



Jane Lloyd Francis
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Meeting the Leri

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Tue 17 Nov 2015 14:12:46 | [0 comments](#)

Wondering down to the river we begin to drift between different planes of time.

It seems like a good omen, seeing a small snail and feather sculpture next to the path, perhaps a sign of that there will be new gateways to pass through.

When we do meet the Leri there are signs of decaying industrialisation – abandoned mines that once would have supported so many of the residents living along its banks - now moss clad ruins.

We cross a bridge above water-sculpted pools then climb through shaded woodlands along a black-berried path – Gwilym transports me into the world of Gwynn ap Nydd.

I had always thought welsh place names like Plas Cefn Gwyn , Bryn Gwyn , inferred a connection to something white , gwyn being the wslh for white. Gwilym has another theory, that the names might be attributed to Gwynn ap Nydd an ancient magician who could facilitate travel between realms, between this world and Annwfn – the underworld, between this life and the next.

Often depicted with antler type horns perhaps it is him that we see on the Gundestrup Cauldron - one of the most ancient Celtic relics of Europe. The horned one, who was once potent and revered – possibly it was the Christians that first depicted him as a devil figure for threatening their beliefs.

Eleri, Leri ,Elerch = Swans Elerch long precedes the name Bontgoch the village close to the head of the Leri. Leri , Eleri, Elerch who decided on Bontgoch as a name I wonder and why?

Gods of wild places passing through animal being. The river a medium for the soul.

Perhaps this valley was a stronghold for followers of the old faith, they may still live here now.

We talk of deep associations with the landscape, entwinings and entanglements before the days of becoming disconnected observers – at a loss with how to feel the earths thrumming.

Above us is an ancient hill fort, evidence that people have lived on the banks of the Leri for a very, very long time – if we hurry we can reach it so we do – puffing as we ascend. Then a surprise, we see water high on the hillside – a source – I am excited. It must be the water supply that supported the hill fort. I am keen on water sources.

We sit and listen to the sound of the water, accompanied by the shriek of a random buzzard, a view of all of Cardigan Bay

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stretching out around us.

Gwilym takes out an instrument, a small primitive harp on a drum, he begins to improvise with the rhythms of the water, the timing is very subtle, the notes sliding in and out of the waters own music.

In this moment everything becomes right, we are joined with the earth and the air. It seems that he to is a magician, capable of joining land and water and life, melding us into one.

It is a perfect moment and nothing else matters in the world.



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