

# THE LLYN PENINSULA - THE JEWEL IN THE WELSH CROWN



Fig. 1 - Snowdonia Mountain Railway

by Paul Brett

*Somedays, when the pressure of Big City living is strangling your very being, or if you just want to take the family for a well earned break, consider visiting the beautiful and unspoilt Llyn Penninsula in North Wales. It is a veritable haven for all manner of pastimes and pursuits. From the awesome Snowdonia National Park to the low lying, tranquil beaches of Pwllheli and Abersoch. You can find peace and solitude there if you wish or you can fill your break with energetic activities. With it's clement weather, derived from the gulf stream which ensures there is little frost or snow in Winter, it attracts visitors all year round.*

The area itself is often described as the "Jewel in the Crown" of Wales. The main market town



of the Llyn is **Pwllheli** <http://www.pwllheli.org.uk>. It's name simply means "salt water pool" and the town was granted a charter as a free borough by Edward, the Black Prince, in 1355. There is a wonderful view of the Town from "Bryn Garn", just above the town itself which encompasses a panoramic view of the town, marina, sea and mountains far away. Wednesday sees the weekly market coming to Pwllheli and the town itself has a good selection of shops, restaurants, pubs

and general services. These days, it's main attraction is watersports. From National and International Events held by the local sailing club, to general pleasure seekers attracted to the joys of "boating". Sea fishing is also very popular from the safe beaches and if you want to see a film or a play, then Neuadd Dwyfor in Penlan Street is



the place to go. Pwllheli has the prestigious **Blue Flag** award which is an international award scheme which acts as a guarantee to tourists that a beach or marina they are visiting is one of the best in the world. Pwllheli also has a well facilitated Golf Club if you want to put your clubs in the boot for some relaxation. It also hosts the years rock and pop bash Wakestock. Europe's largest Wakeboarding Festival. Apart from the watersport event itself, the main attraction for the thousands of youngsters who attend is the three day music festival, which features some of the top artistes and also supports performances from local bands of which current world recording star Duffy (and local to the area) was one not so long ago before achieving her current status.

Criccieth is a very attractive smaller town <http://www.criccieth.co.uk/>. It often wins awards in the Wales in Bloom competition. It's main attraction is it's historical 13th century Castle (pic Criccieth Castle) which sits proudly on a rock overlooking Tremadog Bay. It is well served by a variety of local shops, restaurants, hotels and pubs. It has a different look and feel to it than Pwllheli and there is a monthly Antiques Auction where you can find some good bargains at reasonable prices. The Memorial Hall is the centre for most of the cultural activities and is the home of the excellent Criccieth Players, who perform regularly throughout the year with different plays and musical based productions. The town also promotes a yearly Music and Arts Festival. Hidden



Criccieth Castle

away behind Criccieth is what for a keen angler like myself and millions of others, is a "little piece of heaven". The Bron Eifion Fisheries and Lodges <http://www.broneifion.com/> is a well established commercial fishery with a lake that's stocked to guarantee even the most inexperienced novice, a good catch. You can book a break here all year round as it has it's own lodge self catering accomodation, which welcomes pets as well. It is also a great break for the disabled angler, as the lodges are situated



right on the lakeside. Apart from being very visitor friendly, it also host National events for the Wales Teams against other nations. Further along the coast from Pwllheli is the small



fishing village of **Abersoch** <http://www.abersoch.co.uk>. Famous these days mostly for it's high property prices, it attracts lots of English visitors in the main and is very forward and professional in it's promotion of itself and the events it hosts. Londoners and Mancunians are more aware of Abersoch, than they are most other places on the Penninsula. The upmarket, self contained holiday estate "The Warren" owned by Haulfryn Group plc is extremely popular, with property changing hands for the highest prices in the area. Even little wooden beach huts on the beach in

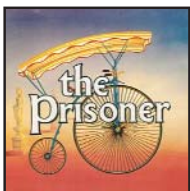


Bardsey Island

Abersoch sell for £60k plus. The Abersoch Jazz Festival is a yearly event which has grown in stature since it's inception and is very well run and attended. The South Caernarvon Yacht Club hosts regular sailing events and is a popular social meeting and event venue. Small as it may be, Abersoch is extremely well served in all departments.

On the tip of the Peninsula is the village of Aberdaron. A far cry from the buzz of Abersoch in Summer, but a place that's worth a visit because from here, you can get a boat trip to the Historical Island of Bardsey, reputed by some to be the mythical isle of Avalon mentioned in the Authurian Legends and where some say Merlin is buried <http://www.bardsey.org/english/bardsey/welcome.asp>. It's Welsh name is Ynys Enlli and it is a very Holy Island dating back to pre-Christian times. In AD 546, Saint Cadfan formed a monastery there and it became a burial place for Kings and Holymen down through the centuries.

The Welsh Highland Railway is based in Porthmadog and is a must trip for any visitor who wants to see the amazing beauty of Snowdonia (see Fig.1). The Railway itself is run almost entirely by volunteers and the most ambitious part of it's plan is now coming to fruition by restoring the whole line through the mountains of Snowdonia. I first visited The Llyn in the 1960's when I stayed at the Portmeirion Village, (<http://www.portmeirion-village.com>) world famous mainly for being the location for the cult 60's television series "The Prisoner" starring Patrick McGoochan as number 6 (pic The Prisoner logo), a new version we



are told is in the making, but not unfortunately at Portmeirion. How many people have visited to look for that "bubble" ! Whether you stay at

it's excellent accomodation or just visit, it really is a place you should see whilst on your visit. It's also the home of the famous Portmeirion Pottery and many items are for sale through it's local retail outlets. It was conceived and built originally by Welsh architect Clough Williams-Ellis, to demonstrate that the "development of a naturally beautiful site need not result in it's defilement." It is described as an "Italiante Village". Many of the frontal facades are deceptive as what looks like a structure, is just the facia. The entire estate includes 70 acres of sub-tropical woodlands and the hotel has a stunning view accross the estuary. The nearby Castell Deudraeth also has accomodation available. I appeared on the Collector of the Year feature for the BBC's Antiques Roadshow a couple of years ago which was filmed at Portmerion.



Michael Aspel and Paul Brett.

I have mentioned what I consider to be some of the main and interesting attractions on the Llyn that visitors to the area would find pleasure in either visiting or taking part in activities. There is also Diving, Horse riding, Welsh Crafts, Music and many other places and attractions if you have longer to visit. There is lots of affordable accomodation available throughout the area [www.lleyn-farm-holidays.co.uk/properties.html](http://www.lleyn-farm-holidays.co.uk/properties.html) . So remember, if you are feeling snowed under in London, take a few days break and visit the beautiful and unspoilt Llyn Peninsula in North Wales.