



GeoCultura

TAKING YOU BEYOND THE LANDSCAPE



6-days retracing Charles Darwin's travels in North Wales

Immerse yourself in the life of Charles Darwin, seeing the areas of Wales he visited before embarking on his famous journey to the Galapagos Islands. Discover the fascinating geology of Wales on a small group tour with a Darwin expert.

Highlights

- Walk in the footsteps of famous scientist and geologist Charles Darwin and discover sites from his childhood and the places where he trained for his legendary voyage on HMS Beagle.
- Witness the spectacular landscapes of north Wales, including the mountains of Snowdonia's National Park, the tranquil Llyn Ogwen Lake, and the rugged coasts of Anglesey.
- Relive the experience and evidence that Charles Darwin used to unravel the origin of these landscapes in 1831 and 1842.
- Stay in style at highly recommended hotels, including a Darwin-themed guest house in Shrewsbury, and a welcoming country house hotel in north Wales.
- A 6-day guided tour of Wales with a Charles Darwin expert and our geologist tour leader. Price includes accommodation, all breakfasts, lunches and dinners and transport. We organise everything! Group size 6 to 12.

Overview

Discover the story behind Charles Darwin's 1831 and 1842 tours of Wales, with a six-day, five-night small group journey to Shrewsbury and Snowdonia. See the dramatic Welsh landscapes and travel to key sites visited by Darwin.

Immerse yourself in the story of Darwin's life with a local Darwin expert and our Tour Leaders, as you explore Darwin's hometown of Shrewsbury, take short walks in Snowdonia and see incredible sights. Hear how Darwin trained in understanding the Welsh landscape and geology before his famous voyage of discovery on HMS Beagle, which led to the groundbreaking Theory of Evolution.

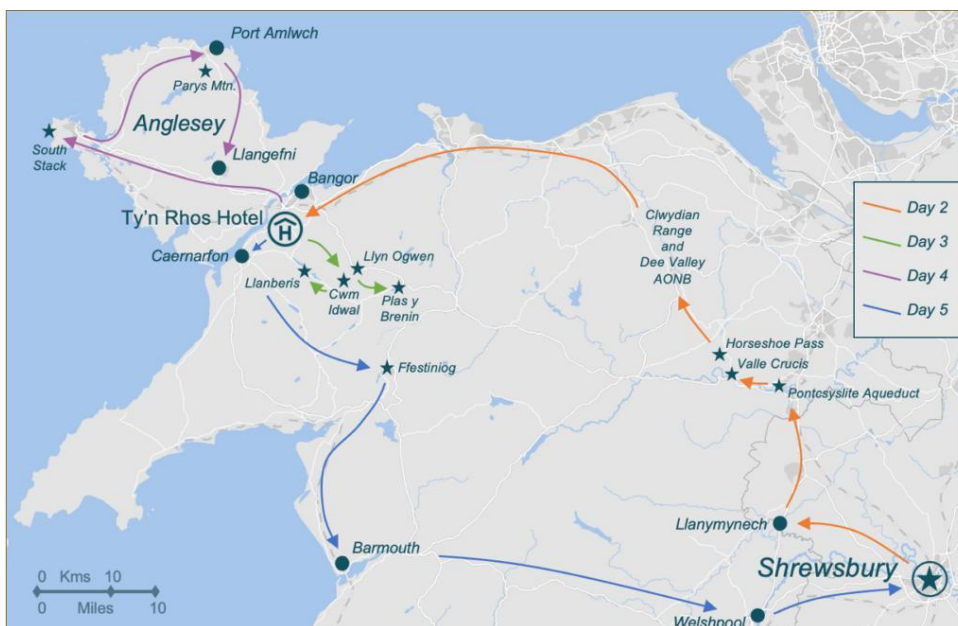
Uncover the best of Wales with a tour of the mountainous Eryri National Park (Snowdonia), and a day to beautiful Anglesey, with its rich geological treasures and impressive coastlines, where Darwin travelled with Cambridge Professor Adam Sedgwick.

Admire sites such as South Stack Lighthouse on Anglesey, scenic Llyn Ogwen and the incredible glacier-formed landscapes around Llanberis and Cwm Idwal. See signs of Welsh history and conflict around ruined forts and well-kept castles.

Enjoy comfortable accommodation throughout your tour, starting with a Darwin-themed Georgian townhouse in Shrewsbury that boasts a relaxing garden and well-appointed rooms. Travel on to a welcoming country house hotel and restaurant in north Wales, offering an exceptional menu of delicious Welsh dishes.

Take away a unique experience of travelling in Wales and Snowdonia, with a fascinating look at Charles Darwin's life and work, and enjoy walks to areas of incredible beauty and interest.

