the patron Saint of Wales and the monastery he founded in Glyn Rhosyn is now the site of Saint David's Cathedral (in the modern City of St. David's), which was begun in 1181. Bones found in the Cathedral recently are thought by some to be those of the Saint.

### Are there other Welsh icons?

Wales has many historical stories and traditions; the legend of St. David; the original Celtic tribes; even King Arthur and Merlin are linked to the history of Wales. The Welsh language is also one of the oldest languages in Europe; some people claim it is the true language of the Britons, as it existed in Britain long before the Romans arrived.



### Is Wales only famous for its history and tradition?

Although the leek and daffodil (traditional national vegetables and flowers) are both linked with Wales and the Welsh celebrate St. David's Day every year, it is not a country set in the past. Wales is a country that celebrates its past but looks to the future. Education, Sport, and Tourism are just three important aspects of modern Wales

and after the creation of a National Assembly for Wales in 1999 the country's international reputation is growing.

## Education

Some of the best educational centres in the UK can be found in Wales. With over fourteen Universities and Higher Education Institutes students can study many different subjects: from Business Management at the University of Wales in Aberystwyth, to Japanese Business Etiquette at the University of Cardiff. The Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama is one of the UK's leading centres for students wishing to follow a career in the performing arts. Future doctors, dentists and nurses can study at the University Of Wales College Of Medicine – based at the third largest hospital in the UK in Cardiff. A large number of students at Welsh Universities are also from overseas.

## Sport

Ever since the first match was played in 1850, rugby has been associated with the country and the Welsh national team is one of the best in the

world. One recent development was the building of a new national stadium, the Millennium Stadium, which can seat over 72,000 people. Athletics, football, cricket, angling and many other sports are also very important and popular across the country. The Ryder cup, a famous golfing competition, is being played in Wales in 2010.

## Tourism

Hundreds of thousands of tourists visit Wales every year for its countryside, historic buildings or its famous cities. If you enjoy the outdoors, Wales has over 700 miles of beautiful coastline, or you can go climbing in Snowdonia or in the Brecon Beacons. If you are interested in history, there are many castles in Wales - one special castle in Llangollen in the north, is said to be the resting place of the Holy Grail. From the large cities of Cardiff or Swansea, to the seaside towns of Llandudno or Prestatyn, there is something for everyone - even an entire Italian style village built in Portmeirion in Gwynedd.

Why don't you find out more about the country of St. David? Maybe you could come and see it for yourself!

[www.britishcouncil.org/learnenglish](http://www.britishcouncil.org/learnenglish)

## After reading

### Exercise 1

Choose a question word from the first box to start each of the 10 questions, and an answer from the second box.

How many	What	When	Where	Who
1850	1999	2010	72,000	An ascetic
Cardiff	Dewi Sant	King Arthur	Performers	Portmeirion

- [.....] is the Welsh name for St. David?
- [.....] was St. David's great-uncle?
- [.....] is a person called who avoids pleasure?
- [.....] was the Welsh Assembly opened?
- [.....] was the first rugby game played in Wales?
- [.....] people can fit in the Millennium Stadium?
- [.....] can we find an Italian village in Wales?
- [.....] is the Ryder Cup being held?
- [.....] is the third largest hospital in the UK?
- [.....] studies at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama?

**More activities on this topic**

You'll find links to all the following activities connected to the theme of Wales at:

<http://www.britishcouncil.org/learnenglish-central-themes-wales.htm>

- **UK Culture: Wales** is a land of rugby, singing and beautiful scenery situated on the western side of the UK.
- **Word game: Famous Welsh people.** Match the names of famous Welsh people to information about them.
- **Poem: Welsh Landscape** This grim poem by R. S. Thomas, the pre-eminent Welsh poet writing in the English language is typical of his work, which is uncompromising: images like slate - hard and sharp; his style spare, unflinching, honest.
- **Trivia:** Everything you (n)ever wanted to know about the Wales.
- There is also a Wales-related cartoon, a poll and some carefully selected external links.

**Answers to comprehension activity:** 1. *What, Dewi Sant*; 2. *Who, King Arthur*; 3. *What, An ascetic*; 4. *When, 1999*; 5. *When, 1850*; 6. *How many, 72,000*; 7. *Where, Portmeirion*; 8. *When, 2010*; 9. *Where, Cardiff*; 10. *Who, Performers*

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