



NORTH WALES TALES

The Wizard Who Grew the Longest Name in Llanfairpwllgwyngyll

Llanfairpwllgwyngyll, North Wales

Long ago, by the Menai Strait on the Isle of Anglesey, there lived a wizard called Cadno who had a long silver beard and a great fondness for naps.

His village had a problem. It was called Llanfair, which was a perfectly good name, except that half the villages in Wales were also called Llanfair. Travellers got muddled. Letters went astray. And one foggy morning a young dragon, flapping in to visit her granny, landed in the wrong Llanfair three times and burst into tired green tears.

A girl named Seren found the dragon sniffing by the water, near where the Britannia Bridge stands today.

"I can never find the right one," the dragon hiccupped. "Every Llanfair looks the same."

Seren took her straight to the wizard. Cadno stroked his beard and thought for a long, slow minute.

"Then we shall make our name so long," he said at last, "that no other village could ever copy it. A name you could read from the sky."

He climbed the little hill above the strait, raised his hazel staff, and began to sing. With every word he sang, a new piece of the name grew like a vine along the rooftops.

He sang of the pool, and the name grew: Llanfairpwll.

He sang of the white hazel trees, and it grew longer.

He sang of the swirling whirlpool out in the water, and of a small church across the strait.

Letter after letter, the name stretched down the lane, over the bridge and past the chapel, until it had fifty-eight letters and eighteen syllables, and was far too long for any signpost.

Seren laughed. "How will anyone ever say it?"

"They won't, not all at once," said Cadno kindly. "They will call it Llanfairpwll, or Llanfair PG, on busy days. But the whole long name will always be here for anyone who wants to try."

The dragon practised all afternoon. She took a giant breath and said the entire name in one go, and a tiny flame of pride puffed from her nose. After that she never got lost again. From high in the clouds she could read the enormous name curling across the village like a friendly green ribbon.

Word spread. Travellers came from far away just to stand by the sign and attempt the name, breathing in deep, tripping over the middle, and giggling at the end. The village that had felt too small to notice became the village everyone wanted to find.

And Seren? She grew up to be the finest name-sayer in all of Anglesey. Whenever a nervous visitor arrived, she would take their hand and say, "Don't worry. Breathe in. We'll say it together, slowly, and I promise you'll get there."

To this day, the village by the Menai Strait has the longest name in Europe, and the second longest one-word place name in the whole world. People still come to try it, just as they did in Seren's time.

And on quiet evenings, if you listen by the bridge, some say you can still hear an old wizard humming the next word, in case the name should ever wish to grow again.

What's real?

- Llanfairpwllgwyngyll is a village on the Isle of Anglesey, Wales, located on the Menai Strait next to the Britannia Bridge.
- The full name Llanfairpwllgwyngyllgogerychwyrndrobwlllantysiliogogoch has 58 characters split into 18 syllables.
- Llanfairpwllgwyngyll is purported to have the longest place name in Europe and the second longest one-word place name in the world.
- Llanfairpwllgwyngyll is often shortened to Llanfairpwll and sometimes to Llanfair PG.
- At the 2011 Census the population of Llanfairpwllgwyngyll was 3,107, of whom 71% could speak Welsh.

Now colour it in!



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