

WILD PHOTOGRAPHY HOLIDAYS



SNOWDONIA MOUNTAINS MYTHS & MAGIC

WITH PAUL HARRIS

HIGHLIGHTS

- Aberglaslyn Pass
- Nant Gwynant
- Lyn Dinas
- Tan-y-Bwlch Railway Station
- Dorothea Rhonwy
- Cwmorthin Slate Mines
- Mining Ruins of Rhosydd
- Cwm Pennant
- Harlech Castle
- Porthmadog
- Ynys-y-Pandy Mill
- Coed Ganllwyd & Rheadr Ddu
- Cricceth Castle

- Barmouth Estuary
- Pensarn Estuary
- Cregennen Lake

*“The Mountain resounding like snow:
Snowdon and the autumn
dividing in two like The Red Sea –
the passage through the big puddle of winter.”*

Eurgain Haf & Barbara Pogacnik

INTRODUCTION

If ever there was a place for immersive contemplation and photography, then Snowdonia has to feature high in both reality and imagination. Camping by Llyn Cwellyn in

the western shadow of Mount Snowdon on an early autumn morning and the prospect of a fine day in the Welsh mountains reminds me of why I return here so often. Whether to scramble the high rock ridges, sit in ancient woodlands by tumbling streams or stroll through the history and culture of its industrial heritage, there are so many reasons to experience and document this wonderful natural and manmade landscape. Situated in Gwynedd, the most northern county of Wales, Snowdonia was designated a National park in 1951. “Parc Cenedlaethol Eryri” in Welsh (Eryri means place of the eagles), covers over 800 sq miles of some of Britain’s wildest mountain landscapes, coastal havens and atmospheric forests. In the 19th century, Snowdonia was the



setting for early investigations and studies of some of the world's oldest rocks. Man has also brought about changes to Snowdonia, mining for minerals such as copper, and the quarrying of slate over the last two centuries have left their mark upon the landscape. It was also the training ground for some of the early mountaineers, who climbed Mount Everest in 1953.

This area is steeped in mythology... according to popular legend, an epic battle between a red dragon and a white dragon took place on the mountain next to the lake, Dinas Emrys. The red dragon killed the white dragon and it tumbled down into Llyn Dinas, which is how the red dragon came to be the national symbol of Wales. Over five days on this trip, we will be visiting some of the well known sites and views Snowdonia has to offer and bring our own vision into play. Beyond the familiar Snowdon massif we will also reveal less frequented parts of the coast, village enclaves and roaring woodland rivers. And no visit to Snowdonia is complete without absorbing some of its fortress Castles like Harlech or industrial heritage sites such as the abandoned mines of

Cwmorthin. The key to this trip is engagement and absorption in this ancient Celtic land. We hope that you can gain insight into a better way of seeing through your photography and learn some different and enjoyable ways of story telling with your images.

Croeso i galon Cymru... Welcome to the heart of Wales!

YOUR PHOTOGRAPHIC GUIDE

Paul Harris is a documentary, travel and adventure photographer steeped in the premise of engagement and curiosity in the world around him. Raised on a diet of hill waling, mountaineering and coastal wanderings, Paul began his photographic career documenting news and current affairs before expanding his brief to cover longer terms projects in environmental conservation, adventure expeditions and global education.

DAILY ITINERARY

Day 1: Arrival in Porthmadog

The harbour town of Porthmadog nestles at the southern foot of the Snowdonia massif in the Glaslyn Estuary. The



town was named after W.A. Maddocks whose ambitious "Cob" embankment scheme led to the town's name, which translates as "Madog's Port". It is at a crossroad of the Wales Coastal path and the Welsh Highland Heritage Railway. Porthmadog developed as a famous port later in the nineteenth century when it began exporting the slate produced at the quarries in Ffestiniog and Llanfrothen to roof houses in the expanding towns and cities in England and all over the world. By 1873 more than a thousand ships carrying over 116,000 tons of slate left Porthmadog.

Day 2-5

Much of our itinerary will be dependent on weather conditions and tides which we will assess each day to maximise the best of numerous locations. Some of these locations are within 15-20 mins drive allowing us to take advantage of dawn light. Most other locations are within 40-50 mins drive so we aim to allow for several photographic opportunities each day. We will be out in the

landscape in all but the worst conditions and there will be time for viewing and critiquing the images we take. Following are some of the places we will be visiting during these 4 full days...

