

HMS Conway memorial window to be unveiled at Anglesey church

Wednesday 8 April, 2026

A stained glass window commemorating the training ship HMS Conway will be unveiled at Llanedwen Church, Llanfairpwllgwyngyll on 18 April.

The ceremony will include the dedication of the window and the laying up of a Conway ensign. It will be led by Rev Simon Douglas Lane, honorary padre to HMS Conway.

The memorial reflects the ship's long connection with the area. For many years, cadets attended services at Llanedwen Church, walking from Plas Newydd to worship alongside the Marquis of Anglesey and his household.

HMS Conway was moored off Plas Newydd on the Menai Strait and previously at Glyn Garth off Bangor. The ship ran aground in 1953 while being towed for repair work.

The event has been organised as a private gathering for former HMS Conway cadets, along with representatives of the Friends of HMS Conway and the Conway Club. Due to limited space, attendance is restricted to invited guests and parishioners.

The window has been designed and created by glass artist Jayne Ford. It features three panels, with a central image of HMS Conway as a wooden sailing ship of the line. The side panels show seagulls around the ship's masts, reflecting a long-standing tradition that the birds represent the spirits of former cadets.

This idea was captured in a 1933 poem, The Conway Gulls, by Poet Laureate John Masefield, himself a former cadet. Despite the mess caused by the birds, they were never driven away by those on board. HMS Conway served as a training school ship from 1859 to 1974, preparing more than 11,000 boys aged between 13 and 18 for careers as officers in the Royal and Merchant navies.

The new window has been funded by the Friends of HMS Conway and former cadets. Similar memorial windows have previously been installed at Birkenhead Priory, Bangor Pier and Plas Newydd, all locations associated with the ship's history. A defaced blue ensign, linked to the Royal Naval Reserve in which Conway cadets were enrolled, will also be laid up during the service. A model of the ship, donated by Mr Matt Burrow DL, will be presented as part of the occasion.

Alfie Windsor, Trustee of the Friends of HMS Conway, said: "Conway training was acknowledged as amongst the best worldwide and it produced young officers of the highest standards. Her cadets went on to become leading mariners around the world, captaining ships and fleets. They gave a life of loyalty and service to their country.

"The Friends of HMS Conway exist to safeguard the good name and memory of the ship and her cadets. We have already created similar memorial windows at her old moorings on the River Mersey, off Bangor Pier and at Plas Newydd. The Llanedwen church window is a fine and moving culmination of our efforts."

Alfie adds, "Conway cadets are intensely proud of their association with Plas Newydd and Ynys Mon and look back on their time in the ship with fondness and huge pleasure. It was a privilege to have trained in such beautiful surroundings. Llanedwen church was our church so, as memories of Conway fade, it is reassuring to know that the ship's memory will be permanently enshrined by this stained glass window."

The unveiling marks the latest addition to a series of memorials recognising the ship's historical links to the Menai Strait and surrounding communities.

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Esgobaeth Bangor

T. 07586469556

E. mattbatten@cinw.org.uk

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