

15th June 2013

Dear Editor,

I would like to respond to the letter entitled 'Defacing of beach would be sacrilege' printed recently. I am proud to consider myself 'old Welsh', my family having lived, worked and died in the Mawddach area for generations, therefore I maybe able to challenge some of the points this relative newcomer raises.

Tourism is the lifeblood of Snowdonia and it should be remembered that Barmouth itself was built to accommodate the Victorian pleasure seekers of the 19th century, who arrived in their droves on the newly built railway. Amongst the many visitors to the area are such acclaimed notables as Charles Darwin, John Ruskin, William Wordsworth, Alfred Tennyson and many more in recent years, all of whom I have no doubt gained huge inspiration from the beauty and peace of the area. To say that the proposed path will be of benefit to only a small minority is short sighted to say the least. I have over the past 60 or so years watched a steady decline in the fortunes of Barmouth, especially after the devastating effects of the Beeching Report of the 1960's. I have watched the town's decline, from a vibrant and blowsy town in the 1950s to the tired and slightly grubby area of the 70s and 80s. I am delighted and heartened that over the last few years the regeneration of Barmouth has brought about a huge change in both the environment and the fortunes of the residents.

This brings me to the comments about disabled visitors. To exclude a whole section of society who experience varying degrees of mobility impairment by dismissing them as not wishing to 'clatter' across Barmouth Bridge is nothing more than arrogant discrimination. Challenges such as this are a minor inconvenience when measured against the huge and seemingly insurmountable obstacles they have already conquered. For Barmouth to survive and prosper in the present climate, tourists from all sections of the community should be encouraged to come and experience the beauty of the area.

The junction of the Barmouth Bridge access path and the main road has been of concern for some considerable time; this road was never designed to take the volume of traffic it now experiences. There have been accidents at this point and the author of the letter is lucky not to have witnessed these or the near misses that I have seen over the years. Therefore I wholeheartedly support the efforts of the Barmouth Viaduct Access Group in addressing this dangerous, possibly fatal situation. People's lives must no longer be endangered when a simple solution has already been identified.

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