

DISCOVER EXPLORE EXPERIENCE



LITTLE ORME, LLANDUDNO

WHAT'S INSIDE

- | | | |
|---|--|-----------------------------------|
| 02 PEAK SEASONS:
WE'RE OPEN ALL YEAR | 20 HISTORY AND HERITAGE | 34 FESTIVALS AND EVENTS |
| 04 SPRING AND SUMMER | 24 BETWS-Y-COED | 38 ACCOMMODATION
GUIDE |
| 06 AUTUMN AND WINTER | 26 COUNTRYSIDE AND
OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES | 53 ATTRACTIONS ADVERTS |
| 08 LLANDUDNO | 30 FOOD AND DRINK | 56 TOURIST INFORMATION
CENTRES |
| 12 ALONG THE COAST | 32 WHAT'S NEW | 60 MAPS AND TRAVEL
INFORMATION |
| 16 THE NATIONAL
EISTEDDFOD, ART,
ENTERTAINMENT,
CULTURE AND CRAFTS | 33 EVENING
ENTERTAINMENT | |

2019 is Wales's 'Year of Discovery'. It's a theme that fits Llandudno and Conwy County like a glove. Uniquely, this area sums up all that's special about Wales in one neat package...its stunning coast and country, rich heritage and culture, immersive outdoor activities and indoor attractions, food, festivals and entertainment.

It's a collection of experiences you won't discover anywhere else. Start at the tip of Llandudno's retro pier and travel into the timeless hills and mountains of Snowdonia, and you'll come across everything from Punch and Judy to world-class contemporary art, one-of-a-kind outdoor experiences (inland surfing anyone?) to rousing, robust castles, exciting new attractions to existing favourites.

Neither will you go short on the good things in life. Stay at snazzy, stylish seafront hotels (we have the best choice in Wales) or characterful country boltholes. Eat at bistros and restaurants serving the finest locally-sourced produce. Dip into a vibrant night-time entertainment scene at theatres, pubs and clubs – and don't miss the Big One, Wales's National Eisteddfod, which comes to the handsome, historic market town of Llanrwst in 2019.

Take your time to discover it all. This part of Wales welcomes visitors throughout the year. Springtime strolls along Llandudno's immaculate promenade and Christmas shopping in Betws-y-Coed bookend a thriving all-season scene.

For the full picture delve into the pages of this publication. Enjoy the read.

Roger Thomas, editor and travel writer.

PEAK

SEASONS

IT MAY BE COLD OUTSIDE BUT WRAPPED UP IN YOUR WINTER JACKET YOU'LL FEEL A GOOD-TO-BE-ALIVE WARMTH AND EXHILARATION UP IN SNOWDONIA'S MOUNTAINS.

This image is the perfect scene-setter for the one message we really want to get across in this guide: Llandudno and Conwy County are open for business 24/7/12, shorthand for all day, every day, every month of the year.

And one year equals 365 different experiences. From warm summers on the beach to winters tucked up in cosy country inns, springtime wildlife-watching to autumnal walks in the woods, you'll find plenty to see and do whatever the season.

There's another message too, summed up in three words: adventure, culture, landscape. They're the inspiration for Wales's 2019 Year of Discovery. On the next few pages we'll show you how, uniquely, you can experience all three along our coast and in our hills and mountains... at all times of the year.



HERE ARE FIVE OF THE BEST EXPERIENCES IN SPRING AND SUMMER

1 BLOOMING BODNANT.

It's a must. Bodnant Garden's famous Laburnum Arch bursts into life from late May. This 180ft/55m tunnel of drooping yellow blossoms is the perfect introduction to a garden that's coming into colour everywhere after its winter slumbers.

2 THE WAY TO GO.

See our shores on two wheels by cycling parts (or all, if you're feeling energetic) of the waymarked 30-mile Conwy Cycle Route along the coast from Llanfairfechan to Kinmel Bay. You'll also be following part of the recently launched North Wales Way, the new national route from Chester to Holyhead.

3 WALK THE WALLS.

Blow the cobwebs away by walking Conwy's medieval walls. Along with brooding, dark-stoned Conwy Castle, this 3/4-mile circuit, the most intact in Europe, guards a maze of narrow streets and alleyways.

4 RURAL ROWEN.

Rowen is one of the prettiest villages in Wales. That's especially true in springtime, when the gardens of its traditional stone cottages are decked with flowers. Follow paths up into the Tal-y-Fan Mountain before returning to the village pub for a well-deserved pint.

5 GREAT TO BE ALIVE.

That's what you'll feel on top of the Great Orme, the headland that rears up like a sea monster above Llandudno. This wildlife haven is one of Britain's most important sites for rare plants. Springtime wildflowers peek through limestone grassland, seabirds gather on the cliffs and over 20 species of butterfly can be seen.

1 P IS FOR...

Pier. Take a stroll in the summer breeze along Llandudno's splendid pier, the longest in Wales.

Promenade. Then head to the prom. Like the pier, it goes on and on – all the way along an unblemished seafront that makes Llandudno the envy of other seaside resorts.

Punch and Judy. Stop off at Professor Codman's show, a Llandudno favourite for over 150 years.

2 CATCH A WAVE.

Not in the sea but at Adventure Parc Snowdonia in the Conwy Valley, the world's first inland surfing lagoon. Revolutionary technology guarantees the perfect wave every 90 seconds.

3 UP, UP AND AWAY.

On a balmy summer's day there's no better place to be than Mynydd Hiraethog, the moorland that rolls away into the distance beneath big skies. Go first to the Llyn Brenig Visitor Centre to get your bearings and find out about local walks, cycle rides, fishing and watersports.

4 SUMMERTIME, AND THE LIVIN' IS EASY.

Sip a cocktail, chardonnay or craft beer on the terrace of the King's Head, Llandudno's oldest inn and don't miss Headstock, its summer music festival.

5 COOL COLWYN.

It's all change at Colwyn Bay. Walk Porth Eirias's remodelled promenade, have a meal at award-winning chef Bryn Williams's snazzy seafront bistro, enjoy aquatic action at Colwyn Bay Watersports. Then do the traditional thing and visit the Welsh Mountain Zoo, Colwyn Bay's caring conservation zoo.



AUTUMN COLOUR

HERE'S A QUICK TASTER FROM OUR ACTIVITY-PACKED AUTUMN AND WINTER.

