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# 2016: Wales' Year Of Adventure

Make it **your** business to benefit from adventure travel. Here's a step-by-step guide.

#WalesAdventure

- ▶ Cover: Coasteering, near Rhoscolyn, Holy Island, Anglesey
- ▶ This page: Mountain biking, Coed y Brenin, Snowdonia



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Earlier this year I was delighted to announce a series of thematic years for Wales, starting with a Year of Adventure in 2016.

The Year of Adventure will seek to build on a wave of exciting new openings and developments across the country, and over 10 years of ongoing investment by Welsh Government to make Wales one of the UK's leading adventure destinations. Aspirational, inspirational – the outdoor activity sector is worth £481 million to the Welsh economy and is growing across the world.

The Year of Adventure will provide focus for further investment, project development and marketing across my portfolio and beyond: galvanising the people of Wales, inspiring our tourism markets, giving the media a fresh hook and enriching the Wales brand message globally.

Over the last few months, I have had the pleasure of taking part in several Welsh adventures and know first hand, that Wales' strength is the fantastic range of adventures we have to offer visitors – high-adrenaline, of course, and also a variety of physical, cultural and natural adventures for all ages, all abilities. Wales is epic for everyone – and that's a great message for all of us to get behind.

Now's the time to develop new projects and ideas, and let us know what you're up to. Follow us on Twitter, and sign-up to our newsletters for further details of the events, campaigns and opportunities ahead.

I encourage you all to join us for a new adventure – to take pride. And take part.

**Ken Skates**  
Deputy Minister for Culture,  
Sport and Tourism

**Your Year of Adventure  
starts here ➤**

## ➤ Visit Wales has adopted the theme 'Year of Adventure' for 2016.

Our big year will be a celebration of Wales as an active, vibrant place to visit. Our aim is to position our country as a leading UK adventure destination.

Wales now boasts iconic, reputation-changing adrenaline attractions such as Zip World, Surf Snowdonia and the world's largest underground trampoline. Our mountain biking centres, at places like Coed-y-Brenin and Bike Park Wales, are world-class and our 870 miles of Wales Coast Path represent the world's longest continuous path along a nation's shoreline. You can paddleboard, kayak or raft in the heart of our capital city – and we invented coastering.

But please don't think that the Year of Adventure is all about capital 'A' adrenaline activities.

Our definition of adventure also comes with a small 'a', embracing:

- Stimulating personal journeys of discovery.
- Experiences based on Wales' rich cultural heritage.
- Adventures of the mind as well as the body.

It means many things, such as taking in festivals, watching wildlife, discovering good local food (and meeting the producers at food festivals), and exploring the battlements of a misty mountain fortress. Our adventures take place in the great outdoors and in new, unexpected ways in towns, cities and historic sites. They're for all ages, all abilities.

### So what's this guide all about?

In a nutshell, it's about how **you** – your business – can benefit from the Year of Adventure. And it applies across the board, from hotels to B&Bs and self-catering, visitor attractions to activity providers.

We know you're busy running your business so we've designed a reader-friendly guide that's concise and full of practical advice and information. It's the kind of guide you don't have to read all in one go, cover-to-cover. You can dip in and out of it, focusing on the bits that are of interest and relevance to you.

In broad terms, here's what you'll find:

- What adventure tourism means for Wales – and why we're very good at it.
- Practical advice – knowing your market and the many ways you can benefit from the Year of Adventure.
- Setting an example – what businesses in Wales think of the Year of Adventure, and how other countries approach adventure tourism.
- Meet our Year of Adventure Ambassadors.
- Further information.

Everyone can easily become involved in the Year of Adventure – it's your year more than ours, your opportunity to be adventurous in marketing **your** business. So now's the time to get started.





► Llangollen Canal, Llangollen

## Make a date

First things first: the 2016 Year of Adventure is the first of three thematic years for Wales. 2017 will be the Year of Legends, 2018 the Year of the Sea. Marketing that focuses on **product** is the way forward. The Year of Adventure places one of Wales' strongest products centre stage.

