

Rhys and Meinir



July the fifth, many, many years ago, was an important date for sweethearts Rhys and Meinir, who lived in the beautiful, tranquil village of Nant Gwrtheyrn in Llŷn - because this was supposed to be the happiest day of their lives - their wedding day. This was the day the young couple showed the world the depth of their love to one another.

The sun shone brightly on the steep slopes of Craig y Llam - the heather like deep purple gems within the golden gorse. Life was blessed.

Rhys and Meinir were neighbours and had been childhood friends, and in time, their love blossomed. They were seen strolling hand in hand along the beach and on the mountain paths, admiring the natural world, appreciating the spectacular sunsets and the silver moonlight on the sea. They watched the sea on stormy days, the white horses racing ashore. Yes, they were head over heels in love.

During Winter storms, the skies at Nant Gwrtheyrn were dramatic, lightning brightening the village and thunder echoing throughout the land. It was on these nights that they curled up in front of the fire with their families.

At the foot of the hill stood an old oak tree that had been hit by lightning years ago, and there under its old branches was where Rhys proposed, and of course where Meinir accepted. They were on top of the world, and they decided on July the fifth to tie the knot, hoping for a long and prosperous marriage.

Wedding plans were afoot. Rhys' friends went about the village singing invitation songs as well as inviting the neighbourhood and well-wishers to bring their gifts on July the fourth, the day before the wedding, to Meinir's family home.

All was set - food prepared, flowers picked and of course, Meinir's stunning dress resting, waiting to be worn the following morning.

On the eve of the wedding, Rhys and Meinir met under the old oak tree. Rhys carved their names as well as the date within a heart on the tree bark.

Their day dawned magically, a light mist enveloping the Nant, sea mist - the promise of fine weather - just what was needed for this special day!

Meinir's friends called at the break of dawn to help her dress, a beautiful white dress of antique lace, and plaited wild flowers in her hair. It was tradition that the bride was to be



escorted to the church by the groom's friends, but Rhys and Meinir had planned to meet so that they could walk to the church together. Meinir hid from the escorts, she disappeared into the forest, and hid among the ancient trees.

The escorts searched high and low for Meinir, they called her name - but she did not reply - she was nowhere to be seen!

At long last, tired of calling and afraid of missing the day they had looked forward to for months, they made their way to Clynnog Church - thinking that she had met with Rhys and had walked together hand in hand.

Rhys stood by their meeting place waiting for Meinir. He got worried when she didn't turn up and thought that his friends had caught her and had escorted her to the church. He hurried along the winding roads so that he would be there awaiting his bride.



The escorts arrived - without Meinir! No one had seen her! She had disappeared!

All guests left the church in Clynnog to look for Meinir. Her name was called, they searched high and low - but not to be found! This was indeed a mystery! It was not possible that she had changed her mind.

Heartbroken and tired, Rhys made his way home, spirit low. His dream had turned into a nightmare! He lost interest in everything - he could not believe that he had lost his beloved Meinir - life was not worth living without her.

On the other side of the mountain lived an old woman who predicted the future, so one of Rhys' friends visited her in the hope of getting information of finding Meinir.

"Is there any hope that Rhys will see Meinir again?" he asked.

"Yes," replied the old lady.

"When and where?"

"There will be no need for further searching. He will see Meinir when a bright light fills the sky," was the answer.

His friends tried their best to console him and told him to stop looking for her - but he could think of nothing else except for his Meinir - he had a feeling deep in his soul that he would see her again one day. He sadly walked the countryside and mountain slopes with his dog to find her.

One stormy day, wind howling, rain teeming, thunder echoing the village and lightning flashing the sky, Rhys ventured out, once again in the hope of finding Meinir. He walked to the old oak tree, and as he touched the carved heart, lightning split the tree. It was hollow - and inside it was a skeleton - a skeleton in a wedding dress - a dress that once had been of old, old white lace!

Meinir! She must've hidden in the branches of the oak on her wedding day, had fallen in, and couldn't get out! She had been imprisoned in the tree - the tree where he had carved their names - where their love had been shown for all the world to see.

When Rhys realised what had happened, he shouted for all the village to hear, "Meinir! Meinir!"

He fell to his knees and tragically he died.

They were both united in the church at Clynnog, not at the altar, as was meant to be, but at their funeral - in the same cold grave.