1 IF YOU GO DOWN TO THE WOODS...

We'll start with something woody after all, our woodlands are at their reddish, russety best at this time of year. Go to Coed y Gopa, an eye-catching mixed woodland of oak, elm, ash, pine and larch above Abergele. 'It makes for a knockout show of autumn colour,' says the Woodland Trust magazine.

2 WE'VE GOT TASTE.

Our food scene is buzzing and inventive, with menus covering everything from fine dining to the best fish and chips. You can't go wrong in Conwy, for example. Try multi award-winning Signatures in the Aberconwy Resort and Spa, or the big, bold flavours at Watson's Bistro. Or the recently opened Midland, where Spain meets North Wales in a choice of tapas with the accent on seafood and local produce.

3 UNDERCOVER.

Okay, we'll come clean. It sometimes rains in autumn. Don't fret. There's plenty to do inside and underground. Go Below near Betws-y-Coed is an action-packed subterranean journey through abandoned mines ('Pound for thrills, this might just be the best value day out in the UK,' reckons The Sunday Times). Not to be outdone, at Llandudno you can explore Great Orme Copper Mine, the world's oldest metal mine open to the public.

4 ART WORKS.

Follow the Helfa Gelf Art Trail every weekend in September, when studios and workshops throughout North Wales open their doors to visitors.



5 OPENING TIME.

Autumn 2019 sees the scheduled opening of the innovative Conwy Culture Centre, where the arts and heritage (we have plenty of both) come alive in interactive exhibits and displays.



WINTER WARMTH

1 CHRISTMAS SHOPPING.

Forget Amazon. There's a special magic about Christmas shopping - especially if you head our way. Llandudno's Christmas Fayre is famously festive, and for more great gift ideas go to Betws-y-Coed's speciality shops. At nearby Trefriw Woollen Mills you can browse products manufactured on site. And Llandudno has the biggest and best shopping in North Wales (Mostyn gallery's shop is outstanding for art and jewellery).

2 YOU'LL FALL FOR THIS ONE...

Swallow Falls usually reserves its best displays for winter. Natural Resources Wales reckons that the trail to the falls from Ty'n Llwyn four miles west of Betws-y-Coed is one of its 'Ten Best Winter Walks'. If one waterfall isn't enough head to the spectacular Conwy Falls the other side of Betws.

3 SNOWY SNOWDONIA.

Now's the time to see the white stuff on Snowdonia's peaks. Get to grips with these mountains under expert tuition on outdoor courses run by Plas y Brenin National Mountain Sports Centre at Capel Curig. They cover everything from climbing to canoeing, mountain biking to hiking. If you're planning your own outdoor adventures, take a look at adventuresmartwales.com... its advice on weather, gear and skills helps you stay safe.

4 THAT'S ENTERTAINMENT.

Pop, comedy, opera, drama, dance... they're all on the bill at Venue Cymru, North Wales's biggest entertainment and arts venue. The biggest? Oh yes it is! (during the winter season there's panto too).

5 IN THE DARK.

Our winter night skies are crisp and inky - ideal conditions for a spot of stargazing. Head for the hills away from light pollution. Llyn Geirionydd above the Conwy Valley is a good choice. It has a real sense of solitude, especially at night.



EVERYONE LOVES LLANDUDNO

HERE'S WHY, IN ONE IMAGE, EVERYONE LOVES LLANDUDNO. JUST TAKE A LOOK AT THE IMMACULATE PIER AND PROM. THEY HAVEN'T CHANGED MUCH SINCE THEIR CREATION WELL OVER A CENTURY AGO (SOMETHING YOU CAN'T SAY ABOUT OTHER SEASIDE RESORTS).

Quite simply, Llandudno is a classic of its kind, cherished, unblemished and pristine. But it's not fuddy-duddy or old-fashioned. That's the key to its character. From its Victorian roots it has grown into a uniquely contemporary resort, the kind of place where you can build sandcastles or see modern art, admire period architecture and enjoy the latest entertainment, go shopping or wildlife-watching, ride a vintage tram or alpine cable car.

It's staying beside the sea as it should be.

SEE OVERLEAF
FOR MORE



LLANDUDNO PIER, LLANDUDNO

LLANDUDNO LIVE

TRAVEL WRITER AND EDITOR ROGER THOMAS AND HIS WIFE LIZ TAKE A TWO-DAY BREAK. YOU CAN FOLLOW IN THEIR FOOTSTEPS AT ANY TIME OF THE YEAR. WHATEVER THE SEASON, LLANDUDNO IS FULL OF LIFE.

DAY 1

10am Let's start right at the top. By which I mean the summit of the Great Orme, the soaring 207m (679ft) headland that's an essential part of Llandudno's character.

Until October, you can get there by tramway or cable car. In winter, it's a short, steep drive from the seafront. Our bird's-eye view takes in the sweep of the bay and the mountains of Snowdonia. The Orme itself is uniquely diverse, home to a country park, ancient copper mines and an amazing variety of wildlife, including a herd of Kashmiri goats and some of the rarest plants in the world.

11.30am Coffee time. There's a great choice of coffee shops - and much else - in Llandudno's busy canopied shopping streets just behind the prom.

2pm After lunch we do what everyone does - take a walk along the pier. Wales's longest pier carries us almost half a mile out to sea, and for every step of the way we soak up views of that picture-perfect, paintbox-coloured seafront - pure eye candy - that makes Llandudno such a special place.

3.30pm We find out more about Llandudno - from its ancient roots to its birth as a resort - at the town's museum (now closed for refurbishment, but scheduled to reopen in winter 2019 - see llandudnomuseum.co.uk). Then we call into the nearby Home Front Experience, an immersive little museum that takes you back to World War Two.

7pm Time to eat. We're spoilt for choice but plump for Dylan's Restaurant, located in an extraordinary seafront setting. The food is as good as the surroundings - do what we did and go for the whitebait and sea bass.

DAY 2

10am We call into Llandudno Tourist Information Centre (in the Victoria Centre on Mostyn Street). As well as providing local knowledge on what to see and do, you'll also get great gift ideas from its well-stocked range of local craft products, food and drink.

Llandudno's 19th-century links with Alice Liddell (the real Alice in Wonderland) are fascinating. We trace her connections with the resort on the Alice Trail. Starting from the information centre and with the help of the map (there's also an app available from alictowntrails.co.uk), we follow the White Rabbit's bronze footprints past landmark characters from her fantasy world, like the Mad Hatter and Queen of Hearts. It's the ideal way to really get to know this heritage-rich resort that hasn't changed that much since Alice's time.