We want to:

- galvanise the industry
- give the media a fresh hook and reinvigorate the Wales brand globally
- energise the people of Wales
- provide a focus for investment
- inspire target markets to think differently and attract new visitors to Wales now
- become a leading European adventure destination, offering experiences that are safe, sustainable and ethical
- welcome adventurers of all ages, abilities and interests

## So why is 2016 the right time for our Year of Adventure?

- **Adventure travel is on the up.** More and more people are on the lookout for new and exciting experiences. We need to act now if we are to catch the wave.
- **We're already on the map.** Wales' iconic places, events and products are perfectly placed to satisfy this growing market. The Welsh Government has made significant investments in adventure tourism across Wales, and many of our adventure experiences are already recognised globally. We need to build on this momentum and seize this moment to tell our story.
- **There's a lot going on.** 2016 is the centenary of the birth of Roald Dahl, the Cardiff-born author who enthralled readers worldwide with tales of magical adventures. This is our inspiration for a host of events.
- **Naturally speaking.** Crucially, for much of the UK, Wales has the closest really adventurous, natural and varied terrain – both coast and country. Visitors from most parts of England can reach much of Wales relatively easily. Bearing in mind that most now come on time-sensitive short breaks, this translates into a compelling message for our key markets in search of a variety of things to do on their doorstep.

## So what's happening?

2016 will showcase all kinds of events, from high-adrenaline challenges like Ironman Wales, the Snowdon Marathon and the Dragon Ride to arty, foodie, musical and cultural festivals. Some activities are being organised or supported by Visit Wales, others are being delivered by you, our industry partners. The full programme is continually changing but follow us [@visitwalesbiz](#) for regular updates.

Our Year of Adventure campaign will be rolled out across the UK, Republic of Ireland and Germany priority markets. Highlights of campaign-led activities and events for the first quarter of 2016 include:

- A kick-off celebration at the Saundersfoot New Year's Day Swim on 1 January
- Our #FindYourEpic campaign that starts across the UK from the end of January
- A Visit Wales Adventure Roadshow, taking in key European cities during the first three months of the year
- A Great Weekend of Adventure, 2/3 April

## #FindYourEpic

This campaign theme for the Year of Adventure takes its inspiration from Visit Wales' new brand positioning, placing Wales as a confident, proud country where visitors can find their own epic experiences. The campaign comes in two phases. The initial emphasis on brand-building and inspiration will be followed by a change of focus that presents more specific reasons to visit – and to visit now.

## The Great Weekend of Adventure, 2/3 April

Throw your doors open, work together, come up with innovative ideas...

The aim of the Great Weekend of Adventure is to focus our collective energies in order to create a critical mass of adventure-themed events, activities, competitions, special offers and discounts in different localities, and across Wales.

Our first aim is to introduce the people of Wales and those already here on holiday to Wales' wealth of adventure experiences. We want to get people trying new things, having a great time, talking about us on social media – and spending money.

If we can create a big critical mass of adventures, or come up with some stand-out individual ideas, the weekend has the potential to set up the rest of the season by providing a showcase for the breadth of activities available here, and inspiring people to return to Wales or visit for the first time later in the year.

Stay tuned to Visit Wales and follow us [@visitwalesbiz](#) for the full picture.

## Know your market

Adventure travellers are as varied as the Welsh countryside and coastline. Understanding who they are and what they want is key to getting the most out of our Year of Adventure.

