



## Edern Church (SH 27953959)

**Directions:** Take the B4417 (Tudweiliog – Morfa Nefyn) and in the lower part of the village turn south (sign 'Woodlands Hall') and go 300m further. The church can be seen on Lôn Pwll Clai.

During the first half of the C19th the vicarage for the parish of Edern was Tŷ Coch (house + red) on Porthdinllaen beach, which these days is an inn. Then a new vicarage was built where the 'Woodlands Hall' hotel is these days.

The cell in the area was established by St. Edern, and there are churches incorporating his name in Bodedern, Anglesey, and in Plouédern, Brittany. He was the son of Cunedda and one of the group of monks who followed Beuno to Llŷn.

According to the Valuation of Norwich, there was a church here in 1254 – *Ecclesia Edern*.

Edern Church was built in 1867/8 using local stone, for a cost of £1,200 and on the foundations of a mediaeval building, but some of the roof timbers are from the C15th. It was planned in the shape of a cross, by an architect named Coad from London.

Hyde-Hall visited Edern in 1809-11 and when discussing the church he paid great attention to the local landowning family from Cefnamwlch, Tudweiliog who are buried in the cemetery.

Also in the cemetery is a stone in memory of the seamen who died in the 'Cyprian' tragedy in 1881.

A skull and crossbones on another stone suggest a connection with pirates, but it was usual to decorate gravestones like this in the C18th.

There is evidence the Bishop of Bangor had a palace in Edern, but we don't know where. It was probably close to the church.



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government





## The Pilgrim's Northern Route



The early pilgrims would congregate in Clynnog Fawr (SH 41464970) to prepare for the arduous journey over the Eifl Mountains and on to Aberdaron before crossing the Swnt (sound) to Ynys Enlli / Bardsey island.

The Church at Clynnog was established by Beuno. He was a saint who had a great influence on early Christianity in north-west Wales. He had a large group of followers and one of them was Aelhaearn, who established Llanaelhaearn Church. The pilgrims would call in there and drink from Aelhaearn's Well before going up to the pass of Bwlch yr Eifl and then down to Pistyll Church.

Another option would be to follow the base of Moel Carnguwch and visit Carnguwch Church, another of the 'llan' establishments belonging to Beuno.

If pilgrims had gone up through Bwlch yr Eifl, after passing the highest point they could rest at Eisteddfa – the sitting place – a field belonging to Pistyll Farm. That farm didn't have to pay a tithe, because it offered refuge to weary travellers.

It was Beuno who also established Pistyll Church, and you can still feel the atmosphere of the early centuries in the church, even these days.

On the hill after leaving the church and heading for Nefyn, there is a stone with a cross on it. This may have been a site for prayer or simply to show pilgrims the way on their journey.

In Llanfair in Nefyn in the Middle Ages there was a monastery. There Giraldu Cambrensis and Bishop Baldwin stayed overnight on Palm Sunday 1188. Nefyn has Stryd y Mynach (street of the monk) and Nefyn Maritime Museum in the old church. The Saintess Nefyn was commemorated here originally, but it was later consecrated to Mary because of the influence of the Marian Cult. In Stryd y

Ffynnon (street of the well), there is Ffynnon Fair (well of Mary), between the two churches of Nefyn.

The pilgrims could follow the coast from Nefyn to Aberdaron. They would go past Tudweiliog Church and the well Ffynnon Cwyfan then on to Llangwnnagl Church. From there, through Bodferin parish, where there is the site of Bodferin Church, and then to Aberdaron.

They could also go past the well at Ffynnon Gybi Bach (well + Cybi, the lesser) at the foot of Garn Boduan, go towards Garn Fadryn and visit Llandudwen Church and its healing well. Then past Bryncroes Church - then on to Aberdaron and St. Hywyn's Church.

## Pilgrimage in Llŷn



For a pilgrim, it's not important where they start from on their journey, but instead their experiences on the way and the end of the journey. Pilgrimage existed before the Christian period, and we can imagine that people would pay tribute to chieftains buried in dolmens, cairns and possibly under standing stones. They would visit at particular time of the year, especially the summer solstice and when there were significant movements of the constellations.

Water in special wells had particular healing powers or the ability to foretell the future, and they became holy, because of belief or superstition.