NOON Sand and sandwich time. We grab a sandwich and head for the North Shore, a popular beach complete with boat trips, donkey rides and Punch and Judy. There's lots of summery sandcastle-building going on (though, to be honest, I prefer it in its bracing, reviving winter persona). Llandudno's second beach - the West Shore - is peaceful throughout the year, with sweeping mountain views an added bonus.

2.30pm We head for Mostyn, a personal favourite and one of Wales's leading galleries, where cutting-edge art (and a seriously good gift shop) are housed in an ornate red-bricked building.

4pm We're not quite shopped out, so pay a visit to Parc Llandudno, the modern retail park on the edge of town.

7pm Time for a slice of showbiz at Venue Cymru, North Wales's largest entertainment complex, which stages a huge variety of starry performances. It's a major venue with world-class productions - everything from top West End shows and Welsh National Opera to big-name stars from pop, comedy and drama.

MAKE A DATE

HERE ARE A FEW OF LLANDUDNO'S 2019 FESTIVALS AND EVENTS. FOR THE FULL PICTURE SEE PAGES 34/37.

16 FEBRUARY
CAMBRIAN RALLY
Llandudno and the Conwy Valley
cambrianrally.co.uk

4-6 MAY
LLANDUDNO VICTORIAN
EXTRAVAGANZA
victorian-extravaganza.com

13-15 SEPTEMBER
LLAWNO7
Free multi-arts festival
llawn7.org

COASTING ALONG

LLANDUDNO IS JUST PART OF OUR SEASIDE STORY. THERE ARE COMMUNITIES ALL ALONG OUR COASTLINE, EACH ONE PACKED WITH THINGS TO SEE AND DO. HERE'S A QUICK GUIDE TO WHAT YOU CAN FIND ON OUR SHORELINE, FROM EAST TO WEST.

KINMEL BAY AND TOWYN

WHAT'S THE STORY? Kinmel Bay's wide sandy beach is popular for thrilling coastal activities like kitesurfing, kayaking and windsurfing, while neighbouring Towyn is the place to be for buzzing beachfront amusements, arcades and entertainment.

DON'T MISS. Take a nature walk through the rolling landscape of Kinmel Dunes Nature Reserve, an unspoilt expanse where you can spot countless seabirds in the sky and grey seals swimming just off the coast. If you're in the mood for action, head to Tir Prince Leisure Park where you'll find American-style harness horse racing and high-speed rollercoasters, or try the go-karts and fairground rides at Knightley's Fun Park.

ABERGELE AND PENSARN

WHAT'S THE STORY? It's two for the price of one. Set slightly back from the coast and a great jumping-off point for country walks, the historic town of Abergele is full of tempting independent shops, while Pensarn's big sandy beach serves up seaside fun in buckets and spades.

DON'T MISS. Take a walk up to the 178m (583ft) Tower Hill. Local legend says it was once the site of an Elizabethan watchtower that guarded the coast against pirates, but today it's the perfect vantage point for stunning sea views. Alternatively, head for the beach. It's often quieter than some of its better-known coastal neighbours, so you'll have plenty of room to enjoy the sand and sea – and sun, if last year's summer is anything to go by. If you're a golfer, don't forget your clubs. There's also an excellent 18-hole golf course.





COLWYN BAY

WHAT'S THE STORY?

While Colwyn Bay has been attracting visitors since the Victorian era, it's not afraid to move with the times. In recent years, the seafront has been transformed with the arrival of the Porth Eirias development (home to Michelin award-winning chef Bryn Williams's bistro) and the construction of a whole new beach.

DON'T MISS. Enjoy some aquatic action at Colwyn Bay Watersports (also found at Porth Eirias), which offers courses in windsurfing, sailing, stand-up paddleboarding and power boating. Away from the water, you'll find animal magic at the Welsh Mountain Zoo, home to rare and endangered creatures like red pandas, snow leopards and Sumatran tigers.

RHOS-ON-SEA

WHAT'S THE STORY? This little harbour town packs a huge amount of personality into a compact package. There's the traditional promenade (ideal for gentle seaside strolls), colourful boats bobbing in the harbour, children dipping for crabs at the water's edge, and a charming puppet theatre, the only one of its kind in Britain. It all adds up to a perfect, pocket-sized resort.

DON'T MISS. The clear waters round here are alive with fish of all shapes and sizes. Go in search of the big one with a sea-angling trip from the harbour. Or stay on dry land and explore Rhos-on-Sea's stellar shopping scene of independent boutiques selling antiques, vintage clothes and jewellery.

CONWY & DEGANWY

WHAT'S THE STORY? You've probably heard of Conwy's historic quayside, an authentic old waterfront (complete with famous 'Smallest House', an impossibly tiny fisherman's cottage) that huddles beneath the town's medieval castle and walls. But it's worth exploring the entire estuary, both sides of the shore. On Conwy's side there's Conwy Quays, a modern marina with splendid views across the water to another swish, stylish boat-filled marina on the opposite bank at Deganwy. They're both a continuation of this area's strong seafaring and maritime traditions.

DON'T MISS. See it all on a boat trip from Conwy's quayside. And sample succulent Conwy mussels.

PENMAENMAWR

WHAT'S THE STORY? A family favourite. Penmaenmawr's wide sandy beach and promenade boast a paddling pool, children's play area and skate park, perfect for keeping younger visitors entertained. There's also great walking, watersports and a busy sailing club.

DON'T MISS. For that classic seaside experience, hire one of Penmaenmawr's wooden beach huts. Conveniently located close to the café on the promenade, they're the ideal base for a day of fun on the sand.

LLANFAIRFECHAN

WHAT'S THE STORY? A pretty little village with a big sandy beach built for games, paddling and sandcastle building. It's also a good starting point for walks in the surrounding hills. Head to higher ground and you'll be rewarded by fantastic views over the Menai Strait towards Anglesey.

DON'T MISS. Make sure you bring your binoculars. Llanfairfechan is close to Traeth Lafan Nature Reserve, a rich coastal habitat home to seabirds like oystercatchers, great crested grebes and red-breasted mergansers.



AWARD WINNERS

Many of our beautiful beaches have received the prestigious Blue Flag and/or Seaside Award in recognition of their cleanliness and water quality. Kinmel Bay, Abergele (Pensarn), Colwyn Bay/Rhos-on-Sea, Llandudno North Shore, Llandudno West Shore, Penmaenmawr and Llanfairfechan have all picked up top beach prizes.





