

DISCOVER DENBIGHSHIRE

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2022

Brush up
your woodland skills

Celebrate the epic
Wales Coast Path

Outdoor adventure:
leave only footprints

Experience the magic of
truly dark skies

Field to fork:
taste the difference

Would you like
to learn more
about the area?
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Denbighshire Tourism
Ambassador.

www.denbighshireambassador.wales



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[@NthEastWales](https://twitter.com/NthEastWales)



[North East Wales](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCNthEastWales)

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Published in 2022 by Denbighshire County
Council's Tourism, Marketing and Events Team.

Photography: The Forge Corwen, The Whittlings,
Oneplanet Adventure, Adventure Tours UK,
Ioan Said Photography, Eastwood Media,
Craig Colville Photography.
Editorial and design: White Fox.
Print: Lexon Group.

Cover shot: Prestatyn beach
This page: The Forge Corwen



www.northeastwales.wales

sir ddinbych
denbighshire
County Council



GOGLEDD
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Gwylb gyda'n gilydd

NORTH
EAST
WALES
Altogether brilliant

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Today's travellers crave authentic experiences. They want to absorb the local culture, try the food, get off the beaten track. Denbighshire in North East Wales is showing the way.

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All information was accurate at time of publication – but things can change. To avoid disappointment please check with all destinations to confirm opening times and other details before you travel.

Discover Denbighshire magazine
is printed on Carbon Balanced
Paper. Through the World Land Trust
the publishers have balanced the
equivalent of 233kg of carbon dioxide.
This enables the trust to protect
44m² of critically
threatened tropical forest.



The Forge



The Wild Bushcraft Company



Wernog Wood



The Whittlings

LEARN YOUR CRAFT

Sometimes we all need to slow down, reconnect with nature and explore our creativity for a change. The wide open spaces of Denbighshire provide the perfect workshop.

From the tranquil setting of **Wernog Wood** (www.wernogwood.co.uk) in the hills above Ruthin an army of craftspeople deliver courses in cleft oak gate making, silver jewellery, pit-fired ceramics, botanical skincare, leatherwork and lino relief printmaking.

One of them is David White of **The Whittlings** (www.thewhittlings.co.uk), maker of unique rustic tableware using traditional green woodworking techniques. He'll teach you how to create your own wooden spoon from a log, with only an axe and two kinds of knife.

"Things have been made this way for hundreds of years and you really feel a connection with the past," he says. "It's just a very simple and relaxing break in the glorious outdoors away from it all."

David learned his craft at the **Woodland Skills Centre** (www.woodlandskillscentre.uk) at Bodfari in the heart of the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

This not-for-profit social enterprise runs probably the biggest programme of traditional crafts in Wales. Their latest courses include bushcraft through the seasons, wild weaving, growing and using medical herbs, and blacksmithing.

When husband and wife team Jamie and Sheena Corry founded **The Forge** (www.theforgecorwen.co.uk) at Corwen it was, they cheerfully admit, just "three tents in a field".

Fuelled by their passion for rewilding it's grown into a luxury eco-camping rural retreat offering everything from yoga and wellbeing breaks to trail running and wild swimming. New for 2022 is a five-day immersive experience they call Free Yourself From Burnout.

Thanks to sister business the Wild Bushcraft Company you can even learn the ancient art of scything on an Iron Age hillfort and wildflower meadow.

Original Outdoors (www.originaloutdoors.co.uk) run courses in bushcraft, navigation and survival training from their base near Ruthin. Most popular by far is their one-day foraging and wild food course – searching for edible plants and fungi growing in the fields and woodlands of North Wales across the seasons.

Things to do in spring



Pin a daffodil to your coat and help our towns and villages celebrate St David's Day on 1st March.

Take a stroll in our spectacular countryside. Walking festivals at Llangollen, Prestayn and Corwen showcase the best routes.



Seek out tender spring lamb from our butchers, delicatessens and farm shops – including Rhug Estate's organically farmed flock.

Our birds are going wild. Hear the dawn chorus at Llyn Brenig or witness the incredible black grouse lek at Coed Llandegla Forest.

Don't miss one of Europe's largest touring youth festivals. The performers of the Urdd National Eisteddfod come to Denbighshire in May 2022 – and this year everyone goes free.



Watch a sunset. There are fabulous views west from the hills of the Clwydian Range and out to sea from Rhyl and Prestatyn.

Mild spring days are made for picnics. Llantysilio Green beside Thomas Telford's incredible Horseshoe Falls is the perfect spot.

