

Mid Wales church offers unique autumn stay for walkers

Friday 5 September, 2025

Walkers looking for a new way to explore the Welsh countryside this autumn can now book overnight stays at St Gwrhai's Church in Penstrowed, Powys — one of only two “champing” sites in Wales.

Champing, a blend of “church” and “camping”, offers exclusive overnight access to historic churches no longer used for regular services. St Gwrhai's, built in the 1860s on a site with Christian heritage dating back to the 6th century, sits beside the River Severn and provides access to walking routes across Mid Wales.

The church accommodates up to four guests and includes a fully equipped kitchen in the adjacent hall, an indoor toilet, and secure space for bikes. Dogs are welcome. Most guests stay for one or two nights, with solo travellers, small groups, and families all booking during the first season.

Located an hour from both Aberystwyth and Shrewsbury, the site is well placed for exploring the Cambrian Mountains, which lie 20 minutes away and include nine Dark Sky Discovery sites. The Severn Way — a 215-mile walking route to Bristol — begins nearby, and guided walking groups operate in the area.

Stephen Leggett, who coordinates the champing initiative at St Gwrhai's Church, says, “We've had walkers, cyclists and families all staying at St Gwrhai's this season, and the feedback has been fantastic. It's a peaceful base for exploring the Cambrian Mountains and the Severn Way, and a unique way to experience the landscape and heritage of Mid Wales.”

Reviews have praised the warm welcome they received and comfortable campbeds, “The stained glass window in the church created beautiful light and the campbeds were comfy,” said Anthea Murr following her stay.

“We had lovely weather and made good use of the garden bench to enjoy the views of the surrounding hills while having a cuppa.”

The second champing site is situated at St Dona's Church, Beaumaris, Anglesey. The church nestles in the hillside overlooking Llanddona beach with views of Red Wharf Bay and Benllech in the distance. Both champing sites in Wales are located within the Diocese of Bangor, which actively supports its churches in diversifying income and attracting walkers, outdoor enthusiasts, and visitors through initiatives such as champing.

Bookings are available through the Champing website, with stays priced per person per night. Guests have exclusive use of the church during their stay.

For more information or to book, visit <https://champing.co.uk/church/penstrowed/>

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