Wales Entertains

It's one of the world's greatest festivals and this year it's coming to Conwy County. In August 2019 the National Eisteddfod lands in Llanrwst for a uniquely Welsh, week-long celebration of music, art, culture and much more. The Eisteddfod is a beguiling blend of tradition and 21st Century fun, attracting around 150,000 visitors a year.

Central to the Eisteddfod are competitions in poetry, storytelling and song featuring 6,000 entrants from all over Wales. But that's just part of what's going on. You'll also find activities and events for all the family, plus Maes B (the Eisteddfod's very own rock and pop festival). Don't worry if you're not a Welsh speaker. Translation services are provided in the main competition pavilion and you can even join in with some on-site Welsh lessons.

FOR MORE ON ART AND CULTURE SEE OVERLEAF



It's the biggest party in North Wales and you're all invited.



WHEN IT COMES TO ART AND CULTURE, THE NATIONAL EISTEDDFOD AT LLANRWST IS OUR HEADLINER FOR 2019. BUT THIS WEEK-LONG CELEBRATION IS ONLY ONE PLAYER IN A RICH CULTURAL SCENE WAITING TO BE DISCOVERED ALL YEAR ROUND.



CULTURE CLUB

Scheduled to open in autumn 2019, the new Conwy Culture Centre brings Conwy's heritage to 21st-century life. Housed in a striking modern building with views over the town walls and castle, it will be home to a library and the Conwy Archive, plus an arts and heritage hub featuring interactive exhibits and displays from the county's historic collections.

ON STAGE

Head to Llandudno's Venue Cymru for a packed programme of theatrical entertainment. Take your pick from traditional family pantomimes (a big hit at Christmas time), performances by Welsh National Opera, pop music, dance and hit plays direct from the West End. Colwyn Bay's Theatr Colwyn is Wales's oldest working theatre and cinema – and it's still going strong, now modernised to offer a 21st-century entertainment experience. Rhos-on-Sea is home to a very different kind of theatrical encounter. The Harlequin Theatre is the first and only permanent puppet theatre in Britain. If movies are more your thing, catch all the latest releases in the Cineworld multiplex at Llandudno Junction.

PLAYING TO THE GALLERY

Mostyn in Llandudno isn't only one of the UK's best contemporary art galleries. It's also a fascinating architectural achievement, with a gold-spired Edwardian façade giving way to a series of strikingly modern interior spaces. Inside you'll find a shifting programme of exhibitions that showcase the best in contemporary art and craft from Wales and beyond. There's also a cool café and stylish shop selling jewellery, ceramics, prints and books.

PICTURE PERFECT

The highly respected Royal Cambrian Academy of Art in Conwy focuses on artistic excellence in Wales, with a mix of historic and contemporary works. There's more amazing art at beautiful Ffin y Parc in Llanrwst, a grand country house that showcases some of the finest artists working in Wales alongside the best of contemporary 20th-century art. Displayed in immaculately designed rooms, all are available to buy. Don't worry if your budget won't stretch to taking a painting home with you. The cakes on sale in the café are masterpieces in their own right.

TRAIL FINDERS

For a wide-ranging look at our diverse art and craft scene take a trip on the Helfa Gelf Art Trail, Wales's largest open studios event. Every September hundreds of artists from all over North Wales welcome visitors to their studios, offering a fascinating insight into the creative process.



DUST HAS SETTLED ON ITS ORIGINAL PURPOSE. BUT THERE'S NO GETTING AWAY FROM THE POWER AND MIGHT, UNDIMINISHED THROUGH THE CENTURIES, OF CONWY CASTLE.

It was built in the 13th century as one of King Edward I's 'iron ring' of fortresses in his campaign against Wales. Its soaring walls and towers, set against Snowdonia's mountains and the sea, still stand tall so much so that the castle, along with Conwy's well-preserved town walls, is a World Heritage Site.

It's one of Europe's great castles – but also just one chapter in our page-turning history and heritage. There's lonely Dolwyddelan for example, home of the Welsh princes, perched on a craggy outcrop amid the peaks of Snowdonia. The atmospheric ruins of Deganwy Castle are located in a prime spot overlooking the North Wales coast. At Llanrwst you'll find the Tudor-era and much-haunted Gwydir Castle. Finally, there's Gwrych Castle in Abergele, a medieval-style mansion built in the early 19th-century.

LIVING HISTORY



DOLWYDDELAN CASTLE

- PAST - MASTERS

IN WALES'S YEAR OF DISCOVERY THERE'S NO BETTER PLACE TO DELVE INTO THE PAST. IT'S ALL AROUND YOU, IN MEDIEVAL CASTLES, PREHISTORIC SITES AND STIRRING STORIES OF KINGS AND PRINCES.



FOR MORE DETAILS ON PLANS FOR THE NEW CONWY CULTURE CENTRE SEE PAGES 32



LITTLE AND LARGE

Our history comes in all shapes and sizes. On Conwy's quay, you'll find the Smallest House in Great Britain. Measuring just 1.8m/6ft by 3m/10ft, this miniature terraced property was inhabited until 1900 but now serves as a tiny time capsule of Conwy's past. At the other end of the scale is Plas Mawr ('Big House' in English). This grand Elizabethan townhouse inside Conwy's crowded town walls is the finest of its kind in the UK. The lavish interior has been immaculately restored to its 16th-century splendour, while interactive touchscreen displays bring the building's history to life.

CHANGING ROOMS

Conwy's many architectural treasures also include 14th-century Aberconwy House. One of Wales's oldest townhouses, it's a fascinating trip through several eras of history. As you explore, you'll pass through rooms decorated in Jacobean, Georgian and Victorian styles, each reflecting a different period in the house's long life.

HAUNTED HOUSE

Home of the powerful Wynn family for more than two centuries, Gwydir Castle at Llanrwst is steeped in history. Restored after years of dereliction, this fortified Tudor manor house is known for its royal connections (both King Charles I and King George V stayed here), impressive original features like the oak-panelled Dining Room and the ghosts that reputedly haunt its halls. Simple from the outside, nearby Gwydir Uchaf Chapel has an elaborate painted ceiling.

MEET THE MAKERS

We've centuries of industrial heritage to discover too. Start out in the hills above Penmaenmawr where you'll find a Stone Age 'axe factory' that made tools which have been found all over Britain. Then it's on to the Great Orme Copper Mines, where Bronze Age workers dug out a network of subterranean tunnels more than 3,500 years ago. Finally, jump forward to the Industrial Revolution, when engineer Thomas Telford created Conwy's stunning, game-changing suspension bridge, then see industry in action at Trefriw Woollen Mills, founded in the mid-19th century and still going strong.

