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Cadair Idris

### CADAIR IDRIS Mountain

Wales's highest **mountain** south of **Aran Fawddwy**, Cadair Idris enjoys a higher reputation than its height of 893m might suggest. Arising virtually from the sea, it was considered in the 16th century to be the highest mountain in **Britain**. That masterpiece of 18th-century art, **Richard Wilson's** *Cader Idris, Llyn-y-cau* (c. 1765), represents the epitome of the glory of high places. Visitors travelling by **railway** to upland Wales generally took the train from **Wrexham** to **Barmouth**; the line was overlooked by Cadair Idris' looming presence causing it to be the most familiar of all of Wales's mountains. **Siôn Dafydd Rhys** was the first to record the legend linking the mountain to the giant Idris; anyone who slept in Idris's bed, it was claimed, would wake up either mad or a poet. The profile of its 13-km ridge suggests a reclining figure, and **Dewi-Prys Thomas** commented that, seen as such, an art critic would judge it to be 'a work of arcane passion'. A magnificent escarpment of Ordovician rock, glacial activity has caused

it to be graced with Britain's finest cirque – the superb hollow which cradles Llyn Cau. Rich in alpine-arctic **plants**, much of it has been designated a National Natural Reserve. Because of its relative isolation, the summit – Penygadair (**Llanfihangel y Pennant**) – offers a superb vista on those rare occasions when there are clear views from the summit; the finest part of the vista is the exquisite estuary of the **Mawddach** and the huge sweep of Cardigan Bay.

### CADFAN (6th century) Saint

According to tradition, Cadfan was the founder of the important church of **Tywyn (Meirionnydd)** and first abbot of Bardsey (**Aberdaron**; *see also* **Islands**). '*Canu Cadfan*', a 12th-century poem by Llywelyn Fardd is the main source of information about him. It was claimed that he had led a contingent of **saints** from **Brittany** to Wales, and stories concerning him circulated until the late 19th century. Cadfan's feast day is 1 November.