ITINERARY



Day 1: Picturesque Shrewsbury - Darwin's hometown



Your journey begins in the welcoming town of Shrewsbury. Meeting around 5pm, with a check in to Darwin's Townhouse, your hotel for the night. Named after and dedicated to the man himself, this boutique hotel is the perfect springboard for your journey into Wales.

You will meet your fellow explorers, along with Michael Roberts, your Darwin expert guide. Michael will set the scene for Charles Darwin's tour of Wales with an engaging talk on the theories of the time, Darwin's own beliefs and ideas, and the importance of the 1831 Wales expedition to Darwin's landmark voyage on HMS Beagle, which departed later that year.

- Hotel: Darwin's Townhouse , Shrewsbury
- Group dinner

Day 2: Into Wales - on Darwin's trail



After a hearty breakfast in Shrewsbury, you'll be heading over the border into Wales, and following Darwin's route through the rolling foothills of the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

On the way, we'll stop off at a number of sites where Charles Darwin was taught to 'read the rocks and landscapes' by Professor Adam Sedgewick, who was a significant figure in Darwin's early scientific career. We will also see the impressive Chirk Aqueduct, 800-year-old Chirk Castle, and the hilltop ruin of Castle Dinas Bran.

Rounding off the day, we'll travel through Gwydir Forest Park to reach your accommodation for the next few days, Ty'n Rhos. This comfortable, 19-bedroom country house hotel is the ideal place to unwind after the day's expedition.

- Hotel: Ty'n Rhos Hotel, Caernarfon
- Group dinner

Day 3: Cwm Idwal - mountains, valleys and lakes



Heading out from Ty'n Rhos, the morning's drive will take you to the Cwm Idwal, the very first Welsh National Nature Reserve, and an important site in Charles Darwin's scientific life.

With its own plant life and distinctive, fossil-filled boulders, Cwm Idwal and Llyn Ogwen Lake helped to spark Darwin's understanding of rock movements and deep time. He also revisited the area in later years, and enhanced his knowledge on how glaciation created the extraordinary landscape.

Leaving the valley, we'll take lunch at the Ugly House, described on last page of 'Variations' 1868. After lunch we pass an old coaching inn, Plas y Brenin, where Darwin stayed and dined. Plas y Brenin has stunning views of Wales's tallest mountain, the towering Mount Snowdon (Yr Wyddfa, in Welsh). Snowdonia is an uplifted, 400-million-year-old volcanic centre, and a product of a millennia of ice ages and glacial movement – all key inspirations for Darwin as he developed his understanding of landscapes.

We will spend the afternoon tracking Darwin's journey across Snowdonia. Highlights include assessing the glacial landscapes of Nant Peris and a visit to the National Slate Museum at Llanberis (2026 only), a site dedicated to one of Wales' most famous and contested exports (the origin of slates was large scientific controversy in Darwin's time). The Museum contains the largest working waterwheel in Britain, and exhibitions showing how slate workers lived and worked. The Slate Museum is closed in 2025 due to an exciting redevelopment project.

- Hotel: Ty'n Rhos Hotel , Caernarfon
- Group dinner
-

Day 4: Anglesey - a land of rugged coasts, multicoloured mines and lonely lighthouses.



Today we'll be exploring what is now considered part of Darwin's first tour. No official records show that Darwin visited the Isle of Anglesey, but Michael's research has uncovered plenty of evidence to suggest that he accompanied Cambridge Professor Adam Sedgwick to the island.

Your Anglesey tour will take you to the north-west corner of the island and the dramatic coastal scenery and 1809 lighthouse at South Stack. Darwin and Sedgwick's tour was guided by John Stevens Henslow and his pioneering new geological map of Anglesey. Also, a Cambridge Professor, Henslow became Darwin's friend and mentor, a sounding board for his developing thoughts and ideas, and the man who 'fixed' Darwin's place on board the Beagle. Lunch near South Stack.

Darwin's finds on Anglesey, including small areas of rare serpentinite rocks holding fragments of ancient oceans, helped him propose a new hypothesis for the origin of the St Peter and St Paul Archipelago in the Atlantic, which he visited during his voyage on the Beagle.

We will also visit the fascinating Parys Mountain, a huge source of copper which has been mined for ~4,000 years, leaving vivid streaks of colour spattered across the landscape. On our way off the island, we'll pick up some culture at the Oriel Môn, a gallery dedicated to Welsh art and artists, such as the famous landscape painter Sir Kyffin Williams.

