

DALE



*Naws am Le
Sense of Place*

Geology of Dale

The old red sandstone rocks of the area were formed during the late Silurian and Devonian period (420-354 million years ago). Since that time the landscape has been shaped by changes in sea level.

The deep harbour of Milford Haven and the Dale valley are part of a major fault line, the Ritec Fault. During an early glaciation (450,000 years ago) the Irish Sea ice sheet stretched across Pembrokeshire and reached the north Devon coast.

Dale valley was carved out by a glacier which, when it melted dumped the debris in the cliffs of West Dale.

At the end of the Ice Ages the sea level rose again as the ice melted and drowned the Milford Haven Estuary.

Early History

Several prehistoric sites have been identified in the area. Worked flints have been found along the western cliffs. People settled and began farming during the Neolithic period (3,500 - 2,000 BC); more sophisticated flint tools from this period were found at several sites near Brunt Farm and are now at Tenby museum. Bronze was introduced probably through trade; a very early example of 'Beaker' occupation was found at Dale Point which has a carbon date figure for 790BC. There are three Iron Age Rathes in the area, which would have been used by the Welsh to defend against attacks from the Irish and the Vikings. The most prominent can be seen at West Dale. The name Dale is derived from the Viking word for Valley. The area was settled by the Normans in approximately 1100AD.

Dale Castle

There appear to be few reliable records of the original castle in which the De Vale family lived around 1100. The present house was built in approximately 1700 and was thereafter remodelled twice, the last around the beginning of the 20th century. There are older buildings to the south of the present house which may have formed part of the ancient building.

Dale Castle & St James Church



The Lordship of Dale is recorded as belonging to the Paynter family, who originated from Cornwall, then, by marriage, came into the possession of the Allens from Gelliswick near Milford Haven. They were followed by the Lloyds from Cardiganshire, who changed their name to Lloyd Philipps on the death of the 1st Lord Milford in 1823.

The present owner is Martyn H.B. Ryder a grandson of the late Colonel Rhodri Lloyd Philipps.

Church and Chapels of Dale

Close to the castle, the parish church, dedicated to St James the Great, is situated in the sheltered valley connecting Dale's western and eastern beaches. The nave and chancel show signs of medieval features, and the tower was added later, probably around the year 1500. The church was completely rebuilt in the 18th century and renovated again after it was struck by lightning in 1889. A leaflet is available detailing the history of the church.

Congregational and Wesleyan Chapels existed in Dale from the 18th - 20th centuries. However in the 1960s the former, situated on the Brig Quay, closed and was converted into a private house. Remnants of the old Wesleyan Chapel still exist near the former school.



Church Gate

Dale as a Port

Nestling as it does in the lee of the prevailing south westerlies, Dale provides a safe haven and anchorage. Dale in the 18th century was an ale producing centre and exported beer to Liverpool. General cargoes were also carried as part of the coastal trade. However the main traffic during the 18th, 19th and early 20th centuries was the transportation of limestone,

coal and culm (a mixture of coal dust and clay) to the beaches where the kilns existed to burn lime for the local

farms. Lime was used to reduce the acidity of the local soil.

Pickleridge and Castle Beach are typical examples of kilns.

Commercial fishing has featured locally from at least the late 1500s. Boat building flourished up to the late 1960s. Today Dale is a thriving water based centre for leisure craft including a Yacht Club and Wind & Sail Centre.



