



Village Life in Wales

In the Llŷn Peninsula and Snowdonia

Be surrounded by some of the most beautiful scenery in Britain

April 17th - 25th 2012

June 12th – 20th 2012

September 4th - 12th 2012

9 days - 8 nights

Our “Village Life” Tour

Our Villager Life in Wales tour programme is now in its seventh year and, as in previous years; we focus on some of the special features of the country and its people. We are justly proud of our lush well-kept countryside, picturesque villages, small market towns, and fine gardens. We have some of the best examples of medieval castles in Europe and our National Trust properties are amongst the best in Britain. The tour is relaxed and unhurried with plenty opportunities to gain a genuine insight into the local culture and taste the delicious regional cuisine.

The Llŷn Peninsula

The Llŷn Peninsula lies on the north-west corner of Wales, dividing Cardigan Bay and Caernarfon Bay, and being west of the Snowdonia Mountains and in the Gulf Stream the region enjoys a mild, drier climate than the rest of Wales.

The peninsula stretches out around 30 miles into the Irish Sea and is surrounded by 100 miles of coastline. There are sweeping bays, small coves and rocky cliffs and impressive headlands. Llŷn is notable for its prime quality agricultural land, quaint villages and over 20 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). For this part of the tour we have chosen once more to stay with Ruth Evans and her family at Sygun Fawr Country House Hotel (www.sygunfawr.co.uk) on the outskirts of the beautiful mountain village of Beddgelert. Sygun is a relaxed, friendly and informal 17th C Manor House full of atmospheric period features with low beams, exposed stone walls, cosy nooks and crannies and an inglenook fireplace - the perfect place to relax and unwind.



Llyn Idwal

Snowdonia National Park

Snowdonia is the second largest National Park in Britain covering an area of 840 square miles. The remoteness provided a hiding place for the last true prince of Wales, Llywelyn ap Gruffydd in 1277 during his final battle with Edward I and it is from here Owain Glyndwr carried on his valiant struggle in the early 15th century. Mount Snowdon at 1085m (3560ft) is the highest peak in Britain south of the Scottish Highlands, as well as the mountains the park contains a wide range of other natural features – rivers, lakes, waterfalls, forests, moorland glacial valleys, wonderful beaches and a beautiful coastline. The population of

the region is around 26,000 of which 65% speak Welsh, one of the oldest spoken languages in Europe, as their mother tongue. Traditional family farms here are numerous with sheep breeding being the main activity. For this part of the tour we move down from the mountains to the seaside resort of Llandudno to enjoy the hospitality of Michael and David at their cosy, award winning late nineteenth century hotel on the seafront. This town is a classic British seaside resort where the seafront is lined with a wide promenade and backed with rows of elegant Victorian pastel coloured facades all framed between the cliffs of the Great and Little Orme Headlands.

Day 1 Tuesday

Meet the rest of the group and Idwal your guide for pre dinner drink at Sygun Fawr Country House Hotel followed by evening dinner.

Dinner and overnight at Sygun Fawr

Day 2 Wednesday

Discover the village of Beddgelert visit oldest Art Gallery and 16th C Manor House (NT)

After a familiarisation walk around the village we make our way to the superb 150 year old Victorian Gothic mansion of Oriel Plas Glyn-y-Weddw one of Wales' most picturesque art venues located in the village of Llanbedrog. After lunch, our journey continues along the south coast of the peninsula to Plas yn Rhiw (NT) a small 16th C Manor House rescued from neglect and lovingly restored by the three Keating sisters who bought it in 1938 as we walk through the house, outbuildings and gardens we see what everyday life was like for the sisters in the 1930's. The property is located on a hillside and enjoys grand views across Cardigan Bay; the garden contains many beautiful flowering trees and shrubs, with beds framed by box hedges and grass paths.

Overnight and dinner at Sygun Fawr

Day 3 Thursday

Criccieth, the Villages of Arduwy valley and Portmeirion

Criccieth is surely one of the most attractive villages on the peninsula with its lovely beaches as part of our visit we drop in at Caffi Cwrt for tea and home baked Bara Brith – a traditional Welsh fruit cake. The inside of Caffi Cwrt is like some old Auntie's sitting room - there are nick-knacks everywhere, pieces of pottery, brass bellows, pictures, hundreds of keys and dozens of jugs hanging from the ceiling joists and Meira, the owner enjoys telling visitors where many of these objects came from. We then continue our journey by crossing the picturesque Dwyryd Estuary to see some of the villages of Arduwy and remote valley of Cwm Nantcol and we end the day with a visit to Portmeirion village and gardens. This unique 'fantasy village' was built between 1925 and 1975 by the late architect Clough Williams-Ellis the village was also the setting for the 70's cult TV series "*The Prisoner*" starring the late Patrick McGoohan. We will enjoy a privately guided tour of the village and for the more energetic there will be an opportunity to wander into the 'Gwyllt Woodlands', above the village.

Dinner and overnight at Sygun Fawr

Overnight at Sygun Fawr



Caffi Cwrt

Day 4 Friday



Caernarfon Castle

Welsh Highland Railway, Caernarfon Castle, the Black Boy Inn,

We begin the day with a pleasant drive to the Royal Town of Caernarfon, this town's symbolic status was emphasized when King Edward 1 of England installed his wife Eleanor in the unfinished castle 1284 to make sure that his son, the first English Prince of Wales, was born here. In 1969, the castle gained worldwide fame as the setting for the Investiture of Prince Charles as Prince of Wales. After a tour of the castle we'll enjoy a light lunch at the historic Black Boy Inn a place that has provided a welcome retreat to weary travellers for over four centuries. After some free time to enjoy more of this lively market town our day will conclude with a

twenty mile journey on the Welsh Highland Railway through the mountains back to Beddgelert.