FEELING ADVENTUROUS?



Claire Copeman of Adventure Tours UK explains how life-changing experiences needn't cost the earth.

Denbighshire is made for outdoor adventure. Its unspoilt coastline, rugged hills and epic river valleys are perfect for kayaking, mountain biking, bushcraft, canyoning, river rafting, foraging, kitesurfing and many other amazing activities.

Like most outdoor adventurers, Adventure Tours UK want to protect the wild spaces that we escape to. So we don't just offer tailor-made experiences for families and groups that are inspiring and authentic. We aim to make these adventures truly sustainable.

That's why we're one of the first operators in the world to label the carbon footprint of our group tours. For every person who travels we'll plant a tree in a new native broadleaf woodland created in partnership with the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

But carbon offsetting is only part of the big picture. There are lots of other ways to enjoy an adventure that doesn't come at a cost to the planet:

Live like a local

Learning about the history and culture of a region is a big part of your travelling experience. Iron Age hill forts are scattered across Denbighshire's hillsides and it can be hard to find meaning in these lumps, bumps and tumbledown ruins. But with a little local knowledge the landscape around you will come alive.

Stay off the beaten track

You'll often have a much better experience where there are no crowds. Rather than queuing to climb Snowdon you can experience beautiful views and hardly see another soul right here in Denbighshire. We took some trail runners along Offa's Dyke Path, past the Eglwyseg scree slopes and down into Llangollen. They said it was the most amazing and beautiful trail they had ever seen – and they have run all over the world.

Travel smart

Don't measure a holiday by how far you travel. In as little as an hour or two you can see things you never dreamed of. Base yourself somewhere and explore it in detail rather than jumping from one place to the next. Slow down and spend a few days to really explore.

Eat well

Denbighshire is renowned for its food and drink. In our pubs, restaurants, delis and community shops it's easy to enjoy fresh, seasonal and locally produced food with a low carbon footprint. (As part of our Wild Wellness Retreat we serve Black Mountain Honey drizzled on Llaeth y Llan yoghurt for breakfast.)

Use insider knowledge

Look out for adventure providers who use local guides. That way you'll get to know all the secrets: the best trails to ride, the stunning spots for a photo, the best beer in town... They'll show you the things you would likely never find travelling on your own.

Learn the language

Just give it a go! Keeping the Welsh language alive is so important and you can do your bit by saying hello and thank-you and a few other simple phrases. Learning how to pronounce Welsh place names is a fun way to get to grips with the local culture.

Leave only footprints

Anyone exploring our beautiful landscapes should respect the Countryside Code. This includes sticking to recognised walking trails and bridleways, closing gates, taking litter home and leaving wild plants and animals in their rightful place.

Get involved

Look out for local events such as food festivals, country shows or eisteddfodau and join in. It's a great way of meeting people and finding out what makes the place tick.

www.adventuretoursuk.com



UNESCO don't hand out accolades lightly. They believe Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal is of "outstanding universal value" to all humanity – just like the Taj Mahal or the Great Barrier Reef. So they made it a World Heritage Site.

Llangollen Wharf (www.horsedrawnboats.co.uk) is the perfect place from which to explore this awe-inspiring 11 miles of canal with its monumental tunnels, cuttings, aqueducts and embankments.

You can catch boats in both directions. Horses will pull you towards the Horseshoe Falls but you'll need a motor, and a head for heights, to cross mighty Pontcysyllte Aqueduct itself.

Llangollen Railway (www.llangollen-railway.co.uk) is a second masterpiece of the Industrial Revolution. This standard-gauge heritage line hugs the banks of the River Dee on its 10-mile journey to Corwen, ancestral home of Wales's greatest hero, Owain Glyndŵr.

These sublime landscapes have been famous since they were discovered by the celebrities of the Georgian age. They included the fabled Ladies of Llangollen, two runaway Irish aristocrats who transformed their modest cottage into a Gothic fantasy.

GOING UNDERCOVER

Explore their extravagant home and garden at **Plas Newydd** (www.plasnewyddllangollen.co.uk) and then take tea, as William Wordsworth, Sir Walter Scott and the Duke of Wellington have done before you.

All these experiences are under cover – ideal for rainy days. Nearby Ruthin has a trio of all-weather attractions including **Ruthin Gaol** (www.ruthingaol.co.uk), which offers a unique insight into life in a Victorian prison. There will be guided tours outside until the cell doors clang open again following recent flood damage – and a programme of monthly artisan markets running throughout the year.