Gradually, with the spread of Christianity, the early Christians adopted the practices and traditions of the pagan community.

Superstition, legend, fear and naivety ruled people's lives, and they feared the uncertainty and fragility of life. They believed that illness and disability were a punishment for sins.

But the Christian priests, the 'early saints' came amongst them and offered hope. By visiting particular places and drinking water from a holy well, people came to believe their illnesses would be cured and their sins forgiven. If





they punished themselves on the journey and were given penance by a priest, that would promote recovery.

It was easier to get their lives in order by severing the link with their community and isolating themselves for a while, to pray.

That was the attraction of the island on the horizon seen by Cadfan from his cell in Tywyn, Meirionnydd, and he managed to persuade his followers to withdraw to Ynys Enlli – Bardsey Island. They did missionary work as they went on their journey and established 'llan' communities here and there, more often than not within reach of wells.

A monastic clas developed on the slopes of the mountain, Mynydd Anelog, priests were soon attracted to come to the far end of Llŷn, and Ynys Enlli developed to be a holy place.

The influence of Cadfan's followers spread beyond Llŷn, and Beuno and his followers also came to have a great influence on the communities of Llŷn.

The churches and their saints, the holy wells and signs of early Christianity to be seen in Llŷn these days are evidence of these pilgrims in the early centuries, and their history continues to enrich the area.

## Attractions for Pilgrims



The pilgrims could have come ashore easily in one of the creeks in this area, in boats similar to coracles. It was important to them to do missionary work on their journey, and then they could follow the paths leading to the Aberdaron area and through Anelog and Uwchmynydd. They would wait at the far end of Llŷn before crossing the dangerous Swnt over the sea to Enlli, and usually had to wait for favourable weather to get across. But there would be plenty of attractions in the area to deepen their religious experiences before they crossed the sea. Enlli was regarded as the Rome of Wales, and three visits to Enlli were equal to one visit to Rome.

The earliest pilgrims had found a particular place to retreat to on the slopes of the mountain in Anelog, and they established a clas there. This is probably the location of Capel Anelog (SH 15592745), one of the early lost chapels of Llŷn. This is where the stones, Cerrig Anelog, were discovered, evidence that Christianity had reached this area in the C5/6th. On one of the stones commemorates the priest Senacus and a 'host of brothers' and maybe many of the frail pilgrims who failed to complete the journey to Enlli are amongst them.

Afon Saint flows from Anelog to Aberdaron. There would be an opportunity to drink the medicinal waters of Ffynnon Saint (SH 16542671) and meditate at the altar of Allor Hywyn. This was the large flat stone near the well, destroyed when the bridge nearby was built. Pilgrims would visit Ffynnon Fair (well + Mary) (SH 13952519) in Uwchmynydd, at the edge of the Swnt. There they would try to find the marks of the hooves of *Ceffyl Mair* (horse + Mary) and the marks of Mary's fingers in the rocks, before drinking the holy water and returning up the steps, Grisiau Mair.

The chapel of Capel Mair (SH 13922534) was on the flat land between Mynydd Mawr and Mynydd Gwyddel and there bodies of the dead were kept, waiting for good weather to be taken to Enlli for burial. Accommodation was available at Gegin Fawr in Aberdaron or Cwrt, Uwchmynydd – a farm that did not have to pay the tithe because pilgrims were accommodated there.

When the weather allowed, boats would wait for people at Porth Meudwy (SH 16302552). This name (meudwy = hermit) and Bodermyd nearby refer to pilgrims and the time they spent living as hermits.

## Morfa Nefyn Church (SH 288401)





**Directions:** Take the B4412 (Morfa Nefyn – Bryncynan) in the village and turn into Lôn yr Eglwys.

This was a missionary church, built in the new village of Morfa Nefyn (sea marsh + Nefyn) in 1871. The village was growing; the roads convenient and the area had used the advantages that came with the plans to develop Porthdinllaen.

It's built of local granite and has a coloured window. The roof has green and blue slate in alternate rows, a rather unusual pattern.

Next to it is the Catholic Church of the Resurrection of our Redeemer.

