New pilgrimage route launches in North West Wales

Wednesday 18 September, 2024

Llwybr Cadfan, a major new pilgrimage trail in North West Wales, launches Saturday 28 September in Tywyn, Gwynedd and offers adventurers and spiritual seekers the chance to explore the region's breathtaking and historically significant landscapes.

Llwybr Cadfan is a 128 mile (207km) pilgrimage trail and is named after the 6th-century Saint Cadfan. The 12-day journey starts in Tywyn, Gwynedd, and leads pilgrims to the sacred Ynys Enlli (Bardsey Island) off the Ll?n Peninsula, known for its spiritual significance and breathtaking scenery.

Along the route, pilgrims visit 17 historic churches and six holy wells, connecting with North West Wales' rich spiritual heritage. The trail winds through areas of outstanding natural beauty and unspoilt coastline in Meirionydd, Eifionydd, and the Ll?n Peninsula.

The Llwybr Cadfan launch takes place at Saint Cadfan’s Church, Tywyn in Gwynedd – the first church on the pilgrimage trail. The launch begins with an opportunity to walk the first stage of Llwybr Cadfan from Saint Cadfan’s Church to St Mary and St Egryn's Church, Llanegryn, and concludes with a special service featuring Christian singer Cass Meurig and poets Siân Northey and Siôn Aled.

During the day visitors can find out more about the pilgrimage trail and take part in a bilingual poetry workshop inspired by the landscape of the pilgrimage trail. Activities include a kids pilgrimage stamp workshop, a prayer event, and a mini-pilgrimage exploring the historic Cadfan Stone – a 7th or 8th century stone that holds a linear Latin cross and the earliest known inscription of the Welsh language.

Archbishop of Wales Andrew John, who will be one of the first pilgrims to walk the first stage of the route, says, “The launch of Llwybr Cadfan marks a new chapter in the ongoing tradition and renewed popularity of pilgrimage in Wales. I am delighted to be one of the first pilgrims to walk the first stage of the trail.

“With the success of programmes such as BBC’s Pilgrimage, we have seen more and more people explore their spirituality by walking ancient pilgrimage routes and visiting churches and holy wells to discover our rich Christian heritage as they seek answers to life’s problems.

“The Llwybr Cadfan pilgrimage is an opportunity for individuals to step away from the hustle and bustle of everyday life, experience the tranquillity of nature, spend time with God in prayer and reflection, and return home with a renewed sense of peace.

“I hope and pray that many more people will discover or deepen their spirituality as they embark on what can be a life-changing pilgrimage.”

Pilgrims who walk Llwybr Cadfan will wind their way through ancient oak rainforests, past remote churches, and along expansive beaches, immersing themselves in the natural beauty and spiritual history of the region.

The trail includes historical and religious highlights such as:

- The Two Kings Statue near Harlech Castle, inspired by the tale in the Mabinogi, and anthology of early Welsh folklore compiled in the 12 and 13th centuries.
- Saint Cybi’s Well, believed to hold healing properties with many people traveling large distances to discover its healing waters.
- St Hywyn’s Church, Aberdaron – the final rest stop for pilgrims on the journey to Ynys Enlli. The landscape of this area inspired the poetry of Welsh poet and priest R.S. Thomas.

The pilgrimage route is available now and pilgrims are welcome to begin their pilgrimage at any time. Visit https://pererin.com/llwybyr-cadfan/ or download Outdoor Active app and search for Llwybr Cadfan.

Visit bangor.eglwysyngnghymru.org.uk/ for more information about the Open Day and sign up to the walk.

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