



NORTH EAST WALES

Altogether brilliant

Year of
LEGENDS



Make your OWN legend

2017 is the Year of Legends in Wales.

We're celebrating our epic past, present and future like never before with attractions, events and activities at a range of legendary locations.

In case you're not quite sure where to start, we've put together a list of **12 Legendary Journeys** in North East Wales. Everything from town centre strolls to long-distance trails. All in spectacular settings. And all, it goes without saying, with a story attached.



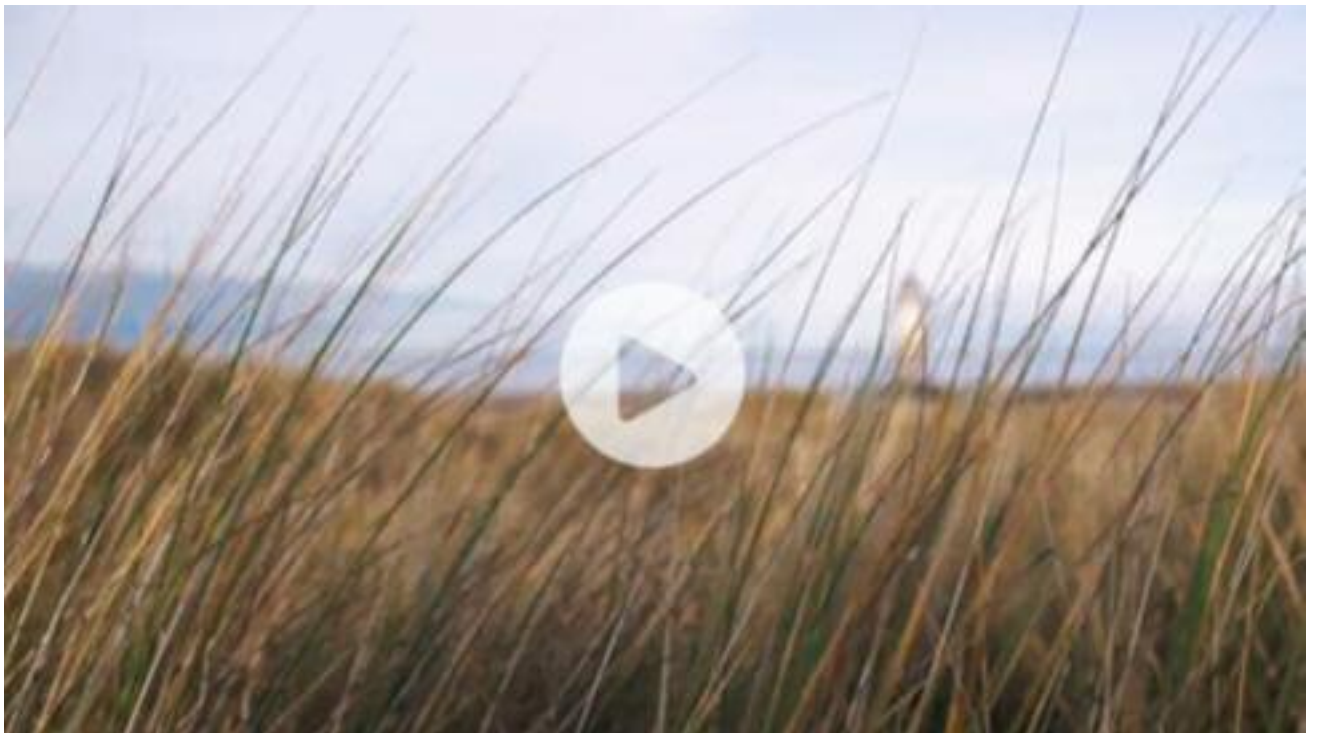
And right here is the place to be.

Lonely Planet named North Wales one of its top 10 regions to visit in the entire world this year. Nowhere else in the UK got a look-in. We're right up there with the Azores, South Australia and Taranaki in New Zealand.

But a bit easier to get to. In fact North East Wales shares a border with Shropshire and Cheshire. So, if you're travelling from outside Wales, you'll be in our wide open spaces, exploring our castles, eating our delicious food and feeling the buzz at our festivals before you know it.



All the more time for legendary experiences. Because we don't just invite you to immerse yourself in our stories. We want you to make your own. This movie might just give you a few ideas.



