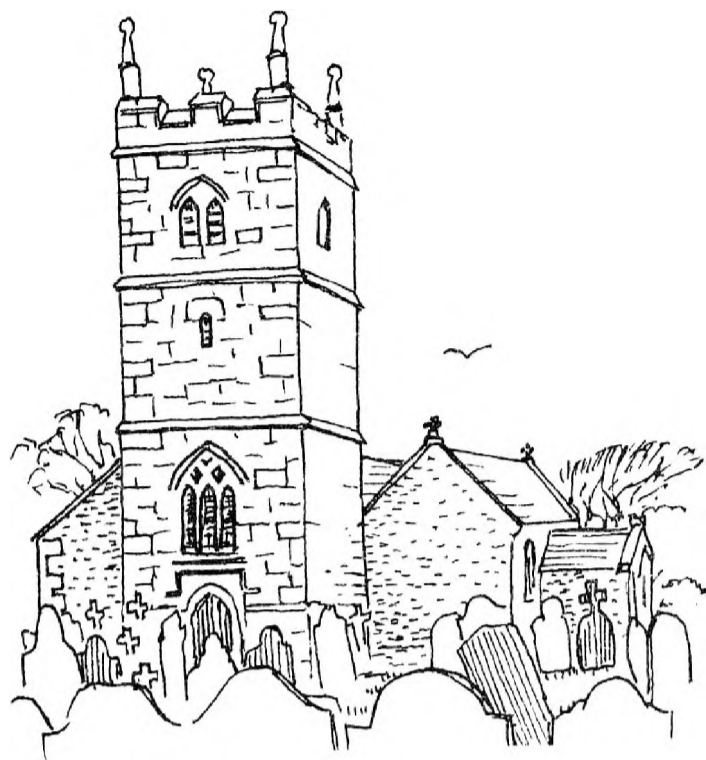


St Endellion Church



"St Endellion! St Endellion! The name is like a ring of bells. I travelled late one summer evening to Cornwall in a motor car. The road was growing familiar, Delabole, with its slate quarry past, then Pendoggett. Gateways in the high fern-stuffed hedges showed sudden glimpses of the sea. Port Isaac Bay with its sweep of shadowy cliffs stretched all along to Tintagel. The wrinkled Atlantic Ocean had the evening light upon it. The stone and granite manor house of Tresungers with its tower and battlements was tucked away out of the wind on the slope of a valley and there, on the top of the hill was the old church of Saint Endellion."

John Betjeman

St Endellion Church is one of England's holy places, an ancient collegiate church with four prebends, a mile from the sea and surrounded by fields. John Betjeman observed that the church goes on praying even when there is no one in it, and it has a sense of spiritual community which affects so many who come here.

St Endellion (Cornish: Sen Endelyn) is a civil parish and village and takes its name from Saint Endelienta who is said to have evangelized the district in the fifth century and to have been one of the children of King Brychan. Two nearby wells are named after her. Her feast day is April 29th.

Saint Endelienta was a Cornish saint of the 5th and 6th century - believed to be a daughter of the Welsh King Brychan and a native of South Wales who travelled to North Cornwall to join her siblings in converting the locals to Christianity. Legend says that she was a goddaughter of King Arthur and that she lived as a hermit at Trentinney with only cow's milk as food. The cow was killed by the Lord of Trentinney after straying onto his land. He in turn is said to have been killed by Endelienta's Godfather after Arthur was angered by the deed. However, Endelienta was said to be unhappy that Trentinney had been killed in her name, and restored both the cow and the nobleman back to life.

Following a vision of her death, Endelienta is said to have asked that upon her death, her body should be placed on a sledge or cart drawn by bullocks, and that she should be buried at the place where they stopped. She is thought to have died on April 29th some time in the sixth century, and possibly at the hands of Saxon pirates. She was buried at the top of a hill, and a church built over her grave. The present church at St Endellion stands on that site.

A chapel dedicated to Saint Endelienta survived on the site of her hermitage at Trenteney until the 16th century, while her shrine at the Church of St Endellion was a site of pilgrimage throughout the Middle Ages. It was virtually destroyed during the English Reformation, but the base survives to the present day and can still be viewed.

In 2005 a local iconographer was commissioned to produce an icon of Saint Endelienta, even though there were no known images of her on which to base the work.

On August 25th 2010, our Prime Minister, David Cameron and his wife Samantha named their new daughter Florence Rose Endellion after the village of St Endellion, reflecting the fact she was born whilst the Cameron family were holidaying nearby.