### Llandudwen Church (SH 27403684)



**Directions:** Take the unclassified road Tudweiliog – Rhydyclafdy. (4.4m from Tudweiliog and 6.9 km from Rhydyclafdy). Near Cefn Madryn farm you'll need to go north for 500m.

Saintess Tudwen consecrated a cell here. She was one of the large number of daughters of Brychan Brycheiniog, in the C5th and Nyfain, patron saint of Nefyn, was her sister.

The present church was built during different periods of the C17th on a site used earlier. The oldest part is the southern transept.

When Hyde-Hall visited it in 1809-11 it was in very poor condition. Part of the roof had fallen, glass was missing from the windows and all sorts of birds were roosting in it. But its condition, and the cemetery, had improved greatly by the early C20th.

Inside there is a communion cup from 1500 with a carving of Christ on it.

### Ffynnon Dudwen (SH 27453680)

This well is across a field from the church and has been restored and reconsecrated recently.

The well was important in the area.

People would throw pins and money into the well and ask for a blessing from Saintess Tudwen because she would be controlling the flow and nature of the water. This well was noted for its medicinal powers in treating eye problems, intermittent fever, rheumatism, nervous complaints and fainting. The water would also be used for baptisms in the church.

There was a village of houses with thatched roofs nearby, but they caught fire centuries ago.

Near the entrance to the cemetery there is a stone Mounting Block. It was used when people wanted to solve disputes and they would come there to try to find a solution. It was also used as a step to get up onto a horse.

### Llaniestyn Church (SH 26973377)



**Directions:** In the middle of Llaniestyn village. Follow the signs for Llaniestyn from the B4417 (Nefyn – Aberdaron,) B4415 (Efailnewydd – Nanhoron), B4413 (Llanbedrog – Aberdaron)

The patron saint of the church is Iestyn, one of the followers of Cybi. He established a church in Llaniestyn, Anglesey and it's believed he was a missionary in Cornwall.

The oldest part of the building, the nave, dates from the early C13th. The western end is the oldest. This church was of some importance at that time. The south aisle was added in the C15th or early C16th and the font is of the same period.

There are dog tongs here that were used to remove unruly dogs from the services.





There are a number of named wells in Llaniestyn parish, such as Fynnon Odo (well of Odo), Ffynnon y Filiast (well of the greyhound bitch) and Pistyll y Garn (spring of Garn). A particularly significant one is Ffynnon y Brenin (well of the king) (SH 27903530) which is very close to the summit of Garn Fadryn.

This well was very useful to people living in the fort in the Iron Age, and much later on the water was used to treat eye problems and women would come here to seek a remedy for disorders specific to them.

Not far away is Bwrdd y Brenin (table of the king) a large flat stone associated with the well and King Arthur.

### **Mellteyrn Church, Sarn Mellteyrn (SH 23743285)**



**Directions:** Take the B4413 (Sarn Mellteyrn – Rhoshirwaun) and turn off for Tudweiliog. The church is on the right after 200m.

There is reference to the townlet of Sarn Mellteyrn yn 1352 as 'Melteren', which is a personal name. There was a sarn or causeway here to cross the river Soch.

Hyde-Hall visited in 1801 and he refers to the church building as a small, simple one with an ancient cross near the west door. He said there was a tree in the cemetery and the builder or founder of the church was buried underneath it.

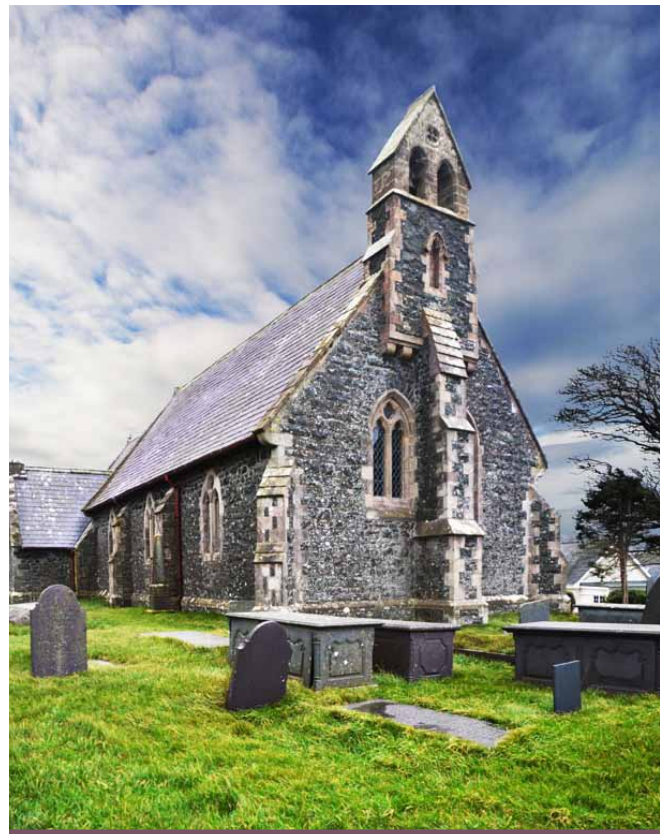
The church was designed by Henry Kennedy and built in 1846 and consecrated to St Peter in Chains, which is very unusual.

