



## **The Saints Shore Way**

Elaine        So Wendy, umm, I have asked you to come here today to talk about your new book and Saints Shores Way?

Wendy        Saints Shore Way, its not too easy to say, The Saints Shore Way

Elaine        So what inspired you to actually explore that particular route?

Wendy        Well I wanted to do a long distance walk in Brittany and give it an identity. Not just say oh this is the GR34 but to say 'this is the something' as in England, more and more walks are developed with names, the Pennine Way, the South Downs Way, the MacMillan Way, it gives uh, you want a start point, a finish point and a theme and that gives a walk an identity all of its own. The Saints' Shore Way started from a connection with the Saints Way in Cornwall where they, uh, set up this walk of 48 kilometers and the theme is they imagine that in the dark ages the Saints from Wales, traveling southwards, would have avoided the dangerous seas around Lands End and have landed at Padstow gone overland to Fowey and then set sail for Brittany because Brittany was the undeveloped country where the early Saints with their missionary zeal came to evangelise and as you are walking you can just imagine those Saints in the dark ages arriving in, let's face it, little coracles to an unknown shore. A very rocky dangerous unknown shore, they didn't know what they were going to find how they, were they going to be attacked, were they going to be received. And I think its on the isolated stretches that you can imagine that.

In the bay of Lieue de Grève in Côte d'Armor the huge bay at Saint Michel-en- Grève where the Grand Rocher is, um, there is a little place called St Eflam and there you have the sacred spring and the chapel of this Saint and he was born into a, a royal family, he was a prince, and great things were expected of him for his life that he'd be a warrior or a king in, in the fullness of time. But Eflam was very much not interested in that sort of thing but he was a very devout studious young man who wanted to devote his life to god. His father has rather different ideas for his son, naturally,, um, and insisted that Eflam was married to a, a suitable princess and Eflam was forced to, to go through with this and on the day of the marriage the ceremony was performed and his young bride, Enora, uh, was joined with him in matrimony but when it came to the bridal night, the thought of what was to ensue was a little too much for the, um, very religious and devout Eflam

and rather than see it through, he escaped from the castle with a few mates and went down to the harbour, got on a boat and sailed to Brittany. So Efflam set himself up on the coast of Brittany, he had a hermitage and he was, uh, worshiping there. His bride back in Ireland felt loyalty to the man she had actually married and so she followed him to Brittany (little chuckles). Now she landed a little bit further east in now what is called the Bay de la Vierge, the Virgins Bay, after her. She was caught up in the net of a fisherman who took her to the local lord who took rather a fancy to, you know, this foreign bird turning up on his shore and, uh, made advances to her which was very shocking to this young woman and she ran away and she managed to come back to where her husband had landed. When the local lord who was pursuing her arrived, the lord was struck with paralysis because of his impious behaviour and St Efflam released the man who begged forgiveness and left them in peace and Enora set up her own, er, hermitage not right by her husband, so they lived nearby but completely separately for the rest of their lives.

I have to say that the saints are very important because they are at the origin of Brittany before Brittany was Brittany. It was the arrival of these holy men who were the first to make settlements. All the places in Brittany that begin with Plu which means parish, err the place names beginning Loc and Lan which means the holy place of somebody like Locquénolé is St Guenolé's place, Locquirec, St Guirec's place.

The place names and the parishes that exist today look right back to those original saints and they means a lot to Bretons today. That's how they imagine Brittany began at that time and the Breton language began, because it was the incomers with their Cornish Welsh er languages that formed Breton eventually as it developed over the centuries.

Elaine            So I believe there is a book, the, the book of the walk, isn't there?

Wendy            Yes the guide book to the Saints Shore Way is coming out at the end of March and it includes full maps of the whole route, large scale maps so you'll have no excuse for getting lost. It also has written directions. It also has all the things to see along the way and at the beginning, in the introductory section of the guide, there are short essays on the main themes like the resistance, uh, the saints, nature and the environment, a little bit about the Breton language so you can look out for place names along the route, uuuh, and just feel that you can start picking out, uh, names and to understand a little bit about the landscape and the history.

Elaine            The actual walk, if you started from beginning to end, continuously, would take about a week?

Wendy            Yes its 133 kilometers. The Bay of Morlaix, Monts d'Arrée Tourism

and the Lannion tourist office will be making details of accommodation clear on their websites in connection with the route. But it's equally as good for planning a day out. A nice place on the coast to go and visit the museums, the heritage sites, the places of great natural beauty are all marked in the book so you can simply use it to take visitors up to a nice place for a day out.

The book will be available in Brittany from all the tourist offices along the route, you could order it from any bookshops you can buy it online from Red Dot Books, from Amazon from all the usual online sources. The tourist boards who sponsored the project are planning to organise events with themes like birdwatching, geology, the oldest rocks in France can be Moulin de la Rive, 2 billion years old, Breton place names which I know is something people are always interested in. And I hope that these kind of events can be organised to, to promote the guide but also to introduce an area of the north coast which is not very well known.

Elaine        It sounds very inspiring Wendy, I think we get, get our walking boots on and be up there so thank you very much.

Wendy        Thank you

Elaine        Thanks