### Adventure Specialists

**Who:** Extreme and enthusiast – couples, groups, backpackers

**Age:** 18–55+

**Key facts:**

- Broad age range. Defined by high-level interest in a specialist activity
- Will travel spontaneously outside of peak season to enjoy specific activities like climbing, mountain biking or kayaking
- In search of new and innovative experiences in spectacular locations

### Pre-Family Explorers

**Who:** ‘Soft’ adventure enthusiasts – couples, groups, backpackers

**Age:** 18–35

**Key facts:**

- They take lots of trips and holidays
- More likely than average to be from London, with upmarket tastes
- Open-minded, curious and brave, they like to try new things when on holiday

### Active Family Explorers

**Who:** Travellers with children under the age of 15

**Age:** 35–55+

**Key facts:**

- Take many holidays, particularly beach and sightseeing trips; looking for places with plenty to do in all weather conditions
- In general, they have upmarket tastes
- Adventurous travellers who like to learn about the places they visit and local way of life

### Older Explorers

**Who:** Couples and groups without young children

**Age:** 55+

**Key facts:**

- Interested in sightseeing, spectacular scenery, heritage and culture
- Want accommodation and food that is high quality and good value
- Really appreciate a warm welcome

## And let's not forget the obvious market close to home...

### The People of Wales

The above target markets also include a very strong in-Wales element aimed at supporting adventure tourism, especially during the quieter months, but also enriching the lives and boosting the health and well-being of the people of Wales.



# Let's get practical



Here's possibly the most important part of this guide – the hands-on, helpful bit. We want everyone to take part in bringing the Year of Adventure to life from the grass roots upwards, from the smallest B&B to the biggest attraction.

The Year of Adventure is both a celebration and an opportunity. We can proactively promote and draw attention to the biggest projects and ideas out there – but we also want to make it a useful hook for you in your own marketing as a destination or individual business.

So how can you get involved? How can you make the Year of Adventure work for you? What should you do next? Here are some suggestions and ideas to get you going.

## Go do it – now

- **Spread the word.** Contact customers on your mailing list to let them know that 2016 is our Year of Adventure, outlining some of the adventures that will be happening in your area.
- **Get the knowledge.** Start collecting information on adventure providers and activities in your area.
- **Share the knowledge.** Feature sample adventures and activities on your website and provide a list of local apps. Create itineraries for guests and keep plenty of local information on hand (put together a scrapbook packed with leaflets and cuttings detailing things to do in the area).
- **Work together.** Collaborate with other local businesses to give your guests the best possible joined-up experiences. Think of other businesses as colleagues, not competitors. Cross promote, arrange special discounted rates and last-minute booking opportunities with activity providers.
- **Multi-task.** Many visitors want to combine a wide range of experiences (walking with tasting Welsh whisky, cycling with red kite spotting, etc). That's okay, for Wales is packed with all kinds of activities and adventures. Offer or suggest a number of different activities in a day or weekend break.
- **Prepare yourself.** Make sure that you and your staff are aware of some of the key events scheduled for the Year of Adventure. If your business will be providing adventure experiences, make sure staff are properly trained.
- **Be accommodating.** Provide storage and cleaning facilities for muddy boots and adventure gear, and print out a daily weather report for guests planning their outdoor activities.
- **Welcome walkers and cyclists.** Join our Walkers and Cyclists Welcome scheme by providing helpful facilities like bike storage, drying areas and so on. They will bring a big boost to your marketing, especially in the Year of Adventure.
- **Get involved.** Run special adventure-themed campaigns and promotions and tell your guests about our calendar of events.



► Snorkelling off beach, Abersoch, Llŷn Peninsula

- **Get connected.** Many businesses in Wales provide Wi-Fi free to guests. It's a must-have. You're missing a trick (and lots of potential customers) without it.
- **Don't forget the kids.** If children are part of your target market hook up with other similar operators and arrange a group day out – children enjoy each other's company.
- **Go green.** Make your business more energy efficient – and tell the world about it.
- **Quality counts.** Make the most of grading and accreditation schemes for accommodation, attractions and activity providers (see the 'Quality Counts' section of this guide).
- **Seize the day, be innovative.** If you're an adventure business thinking about adding a new experience or product to your offering, now is the time. Put your plans into action today so you'll be up and running for 2016.

