



Many people will be seeking rest and recreation closer to home this year as we continue to emerge from the Coronavirus pandemic. If you are planning local holidays or days out, why not visit some of our own churches? There are some hidden gems on our doorstep as three local 'ambassadors' explain.



Images of St Giles: Paul Wynn



Hidden Gems: Delightful Discoveries

A Wonder of Wales: St Giles, Wrexham

St Giles' Church, Wrexham is the largest and maybe finest medieval Parish Church in Wales, writes Paul Whitham, the church's volunteer visitor/tourism officer.

St Giles is architecturally rich inside and out: its legendary and iconic Tower is one of the 'Seven Wonders of Wales'. And inside, the church is a treasure-trove, containing amongst other things, a 14th century Doom Painting, and a spectacular medieval roof which is decorated with gilded musical angels (and one cheeky Wrexham devil). It boasts some of the finest Baroque sculptures in the UK, some exceptional Victorian stained glass, and a host of green men peeping out from the stonework.

For those wanting a different view of Wrexham, our legendary and iconic Tower can be explored by booking a Tower Tour. It offers stunning views across the town and beyond. The Tower Climbs are seasonal and are now included as part of Explore Churches

'Experiences'. Visit www.explorechurches.org/experiences for full details and booking.

St Giles is also working with three other Wrexham 'attractions' – the Museum, Ty Pawb and Xplore! offering a half or full day visitor offer. These are bookable via the Wrexham Visitor Information Centre: tourism@wrexham.gov.uk / tel 01978 292015.

Our mission is "to be a Visible and Active Christian Witness at the Heart of Wrexham", serving those who live, work, study and shop in, as well as visit, the town. In 2019 – our last full year pre-pandemic – we welcomed 30,000 visitors: they were local as well as coming from all parts of Wales, the UK and across the world.

Most importantly, St Giles' is open, warm and lit every day, with groups and tours welcomed. There is always a friendly welcome.

For more information visit stgilesparishchurchwrexham.org.uk or facebook.com/stgileschurch.wrexham.

Walking or Cycling in Mid-Wales



Cedewain Mission Area is blessed with some of the most beautiful landscape in Mid Wales, with rolling hills, the wide Severn Valley, woods and picturesque villages,

says Mission Area Leader, Suzanne Wardell. It is no wonder it is an attractive area for tourists to visit.

There are nine churches in the Mission Area (MA), many described as 'little gems'! To maximise the potential of these buildings as visitor attractions, we are keen to promote the established walking and cycling routes that pass near some of our churches. Our plan is to publicise our parking and toilet facilities and to use the churches as bases for walks or rides. It is hoped that we can encourage people to visit the churches and share in the beauty, history, the peace and glory of the churches, sat as they are in stunning surroundings.





A King of Wales: St Grwst's Church, Llanrwst



Llewelyn the Great, was a King of Gwynedd and eventual ruler of all Wales in the twelfth century. His stone coffin forms part of a new display at St Grwst's Church in Llanrwst. The Grade 1 listed church in the Aberconwy Mission Area has undergone a £1m restoration and reordering project and the church has now reopened. Jon Richmond, the Church's Business Development Officer, describes what you will find.

St Grwst's is open on Mondays and Thursdays for visiting and guided tours. Booking is essential and can be done via the church's website: www.stgrwstchurch.co.uk. The tour includes a visit to the historic rood loft, considered one of the finest in Wales. A new interpretation area has also been created at the back of the church's north

aisle showing a timeline of the fascinating history of St Grwst's and telling the stories of some of the people who have been associated with the church, and the town of Llanrwst.

In the adjacent Gwydir Chapel, the memorials to the Wynne family have been restored and further new interpretation is available telling the story of the members of the family.

The new community facilities at St Grwst's include toilets and a kitchen at the back of the church, together with a mezzanine gallery overlooking the nave and suitable for small meetings. New stone flooring has been laid in the nave, and the building is now kept comfortably warm due to the new underfloor heating.

As well as the regular Sunday services at 9.45am, St Grwst's Church is planning to utilise the new kitchen facilities to hold regular weekly coffee mornings and other events in the church. One of these is the annual Festival of Flowers which (subject to Welsh Government rules) will be held from Friday 2 to Sunday 4 July.

Further information is available from www.stgrwstchurch.co.uk or on www.facebook.com/stgrwstchurch.



Mochdre is a small rural village just three miles west of Newtown and is on National Cycle Route 81 (from Aberystwyth to Shrewsbury). Over the last year, there has been a huge increase in walking

and cycling in the area, and the church of All Saints is ideally placed to offer parking and a toilet for visitors. There has been a place of worship here since the 12th century, with the current 19th century building, retaining its 15th century roof.

The Cedewain churches each have their own individual characters – from the hilltop St Gwyddelan's in Llanwyddelan with its sweeping views of the Rhiew valley, to the ancient church of St Michael's in Kerry, with its impressive tower, in which there is planned a Fair Trade coffee shop to refresh both visitors and locals.

So, put on your walking boots, or pile the bikes on the car and come and explore the hidden corners and beauty of Cedewain Mission Area and its little church 'gems' – you won't be disappointed!

For further information, email Suzanne at suzanneWARD@cinw.org.uk

