

## Scenic Western Wales

by Jane Lawson at DailyStep.com

I have just returned from West Wales. My mother-in-law has a shop there, and Brendan and I were minding it while she was on holiday. This part of Britain is incredibly beautiful and it is well worth a visit. Wales is a country in the west of the island of Great Britain. It shares a border with England. You can learn more about the relationship between Wales and England in my blog about the British Isles.



Last weekend, we stayed in a coastal town called Barmouth. It has amazing sandy beaches, and gentle mountains behind it, all covered in lush green grass and trees. Further inland are the higher mountains of Snowdonia. Barmouth is built next to a wide estuary, and it is a typical Welsh seaside town, with grey stone buildings and green hills rising up behind them. You can see a picture of Barmouth harbour in the top left hand picture, and a typical view of the town in the top right hand picture.

One of the things I love about going to this part of Wales is that the Welsh language is thriving. You can hear parents speaking Welsh to their young children, and groups of teenagers laughing together and speaking in Welsh. The signs are all in Welsh first, and then in English. You can see one of these signs in the bottom right hand picture. Welsh is completely unrelated to English – in fact, it is an ancient Celtic language that dates back to before the Romans invaded Britain in the year 43 AD.

The Welsh language is actually related to an ancient language that is still spoken in Brittany, Northern France. This is because, after the Roman Empire collapsed and the Romans left Britain in about 400 AD, the Celts, who had lived quite peacefully with the Romans, left what is now England and settled in Wales and Brittany, to escape from the invading Anglo-Saxons and Vikings. You can read more about this period of British history in my blog about the story of the English language.

It always strikes me, when I enter any Welsh town, to see so many old, grand churches. Even in a small town like Barmouth, there are at least 6 large churches, and one of them is more like a cathedral. It is hard to see how such small towns, especially with the tiny populations that they had back when these churches were built, could ever have had enough people to fill even one of these churches. These days, most of them are used as shops or theatres, as you can see in the bottom left hand picture.

The weather in Wales is notoriously changeable. We were very lucky that most of the time it was sunny and warm – but you often hear stories on the news about walkers who set off on a sunny day for a long walk in the Welsh hills, and are then surprised by a sudden change in the weather.

So, now that we have learnt a bit about Wales, let's move on to our audio word study, where we will take another look at EVEN.

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