### And have you thought of...?

- **Small touches, big difference.** Pin up a map of walking routes in your area, provide information in welcome packs, supply wellies and spare waterproofs to help your guests explore, create an adventure-themed menu with unusual local ingredients.
- **Think global, act local.** Work with other businesses in your area to put on your own mini-adventure events to coincide with some of the big dates in the Visit Wales calendar (like the Great Weekend of Adventure taking place in April 2016).
- **Make it authentic and interactive.** Today's visitors are looking for authenticity and honesty. If possible, base your adventures on local, genuine, personal and distinctive experiences that can't be provided elsewhere. And make them involving and interactive – people don't want simply to stand and stare.
- **The write stuff.** What other people say about you has more impact and credibility than straightforward advertising. Work

with Visit Wales to bring travel journalists and bloggers to your business.

- **Pick a winner.** Offer an action-packed competition prize for use in one of Visit Wales' promotional campaigns.
- **Go the extra mile.** Provide a drop-off and pick-up service, especially useful to walkers – and also cyclists who can then have rental equipment delivered to their accommodation. As a back-up, also provide public transport details.
- **Be flexible.** Be aware that guests might need to eat earlier or later than usual.
- **Become your own ambassador.** Our official Year of Adventure ambassadors are profiled elsewhere in this guide. You can do your bit too by encouraging guests to try something different – many activity providers offer taster courses for beginners.
- **Dive in.** Try some local adventures for yourself – you can then sell them enthusiastically to your guests, based on first-hand experience.
- **Star quality.** If you have an iconic adventure experience on your doorstep then bang the drum loudly about it to potential guests.
- **Become a trip advisor.** Provide feedback and testimonials from past guests' adventure and activity experiences.
- **Capture the imagination of young adventurers.** Put together a welcome box packed with fun items (crabbing nets, kites, magnifying glasses, buckets and spades), create a Roald Dahl-inspired adventure bookshelf, make up a local treasure map and create lasting memories.
- **At the end of the day...** Adventurers like to chill out too. Suggest good pubs, inns and restaurants with an authentic, local atmosphere – and local food. And in your own establishment welcome guests back after a busy day with tea and cakes, chocolate and coffee.
- **Safety.** Ascertain from your guests the route and areas they are looking to take. If for any reason they are late it could help the emergency services if they need to carry out a coordinated response.



► Great Orme Tramway, Llandudno

## The IT crowd

Go digital to stay up-to-date with everything that's happening in 2016 and promote your own Year of Adventure activities.

- **Link up.** Add a list of local activity providers to your own website
- **Get noticed via the Visit Wales website.** Add or update your information on our site searches, which cover accommodation, activities, attractions and events. For more information go to [www.visitwales.com/working-with-us](http://www.visitwales.com/working-with-us)
- **Stay in touch.** Let us know about your adventure products and events by emailing [yearofadventure@wales.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:yearofadventure@wales.gsi.gov.uk)
- **Follow us.** Follow our industry Twitter feed @visitwalesbiz to stay informed about what's going on
- **Post it.** Raise your profile by posting adventure content, pictures and films to your website and on social media like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube – and share them with Visit Wales
- **Tag it.** Use #WalesAdventure in your social media
- **Support it.** Back our campaign #FindYourEpic

## On-message, online

Follow our consumer social media feeds for special Year of Adventure news and encourage your visitors to do the same. Don't forget to share your content with us too.



Facebook – [www.facebook.com/visitwales](http://www.facebook.com/visitwales)



Instagram – @visitwales



Twitter – @visitwales



You Tube – [www.youtube.com/user/visitwales](http://www.youtube.com/user/visitwales)



Pinterest – [uk.pinterest.com/visitwales](http://uk.pinterest.com/visitwales)

► Walkers near summit, Snowdon



# The X Factor



The Year of Adventure plays to our strengths as a country. We have a head start when it comes to adventures. Victorian visitors – the first tourists – took to our hills and cruised along our rivers. Rock climbing was pioneered in Snowdonia, and in the 1950s the team that first conquered Everest trained there. Wales was the first part of Britain to create purpose-built mountain biking centres. We have more castles per square mile than anywhere else on the planet. The Wales Coast Path is the world's first continuous national coastal path. And now we have more world records being broken by dynamic new attractions like Zip World and Surf Snowdonia.