Find out more at
northeastwales.wales



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North East Wales
Gogledd Ddwyrain Cymru

[#FindYourEpic](https://www.youtube.com/hashtag/FindYourEpic)

CASTLE country



There are 641 castles in Wales, more per square mile than anywhere on earth - and North East Wales has more than its fair share.



Brooding magnificently beside rivers, crowning craggy hills or towering over our market towns, they're a constant reminder of our legend-haunted past.

They come in all shapes, sizes and states of repair, from atmospheric ruins hidden in ancient woodland to a 700-year-old stronghold still lived in today. Some were lofty fortresses built by Welsh princes. Others were symbols of English conquest. Each comes with its own rich history of passion, intrigue and bloodshed.

They're all part of the epic story of North East Wales.



What's the story?

Corwen is the ancestral home of Wales's national hero, Owain Glyndŵr.

You'll find a magnificent life-size statue of the last native-born Prince of Wales astride his battle horse in the town square. Three miles to the west at Llidiart-y-Parc is the mound from which he launched his revolt against English rule in 1400. He soon dominated much of Wales but, under pressure from the future Henry V, his star eventually began to wane. By 1415 he had disappeared, never to be captured. The "father of modern Wales", rumoured to lie sleeping until the time of his county's greatest need, is celebrated every 16 September on Owain Glyndŵr Day.



Historical drama

St Winefride's Well has been a place of pilgrimage for 1,300 years. According to legend Winefride was beheaded in 660AD by a local chieftain after she spurned his advances – and a spring rose from the spot where her head fell. This being the “**Lourdes of Wales**”, you can still bathe in the pool beside the beautiful chapel built by Margaret Beaufort, mother of Henry VII.

You might have thought the tale of two women who ran away together would have caused a scandal at the turn of the 18th century. Far from it. Lady Eleanor Butler and Miss Sarah Ponsonby received a stream of famous visitors to **Plas Newydd**.



Edward I was known as Longshanks because he was so tall. We Welsh probably had a few other names for him when he began a campaign to crush our independence with an “iron ring” of castles along the North Wales coast. It all started in 1277 at **Flint Castle**, painted by Turner and immortalised in Shakespeare's *Richard II*. The great castles of **Denbigh**, **Rhuddlan** and **Chirk** all date from the turbulent age of Edward I.



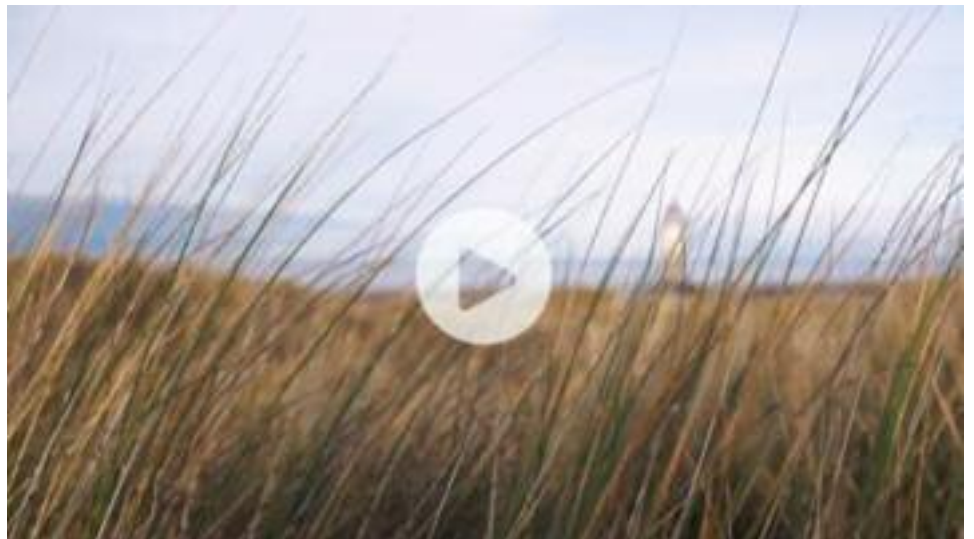
Image (Mold Cape) courtesy of the British Museum & Wrexham Museum

About 4,000 years ago the fabulous Mold Gold Cape was laboriously beaten from a single ingot weighing half a kilo. The British Museum has the original. But you can see a replica of one of the world's great Bronze Age treasures in **Mold museum**.