It was demolished in the late 1980s, because the church needed money spent on it and the congregation was dwindling. By now it's an acceptable ruin and the bell can be seen in the Hall in Sarn.

Nearby, at Mellteyrn farm, was the birthplace of Henry Rowland who became Bishop of Bangor. He died in 1616 and left money to establish a school - Ysgol Botwnnog.

There is a standing stone (maen hir) to be seen in the cemetery.

### **Tudweiliog Church (SH 23833678)**



**Directions:** Take the B4417 (Aberdaron – Ederne). The church is a prominent building in the middle of the village and on the road to Dinas.

The patron saint of Tudweiliog is Cwyfan, a pupil of Beuno, and Cwyfan is also the patron of Llangwyfan, Denbigh and Llangwyfan, Anglesey.

There is also, it is said, a relationship with Tudwal, who established the monastery in the C6th on St Tudwal's Island. This explains the source of Tudweiliog's name, which is 'Tudwal's land'.



This parish has links with the Pilgrim Route but there is no evidence of that by now.

Before Tudweiliog existed, there is mention of a community in Rhoslan once, not far from the village, with a church on land now belonging to Tywyn.

But the Valuation of Norwich in 1254 refers to a church at Tudweiliog.

The earlier church was slightly to the north of the present one. The present church was designed by Sir Gilbert Scott and built of local stone in 1849. The chancel is separate from the nave of the church.

This church has had substantial support over the years from the Wynne-Finch family of the Cefnamwlch estate.

Near afon Amwlch, on the boundary between the parishes of Tudweiliog and Penllech, between the coast road and the sea is the well of Ffynnon Gwyfan (well of Cwyfan) (SH 22833738). It has been eroded from the rock and the water had medicinal value for treating tremors, skin warts and eye disorders. Pins were given as offerings to it.

## The Holy Wells



*Ffynnon Gwyfan, Tudweiliog*

A large number of the wells in Llŷn are on the Pilgrim Route to Enlli / Bardsey, leading to the end of the peninsula. The pilgrims believed the wells had medicinal powers, and it's easy to imagine them trudging wearily towards the wells, and maybe not in the best of health. We know about some of the wells, but the secrets of the other ones have been lost for centuries.

The wells existed before Christianity arrived, and before the oldest church in Llŷn was established. They show where our pagan forefathers had their holy sites, and are evidence of Mediaeval beliefs and activities.

Our forefathers believed in the powers of the wells' waters, and that was tightly woven into their religious beliefs. But by now, because of the influence of Puritanism, this is seen as superstition. Ieuan Llŷn wrote a letter to Dafydd Ddu Eryri in 1796 where he describes Ffynnon Fair (well of Mary) Uwchmynydd and the mark of a horse's hoof in the rock. This is *Ceffyl Mair* (horse of Mary) and Ieuan Llŷn refers to this as one of the 'remnants of Papism'.

Ritual and ceremony were essential when drinking the water or bathing in it, as at Ffynnon Gybi and Ffynnon Beuno. Doctors understand why the *Meddyges* (Woman Doctor) of Bryn Canaid in Uwchmynydd used water from Ffynnon Saint and the water cress that grew in it to cure depression.