- Hotel: Ty'n Rhos Hotel , Caernarfon
- Group dinner

Day 5: Returning to Shrewsbury - sights of Snowdonia

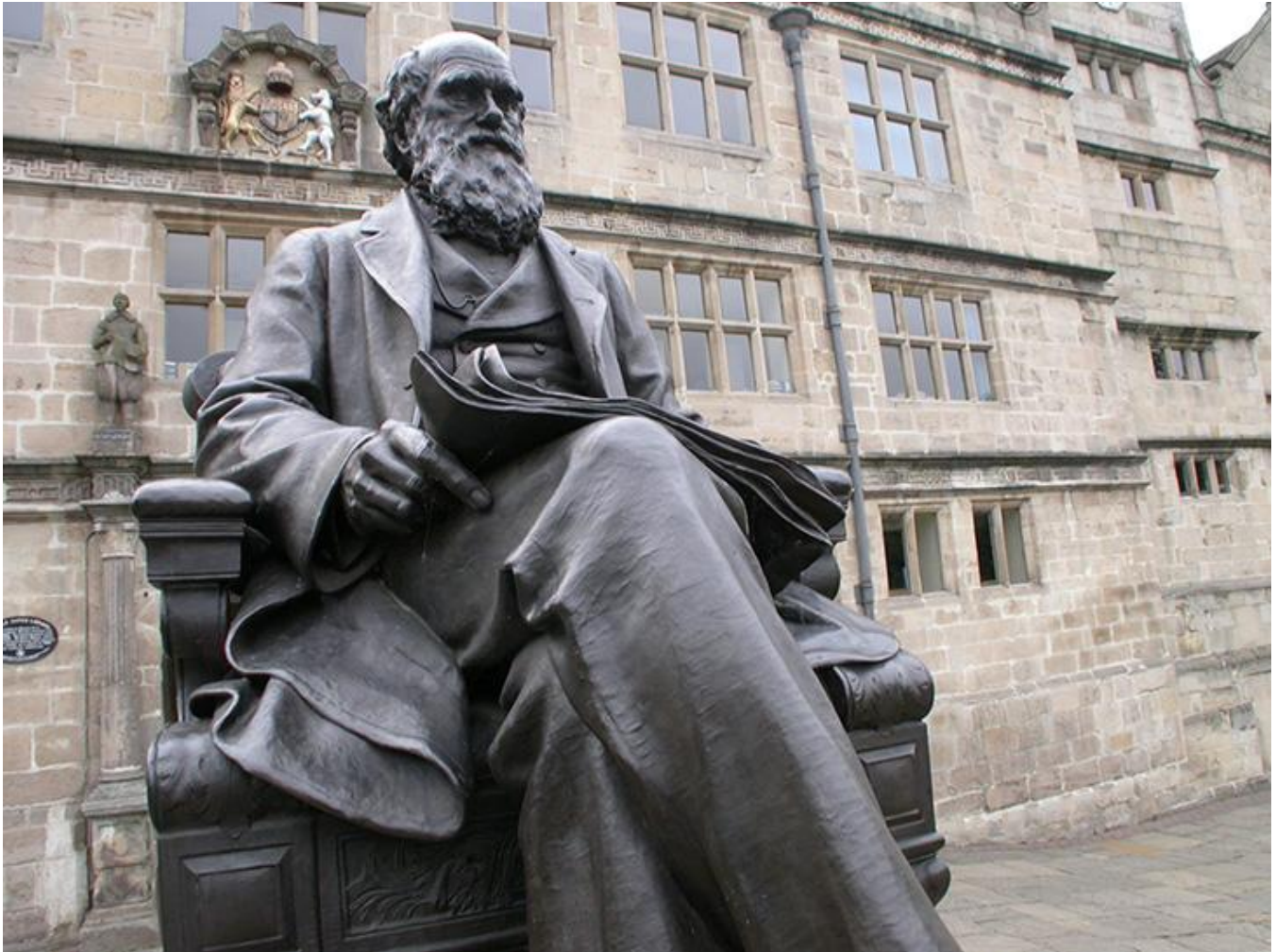


It's time to bid farewell to Ty'n Rhos and head back to Shrewsbury, but don't worry – the journey back is through the spectacular landscapes of southern Snowdonia.

After a pleasant morning stop in, yes, a Welsh vineyard, we'll head south through Snowdonia, following part of the 'long walk' Darwin made in 1831 to meet his Cambridge friends in Barmouth. A few stops along the way will reveal some of the key geological wonders Darwin and other geological giants of the 1800's visited. Like Darwin, we will lunch in Barmouth. From here, we will pass around the Cadair Idris mountain, with its shark-toothed profile, and hear the tales about earlier giants from Welsh folklore that have 'inhabited' this landscape.

