

May 30, 1990

Dear Mabyn,

Well, there really was a St. Mabyn, and there really is a town named after her! Once I had the bee in my bonnet, nothing could stop me from going there, so one day while the rest of the group took a trip by bus to Lands' End and Penzance, I walked from Wadebridge up to St. Mabyn and back -- the round trip was nine miles but remember I was there on a "walking holiday" so it fit in well. It was a glorious day for it, too. When I got to the town I first went to the church -- dating back to Norman times -- and read a little about St. Mabyn, then went to the Post Office/general store and talked to the postmaster. He suggested I look for Donald Hoskin at the pub: he's 84, was born in St. Mabyn, and was the postmaster for 38 years. He turned out to be a delightful fellow and I spent more than an hour at the pub, talking to him and others, having a Cornish pasty for lunch with English bitter. Everybody was intrigued to hear why I was there, and the pub owner gave me a book that mentions St. Mabyn. By the way, the legend is that a Celtic saint named St. Brechan came to Cornwall and had 24 children (!), all of whom became saints and founded churches, and St. Mabyn was one of them. She founded the church of St. Mabyn in 587 AD.

I don't think anyone else can understand how startling it was to look around and see "Mabyn" on signs all over the place, correctly spelled, too. It was, for reasons I don't even fully understand, very affirming.

Anyway, here's a map with my walking route marked on it, a copy of the relevant page from Hidden Places of Devon and Cornwall, and a couple of pictures. Hope you enjoy them!

It was good to talk with you. I hope the businesses are going well and that you also get some time off this summer. New England is a great place to visit if you and Pat can work that out. I still vividly remember your mom calling me when she was here a few years ago on a fall foliage tour with Virginia. I'd love to have you stay with me if you do come.

Love,

