

Karen Sawyer reveals how the magic of Pembrokeshire inspired her to write her first book

# Creative spirit

PEMBROKESHIRE is beautiful, there's no doubt about it. Whether walking the coast path or visiting the ancient bluestone hills of the Preselis, I can't help feeling enlivened and inspired to create.

For me, nature is a source of great energy where I receive healing, signs and information - where lyrics, complete with tune, will sometimes pop into my head, and I get crazy ideas like 'write a book!'.  
 This is precisely how I came to write *Soul Companions: Conversations with Contemporary Wisdom-Keepers - A Collection of Encounters with Spirit*.

I was living in Manorbier then, and would walk my dog on the beach every morning. The place has a special magic about it, where even the stones on the beach guide and point the way.

When I had 'writer's block' and needed inspiration, I found a stone with a fossil embedded into it that resembled a shining light bulb (like you get in cartoons when someone has a 'eureka!' moment).

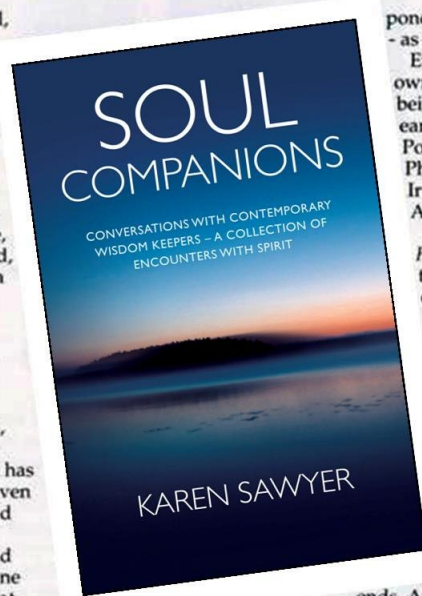
When I was feeling confused and needing some insight, I found a stone with an 'eye' on it. Another time, I found a stone with a 'key' shape on it.

Most people consider stones to be inanimate, lifeless 'lumps' but, in my experience, they are certainly not. Everything, from the smallest flower to the highest mountain, is imbued with Spirit, or essence, that will teach you if you are receptive enough to listen. The vibrant natural world we live in is our guide and perhaps our greatest ally.

In addition, there are invisible beings that guard and protect the natural world. They are said to govern the elements of earth, air, fire and water - hence they are collectively referred to as 'Elementals'.

Earth spirits are affiliated to rocks, minerals, soil, mountains and caves. The spirits of the air can be found in the wind, sky and clouds - assisting the growth of all plants, trees and flowers.

Fire spirits govern heat and light, and the guardians of water are the spirits of springs and wells, marshes, lakes,



ponds and streams, waterfalls, rivers and oceans - as well as mists and rain.

Every country throughout the world has its own myths and legends to tell of these magical beings that live in an Otherworld within the earth - they are the Tylwyth Teg in Wales, the Pobel Vean in Cornwall, Fées in Brittany, the Phi in Thailand, and the Alcheringa and Iruntarinia to the Arunta tribes of Central Australia.

Malidoma Patrice Somé, in his book, *The Healing Wisdom of Africa*, describes his encounters with the kontomblé in Africa, and it has often been said that Ireland contains two races - the visible human beings we call Celts, and invisible beings known as the Sidhe or Tuatha De Danann.

In particular, the Celtic lands have an oral tradition rich with encounters with these magical spirits - remnants of ancient bardic tales told for a perhaps a thousand years or more before they were eventually recorded in writing.

A good example is the Welsh *Mabinogion* (1300-1425), where King Arthur makes an appearance.

Incidentally, in the older Arthurian legends, Arthur is an incarnate fairy king with a mystic brotherhood known as the Round Table, his wife is

Gwenhwyfar (whose name translates to 'white fairy'), and their son is called Llacheu ('bright one') who is credited with clairvoyant vision.

Lancelot is the foster-son of a fairy woman, and Galahad the offspring of Lancelot and the fairy woman Elayne. The old Welsh legends say that Arthur lives in the Otherworld, and prophesy that he will one day return.

In *The Fairy-Faith in Celtic Countries* (first published in 1911), the anthropologist W.Y Evans-Wentz shares a fine collection of testimonies from indigenous Celtic people regarding the existence of an invisible race of beings inhabiting the land.



The mysterious appearance of small, silvery-white orbs is evidence to Karen that we are not alone.

One of those, Mrs. Betsy Thomas, then aged 100 (in 1909) said: "I saw one of the Tylwyth Teg about sixty years ago, near the Tynymyndd farm, as I was passing by at night. He was like a little man.