- Hotel: Darwin's Townhouse , Shrewsbury
- Group dinner

Day 6: Darwin's town and journey's end



After a restful night at Darwin's Townhouse, you'll have the morning to take a guided tour around Shrewsbury. Accompanied by your expert, take in the significant sites from Darwin's childhood. Darwin was born in Shrewsbury in 1809 and the town still holds his historic home, The Mount, and the distinct rounded church of St Chad's where he was baptised.

Other places of interest are Darwin's old school (now the town library), and the enigmatic 'Bellstone', a mysterious rock that was later demystified when Darwin returned to the town armed with geological knowledge. Famously, Darwin's tour of Wales (which you have just retraced) concluded in Shrewsbury, where he received the coveted invitation to join the Beagle voyage and sailed into history.

The tour will conclude at 12pm, giving you the opportunity to continue exploring the historic charms of Shrewsbury or begin your journey home. If time permits, we highly recommend Shrewsbury Castle . This 11th-century red sandstone fortress is home to the Shropshire Regimental Museum , where you can discover military artifacts and historical exhibits. Also located in the town centre is the Shrewsbury Museum and Art gallery , a must-see for anyone interested in local history, archaeology and fine art. Note: If required for reasons beyond our control, GeoCultura reserves the right to substitute alternative accommodation of equal or higher quality or adapt the itinerary if required.

Your tour leaders

Michael Roberts

Eminently qualified to tell the story of Charles Darwin and his discoveries, Michael Roberts has travelled the world as a geologist, but also practiced as a vicar in north Wales, bringing together the sometimes-opposing worlds of science and religion.

Michael's travels as a geologist have taken him to Africa and closer to home, to the spectacular mountain ranges of Wales and Snowdonia, as he traces the footsteps of Darwin across the landscape. For his work in bridging the gap between Darwin's research and Christian teachings, Michael's efforts have been recognised by a number of institutions, including the John Templeton Foundation which awarded him the Exemplary Paper in Science and Theology prize for "Darwin's Doubts about Design". Michael remains an active scholar in studying Darwin, geology and the role religion has played in developing scientific theories and likes to remain physically active too by cycling and mountain climbing across Wales.

Meet Michael on the Retracing Darwin's travels in North Wales tour and visit our [scheduled tours page](#) for a full list of GeoCultura tours.

Rob Knipe

Chairman

Rob Knipe is the Chairperson at GeoCultura and an Emeritus Professor of Structural Geology at the University of Leeds; he splits his time between homes in Yorkshire and Wales and revels in engaging the public in the history and application of science. He also created and led 'Rock Deformation Research Ltd', a leading structural geological consultancy.

Rob has immersed himself in the Scottish Highlands for more than 40 years, during which time he has developed a passion for its geology and landscapes that almost rivals his passion for his native Wales! Rob has won awards for his work, including the prestigious William Smith Medal from The Geological Society of London, and is a Fellow of the Learned Society of Wales.

Rob is currently involved in Energy Transition, and works with local and national groups promoting changes towards a carbon neutral society. He is also part of the World Heritage Site team working to raise awareness of the slate landscapes in North Wales.

Meet Rob on the Retracing Darwin's travels in North Wales tour and visit our [scheduled tours page](#) for a full list of GeoCultura tours.

Bedroom in Darwin's Townhouse, Shrewsbury, England.

The majestic Tryfan mountain and Llyn Ogwen lake, key stops in Darwin's tour of Wales.

Testimonials

The best things were the wonderful Welsh scenery, the knowledge and patience of the leaders, plus super hotel in Wales.

6-days retracing Charles Darwin's travels in North Wales, Pat K, April 2026

The organisation of the tour made everything easy. Michael and Rob adjusted the itinerary to make the most of the weather conditions and the group members ability to walk further. It's obvious that a lot of care and attention went into the choice of accommodation, food and our driver. Both hotels were very comfortable and welcoming.

6-days retracing Charles Darwin's travels in North Wales, Denise J, September 2026

The tour was very well planned. Tour guide Michael's detailed scholarship and cross referencing of Darwin and Sedgwick's notes and maps, and his own on-the-ground walking of the trek was impressive indeed. As a result we ended up in what seemed very improbable locations, which exemplified key observations that Darwin had made and geological puzzles he had pondered, with comparisons between his inferences and what has been learned in the century and a half since.

Get in touch with our team

Want to contact GeoCultura? Our friendly team is here to answer your questions. You can complete our contact form, or use the contact details below.

+44 2081 451011

+1 713 400 6326

info@geoculturatours.com