Our advantages as an 'adventure capital' are founded on an exceptional natural environment and distinctive cultural and artistic heritage, resources that lead to all kinds of personal adventures, challenging and creative, physical and spiritual.

## What's it all worth?

A lot. Activity/adventure holidays in the outdoors alone contribute over £481 million to the Welsh economy. Talking globally, the Adventure Travel Trade Association says that worldwide adventure tourism – in its widest sense, both 'hard' and 'soft' – increased threefold from £55 billion in 2009 to a staggering £163 billion in 2013.

## Can-do

Our can-do spirit has already taken us a long way. The Welsh Government has invested significantly in adventure across Wales. Through the Environment for Growth programme, for example, over £37 million has been invested in eight new Centres of

Excellence, including Swansea's 360 Beach and Watersports Centre, Bike Park Wales at Merthyr Tydfil, and multi-activity schemes in key Snowdonia locations.

You only have to think of one place – Llanwrtyd Wells – to sum up this can-do attitude. The former (and formerly very sleepy) mid Wales spa town has transformed its fortunes through an imaginative (not to say wacky) programme of festivals and events involving everything from bog snorkelling to man versus horse marathon races.

The Hay Festival has grown from a tent in a field to a worldwide cultural phenomenon, Crickhowell's Green Man and Portmeirion's Festival No.6 attract rave reviews, and the Abergavenny Food Festival is now recognised as the UK's leading foodie event.

It all goes to show what can be done. All are hallmarks of our Year of Adventure.

## Let's work together

We welcome the opportunities the Year of Adventure brings for working with tourism businesses. We have already outlined some of the practical measures you can take in the 'Let's get practical' section of this guide.

Other measures include bringing projects and ideas to life through various funding schemes. We are looking for fewer, bigger, better iconic, brand-defining events and experiences, backed up by a wealth of supporting attractions on the ground, throughout the year and in all parts of the country.

Contact the regional engagement teams on [regionaltourism@wales.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:regionaltourism@wales.gsi.gov.uk) or go to [www.business.wales.gov.uk/dmwales/support/investment-support](http://www.business.wales.gov.uk/dmwales/support/investment-support)



► Dark skies, Brecon Beacons

## Partnership for growth

The Welsh Government's Partnership for Growth Fund (P4G) encourages closer collaborative working to improve tourism products in a sustainable, profitable way. Funding for 2015/2016, focusing on product-led initiatives aligned with the Year of Adventure, has now been fully allocated. The funding includes:

- Gwynedd Council – The Year of Adventure Project
- Denbighshire County Council – Mini-Adventures in the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- Brecon Beacons National Park Authority – Beacons Way Regional Walking/Cycling Route
- Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority – Dark Skies: Brilliant Parks
- South-West Wales Wildlife Trust – Wild Wales Adventure
- Newport City Council – Capital Region Cycling Project
- Monmouthshire County Council – Cardiff Capital Region Food Tourism
- British Hospitality Association Cymru (BHA) – The Wales Sustainable Food Adventure Trail

## Engaging with you

Like the Partnership for Growth Fund, the Regional Tourism Engagement Fund (RTEF) has been fully allocated for 2015/16. In support of the Year of Adventure, £1 million has been allocated across Wales. Here are examples from the four regions.