Some say 13th century **Castell Dinas Brân** was the abode of giant demons, whose treasure of golden idols still lies buried somewhere beneath it. Others believe it was the miraculous castle where King Arthur's knights found the Holy Grail. One thing is for sure: it's one of the most dramatically sited castles in Britain.

EPIC Landscapes

The landscapes of North East Wales are simply epic. And we're pleased to say that the rest of the world has noticed. In fact they keep showering us with capital letters.



The people at UNESCO, for instance, who designated mighty Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and 11 miles of the Llangollen Canal a World Heritage Site on a par with the Taj Mahal and the Acropolis. Or the kind folk who made the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

But none of this really matters. What matters is how they make you feel. In these remarkable places you'll experience a sense of space and freedom. Our commanding views and dark night skies will inspire you to create your own legends.

A photograph of the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct, a stone bridge with multiple arches, carrying a canal boat across a valley. The boat is yellow and red, and a person is visible on the deck. The background shows a lush green hill under a blue sky with clouds. A green semi-transparent shape is overlaid on the bottom left of the image, containing text.

What's the story?

When Thomas Telford and William Jessop opened **Pontcysyllte Aqueduct** a month after the Battle of Trafalgar in 1805, it was the tallest canal boat crossing in the world.

We still call it "the stream in the sky". It's 1,007 feet long and 126 feet high. And on one side there's nothing between you and the River Dee far below except a great deal of fresh Welsh air. The masonry mortar was made with ox blood and the trough was lined by Welsh flannel, lead and boiling sugar – or treacle toffee to you and me. Fortunately it hasn't sprung a leak in more than 200 years.



Land of adventure

The **Clwydian Range and Dee Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty** is the dramatic upland frontier of North Wales. Covering 390 square kilometres of windswept hilltops, heather moorland, limestone crags and wooded valleys, it's one of the least discovered yet easiest to explore of Britain's finest landscapes.

A £1 million extension to the **Llangollen-Corwen Heritage Railway** brought a welcoming toot and hiss of steam to Corwen for the first time since the Beeching axe fell in 1965. Now you can ride for 10 glorious miles, hugging the banks of the River Dee all the way, on one of the most beautiful railway journeys in Britain.

Rare and beautiful **Gronant Dunes** acts as a natural sea defence and is home to wild orchids, natterjack toads, sand lizards and the only breeding colony of little terns in Wales. Next door are the bustling seaside resorts of **Rhyl** and **Prestatyn** – and their seven glorious miles of golden sand.



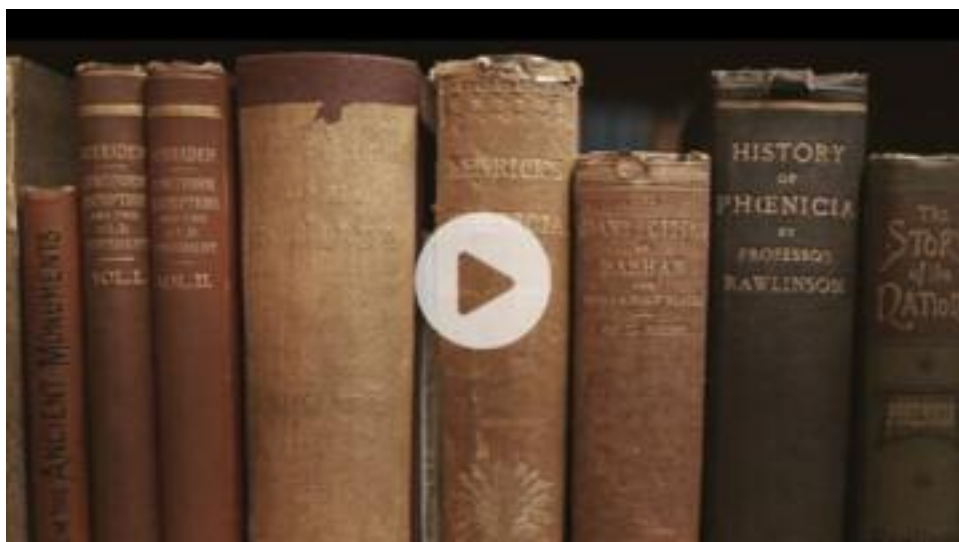
The 870-mile **Wales Coast Path** runs right along our beaches and promenades. **Offa's Dyke Path National Trail** traces the Dee Valley and the purple hills of the Clwydian Range. And these epic routes meet at Prestatyn to circumnavigate the whole of Wales. Now that's what we call a circular walk. All 1,030 miles of it. See you in a month or two.