Wells were important in cultures and civilizations worldwide. The belief was that gods lived in wells and lakes, and they and rivers were worshipped. As a result, they were sites for giving offerings, places to hold ceremonies, and the water was often believed to be medicinal. The rivers Dwyfor and Dwyfach were 'Duwies Fawr' (the Great Goddess) and 'Duwies Fach' (the Lesser Goddess).

There is a very interesting variety in the wells of Llŷn – in their names, their nature and characteristics.

## Local Holy Wells







There are a number of holy/medicinal wells in this area, linked with the pilgrims and their routes.

**Ffynnon Dudwen (well of Tudwen), Llandudwen (SH 27403686)**

**Directions:** *Follow the narrow road, Tudweiliog – Rhydyclafdy. (4.4km from Tudweiliog and 6.9km from Rhydyclafdy). Near Cefn Madryn farm you will need to turn and go northwards for 400m and through a kissing gate on the right.*

The well is across a field from the church and has recently been restored and reconsecrated. It was an important well in the area.

People would throw pins and money into the well and ask for a blessing from Saintess Tudwen because she would be controlling the flow and nature of the water. This well was noted for its medicinal powers in treating eye problems, intermittent fever, rheumatism, nervous complaints and fainting. The water would also be used for baptisms in the church.

**Ffynnon Cwyfan (well of Cwyfan), Tudweiliog (SH 22833738)**

**Directions:** *Turn towards the sea on the narrow coast road off the B4417 (Nefyn – Aberdaron) about 1km south of Tudweiliog. Go straight on at the next junction, then keep left and past Tywyn farm. The well is on the right at the edge of a stream flowing towards the sea on farmland.*

This well is on the boundary between Tudweiliog and Penllech parishes, eroded from the rock. The water had medicinal value for treating tremor, warts on the skin and eye problems. Pins were given as offerings to it.

**Ffynnon y Brenin, (well of the king), Garn Fadryn (SH 279353)**

**Directions:** *Go to Garn Fadryn village (SH 27803452) and follow the path alongside the chapel up to Garn Fadryn. It's on the flat land north of the summit.*

This is a stone well with its front partly enclosed. It would have been very valuable to the people of the fort in the Iron Age, and much later on the water was used to treat eye problems and women would come here to seek a remedy for disorders specific to them.

Not far away is Bwrdd y Brenin (table of the king) a large flat stone associated with the well and King Arthur.

## Early Christian Remains



*Early gravestone showing pilgrim's costume (Ynys Enlli)*

Christianity spread to Llŷn because of missionary work by the 'saints'. They were the missionary pilgrims who would travel about, setting up 'llan' (religious enclosures) establishments here and there. The holy wells and the early Christian stones are evidence of that.

Not every stone commemorates Christians, and it was also usual to turn a site into a Christian one by putting an inscription and a cross on stones from an earlier age.

Nash-Williams refers to these two groups of stones.



Gravestones are stones with an inscription on them, usually to commemorate a priest or man of high rank. The Latin or Ogam language would be used, and these stones tell us something about the lives of the generations of Early Christians. But there are no Ogam inscriptions in Llŷn. But no Ogam inscriptions have been found in Llŷn.

In Llŷn there are a number of other stones from the early age of Christianity.

- **Cerrig Alitorius and Melitus**, Llanaelhaearn Church (SH 38704480)
- **Carreg Plas Bach**, Ynys Enlli (SH 12072214)
- **Cerrig Anelog**, Aberdaron Church (SH 17332637)
- **Cerrig Penprys, Plas Glyn y Weddw**, Llanbedrog (SH 329314)
- **Carreg Melus**, Llangian Churchyard (SH 29562894)
- **Carreg Llannor**, Llannor Church (SH 35393727)

Examples of stones with crosses inscribed on them are rare in Llŷn. These are from the C7th to the C9th, when Christianity had spread throughout Wales.

- **Carreg Groes Llanaelhaearn**, Llanaelhaearn Church (SH 3874480)
- **Carreg Croes Pistyll** (SH 31974182)
- **Carreg Hendy, Ynys Enlli** (SH 12072214)
- **Carreg Croes Goch, Llangwnnadr** (SH 20883324)



### Follow the Story

Find out more about sacred places by visiting Llandudwen Church – A popular meeting place for the pilgrims on their way to Ynys Enlli / Bardsey Island and a sacred well close by.