

# Anglesey: The Mother of Wales [B2]

Quest'isola di fronte al Galles venne attaccata più volte nel corso della sua storia e nel XIII secolo finì sotto il dominio inglese. Piena di luoghi di interesse storico e dotata di una fra le più belle coste britanniche, attualmente vive soprattutto del turismo.



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Anglesey is an island [off the north-west coast](#) of Wales. It resurfaced more than thirteen thousand years ago after years of glaciation spent under an [ice cap](#) 550 metres high. A part of Wales, it is famous for its ancient historical sites and its beautiful coastline. The island is home to no less than the earliest evidence of life on Earth, which has been preserved as calcified microbes. These helped increase the world's oxygen content and were critical to the evolution of more advanced forms of life on our planet.

## HUNTERS TO FARMERS

Around eight thousand years ago, the first [hunter-gatherers](#) arrived on the island. Three thousand years later, they were followed by the first farmers, who left behind Neolithic [burial mounds](#). Around 300 [BC](#), the Celts arrived,

making the island a centre for Druids. They created important trade [links](#) via sea routes to Scotland, Ireland and the rest of [Europe](#).

## ROMAN INVASION

In 60 AD Roman invaders arrived. In addition to mining for [copper](#), they violently attacked the Druids, destroying some of their sacred sites. After the Romans left, the island was attacked by the Irish, Saxons, Vikings and Normans. In the 13th century, Anglesey finally fell to the English, led by Edward I, who built the huge fortress of Beaumaris Castle. In the Middle Ages, the island was given the Welsh name Môn Mam Cymru, which means 'Anglesey, the mother of Wales'. The island's fertile land would lead it to serve as a [breadbasket](#) for Wales for hundreds of years.

## FOOTBALL VIOLENCE

Island life was now free from invaders, but violence [sprang](#) from an unexpected source: men played a sport that was a precursor to modern football, very popular but with very few rules. One 18th-century commentator described a game ending with "numbers of players left here and there on the road, some having [limbs](#) broken in the struggle, others severely injured, and some carried on [biers](#) to be buried in the [churchyard](#) nearest to where they had been mortally injured."

## ISLAND CONNECTIONS

Connections to the Welsh [mainland](#) were fundamental for the economy. Two bridges cross the turbulent [tidal waters](#) of the Menai [Strait](#): the Menai Bridge, built in 1826 as the first major suspension bridge in the world, and the Britannia Bridge, built in 1850 specifically for trains. Ferries can now be taken from the port of Holyhead; they currently take two million passengers a year to and from Ireland.

## STORMY SEAS

The seas between Anglesey and the [mainland](#) can be [stormy](#). On 26 October 1859, a ship carrying gold, the Royal Charter, was [stranded](#) just twenty-five metres off the island coast as a result of a terrible storm. A [sailor](#), Giuseppe Ruggier, swam to shore to [fix](#) a [rope](#) that would allow the passengers to reach the land. Forty passengers were saved before the [rope](#) broke, but another four hundred died. Ruggier's bravery was immortalised in a sculpture. The tragedy marked the beginning of weather [forecasting](#) in Britain, with the first official [gale warning issued](#) one year later, in 1860.

## INNOVATION AND INVENTION

Anglesey is [deemed](#) to be fertile land also for invention and innovation. The world-famous (and Royal Family favourite) [off-road](#) vehicle Land Rover was invented there by farmer and engineer Maurice Wilks in 1947. A few years later, the agricultural world saw an ingenious innovation, the Easycare [breed of sheep](#), which does not need [shearing](#). Every spring, these sheep [shed](#) their [woolly](#) winter [coat](#) all by themselves.

## ISLAND TOURISM

Tourism is the island's major economic activity. The coastline is an area of [outstanding](#) natural beauty. Popular activities include [sailing](#), [angling](#), walking (on the 200-kilometre Coastal [Path](#), or in the mountains of Snowdonia National Park), windsurfing and [jet skiing](#). Tourism actually dates back to the 19th century.

## [TONGUE-TWISTER](#) \*\*VILLAGE

Anglesey has the village with the longest name in [Europe](#): Llanfairpwllgwyngyllgogerychwyrndrob-wlllantysiliogogoch. The Welsh name was [coined](#) in the 19th century to attract tourists to the island! In English it is translated as 'The church of St. Mary in a [hollow](#) of white [hazel](#) near a rapid [whirlpool](#) and near St. Tysilio's church by the red cave'.

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# Glossary

- **fix** = fissare, legare
- **TONGUE-TWISTER** = scioglilingua
- **burial mounds** = túmulos funerarios
- **links** = connessioni
- **copper** = rame
- **mainland** = terra ferma
- **Strait** = Stretto
- **stormy** = burrascosi
- **coined** = coniare
- **tidal waters** = maree
- **woolly** = di lana
- **coat** = pelo
- **outstanding** = eccezionale
- **sailing** = navigare
- **angling** = pescare con la lenza
- **BC** = a.C. (Before Christ)
- **biers** = catafalchi
- **deemed** = considerare
- **hollow** = piccolo valle
- **whirlpool** = rapide vorticose
- **off the north-west coast** = frente a la costa
- **hunter-gatherers** = cazadores-recolectores
- **breadbasket** = granaio
- **limbs** = estremità
- **stranded** = arenata
- **forecasting** = prevedere
- **off-road** = fuoristrada
- **breed of sheep** = razza ovina
- **shearing** = tosatura
- **hazel** = albero di nocciolo
- **ice cap** = capa de hielo
- **sprang** = scaturire
- **churchyard** = cimitero

- **gale warning** = avviso di burrasca
- **shed** = perdere
- **sailor** = marinaio
- **rope** = corda
- **issued** = emettere
- **Path** = percorso
- **jet skiing** = andare in moto d'acqua