Built in 1435 and Grade I listed, **Nantclwyd y Dre** (www.nantclwydydre.co.uk) with its restored Lord's Garden is the oldest timber-framed townhouse in Wales. Audio guides bring to vivid life the characters and stories of over five centuries of history.

Ruthin Craft Centre (www.ruthincraftcentre.org.uk) is the leading applied arts centre in Wales with three exhibition galleries, makers' studios, a retail gallery and a café plus a busy programme of talks, events and workshops.



Nantclwyd y Dre



Ruthin Craft Centre



Llangollen Railway



Pontcysyllte Aqueduct

Things to do in summer



Ride a vintage steam locomotive around Rhyl's marine lake on Britain's oldest miniature railway.



Climb a hillfort. The remains of a chain of Iron Age fortresses stretch right along the spine of the Clwydian Range.

Summer means sand.

Our famous resorts of Rhyl and Prestatyn offer traditional seaside fun and brilliant attractions including the SC2 waterpark.



Watch Wales's only breeding colony of little terns from a special viewing platform on windswept Gronant Dunes.



Hire a bike from Rhyl harbour and head off down the prom towards Prestatyn on National Cycle Route 5.



Join the party. Our big events include Denbigh and Flint Show, Rhyl Air Show and the cultural extravaganza that is the Llangollen International Musical Eisteddfod.

Seek adventure in the great outdoors. Try kitesurfing at the coast, stand up paddleboarding along Llangollen Canal or mountain biking at Llandegla's Oneplanet Adventure.



COAST TO COAST

To find out more about Rhyl's past and its hopes for the future, download the free izi.TRAVEL app and search for our Rhyl podcast.



Gronant Dunes



Pont y Ddraig



Nova Centre



SC2



Rhyl Skyflyer

A walk along Rhyl and Prestatyn's famous seaside promenade is the perfect way to celebrate a very special birthday in 2022.

Walkers of the world, prepare to celebrate. The Wales Coast Path – the very first to follow the entire coastline of a country – is 10 years old this year.

The 870-mile route already offers hundreds of unique walking experiences but, after a decade of adventure, 2022 is set to be its most memorable year yet. A full calendar of events will allow walkers to join the festivities and rediscover its delights.

One of them will be a special guided walk for the Prestatyn and Clwydian Range Walking Festival in May. Denbighshire has its very own section of the epic trail – seven miles of golden sand and sea views between the famous seaside resorts of Rhyl and Prestatyn.

Best of all, until the route enters wildlife-rich Gronant Dunes, it follows one long flat sweep of promenade beside a succession of beaches. They include Blue Flag Prestatyn Central and Rhyl Central with its Seaside Award (dogs are welcome between October and April).

“Walkers are not just those with beards and rucksacks,” says festival organiser Malcolm Wilkinson. “People in wheelchairs or pushing buggies can also get out and see some wonderful things on this part of the Wales Coast Path.

“They come from all over the world to witness the sunsets out towards Puffin Island, the hills in the background, the seaside attractions with wonderful things for children to do, the safe beaches. Most of this walk is suitable for people of all abilities and it stimulates all of their senses.”

Over the last decade the Wales Coast Path has become a true bucket list challenge. Prestatyn, the first town in Wales to achieve Walkers Are Welcome status, is expecting even more outdoor enthusiasts than usual in the path's 10th anniversary year.

A few adventurers may even decide the full 870-mile odyssey isn't quite ambitious enough. Because Prestatyn marks the spot where the Wales Coast Path joins Offa's Dyke Path National Trail, which runs all the way to the Severn estuary at the other end of Wales.

Together they make a 1,047-mile circumnavigation of the entire country – although a stroll along the prom followed by a cake at the Nova Centre's Beach Hut Café remains a very viable alternative.

www.prestatynwalkingfestival.co.uk

Landmarks

The walk from Rhyl harbour to Gronant Dunes should take about three hours – or rather longer if you explore some of the attractions on the way. Here are five leading landmarks.

Pont y Ddraig

The iconic Dragon's Bridge opens and closes like a giant metal flower to allow boats to sail past at Rhyl's historic harbour. Both the Wales Coast Path and National Cycle Route 5 run beneath its 50-metre tall mast (hire a bike at the harbour hub and café next door).