Thousands of **cyclists and mountain bikers** come to North East Wales every year for the panoramic views, challenging climbs and swooping descents – and above all for the sheer fun of it. We've got everything from natural mountain bike trails and BMX tracks to **traffic-free family-friendly cycling**.



EPIC *thinking*

North East Wales may be an ancient landscape, with history and myth wherever you look. But it's also a land of epic thinking and creativity. Everywhere you go, there are bright new ideas in very old places.



Year of Legends is about showcasing the real Wales: a place that's alive with fresh talent, a vibrant arts scene and a culture that's never standing still. And North East Wales is its heart and soul.

Here you'll find the leading craft gallery in Wales, its finest English language **theatre** and one of the greatest celebrations of world music not just in Wales but anywhere. You might even hear us singing down the pub, especially if the rugby is on. Because we don't reserve our culture for festivals – it happens every day.

The image shows the interior of Gladstone's Library at Hawarden. It features a large, multi-paned window at the top, a balcony with a decorative railing, and a large wooden desk in the foreground. Bookshelves filled with books line the walls. A clock is mounted on the wall above the desk. The floor is made of wood.

What's the story?

Gladstone's Library at Hawarden was founded by four-times Prime Minister, William Ewart Gladstone, with 32,000 of his own books.

He (and his long-suffering valet) carried them all from the family seat at Hawarden Castle in a wheelbarrow. The library is the National Memorial to his life and work – and the “Grand Old Man” is the inspiration for a vibrant literary festival called Gladfest. You can catch a 15-minute “glimpse” of the magnificent reading rooms, said to look like Harry Potter’s Hogwarts, three times a day, seven days a week. Inside St Deiniol’s church next door is Gladstone’s stupendous marble tomb – and the last major stained glass window by Edward Burne-Jones.



Legends in the making

Meet Wales's Charles Dickens and Mold's most famous son: 19th century Welsh language novelist Daniel Owen. His statue stands outside the town's library and museum – and the annual **Daniel Owen Festival** is a highlight of the Mold arts scene.



Ruthin Craft Centre is one of Britain's major contemporary galleries for the applied arts. And the £4 million building is a work of art in itself, its zinc roof echoing the shape of the surrounding hills.

For one week every July the town of Llangollen opens its door to the world. And the world pours in: 5,000 musicians and 50,000 visitors. The **Llangollen International Musical Eisteddfod** is simply unmissable.

St Asaph Cathedral is the smallest ancient cathedral in Britain – just 182 feet long and 68 feet wide. And it has magnificent acoustics. Which makes it the perfect setting for the **North Wales International Music Festival**, which attracts many of the world's finest classical musicians to one of Britain's newest, and smallest, cities.



Glyndwr University Racecourse Stadium at Wrexham is the world's oldest serving international football venue – the Wales team's journey to glory in the Euro 2016 finals started right here in 1877. So **Wrexham Museum** is the ideal guardian of the shirts, caps, badges and other evocative memorabilia that make up the Welsh Football Collection.



Food HEROES

The recipe for our food is simple: first-rate ingredients, cooked with skill by passionate people. We're famous for our lamb, our Welsh Black beef and our champion cheeses – and we're at the forefront of the craft ale revolution.



It all starts with our rolling hills and fertile pasture. Because beautiful landscapes produce delicious food. Our delis, pubs and restaurants know we have some of Britain's best food producers on our doorstep, so why would they offer you anything else? Not because of food miles. Just because it tastes good.

So every day in North East Wales is a celebration of food. But once a year the towns of Mold, Llangollen and Wrexham like to make it official. Thousands flock to their food festivals featuring celebrity chefs, demonstrations and all our local food heroes.

What's the story?

No, your eyes are not deceiving you. That really is a herd of bison, legendary beast of the American Wild West, peacefully cropping the lush pasture beside the A5 near Corwen.

