

GWENFREWI, or WINIFRED (fl. early 7th century), saint

Name: Gwenfrewi
Parent: Gwenlo
Parent: Tevyth
Gender: Female
Occupation: saint
Area of activity: Religion
Author: Thomas Jones Pierce

Traditions incorporated in 12th century 'vitae' are the only basis for an account of her life. Her father, Tevyth, is said to have been a native of Tegeingl (modern Flintshire), and according to late pedigrees, her mother, Gwenlo, was a sister of [Saint Beuno](#). It is at least reasonably clear that she was closely associated with the spread of the [Beuno](#) cult in North-east Wales, and on the site of her sanctuary at Holywell, where she is supposed to have been miraculously restored to life by [S. Beuno](#), there formerly stood, it was believed, a chapel founded by [Beuno](#) himself. That she was subsequently in close touch with Saint Eleri, spending her later years with the latter at Gwytherin (where she was in the first place interred), may also probably be regarded as fact. Her personal cult, however, appears to have been of comparatively late origin; it seems to have developed under the auspices of Shrewsbury abbey to which place her remains were translated in 1138, and where the principal record of her life was compiled by prior Robert between 1140 and 1167. Even then the cult continued to be local in character, until, in the later middle ages, her fame and that of her sanctuaries of Holywell, Gwytherin, and Shrewsbury spread far afield, and the saint attracted the interest of the native bard and hagiologist. Twice in this later period, her principal festival on 3 November was declared a holy day by archiepiscopal decree.

Author

Professor Thomas Jones Pierce, (1905 - 1964)

Sources

The Lives of the British Saints, iii, 185-96

Further Reading

Wikipedia Article: [Winefred](#)

Additional Links

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