SC2

The undisputed centrepiece of Rhyl's seafront, this waterpark for all ages and abilities features the fearsome Anaconda, the fastest flume in the park. It also contains Ninja TAG Rhyl, an indoor multi-level assault course to test your skill, fitness and bravery. www.sc2rhyl.co.uk

Rhyl Skyflyer

Launching in summer 2022 this breathtaking experience from the Zip World team is a European first. A gondola suspended beneath a vast helium balloon takes passengers on the ride of a lifetime, soaring 120 metres into the air to provide spectacular 360-degree views.

Nova Centre

One of region's biggest indoor attractions with soft play area, swimming pool, splash pool and state-of-the-art gym. The Beach Hut Café, like SC2's Rainforest Diner, specialises in local produce including bread from Henllan and cakes from Siwgr a Sbeis. www.novaprestatyn.co.uk

Gronant Dunes

A wooden boardwalk leads through a rare dune system and Site of Special Scientific Interest. It's home to natterjack toads, sand lizards and the only breeding colony of little terns in Wales. Listen out for the magical song of the skylark.

Walk past Anna and Dave Taylor's organic farm in the foothills of the Clwydian Range and you'll spot a herd of cows with brown coats and fluffy ears. The breed is Brown Swiss and they produce milk that's higher in butter fat than most other cows.

Perfect, as it turns out, for making delicious ice cream. Under the quirky Chilly Cow brand Anna offers lip-smacking flavours from vanilla or strawberry to espresso frappé, sticky toffee fudge and lemon meringue.

They're available from the farm gate and a range of stockists including local theatres, who know a good story when they hear one. One that explains Denbighshire's growth as a food destination in a nutshell.

It's all about provenance. These landscapes aren't just beautiful to look at – they produce glorious food and drink. Every mouthful of Chilly Cow is literally a taste of the countryside.

"People buy our ice cream because they know exactly where it's come from and that it's freshly made every day for them," says Anna.

She's part of Clwydian Range Food and Drink, a group of about 30 bakers, brewers, farm shops, gin distillers, cheese makers, bee keepers, kitchen gardens, restaurants and B&Bs all striving to raise the profile of



Chilly Cow cattle

DESTINATION FOOD



the local food scene. There's a similar group based in Llangollen and the Dee Valley.

They share advice and tips, join forces at food fairs and host joint tastings. They even get their heads together to develop new ideas – like Anna's Christmas Cake ice cream with input from fruit liqueur maker Schizzy.

Their philosophy is simple. Buying local supports our farmers, reduces environmentally damaging food miles and often tastes fresher and better.

Pioneer of this approach is Lord Newborough's Rhug Estate near Corwen, an 8,000-acre organic farm with farm shop, takeaway, café and drive-thru. "The whole essence is to build a business that's sustainable for the future," says Lord Newborough.

So Rhug showcases not only its own meat as supplied to HRH The Prince of Wales but some of the best local producers. It's a great place to start your Denbighshire food journey.

@TasteDeeValley

@ClwydianRangeFoodandDrink

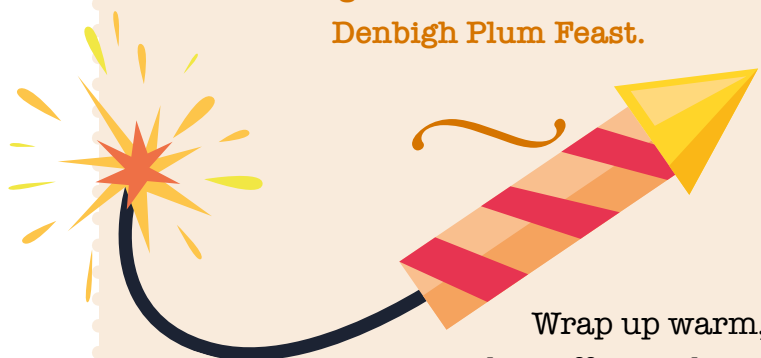
Things to do in autumn



Dress up in spooky Halloween costumes and scare yourself silly with a ghost hunt or witches' tea party.



It's a festival of food every day in Denbighshire. But this time of year we make it official with events like Llangollen Food Festival and Denbigh Plum Feast.



Wrap up warm, grab a toffee apple and watch the sky light up. There are Bonfire Night firework displays right across Denbighshire.



Go foraging. Our fields and hedgerows are groaning with food if, like the experts of Original Outdoors, you know where you look.

Our trees are in their autumn glory. Take a walk through a magical landscape of russets and golds at the likes of Loggerheads Country Park.



Learn hedge laying or drystone walling as a volunteer with the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.



Kick off your walking boots and curl up in front of a crackling log fire in one of our cosy country pubs.