**South East Wales:** Adventure Trail 'Follow the Stars' focuses on Dark Skies Discovery Sites in Rhondda Cynon Taf, Monmouthshire, Blaenau Gwent and Caerphilly. Tourism providers are being given Dark Sky navigation training to assist visitors in the appreciation of the night sky. Eleven Dark Sky events will be held, based on taster sessions at the sites, solar observations, astronomical events, etc. A video will be produced to showcase the sites and the night sky on YouTube. The events and

sites will be promoted via PR and social media channels.

**South West Wales:** The Destination Carmarthenshire project aims to develop and promote Carmarthenshire as a competitive activities destination, and to play a key role in the overall campaign presenting Wales as the world's capital for adventure tourism. These will be achieved by:

- Identifying Carmarthenshire's key adventure products.
- Reviewing the activity/adventure scene to highlight any gaps in the current offering.
- Identifying and creating new opportunities for adventure activities.
- Creating digital promotional material.
- Developing innovative social media activities.

**Mid Wales:** The Brecon Beacons Sustainable Destination Partnership involves integrated destination development and marketing to prepare for the Year of Adventure, including support for the Brecon Beacons Ambassador Scheme. Ambassadors will experience 'taster adventures' based on themes and activities such as abseiling, archery, birdwatching, navigation, stargazing, waterfalls and wildlife. The programme also includes a celebratory Ambassador event.

**North Wales:** Ffordd Brailsford/Brailsford Trail cycling initiative. Sir Dave Brailsford has done more to put British cycling on the map than anyone since the invention of the penny farthing. Team Sky and British Cycling Team guru, he hails from the village of Deiniolen near Llanberis. Now he's weaving his magic back home by endorsing the new 'Ffordd Brailsford' project, involving the development of a new road cycling network in Gwynedd. The initiative includes two waymarked routes, branding, a mapping leaflet and online presence. Celebrating Sir Dave's achievements and featuring some of his favourite cycling roads, these circular routes will include many of the area's popular destinations (Caernarfon, Betws-y-Coed, Beddgelert, etc) as well as challenging climbs and spectacular scenery.



► Ogwen Valley, Snowdonia

## Quality counts

It's the watchword with today's more demanding and discerning visitors. Everything we do must reflect our commitment to providing a quality experience that's safe, ethical and sustainable, key values that chime with the expectations of today's travellers.

Please forgive us if we're preaching to the converted, but if you're not signed up to the relevant Visit Wales Quality Assurance scheme you're missing out on marketing opportunities. Our schemes cover accommodation and attractions, and we have introduced a new approach to recognising outdoor activity providers (see below for details).

Our accreditation and grading create reassurance, allowing customers to book in confidence. The schemes will also give you access to opportunities for working with Visit Wales, including website listings, the use of logos, media visits and other joint marketing activities.

For more information go to:

[www.gov.wales/tourism](http://www.gov.wales/tourism)

Or contact the Quality Assurance team:

- call 0845 010 8020
- email [quality.tourism@wales.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:quality.tourism@wales.gsi.gov.uk)

## Activity providers

If you want to work with us you will need to self-certify your accreditation details. Please visit [www.visitwales.com/wato](http://www.visitwales.com/wato) for further details and to complete the self-accreditation form.

Our new approach to registration, developed in partnership with the Wales Adventure Tourism Organisation ([www.wato.org.uk](http://www.wato.org.uk)), will provide visitors to Wales with a simple way of selecting adventure providers based on ability to deliver safe and effective industry practice. It will also allow us to recognise providers that meet our expectations in terms of:

- Sustainable activity tourism.
- Good practice and standards of customer care.

It will also give us confidence that risk-managed, high-quality activity provision is available across Wales.



► Ogwen Valley, Snowdonia

# The word on the street



A cross-section of top Welsh tourism businesses tell us what the Year of Adventure means to them.

**The TYF Group**, the international adventure and education business based in Pembrokeshire. [www.tyf.com](http://www.tyf.com)

The Year of Adventure is a 'celebration and an opportunity', says Founding Director **Andy Middleton**.