Lord Newborough has 70 of them on his 6,700-acre **Rhug Estate** where he also farms organic beef, lamb, pork and poultry – including Norfolk Bronze turkeys for Christmas. It all tastes, well, like meat used to taste. So mouth-watering in fact that you'll find it on the menu of more than 20 Michelin-starred restaurants. They also do a mean bacon bap takeaway at their award-winning farm shop – or if you have a little more time to spare, settle down to a rib eye steak in the appropriately named Bison Grill.



The local larder

Mold Alehouse is the very first micropub in North Wales. Which means it's small (obviously), dabbles in traditional bar snacks and prefers conversation to canned music. And it's very, very devoted to showcasing local cask beers from the likes of Big Hand, Heavy Industry and Cwrw Iâl.



The **Clwydian Range Food Trail** takes you on a journey through some of our most spectacular countryside – and introduces you to the makers of its most delicious food, from bread, pies and pastries to meat from traditional Welsh breeds, cheese, yoghurt and cider.

Phill Blanchard, head brewer at **Hafod Brewery**, isn't just inspired by the surrounding landscape of the Clwydian Range. He makes his beer out of it: heather from Moel Famau, honey from Moel Fenlli and bilberries from Moel Arthur have all rubbed shoulders with his hops and barley. It's North East Wales in a glass.

It's all very well producing some of the finest and freshest food you can find anywhere. But someone's got to cook it. You're in safe hands at **Tyddyn Llan** restaurant with rooms. Master chef Bryan Webb has quite a way with our local game. Not to mention a Michelin star.

Former London restaurateur Robert Didier trained under superstar chef Raymond Blanc. Now, as boss of Orchard Pigs, he's famous for his trademark Tractor Wheel Pies made with free-range rare-breed pork.



Events 2017

This is just a taste of everything that's happening in 2017 Year of Legends.

For all the latest events, contact one of our Tourist Information Centres. They'll help you book accommodation too – and tell you just about anything else you'd like to know.

Llangollen



LL20 8NU

✉ 01978 860828

Rhyl



LL18 1HZ

✉ 01745 355068

Wrexham



LL11 1AR

✉ 01978 292015

April

29 April - 1 May
Llangollen Walking Festival

May

11 - 13 May
Focus Wales Music Festival

13 - 14 May
Wrexham Food Festival

19 - 21 May
VANgollen

19 - 21 May
Prestatyn Walking Festival

26 - 28 May
North East Wales Diversity Festival

June

11 June
Bailey Hill Festival

19 - 25 June
Holywell & District Walking Festival

July

3 - 9 July
Llangollen International Musical Eisteddfod

13 - 23 July
Llangollen Fringe Festival

14 July
Underneath the Arches Festival

August

4 - 6 August
North Wales Blues & Soul Festival

12 - 13 August
Llangollen Faery Festival

17 August
Denbigh and Flint Show

26 - 27 August
Rhyl Air Show

September

Helfa Gelf Art Trail

1 - 3 September
Gladfest

2 September
Well Inn Music Festival

2 - 3 September
Corwen Walking Festival

16 - 17 September
Mold Food and Drink Festival

16 - 30 Sept
North Wales International Music Festival

October

14 - 15 October
Hamper 2017: Llangollen Food Festival

14 - 20 October
Daniel Owen Festival

26 - 29 October
Wales Rally GB



Must see attractions across the region

to Liverpool

to Chester

to Manchester

Wrexham

Erdig

Pontcysyllte

Llangollen

Corwen

Ruthin

Mold

Holywell

Prestatyn

Rhyl

Rhuddlan Castle

St Asaph Cathedral

Denbigh

Denbigh Castle

Ruthin Gaol

Owain Glyndŵr statue

Dinas Bran

Railway Llangollen-Corwen

Talacre Lighthouse

St Winefride's Well

AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY

Moel Famau Jubilee tower

WORLD HERITAGE SITE

to Bala

to Shrewsbury

Find out more at
northeastwales.wales

Dinas Bran



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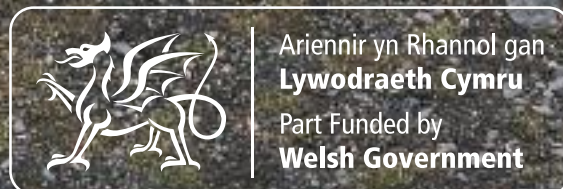


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Thank you to everyone involved in producing the brochure and films.