Wales is fast becoming the ultimate destination for budding stargazers. With 98% of the UK population living under light-polluted skies, it's no surprise that visitors are drawn to our famous Dark Skies.

The Clwydian Range and Dee Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is one of the rare places left in the UK that you can see the Milky Way unaided. Thanks to the AONB team it's set to get even darker and the stars even brighter.

As part of the North Wales Dark Skies Partnership, or Prosiect Nos, we're working to keep our magnificent view to the universe clear for future generations.

It's not just about stars. Light pollution damages human health and is having a devastating impact on our biodiversity, with more than 60% of our wildlife needing natural darkness to survive. That's why our work is crucial for all who live in the AONB – human or otherwise.

Now we're on a mission to gain official status from the International Dark Sky Association. We're educating people about how to reduce light pollution and holding a range of exciting events from stargazing and telescope talks from our mobile observatory to walks to see bats, owls and other nocturnal creatures.

The best time to see our skies is the winter months – October to March is peak 'Dark Sky Season'. With lots of hours of darkness you'll have the best chance of seeing the Milky Way, winter constellations such as Orion and maybe even a shooting star or two.

So where do you start? We have four Dark Sky Discovery Sites that are open overnight, safe and accessible – three in the dramatic hills of the Clwydian Range and the fourth in the iconic landscape of the Dee Valley. Just step out of the car and look up in wonder.

www.clwydianrangeanddeevalleyaonb.org.uk

THE GREATEST SHOW ON EARTH

Driving down light pollution brings the wonders of the universe into sharp relief, says Dark Sky Officer Dani Robertson.

Dark skies on Denbigh moors



Top tips for intrepid stargazers

Be Adventure Smart. www.adventuresmart.uk

Prepare for the conditions – wrap up warm with sturdy boots, lots of layers, hats, scarves and gloves. Temperatures can really plummet in the night, so be prepared.

Plan ahead. Visit where you plan to stargaze during the day. You'll be able to navigate your way there much easier in the dark after a daytime visit and be aware of any hazards that may not be visible at night.

Be fully charged. Phone, car, tablet... whatever needs charging make sure it's full before you go.

Communicate. Let someone know where you're going and what time you plan to be home.

Learn from the experts. Join one of our events or look up the local Astronomical Society. www.northwalesastro.co.uk

Travellers along the North Wales Way, tracing the ancient trading route along the coast into Anglesey, are not supposed to hurry. The idea is to linger, to criss-cross, to explore off the beaten track.

It's one of many reasons why the scenic Vale of Clwyd is now a visitor destination in its own right. Easily accessible from the main artery of the A55, its lush meadows and bustling market towns offer an authentic alternative to the tourist honeypots farther west.

The Vale offers epic views of the surrounding hills as it sweeps down from Rhuddlan near the coast, through the ancient city of St Asaph to take in Denbigh and Ruthin before reaching the source of the River Clwyd at Clocaenog.

Look out for the brown tourist signs that point the way to three of the most fascinating heritage attractions in North Wales.

Rhuddlan Castle (www.cadw.gov.wales) was part of

an “iron ring” of strongholds built by Edward I in his ruthless campaign to subdue the Welsh. The meandering River Clwyd wasn't quite in the right place so Edward simply had it diverted by hand. Seven centuries later Rhuddlan still looks like a castle that was worth moving a river for.

Cross the drawbridge into the triple-towered gatehouse of **Denbigh Castle** (www.cadw.gov.wales) and you'll hear the clatter of a rising portcullis and the din of marching soldiers. It's all down to sensors and the wonders of modern technology – a vivid reminder of the castle's vital role in the wars that shaped Wales.

At just 182 feet long and 68 feet wide **St Asaph Cathedral** (www.stasaphcathedral.wales) is the smallest ancient cathedral in Britain. But it played a huge part in Welsh culture as the home of the very first Welsh language Bible. You can still see an original 1588 copy on display in a building that retains the “dignity and grandeur” described by Dr Johnson.

FOLLOW THE RIVER



Rhuddlan Castle



Denbigh Castle



St Asaph Cathedral



Cathedral interior

Things to do in winter



Christmas means festive food markets, lantern parades, children's carols – and lots of shopping in our bustling market towns.

Look up and watch the wonders of the universe unfold. Winter's the best time to explore our famous dark skies.

Do something romantic. In Wales we celebrate Saint Dwynwen, patron saint of lovers, on 25th January – three weeks before St Valentine's Day.



