

WALES GOES TO BATTLE ON THE TOURISM FRONT



Wales seems to be unable to make the most of what it has to offer to historians, particularly those interested in the history of battles in the British Isles. According to campaigners the Welsh should take the example set by the Scottish, who make a sizeable amount of money from welcoming tourists to their infamous battlegrounds.

At a glance around Europe and at the history books, it is clear that historical battlegrounds are popular all over the continent. Many of them are accompanied by museums and tourist information centres. Others merely draw visitors who look forward to saying “I was there” when they get home. The Ardennes and Waterloo in Belgium, Slavkov (Austerlitz) in the Czech Republic and numerous sites in Britain spring to mind as just a few examples.

Taking a country close to Wales as an example, we can see how **Scotland has used its somewhat brutal past to lure visitors to famous sites**. A great example is the site of the battle of Bannockburn, very well preserved since 1314. This area now has national status and is a focal point of marketing campaigns for Scottish tourism.

However, despite Wales seems richer in such attractions, historians point out that the Welsh are much slower at making use of their historical assets. To take one example, the preservation given to the site of the **battle of Pilleth** (1402) is negligible compared to the care the Scots give to Bannockburn. There is simply no information available for tourists at one of the most important places in Welsh history, where Owain Glyndr fought for the nation’s independence.

The case of **Crug Mawr** (1136) is very similar. This is the site, which was captured by the Normans before being taking again in later years. Unless tourists are determined to visit this place, they will not be lured to it in Wales.

Currently Cadw, the Welsh-government body, with the assistance of the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales, is carrying out research into the feasibility of creating a register of nationally important battlefield sites in Wales.

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