Ceunant Cynfal National Nature Reserve

A short walk from the village of Llan Ffestiniog drops us into this stunning gorge and the free flowing Afon Cynfal where we can spend time photographing the gnarled ancient woodland along its banks. There's a magical feel to this place, especially on a misty October morning so it's easy to imagine how the legendary exorcist and mystic Huw Llwyd cast a spell over his local congregation. From the road above back along the road above the gorge, there is a tremendous viewpoint of double drop Rhaeadr Cynfal waterfall.

Ynys-y-Pandy Mill

Remnants of the grand three story slate mill perched atop a small hill in Cwmystradllyn appears out of nowhere after the short drive from Porthmadog. The mill serviced slate from nearby Gorseddau quarry but was only in operation for less than 10 years. This a good location for both dawn and nighttime photography.

Cwmorthin Slate Mines

Another isolated site of past glories of the mining industry so prevalent in Snowdonia, Cwmorthin came to prominence in the early 1800's and the slate was worked right up until 1997. A steep but easy track leads into this peaceful mountain bowl with countless opportunities for both creative and documentary photography.



Harlech Castle

Driving the coast road from Barmouth to Porthmadog, you would be hard pushed to avoid seeing this formidable fortress. Harlech was completed from ground to battlements in just seven years. Its classic 'walls within walls' design makes the most of daunting natural defences. 'Men of Harlech'. The nation's unofficial anthem, loved by rugby fans and regimental bands alike, is said to describe the siege which took place here during the War of the Roses, wherein a handful of men held out against a besieging army of thousands. The evening sun glinting off the walls, ravens crowding its towers and Snowdonia's mountainous backdrop is something to behold.

Pensarn Estuary & Llandanwg Beach

Pensarn Harbour is set on the tidal estuary of the River Artro, against the backdrop of the stunning Rhinog mountain range. And just to the North on the other side of the estuary at low tide is Llandanwg, a stunning sand and the rocky beach with views north toward the Llyn Peninsula. Both locations provide a range of low tide, late afternoon seascapes and details of beached craft.

Barmouth & Mawddach Estuary

This Victorian resort town will be the southern most location of our time in Snowdonia. The journey to get here is well worth the effort for the amazing view across the low tidal reaches of the River Mawddach creating wonderful patterns in the sand and beyond, the wooded slopes leading to Cader Idris. Barmouth bridge at the mouth of the estuary is a Grade II listed single-track wooden rail-



way viaduct 699 metres (764 yd) long and is a worthy photographic subject in its own right, especially the colourful rusted iron section nearest to the town centre.

Coed Ganllwyd & Rheadr Ddu

Travelling north from Dolgellau and a short walk into a twisted oak forest lies the helter skelter River Gamlan littered with ferns and mosses and some of the best waterfalls and plunge pools in Snowdonia. The woodland forms part of a larger Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and is part of the Coedydd Derw a Safleoedd Ystlumod Meirion/ Meirionnydd Oak woods. This is an fantastic location to spend time in, experiment with slow shutter speeds and build compositions of the natural world.

Day 6

Dawn permitting, we will aim to photograph a last vista of the autumn landscape before breakfast.

JOINING ARRANGEMENTS AND TRANSFERS

We will meet early evening in our hotel for introductions and a brief outline of our next few days of photography and exploration, followed by dinner. You should aim to arrive at the hotel no later than 18:00 on the first day of the trip.

We can transfer guests from the train station in Porthmadog to our hotel in the afternoon of the first day and back to the station on the morning of the last day.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- 5 nights hotel accommodation in Porthmadog
- Breakfasts & dinners
- Transport during the workshop
- Photographic tuition
- Transfer to and from Porthmadog train station before and after the trip for those travelling by train

WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED

- Lunches
- Beverages and alcohol



- Travel & medical insurance

ACCOMMODATION

We will be staying at [Tudor Lodge](#), a comfortable guesthouse in the heart of Porthmadog with its traditional high street, heritage narrow gauge railway and pretty harbour all within walking distance. All guests will have their own rooms with private facilities, free WiFi and parking.

TRAVELLING TO PORTHMADOG

By Air

The nearest international airports to Porthmadog are Liverpool, Manchester and Birmingham with onward train, bus or taxi.

By Rail & Bus

There are frequent trains to Porthmadog from Machynlleth, Shrewsbury and Birmingham along the Cambrian Line, [see The Trainline](#).