Overnight and dinner at Sygun Fawr

Day 5 Saturday

Departing Beddgelert midmorning and journey through the high peaks of the Snowdonia National Park to the seaside resort of Llandudno to check in at Can y Bae hotel mid afternoon. After a familiarisation drive around the town the remainder of the day will be at leisure.

Overnight and dinner at Can y Bae

Day 6 Sunday

Conwy Valley, Woollen Mill Lunch and Pottery

Our journey will take us along the country lanes and through several small villages of the lower reaches of the Conwy valley to visit to Elaine and Morgan who are fifth generation of the Williams family at Trefriw Woollen Mill. At the mill the Williams' with a small team of dedicated workers manufactures Welsh double weave tapestry, bedspreads and tweeds in the traditional method using Dobcross looms. We then continue the short distance to the market town of Llanrwst, an ancient town with a long and often tragic history where your guide will



Trefriw Woollen Mill

take you on a short walking tour ending for lunch at 'Tu Hwnt i'r Bont' a former 15th century courthouse and is now one of the best "Tea Rooms" in Wales serving mouth-watering home baked scones. We then continue our journey to remote woodland by Porth Llwyd Falls to meet Vicky Buxton at her pottery studio and workshop where she makes a selection of ceramics, decorative stoneware and porcelain. Enjoy a demonstration by Vicky and see how she miraculously turns a piece of stick clay into an elegant pot.

Overnight and dinner at Can y Bae



Steam train travelling in Snowdonia

Day 7 Monday

Slate Museum, Penrhyn Castle (NT), Pub meal Choir rehearsal

The Slate industry in North Wales was as important to the local economy, culture and history of the area as was the Coal industry of South Wales. In the good times, quarry owners made massive profits from the industry, and the building of the enormous neo-Norman castle at Llandygai by the Pennant family is a fine example of how this wealth was spent. Architect Thomas Hopper supervised the construction between 1820 and 1845 and was passed to the National Trust upon the death of the last Lord

Penrhyn in 1948. We now see it fully restored with some of the original fine furniture and precious works of art in place.

In contrast, in the afternoon a visit to the Slate Museum this will tell the story of the industry from the workers standpoint. We see a film presentation which illustrates the harsh working condition, visit the miner's cottages and end our visit with a demonstration by Ifan, Carwyn or Dafydd all former miners, on how in earlier times boys as young as twelve were taught to split and 'dress' the slate.

We then make our way over to the Isle of Anglesey to enjoy a pub dinner and then onwards to the village of Bethesda to end our day with a visit the Penrhyn Male Voice Choir at their rehearsal rooms. Visitors are always given a warm welcome by Owain Arwel their dynamic young musical director and the 60 plus members, the choir was formed in the last decade of the 19thC and is one of the best known choirs in Wales.

Overnight at Can y Bae

Day 8 Tuesday

Bodnant Garden, Ogwen Valley, Mountain farm (NT)

One of the world's most spectacular gardens, Bodnant is situated above the River Conwy, with stunning views across Snowdonia. Begun in 1875, Bodnant is the creation of four generations of the Aberconway family, featuring huge Italianate terraces and formal lawns on its upper level, with a wooded valley, stream and wild garden below.

There are dramatic colours throughout the season, with fine collections of rhododendrons, magnolias and camellias

and the spectacular laburnum arch, a 55yd tunnel of golden blooms, from mid-May to early June. The garden was presented to the National Trust the Second Baron Aberconwy in 1949. In the afternoon we journey to Blaen y Nant a 302 hectare mixed farm high in the mountains of Snowdonia National Park, owned by the National Trust, and farmed organically by Gwyn Thomas whose family has been farmers in this region for over 350 years We meet Gwyn who will tell us about the challenges he faces as a farmer in this mountainous area at the same time as exploring this beautiful organic farm which is exceptionally rich in both landscape and wildlife.



Laburnum arch at Bodnant Garden

Overnight and dinner at Can y Bae

Day 9

Tour ends after breakfast

Tour Inclusions:

- Four night's bed and breakfast and four evening dinners at Sygun Country House Hotel.
- Four nights bed and breakfast and three dinners at Can y Bae Hotel
- A comprehensive daily sightseeing tour programme with the following inclusions:-
- Tea and 'Bara Brith' at Caffi Cwrt
- Lunch at the 'Black Boy Inn' a traditional country inn
- Visit Oriel Glyn y Weddw
- Visit the medieval 'Walled Town of Caernarfon and tour its mighty castle
- Visit Plas yn Rhiw (NT) – home of the Keating sisters
- Visit Woollen Mill
- Visit Pottery
- Visit Bodnant Garden (NT)
- Visit Ty Hwnt i'r Bont
- Visit Blaen y Nant farm
- Visit the Slate Museum
- Penrhyn Castle – home of the Pennant family
- Travel on the Welsh Highland railway
- Visit and private tour of Portmeirion the fantasy village
- Visit the rehearsal rooms of the Penrhyn Male Voice choir
- Services of experienced local driver /guide throughout
- Small group travel in our 16 seat Mercedes Coach

Price per Person: £ sharing £1099.00

Single Supplement:

£ £180

Deposit:

£100.00 per person at time of booking

Balance:

Due 60 days prior to departure. See our website for terms and conditions. www.countrylanetours.com

Optional Extra

Our 'Meet and Greet' and transfer services for this tour

We offer a mid-morning pick up from Manchester city and airport hotels, a sightseeing tour, lunch stop and some visits on route to arrive at the hotel late afternoon. For the return journey we visit the historic city of Chester for a few hours on route to your overnight stay at Manchester.

£150 per person return

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