"When I approached him he disappeared suddenly. I have heard about the dancing and singing of the Tylwyth Teg, but never have heard the music myself. The old people said the Tylwyth Teg could appear and disappear when they liked; and I think as the old people did, that they are some sort of spirits."

In ancient tales, these beings are rarely described as the gossamer-winged dainty 'cuties' prevalent in children's stories today - on the contrary, they were extremely powerful, wild and often volatile. Respect and caution were essential if you ever encountered such a being, but, when not offended, they would become beneficent allies and guardian spirits.

Long ago, human beings lived in harmony with these beings and with the natural cycles of the land. There have been many tales told and songs sung of human and faery beings crossing between the boundaries between the worlds, and alliances - even marriages - between the two.

At some point in history, that connection was lost or broken. Perhaps human beings, with their corrupt societies and pollution, did not respect these ancient ones of the land, so (with exception) they withdrew from their interactions with us - or maybe we lost our subtle connection to these earth spirits as we constantly developed new towns and cities.

With the increasingly rapid technological advancement of humanity, we appear to be even further away from our roots - from the earth. It is imperative at this time that we remember our connection with the land, and reconnect to the power within the land. Our continued existence depends on it.

As our world rapidly moves towards ever greater spiritual, environmental and political challenges there is an urgent need for us to listen to the voices of well-respected healers, seers, visionaries and shamans who can share their wisdom, insights and leadership to inspire and guide us to make our planet a healthier, more peaceful and equitable place to live.

For two years, I met and spoke with 45 such remarkable people. It was inevitable that many of my personal beliefs and ideas would be challenged.

For instance, I used to naively think that all spirit guides were 'dead people', alive in another dimension 'somewhere up there'. Through my research for this book, I now fully accept that, dead or alive, every life form has a spirit body and therefore has the potential to be a spirit guide.

Contact with spirit beings is a natural and accepted daily occurrence in many indigenous tribes throughout the world. Traditionally, those who are 'called by the spirits' to be a bridge between the worlds become a shaman or medicine person. Some shamans enter an altered state of awareness by 'journeying' to contact spirit helpers, or allies, in order to gain information that will heal or be of benefit to the people.

By contrast, in our Western society, the ability to communicate with spirit (or mediumship, for want of a better word) is often treated with scepticism or, at best, is seen as an extraordinary gift blessed to a chosen few.

We are suspicious of anything we can't see with the naked eye and want tangible proof that something exists.

Yet we readily accept that our radios and televisions are picking up on normally invisible phenomena at different frequencies and are translating that information into sound and pictures; they, too, are 'mediums'.

Other worlds exist that are in the same place as our radio and television signals, but on different frequencies. A human being is a highly sensitive instrument that does more or less the same job as your TV and radio. We are all able, consciously and subconsciously, to tune into these frequencies. These realms are not heavenward - they exist all around us.

I was in my teens when I first discovered that other forms of life exist within our own. One night as I was drifting off to sleep, I opened my eyes and saw several small silvery-white orbs, dancing and zipping around. They suddenly took off, disappearing through the wall!

A few years later, I saw a large red orb bobbing around on the Black Mountain in Wales. It split into two, danced around and merged into one

again. Observing it for some time, it occurred to me that it was intelligent and knew my mind. Using my thoughts, I urged it to come nearer - and it did, at which point I became nervous and told it to back off - and, again, it did.

We played this game for a while until I became anxious about its origin and purpose and mentally told it to go away. It did and, realising it was benevolent, I yelled, 'Come back!' (It didn't; it had probably had quite enough of my silly behaviour by then). To this day, these orbs of light continue to appear in my life.

It is my belief that we are all mediums, to a greater and lesser degree. Every one of us has the ability to transform our perception of reality to integrate and tune in to other dimensions. It just takes a little practice.

The isolation of life as we perceive it to be is an illusion. Whether we are conscious of it or not, there are many dimensions of existence overlapping and permeating the world as we know it. 'It' is part of us and we are part of 'it' - we are never alone because we are all one.

Every one of us - whatever nation, race, religion or belief - has spirit helpers that guide us on our journey through life.

*'Soul Companions' is published this month by O Books. 'Pembrokeshire Life' readers are invited to attend the book launch on Friday April 18 from 6.30pm to 8pm in the round room at Haverfordwest library, with special guests - psychic artists Patrick Gamble and Pembrokeshire's Angela George.*

*For further information, including forthcoming Soul Companions events, visit: [www.soulcompanions.org](http://www.soulcompanions.org) or e-mail: [info@soulcompanions.org](mailto:info@soulcompanions.org). The website features new conversations and resources, and also has a community forum.*



*Karen Sawyer's first book, 'Soul Companions' is published this month by O Books.*