MOTHER TONGUE

A humble stone farmhouse deep in the hills above Penmachno has a huge cultural significance within Wales. Tŷ Mawr Wybrnant, now cared for by the National Trust, was the birthplace in around 1545 of Bishop William Morgan who helped secure the future of the Welsh language as the first translator of the Bible into Welsh.



BEST OF BETWS

IT'S LLANDUDNO'S INLAND NEIGHBOUR AND THE GATEWAY TO THE SNOWDONIA NATIONAL PARK. HERE'S OUR LIST OF EIGHT CAN'T-MISS THINGS TO SEE AND DO IN AND AROUND BETWS-Y-COED.

TAKE THE TRAIN

Ride the rails for the best introduction to Betws-y-Coed. Take the 40-minute train journey along the Conwy Valley line from Llandudno and you'll pass through some of the loveliest riverside and mountain views in North Wales.

TAKE THE TRAIN (AGAIN)

Rail enthusiasts love Conwy Valley Railway Museum, located right next to the main station. Climb aboard a miniature steam train for an eight-minute trip through landscaped grounds, visit a museum full of fascinating railway artefacts and browse the huge collection of model trains in the shop.

IN THE KNOW

One of your first stops should be the Snowdonia National Park Information Centre, a font of knowledge on things to see and do locally. There's also a spectacular introductory film featuring high-altitude drone footage and a virtual summit that recreates the 360-degree views from Snowdon's peak.

WALK THIS WAY...

Or ride, or take your pick from a range of all things outdoorsy. There's a good reason why Betws-y-Coed is popular whatever the season. It's a thriving hub for walkers, cyclists, kayakers and just about every other type of fresh-air enthusiast.

BE A FALL GUY (OR GIRL)

Watch the rushing waters at Swallow Falls, where the River Llugwy plunges through a rocky channel in a series of tumbling cascades. One of Wales's most famous beauty spots, it's at its most spectacular in autumn, winter and spring. Make sure you bring your camera.

HIT THE SHOPS

Browse boutiques selling one-of-a-kind craft items harking back to the Betws-y-Coed's 19th-century past as an artists' colony, or stock up on all the gear you'll need for outdoor adventures in Snowdonia. Bustling Betws is a shopper's paradise, and a great place to source those special Christmas gifts.

BE A SOCIAL CLIMBER

Take to the trees with friends and family at Zip World Fforest to tackle ropes, nets and swings strung through the canopy. There's also the Fforest Coaster toboggan run and the new Plummet 2, a pulse-pounding 100ft/30m drop through a trapdoor that's the closest things to freefall this side of an aeroplane.

CAFÉS AND CHOIRS

You'll build up quite an appetite exploring Betws, so treat yourself to a bite to eat and refreshing beverage in one of the town's cafés and restaurants. The lively Y Stablau (Stables) is one of the best, serving up live music and special events alongside tasty locally sourced food and drink. Look out also for male voice choir summer evening concerts at St Mary's Church.



AND
SO THE
ADVENTURE
BEGINS

MAKE A DATE

HERE ARE A FEW OF BETWS-Y-COED'S 2019 FESTIVALS AND EVENTS. FOR THE FULL PICTURE SEE PAGES 34/37.

8 JUNE
QUEST ADVENTURE RACE
Betws-y-Coed
questadventureseries.com

25-31 OCTOBER
FFEAR FFOREST HALLOWEEN
Zip World Fforest, Betws-y-Coed
zipworld.co.uk

2-3 NOVEMBER
SNOWDONIA
WALKING FESTIVAL
breeseadventures.co.uk

GREEN


HERE'S WHERE YOU CAN BE JUST A STONE'S THROW FROM THE SEA: WALKING IN THE WOODS IN A FRESH AND VERY GREEN NORTH WALES. COUNTRY-LOVERS HAVE THE GREAT OUTDOORS AT THEIR FEET.

AT *Heart*

Flanking the lush Conwy Valley on one side there's the Gwydyr Forest Park, a landscape latticed with trails for casual and serious walkers not to mention hidden lakes and an abundant wildlife. Venture further west and you're into high-altitude Snowdonia, with its rocky peaks and classic mountain hikes.

On the other side of the valley there's the very different landscape of Mynydd Hiraethog, a high, wild plateau clothed in forest, moor and heather, centred around the lake of Llyn Brenig, a focal point for walkers and outdoor enthusiasts.

And don't forget the coast. How could you, when you have almost 35 miles of the world-famous Wales Coast Path to explore, all the way from Llanfairfechan to Kinmel Bay?

FOR MORE ON OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES AND THE COUNTRYSIDE SEE OVERLEAF 

STARS IN YOUR EYES

Go star trekking in Snowdonia's Dark Sky Reserve. Thanks to low levels of light pollution and wide, open spaces, it's one of just 11 such reserves in the world... the perfect place for stargazing, with the Milky Way, distant constellations and shooting stars all visible on a clear night.

OUTWARD BOUND

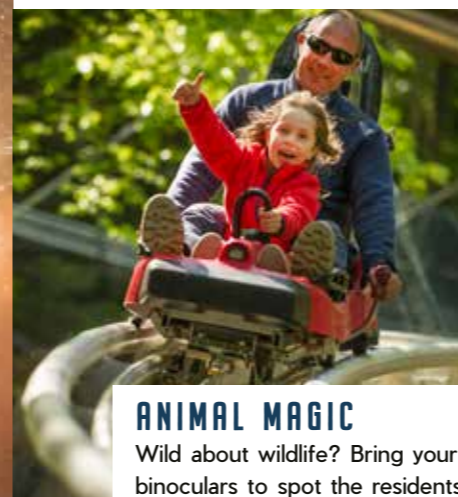
WALKING, WILDLIFE SPOTTING, CYCLING, SURFING... THESE ARE JUST A FEW OF THE REASONS TO GET OUT AND ABOUT.



IN THE ZONE

North Wales's reputation as the UK's activity capital is down to places like Adventure Parc Snowdonia and Zip World Fforest. The waves arrive like clockwork at Adventure Parc Snowdonia, Conwy Valley's unique inland surf lagoon, where revolutionary technology serves up the perfect swell. There's also a soft play area for the kids, with a number of new developments planned for 2019 including an indoor adventure centre. See page 32 for more details.

Just down the valley there's Zip World Fforest, an aerial adventure experience with zip lines, toboggan rides and simulated parachute jumps. And at Llandudno's Ski and Snowboard Centre there's guaranteed on-piste fun and games whatever the weather.