'It's a huge celebration for us, of all the amazing things that are happening in Wales – in the mountains, the uplands, the rivers, lakes and on the coast where we are based. It's also a celebration of the 30 years we've been taking people out coastering, sea kayaking and exploring around the coastline. It has been an amazing journey'.

'The Year of Adventure creates an opportunity for us to rethink our relationship with nature and the outdoors. It's something that gets us really excited. We're going to be using 2016 to launch our Lifetime of Adventure series. It's about understanding that adventure is about taking people on a journey that runs from the very first weeks of life through to the very last and recognising that time in the outdoors improves the quality of life for everyone, regardless of age and physical ability.

'It's great that Visit Wales are working with the activity sector across Wales to help create some really exciting events. We are passionate about getting more people adventuring in Wales and this is a fabulous opportunity to use the support of Visit Wales to help get that message out.'

**Y Talbot**, at Tregaron in the heart of Wales, is a forward-looking hotel with an auspicious past. [www.ytalbot.com](http://www.ytalbot.com)

They are already famously hospitable, but owners **Mick and Nia Taylor** are confident that the Year of Adventure will make them 'think how we can do even more'.

'The Year of Adventure will be particularly relevant to many of our guests, both from within Britain and overseas. We're in a wild part of Wales with proper countryside. The cycling – both on and off-road – is great, the walking can be challenging and we have the Cors Caron National Nature Reserve and Abergwesyn Pass on our doorstep.

'It's a cultural adventure too. We're a Welsh country inn in a Welsh-speaking agricultural area. Y Talbot belongs to the local community as well as its visitors. Guests invariably remark on our warmth, friendliness and authenticity – we don't go in for the "have a nice day" approach. And in the bar the locals are always very interested in chatting with everyone.

'We already provide lots of local information to guests. We get a real buzz from sharing our passions for the countryside, cycling and walking, but the Year of Adventure has made us think how we can do even more. We pride ourselves on Y Talbot's genuine welcome, and the dialogue we have with guests.'



► Festival No.6, Portmeirion

**Halen Môn Anglesey Sea Salt** is the Rolls-Royce of table salts. Its new visitor centre opened in 2015. [www.halenmon.com](http://www.halenmon.com)

‘Perfect for adventurous tastebuds’, says co-founder **Alison Lea-Wilson**.

‘The 2016 Year of Adventure is a great opportunity to showcase our Halen Môn sea salt. It’s perfect for adventurous tastebuds. It’s also a chance to show off our base and new “behind the scenes” visitor centre here on the Isle of Anglesey, which provides our inspiration, raw materials and a beautiful backdrop.

‘Making visitors feel welcome is really important to us. It’s like inviting someone into your home. The highlight of a visit here is the tutored salt tasting. Where else would you get to sit down and taste your way round different types of salts and learn what sets Halen Môn apart?’

‘My idea of an adventure is meeting someone interesting, eating or drinking something new, learning something that I will remember and talk about to my friends and family. In that respect, Wales is the perfect place. There’s a huge choice of things to do, feel and taste, against a backdrop of incredible scenery and interesting people. The 2016 Year of Adventure is the ideal time for us to get that message out.’

**Zip World** is a company that has taken adventure tourism to new heights, with world-class adrenaline experiences in Penrhyn Quarry (near Bethesda) and Blaenau Ffestiniog. [www.zipworld.co.uk](http://www.zipworld.co.uk)

‘There are so many things that make Wales the perfect adventure destination’, reckons Commercial Director **Sean Taylor**.

‘We’re a compact country with a huge range of experiences in a comparatively small area. There’s also the language and culture, which are a big draw. We’ll be showcasing all these things during 2016.

‘For me an adventure is an experience that you want to try again the minute you’ve finished doing it. A lot of visitors don’t know what to expect when they come here. It’s hard to imagine what it’s like underground in Zip World Caverns and Bounce Below until you’re actually there. But when people see and experience it for themselves, they’re just blown away. The Year of Adventure is a chance to tell even more people about the amazing experiences we have on offer.