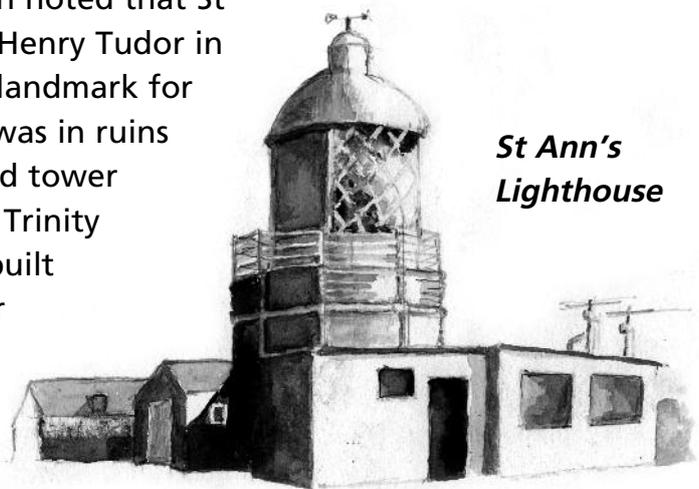
***Limekiln
Pickleridge***

Military Sites

A prominent location on the mouth of Milford Haven, Dale has had a defensive role for many centuries. On 7th August 1485, Henry Tudor and troops landed at Mill Bay. They marched unopposed to Leicestershire where, at Bosworth Field, Henry successfully defeated Richard III and claimed the throne. In later centuries the fear of invasion prompted plans to fortify the Haven. In the mid 1800s West Blockhouse and Dale Point Fort were established. During WWI gun emplacements were established near West Blockhouse. Dale Point Fort was used as a Signal Station and as an anchor point for the Haven's defensive boom. During WWII almost the whole peninsula was commandeered for military purposes. The old lighthouse at St Ann's Head was fitted with a concrete observation box and became the HQ of the Milford Haven Fire Command and the Royal Navy's War Signal Station. In later years the lighthouse was utilized as the Coastguard Headquarters. A hut near Snailton Farm is all that remains of a former RAF radar station. An aerodrome north of Dale was constructed for use by the RAF Coastal Command for anti-submarine operations and was later used as an airbase by the Navy. Known as HMS Goldcrest, it was mainly a training station for Naval aircraft pilots. The runways can still be seen today. Officers and Radar operators/plotters were trained at the base at Kete, which continued as a RN Air Direction and Meteorology Training School and was commissioned as HMS Harrier in 1948, until it closed in 1960.

St Ann's Head Lighthouse

The Pembrokeshire Historian George Owen noted that St Ann's Chapel, thought to be endowed by Henry Tudor in gratitude for his safe landing, served as a landmark for ships approaching the Haven. The chapel was in ruins when Owen knew it in 1600, but the round tower remained. In 1713 with rights leased from Trinity House, Joseph Allen the local landowner built the first lighthouse at St Ann's Head. Later a High Light and a Low Light were built which worked in conjunction to provide leading lights for safe entry into the Haven. The present lighthouse was rebuilt in 1844.

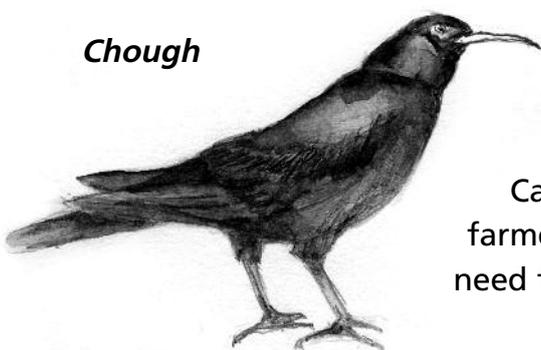


*St Ann's
Lighthouse*

Agriculture

Farming in Dale over the centuries has changed very little, always following a mixed farming pattern. Frost free, with high levels of sunshine, the fertile soil produces crops of early potatoes, cereals, fodder crops and good grazing for dairy cows, beef cattle and sheep. The tenanted family farms, several of which date back to the medieval period, are now owned by the Dale Castle Estate. All the land in Dale continues to be farmed today but modern mechanisation has reduced the need for farm labourers.

Chough



Dale Windmill

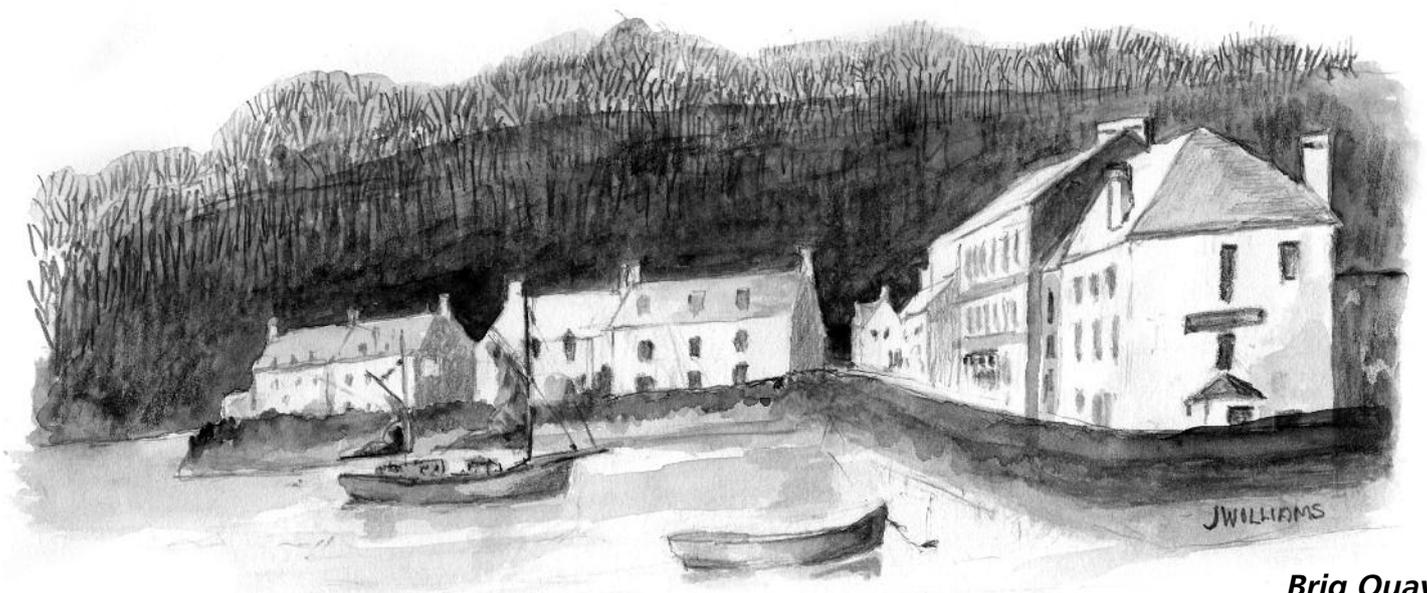
On the north side of Dale the unusual squat sloping sided circular tower, with thick stone walls, was a working mill during the 19th century. Oral stories suggest that a man who was blinded during the Napoleonic Wars supervised the rebuilding and may have adapted the design from continental windmills. Listed in 1997, it is now in the process of being restored. Several millstones remain, some consisting of French burrstone, a tough limestone traditionally favoured for millstones.