ANIMAL MAGIC

Wild about wildlife? Bring your binoculars to spot the residents of Conwy's RSPB Reserve, which include black-tailed godwits, lapwings and sedge warblers. Visit watery Llyn Brenig to catch a glimpse of rare creatures like red squirrels and ospreys, or wander over Llandudno's rugged Great Orme for an encounter with our resident population of Kashmiri goats. You'll also see exotic beasts at Colwyn Bay Mountain Zoo, plus farm animals, owls and birds of prey at Bodafon Farm Park in Llandudno.

THE WHEEL THING

You'll find marvellously muddy off-road routes in our hills and forest. Head to Penmachno or the Gwydyr Forest Park for some of the UK's most spectacular and scenic mountain biking. For road cyclists there are lung-busting climbs and gentle family trails like the Conwy Cycle Route, an almost entirely traffic-free 30-mile coastal cruise.



OVERGROUND

Go Below Underground Adventure near Betws-y-Coed is the ultimate dramatic subterranean experience. In former mines deep beneath Snowdonia you'll discover a world of deep blue lakes, zip wires, bridges, ladders and abseils. It's an assault course like no other. Back on the surface, tackle Snowdonia's high country from Plas y Brenin National Mountain Sports Centre, Capel Curig, which lays on all kinds of courses and outdoor experiences.

GET ON TRACK

Feed your need for speed at GYG Karting in Cerrigydrudion. It's the largest karting circuit in the UK, providing high-octane thrills for racers of all ages.

UP THE GARDEN PATH

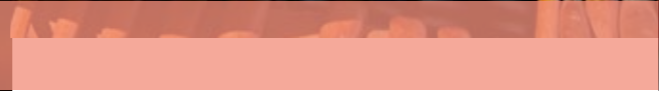
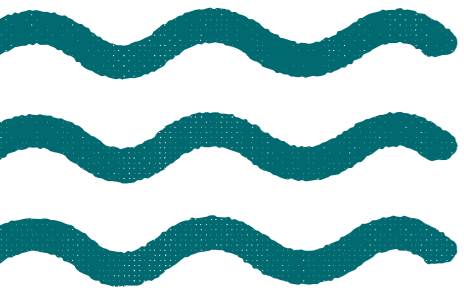
Bodnant Garden in the Vale of Conwy is a National Trust treasure. It packs amazing horticultural variety into its 80 acres/32ha, from Italianate terraces, crafted water features and manicured meadows to the wild, tangled world of The Dell. It's no surprise to learn that a remake of The Secret Garden starring Julie Walters and Colin Firth, scheduled for release in 2019, was partly filmed here. Across the valley there's Conwy Water Gardens, an aquatic centre with fishing lakes, reptile house and nature walks.



LOCAL FLAVOUR



OUR PRISTINE COUNTRYSIDE, RIVERS AND SEAS ARE THE SOURCE OF FINE, FRESH FOOD AND DRINK. HERE'S A TASTE.



MUSSEL POWER

Sustainably hand-raked from Conwy Estuary just as they have been for centuries, deliciously meaty Conwy mussels are known as the best flavoured in the UK. Pop into the shop on the harbour for mussels at their freshest then visit the Conwy Mussel Museum to find out more about these succulent shellfish.



A FEAST OF A FESTIVAL

Taking place every October, Gwledd Conwy Feast is the biggest and best food festival in North Wales. The town's historic streets are transformed as producers gather to showcase their wares, alongside a local food market, street food vendors and cooking demonstrations. Completing the menu is a busy programme of live music, art and crafts and an explosive finale with fireworks lighting up the sky above Conwy.

LOCAL HEROES

There's mighty meat at Edwards of Conwy. The award-winning butchers serve up tempting cuts of locally sourced Welsh beef and saltmarsh lamb, plus traditional hand-made sausages and pies. If you're on the go, there's also a fantastic selection of freshly made sandwiches. For more local delicacies, head to Llandudno Tourist Information Centre, where produce from across the area is on offer alongside guides, maps and travel advice.

BOTTOMS UP

Fancy a tippie? Take a tour of Conwy Vineyard to find out exactly how they make their five varieties of wine (and taste a few samples while you're at it). If gin's your thing, take your pick from two distilleries, North Star and Snowdonia, producers of award-winning spirits using ingredients foraged from the North Wales countryside.



WHAT'S NEW?

KEEP AN EYE OPEN FOR THESE NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN 2019



BOATHOUSE CLIMBING CENTRE

YOU WON'T MISS THE BOAT

Llandudno's Old Lifeboat Station is the new home of the Boathouse Climbing Centre, opening early in 2019. North Wales's latest climbing centre will appeal to all-comers, beginners and experts alike. It features around 300 sq m (3,230 sq ft) of climbing surface with 8m (26ft) lead walls, a roof bouldering area and human 'rat run' cave system created in the roof space.

RIDING THE CREST OF A WAVE

From summer 2019 Surf Snowdonia in the Conwy Valley becomes Adventure Parc Snowdonia. Don't worry, surfing dudes. The 300m (984ft) inland surfing lagoon – a world's first – will remain a key part of the attraction. The renaming/rebranding reflects the broader range of activities on site, the result of a development of around £16m. These include:

- **Adrenaline Indoors** – a nature-inspired high-thrills climbing, artificial caving adventure experience.
- **Explore Outdoors** – fresh-air family activities including an off-road pump track, mountain bike trail, bouldering, fun and fitness trail and adventure playground.
- **Adventure Concierge Service** – to encourage visitors to explore exciting instructor-led activities off-site and visit other leading attractions in the region.



GIVING THE PAST A NEW FUTURE

Llandudno Museum and Gallery has always been a treasure chest of all things local – from prehistoric and Roman times to Llandudno's growth as a seaside resort.

It's currently going through a complete makeover in preparation for its reopening in winter 2019 as Llandudno's prime all-year, all-weather heritage attraction. Highlights of the redevelopment include new galleries, exhibitions and interpretation, family fun and exciting activities, a drop-in heritage and community hub, refreshments area and improved access throughout.



A NEW CHAPTER IN CONWY COUNTY'S STORY

Heritage-rich Conwy is about to add to its cultural assets. The Conwy Culture Centre, scheduled to open in autumn 2019, is housed in a striking contemporary building with views over Conwy's medieval castle and town walls.