‘The welcome is everything for us. There’s no point having the best activity in the world if you haven’t got the best welcome. We are embedded in the community and we see our staff as ambassadors, both for our business and the area. Most of them are local Welsh-speakers and many of them used to work in the quarry that is now Zip World.’

# Adventure International



Adventure tourism is the new big thing. And it's catching on worldwide – we can learn from others and stay ahead of the game. Here are some examples of great products and destinations, but there will be many more. Search and share your finds with us and each other.

Area 47 in Austria's Ötztal Valley is billed as 'the ultimate adventure park'. They're not far wrong. Europe's largest adventure park has a breathtaking choice of activities in its outdoor, water and offroad areas. It's the complete package, with accommodation thrown in too (in tipis and lodges) plus a food and events area. [www.area47.at/en](http://www.area47.at/en)

New Zealand is a country synonymous with adventure travel – especially down south based around Queenstown, the country's favourite visitor destination. Its stunning scenery provides a backdrop for trips full of adventure and exploration. Sports include backcountry skiing in winter and paragliding, mountain biking and bungee-jumping in summer (the Kawarau Gorge Suspension Bridge is one of the sport's original sites). On a less extreme scale, Queenstown is at the gateway to the unmissable spectacle of Milford Sound, with sightseeing trips by boat and coach. [www.queenstownnz.co.nz](http://www.queenstownnz.co.nz)

# Talking Heads



Meet our Year of Adventure Ambassadors.

**Bear Grylls.** Adventurer, former British Special Forces soldier and the youngest ever Chief Scout, he's the definitive action man. Hit TV shows like *Man vs Wild*, *Born Survivor* and *Running Wild* have made him an international adventure icon and he's written more than 15 action-packed books, including his best-selling autobiography *Blood, Sweat and Tears*. Globetrotting Bear knows where the action is: 'Wales is where the adventure starts in 2016,' he says.

**Tori James.** Pembrokeshire-born Tori was the first Welsh woman to climb Everest, a feat documented in the BBC's *On Top of the World*. She's also completed an unsupported cycle trip across New Zealand and been part of the first all-female team to complete The Polar Challenge, a gruelling 360-mile race to the magnetic North Pole. 'The Year of Adventure in Wales presents a brilliant opportunity to venture outdoors and try new things,' she says. 'You're never too old or too young to start exploring Wales.'

**Maria Leijerstam.** Born in Aberdare, Maria is the first person to cycle to the South Pole – a freezing 396-mile (638km) journey along an ice road from the Antarctic coast. She's also run across the Sahara desert and cycled across the frozen Lake Baikal in Siberia. Wales has been a training hub for her international expeditions. 'I have travelled the world and worked in many countries but there is something that always draws me home to Wales,' she says.

**Lowri Morgan.** She's a BAFTA-winning television presenter and producer, an Elite Ultra endurance marathon runner and world adventurer. One of only six people to complete the 350-mile (563km) endurance 6633 Ultra footrace in the Arctic, she also ran the 140-mile Jungle Marathon alongside the Amazon. 'Wherever I travel, people are increasingly aware of the opportunities we have here in Wales for adventure,' she says. 'Everything you need is right on your doorstep, you can be swimming in the sea in the morning and running a mountain in the afternoon.'

**Richard Parks.** A former Wales international rugby player turned extreme environment athlete, Richard now takes on incredible expeditions and challenges. He was the first person to climb the highest mountain on each of the world's seven continents and stand on all three poles (the North Pole, the South Pole and the summit of Everest) within seven months. 'Anytime we choose to step outside of the parameters of our normal life is an opportunity for us to be more active, grow and learn more about the world that we live in,' he says.

The Year of Adventure is about raising awareness of Wales as an adventure destination. Promoting safe adventures is of upmost importance and priority. We are directing visitors to participate in activities with accredited providers and encouraging people to respect the natural environment and be prepared for outdoor activities.

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