THE OLD SCHOOL

Education

Records show that education in Dale may have begun in the middle of the 19th century. Ann Stephens was listed on the 1841 census as a school mistress. By 1846 a Madame Bevans provided some education for 72 children through a charitable trust. The school building was a former corn store lent and furnished by the landowner Mr Lloyd Philipps. Mr William Edwards was appointed Headmaster when a new building was finished in 1876. Numbers stayed constant. In 1940/41 evacuees arrived. New houses were built in the village to accommodate naval families following the commission of Kete in 1944. From 1946 all children over 11 years attended secondary schools in Milford Haven. Following the closure of Kete in 1960 numbers dwindled. Marloes children joined Dale in 1963 but numbers dropped during the 1970's, 1980's and 1990's until the school finally closed its doors in 2003. Today children attend primary school in St Ishmaels and Herbrandston. In 1947 Dale Fort became the centre for the West Wales Field Society. The centre provided courses to promote education and conservation of the unspoilt west Wales countryside. In 1961 the centre was purchased by the Field Studies Council, who continue to provide courses such as marine biology.



Brig Quay

Life in Dale in bygone days

Dale has several Grade 2 Listed Buildings.

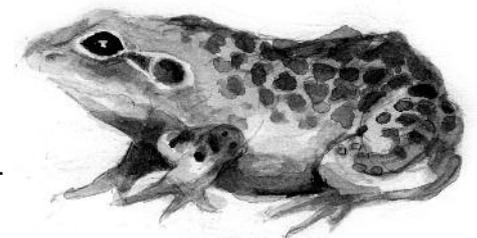
In addition to the church, castle, lighthouse, forts, limekilns and windmill, the older buildings clustered round the 'Brig Quay' and the larger farmhouses are mostly of 18th century origin and built in a country Georgian style. The church, chapels and school would have been focal points for concerts, parties, amateur dramatics, whist drives, dances, displays and fetes. Today, these activities are still well supported and enjoyed.

The village inn, or inns - as records suggest that there were at one time

about 14 ale houses here - were a cheerful, friendly meeting places providing welcome refreshment after a hard day's work in the fields or at sea. Nowadays the Griffin Inn and the Yacht Club carry on this tradition.

Dale Fair, with its famous pudding - thick, creamy rice studded with sultanas and raisins - was once an annual highlight. Competitions and sports were held, with stalls, fairground rides, music and bright lights making it a truly festive occasion. In more recent times, a Carnival and Regatta continued the festivities.

Shops and workshops, too, were a necessity in the village; a Post Office was established in the mid 19th century and later housed the first telephone in the village. Fish and lobsters were caught and sold locally. A butcher, tailor, cobbler, draper, ironmonger, boat builder and blacksmith had premises here, as well as general grocers, selling all sorts of goods from candles to cheese.



Dale Frog - Emblem of Dale

Country Code

Respect • Protect • Enjoy

- Be safe - plan ahead and follow any signs.
- Leave gates and property as you find them.
- Protect plants and animals, and take your litter home.
- Keep dogs under close control.
- Consider other people.