It features an arts and heritage hub with interactive interpretation and historic collections plus a new library and home for the County Archive. For visitors, it's the perfect gateway to the story of Conwy County – and also a great place to enjoy a cup of coffee against the stunning backdrop of Conwy Castle.

Funded by: Conwy County Borough Council, Heritage Lottery Fund; Welsh Government; Rural Community Development Fund; Gwynt y Môr in partnership with Conwy Arts Trust and Arts Council Wales.

32 VISITLLANDUDNO.ORG.UK



Ariennir yn Rhannol gan Lywodraeth Cymru Part Funded by Welsh Government

INTO THE NIGHT

5 TOP EVENING EXPERIENCES

FROM BUSTLING SEASIDE PUBS TO LATE NIGHT SKI EXPERIENCES ON THE GREAT ORME, HERE ARE CCBC TOURISM MARKETING OFFICER – JASMIN KOFFLER'S FIVE TOP EVENING EXPERIENCES. FOR MORE GREAT IDEAS FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK.COM/VISITINGLLANDUDNO

1 FOR THE JOKERS...

Comedy nights are extremely popular in Llandudno and the surrounding areas, with many pubs hosting regular comedy evenings. Head to The Great Orme Brewery or Colwyn Bay's Station Pub on the last Saturday of every month for an evening full of side-splittingly funny entertainment. Guest comedians in the past have included Wales' own Tudur Owen, as well as the fabulous Dan Nightingale – a top-class circuit headliner who earned rave reviews at Edinburgh Fringe 2018. Find out more at greatormebrewery.co.uk or [facebook.com/standupattheseaside](https://www.facebook.com/standupattheseaside)

2 FOR THE THEATRE LOVERS...

There's no business like show business! Avid theatre-goers can enjoy magical and inspiring performances at Llandudno's Venue Cymru – a theatre, conference and events facility close to the centre of Llandudno. The theatre regularly hosts West End favourites, as well as popular music concerts and theatrical productions. For a full list of upcoming shows and events, visit venuecymru.co.uk

3 FOR THE PARTYGOERS...

Llandudno has a bustling nightlife community and houses many popular bars including Fountains, The Lily and The Palladium (more commonly known as Llandudno's Whetherspoons). Lookout for seasonal offers throughout the year and enjoy a cocktail, live music and the occasional karaoke evening. At the end of the night, the party continues in the town's two nightclubs – Club 147 or Broadway Boulevard!

For a more relaxed evening, visit one of the traditional ale pubs including The Kings Arms, The Cottage Loaf (Llandudno), and The Erskine Arms (Conwy) – all of which have a friendly and laid-back atmosphere. Typically housed in period buildings, these pubs ooze character and charm, reiterating the history of the Victorian and Medieval resorts of Llandudno and Conwy.

4 FOR THE BRAVE...

Are you brave enough to spend a night in a haunted castle? For those that enjoy haunting tales and ghostly visits, take a guided ghost tour at Gwrych Castle where you can investigate reports of notorious ghosts that haunt the castle at night. Guests will then be taken on vigils around the grounds of the castle and the restored tower. Visit gwrychcastle.co.uk for more details – if you dare!

5 FOR THE ADRENALINE SEEKERS...

Booked a ski holiday and want some extra practice before your trip? Llandudno Snowsports Centre offers a wide range of PermaSnow slope-based activities – skiing, snowboarding and even sno-tubing! Located on the Great Orme, the centre provides a late ski session every Thursday until 10pm. Ski the night away and admire the stunning views of Llandudno Bay at night! Find out how you can get on-piste at jnllandudno.co.uk/slopes/ski

FOR MORE FESTIVALS AND EVENTS SEE OVERLEAF



VISITLLANDUDNO.ORG.UK 33

Festivals EVENTS 2019

Our full-on programme of festivals and events runs throughout the year. Here's a taste of what's happening in 2019. For more details of events in Conwy County check out

VISITLLANDUDNO.ORG.UK

WINTER

JANUARY

6 WIRRAL TO LLANDUDNO MINI RUN
North Shore Promenade
facebook.com/WirralMinis

12-13 TAKE PART 2019
Venue Cymru, Llandudno
venuecymru.co.uk

26-27 BIG GARDEN BIRD WATCH: FAMILY FUN RSPB CONWY
RSPB Conwy
rspb.org.uk
01492 584091

10 NICK BEER MEMORIAL 10K FUN RUN

North Shore Promenade, Llandudno
nwrrc.co.uk

22 UNDER 20 SIX NATIONS: WALES V ENGLAND

FEBRUARY

16 CAMBRIAN RALLY
cambrianrally.co.uk

LLANDUDNO AND THE CONWY VALLEY
The 64th Visit Conwy Cambrian Rally is a new round of the prestigious MSA British Rally Championship – and the opening event of the series. It's also part of the Jordon Surfacing BTRDA Rally Series, Pirelli Welsh Rally Championship and the ANWCC Championship. Drivers and spectators love it, for it takes place in the challenging, classic forests of North Wales.

Stadiwm Zip World, Parc Eirias, Colwyn Bay
wru.wales/tickets

SPRING

MARCH

15 UNDER 20 SIX NATIONS: WALES V IRELAND
Stadiwm Zip World, Parc Eirias, Colwyn Bay
wru.wales/tickets

19-24 WORLD SNOOKER: LADBROKES PLAYERS CHAMPIONSHIP
Venue Cymru, Llandudno
venuecymru.co.uk

23 GREAT ORME GIANT WALK
LLANDUDNO



breeseadventures.co.uk

26 CONWY SEED FAIR
High Street, Conwy
conwybeekeepers.org.uk

31 CONWY MARATHON
Llandudno Promenade
alwayssaimhigherevents.com

APRIL

7 LLANDUDNO TRAIL HALF MARATHON
Happy Valley, Llandudno
runwales.com/events

14 COAST HALF MARATHON
Porth Eirias, Colwyn Bay to Prestatyn
bespokefitnessandevents.co.uk

27-28



COLWYN BAY 1940S FESTIVAL
facebook.com/FortiesFestival

MAY

4-6 LLANDUDNO VICTORIAN EXTRAVAGANZA
victorian-extravaganza.com

4-6 LLANDUDNO TRANSPORT FESTIVAL
Bodafon Fields, Llandudno
llantransfest.co.uk

17-19 TREFRIW WALKING FESTIVAL
trefriwwalkingfestival.co.uk

19 SNOWDONIA HALF MARATHON
Llanrwst
runwales.com

30 CANAPÉS AT THE CASTLE
VIP evening tour of Conwy Castle
01492 577566



11 PROM XTRA

Promenade, Colwyn Bay
promxtra.co.uk

DON'T FORGET! This list was compiled during November 2018 and details may have changed, so please check dates and times if you plan to attend an event.

