

DO THE LITTLE THINGS

If Uchtryd ab Edwin and Hywel ab Gronw had not been so gullible in 1094 it is more than likely South Pembrokeshire would have remained as Welsh as the north of the county to this day – that is what was said at St Davids when Menter Iaith Sir Benfro launched its new language resource on Friday, 4 March, 2011.

The leaders of the Welsh insurgents trying to recapture Pembroke castle from the hands of the Norman, Gerald de Windsor were defeated through deception. The Welsh were allowed to intercept a letter sent by Gerald to his colleagues implying that no military help was required and that supplies were plentiful within the castle. The Welsh did not realize they were reading a deliberate false letter.

Flitches of pork were thrown over the walls to consolidate the trickery. The Welsh gave up their siege and conceded defeat. They had suffered great losses and did not realize that Gerald's forces were in fact at the point of starvation, as they did not even have a single piglet left to roast.

If it were not for such an episode it is possible the Normans would never have gained such a strong foothold in the area, Pembroke would never have become a royal palatine and the Flemish would never have settled in the vicinity. Bullslaughter Bay would still be known as Bae Pwllstrodur and Crickmarren as Crug-y-maharen.

At the launch of the resource 'Do the Little Things' it was said it could take five to six generations to resuscitate the Welsh language in the south of the county by encouraging everyone to make use of the language, how ever small it might be, at every possible opportunity.

Mari Grug, a familiar face on S4C as a 'weather girl', officially launched the resource. Mari hails from Mynachlog-ddu, in the heart of the Preselau, and is

a descendant of Twm Carnabwth, the leader of the Beca rioters who destroyed the turnpike at Efail-wen in 1839. Her great-great-great grandfather was one of Thomas Rees' cousins.

"I support the campaign to encourage people to do the simple things – a greeting in Welsh when they answer the phone, a few words in Welsh when placing a sign at the end of the lane and speak the language in a public meeting. These small gestures will make a significant contribution in the long run if the language is to thrive," she said.

Supporting the launch of the resource was a young man who does not have a drop of Welsh blood in his veins and who until eight years ago lived in the heart of England. But since moving to the village of Glôg, near Crymych, Jack Pulman-Slater has learned Welsh to such a degree of fluency that he won the Learner's Literary Medal at the 2010 Urdd Eisteddfod.

Although a fluent speaker he insists he will always be a 'learner' throughout his life as Welsh is not his mother tongue and because he has not been imbued with Welshness as an integral part of his background.

"But I support every attempt to persuade the people of Wales to make more use of the Welsh language. After all it is their language. They are the future of the language and I would like to think that I as a learner, at the same time, can play a role in the future of the Welsh language as well," he said.

But Jack was not at the actual launch in St Davids as it was Eisteddfod day in school and he was keen to use the language on stage!

The resource 'Do the little things' is available as a CD or can be downloaded from this website.