There is a regular scheduled bus service from Bangor, Pwllheli and Dolgellau with onward connections to and from National rail and international airports, [see moovit](#)

By Road

Traveling to Porthmadog is scenic and worthwhile and would be great for spending independent time before or after the trip. Our travel throughout the trip will be by minibus so cars can be left securely at the hotel's private parking area. You will need to arrive at the hotel no later than 18:00 on the first day of the trip.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

It is recommended that you take out appropriate insurance to cover personal accident, medical costs, repatriation and loss of baggage.

LANGUAGE

English & Welsh

CLIMATE AND CLOTHING SUGGESTIONS

Being on the Atlantic coast of the UK and close to the Snowdon mountain range, we will have the benefit of changeable weather conditions. Temperature extremes are rare but October is a transitional month so we can expect diverse and often beautiful photographic landscape light. We will be spending the majority of our time outdoors in the hills, valleys and coast of Snowdonia, so a good pair of comfortable, sturdy shoes or walking boots are essential. Please bring suitable clothing for changeable weather conditions.



ADDITIONAL CLOTHING LIST ITEMS

- Wellington boots
- Warm hat
- Fleece neck-warmer
- Light warm gloves
- Casual clothes for inside wear
- Sun cream, sunglasses
- Head torch
- Small, basic first aid to include plasters, blister repair and any medication that you normally use.

If you have any questions feel free to contact us at any-time before the trip.

SPENDING MONEY

UK Pound Sterling is the currency and cash can be easily obtained from ATMs. Credit cards are widely accepted

PASSPORT, VISA REQUIREMENTS

If you are coming from abroad you will need a valid passport or national identity card to enter the UK. You might also need a visa, see the [UK Government website](#).

TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS DUE TO COVID 19

Due to possible Covid 19 restrictions we advise you to check the [official Covid pages](#) and if travelling from abroad to consult [Entering the UK](#) on the UK Government website.

PHOTOGRAPHIC EQUIPMENT AND INFORMATION

- Camera bag or backpack such as the Flipside or Trekker series designed by LowePro.



- A camera with interchangeable lenses such as a digital SLR or a mirrorless system camera.
- During this workshop we will experience people and documentary photography at its best. This will require getting close to our subject. Participants will be encouraged to use shorter focal length lenses from 35mm to 100mm (full-frame) or 24mm to 70mm (crop-format) enabling them to create a better and more engaging portraiture for both the photographer and viewer. Additionally the following will be useful: one wide angle, one telephoto zoom lens (i.e. 70-200mm) and a prime 35mm or 50mm (full-frame) or the equivalent for crop format cameras.
- Spare camera
- A tripod would be useful as we will have the opportunity to experiment with time-lapse photography and utilise the rich light of dawn and dusk, weather permitting.
- Separate flash if you have one and hand or head torch as we will have opportunities to experiment with fill in flash.

- Remote release, mechanical or electronic, to avoid shake on long exposures
- Neutral density, graduated filters and polariser, if you use these. Please do not buy especially for this workshop.
- Lens cloth
- Lightweight 'trekking' absorbent towel, for drying cameras and equipment
- Sufficient memory cards for the whole workshop as it may not be possible to buy more during the trip.
- Backup storage device
- Laptop or tablet preferably with Lightroom, Capture One or Adobe Camera RAW loaded. A laptop/tablet is essential for checking and presenting images during the trip and for one-on-one sessions with the tutor.
- Spare batteries and chargers
- Sensor cleaning device
- Camera rain cover that can be left on while taking pictures.



- International all-in-one travel plug adapter, if you're coming from outside the UK. These are on sale at airports. All electrical sockets are UK three-pin.

There will be opportunities to review and discuss any issues you have with your photographic equipment throughout the workshop. For further advice please contact us.

PARTNERS

Although this is primarily a photography workshop, non-photographer partners will be very welcome as there are many options and interesting possibilities in addition to taking photographs. If any guests do not wish to join the walks/photographic sessions they will be able to relax in and around the accommodation. The cost will be the same for photographers and non-photographers.

MORE QUESTIONS?

While we hope that this information has answered most of your questions about the holiday, we know it will not give you all the information you need. If you have any

more questions, please get in touch. Talking to us on the phone (we will always call you back) can often be a quick way of sorting out individual questions. It also helps us to get to know each other before the holiday.

BOOKING THIS HOLIDAY

Fill in the [online booking form](#), or give us a call on +44 (0)7432 808777.

LINKS

View [images and information for this tour](#) on the website.

Visit [Paul Harris's website](#)

Read about [our approach to teaching photography](#)