SUMMER

JUNE

1 DEGANWY PROM DAY
From 11am to 4pm
[facebook.com/DeganwyPromDay](https://www.facebook.com/DeganwyPromDay)

1-2 CONWY PIRATE WEEKEND
Conwy Quay
[conwypirates.com](https://www.conwypirates.com)

4-7 THREE CASTLES TRIAL
Classic cars trial based in Llandudno
[three-castles.co.uk](https://www.three-castles.co.uk)

9-10 RHOS PIRATE WEEKEND
Rhos-on-Sea
[conwypirates.co.uk](https://www.conwypirates.co.uk)

8 QUEST ADVENTURE RACE
BETWS-Y-COED
questadventureseries.com/race/quest-wales

Quest Wales, part of Quest Adventure Series, returns to the idyllic town of Betws-y-Coed.

The inspiring, challenging routes are designed to be a real test of endurance for any outdoor enthusiast. With various routes to choose from, Quest takes you on an adventure to the edge of your physical ability. Tough cycles, amazing trail runs and a remote kayak in a lake in the Snowdonia National Park lie ahead.

28-30 SNOWDONIA CHALLENGE
BETWS-Y-COED
[BREESEADVENTURES.CO.UK](https://www.breezeadventures.co.uk)

29 LLANRWST RURAL SHOW
[sioellanrwstshow.co.uk](https://www.sioellanrwstshow.co.uk)

JULY



LIVE AT STADIWM ZIP WORLD JESS GLYNNE
Stadiwm Zip World,
Colwyn Bay 01492 872000
[venuecymru.co.uk](https://www.venuecymru.co.uk)

20-27 CONWY CLASSICAL MUSIC FESTIVAL
[conwyclassicalmusic.co.uk](https://www.conwyclassicalmusic.co.uk)

22-27 WALES 360
A six-day cross-country mountain bike adventure. Day three starts from Betws-y-Coed
[wales360.com](https://www.wales360.com)

25 CANAPÉS AT THE CASTLE
VIP evening tour of Conwy Castle 01492 577566

26-28 LLANDUDNO JAZZ FESTIVAL
[LLANDUDNOJAZZFESTIVAL.COM](https://www.llandudnojazzfestival.com)

27-2 AUG SCORPION NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS
Llandudno Bay [llandudno-sailing.com](https://www.llandudno-sailing.com)

2-10 AUG NATIONAL EISTEDDFOD

LLANRWST

The National Eisteddfod of Wales is the country's main celebration of the arts. It's a travelling annual festival attracting around 150,000 people to venues around Wales, and this year it comes to Llanrwst in the Conwy Valley. Steeped in tradition, it also embraces all that's new and youthful in Welsh culture. And everyone is welcome, with translation facilities available to non-Welsh speakers.

[eisteddfod.wales/2019-eisteddfod](https://www.eisteddfod.wales/2019-eisteddfod)



AUGUST

3-4 BIG WILD SLEEPOUT
RSPB Conwy [rspb.org.uk](https://www.rspb.org.uk)
01492 584091

10 EGLWYSBACH SHOW
[eglwysbachshow.co.uk](https://www.eglwysbachshow.co.uk)



18 SNOWDON MG RUN
Starting from Llandudno Promenade [llandudnomgoc.org](https://www.llandudnomgoc.org)

18-21 GLAMORGAN CC V LANCASHIRE CC
Colwyn Bay Cricket Club,
Rhos-on-Sea
[glamorgancricket.com](https://www.glamorgancricket.com)

22 CANAPÉS AT THE CASTLE
VIP evening tour of Conwy Castle 01492 577566

24-26 (12PM-6PM) ROCK & POP FESTIVAL
Llandudno Promenade
A free international festival presented by TVWales, featuring emerging recording artists.
[tvwales.co.uk](https://www.tvwales.co.uk)



24-26 (6:30PM-9PM) TVWKIDS
Llandudno Promenade
A competition for young singers and musicians in partnership with Anglesey Music.
[tvwales.co.uk](https://www.tvwales.co.uk)

30-31 LLANDUDNO GOLDWING LIGHT PARADE
[llandudnolightparade.co.uk](https://www.llandudnolightparade.co.uk)
Friday evening and Saturday

SEPTEMBER

13 CONWY HONEY FAIR
High Street, Conwy
[conwybeekeepers.org.uk](https://www.conwybeekeepers.org.uk)

13-14 ANYFISH, ANYWHERE
Two-day open championship for sea anglers hosted in the popular resort of Llandudno [anyfishanywhere.com](https://www.anyfishanywhere.com)

13-15 LLAWN07
Free multi-arts festival Llandudno
[llawn.org](https://www.llawn.org)

OCTOBER

3-6 WALES RALLY GB
[walesrallygb.com](https://www.walesrallygb.com)

25-27 GWLEDD CONWY FEAST
[gwleddconwyfeast.com](https://www.gwleddconwyfeast.com)

26 PORTH EIRIAS HALLOWEEN 10K AND KIDS 1K
Fun Run Colwyn Bay
[bespokefitness.niftyentries.com](https://www.bespokefitness.niftyentries.com)

NOVEMBER

NORTH WALES CHORAL FESTIVAL
VENUE CYMRU, LLANDUDNO

This popular annual festival welcomes choirs from all over the world. Organised by Conwy County Borough Council, it's one of the top choral festivals in Wales. Renowned for its friendly atmosphere, it has grown from strength to strength. A wonderful celebration of music suited to any chorister, with a variety of competition categories across the weekend. 01492 575943 [northwaleschoralfestival.com](https://www.northwaleschoralfestival.com)

9 BETWS-Y-COED TRAIL CHALLENGE
[trailbetws.com/the-challenge](https://www.trailbetws.com/the-challenge)

14-17 LLANDUDNO CHRISTMAS FAYRE
[llandudnochristmasfayre.co.uk](https://www.llandudnochristmasfayre.co.uk)

WINTER

DECEMBER

7 LLANDUDNO 5K SANTA DASH
[bespokefitnessandevents.co.uk](https://www.bespokefitnessandevents.co.uk)

7 LLANDUDNO CHRISTMAS PARADE
[llandudno.gov.uk](https://www.llandudno.gov.uk)

14 CONWY WINTERFEST
[conwytownevents.co.uk](https://www.conwytownevents.co.uk)

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