Take a winter break in somewhere quirky: an eco-lodge, bell tent or gypsy wagon with a hot tub under the stars to keep the chills away.

Give your dog a treat with a brisk walk on the beach. In winter pooches are welcome on every beach between Rhyl and Prestatyn.

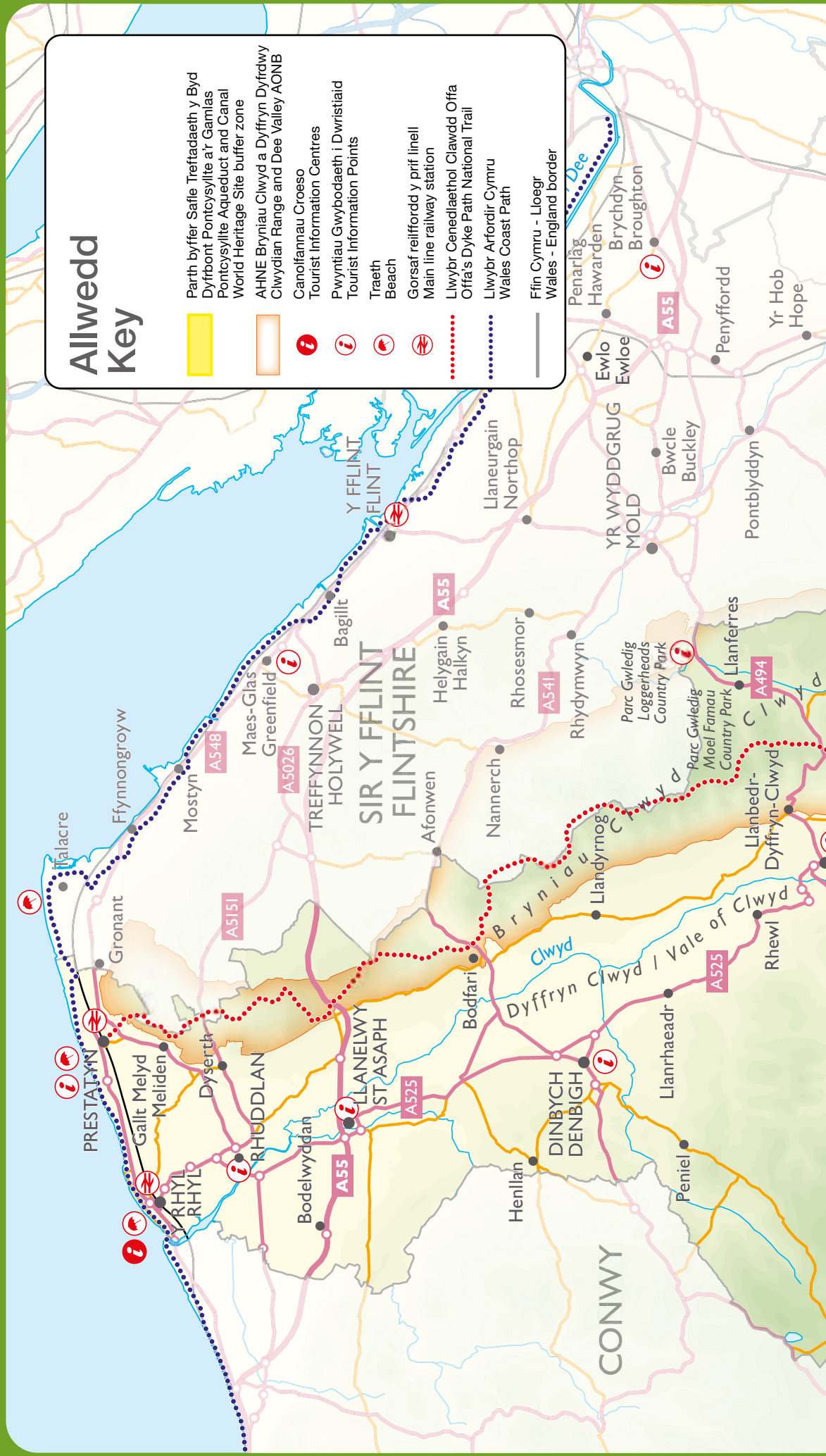


And relax... start the New Year as you mean to go on with a spa day, yoga retreat or mindfulness course.



This is panto season (oh yes it is). The Pavilion Theatre at Rhyl delivers a laughter-packed show for the whole family.

SIR DDINBYCH





DENBIGHSHIRE