



Money to burn

Cars

Travel

Health

Food+drink

Sport

Competitions



THE DAY

Splashy and icy

There's crazier things in Wales than the locals. Maxim goes coasteering

→ If you've ever flushed your own head down the toilet, then: a) why? And b) you'll know what coasteering is like.

For those who don't know, it's an exhilarating mix of rock climbing, gorge scrambling, sea swimming and cliff diving, and it's probably the first truly British adventure sport (we're talking about coasteering now, obviously; not flushing your head down the toilet – it'll be at least two years before they foist lavvy-surfing on us as a hip new adrenaline activity).

Dressed in wetsuit, buoyancy aid, helmet and trainers you don't mind if you never wear again, you inch slowly from A to B along the coast. You leap from rock to rock on the easy bits, cling to narrow footledges and handholds where you can, swim or wade where you can't, hold on for dear life when the surf hits, and occasionally force yourself to let go.

Yes, the highlight for many of the fools on the trip *Maxim* joined was jumping into a lagoon from 50 feet. There's no actual danger (the lagoon's in an old quarry

70 foot deep, so you're not going to hit the bottom), but overriding your instincts and stepping out into nothingness takes balls (talking of which, keep your legs together when you hit the water).

The techniques of coasteering aren't hard to master – you've almost certainly done this before, as a child when your parents weren't looking. And you can probably persuade your other half along too (it's environmentally sound, she'll see some picturesque countryside from a whole new angle and very likely come face-to-whisker with an adorable seal or two if, like *Maxim*, you're in Pembrokeshire).

It can hurt (barnacles are sharper than you think, and waves harder), plus you can expect to swallow an Olympic-size poolful of salt water; but the feeling that you're really exploring makes it twice as rewarding as most action sports. Best of all, there's a sizeable surge of adrenalin – which is more than can be said for most adrenalin activities. And it's considerably more hygienic than the toilet thing.



'Hurry up Dave, I'm busting'

DETAILS

Maxim coasteered with Preseli Venture (preseliventure.com, 01348 837709), £70 for a full-day (with a break for lunch), but with various packages available, including surfing, sea kayaking, mountain biking, etc. We travelled with First Great Western (firstgreatwestern.co.uk). For further information, see visitwales.com.

Cliffdangler



'Last one to Ireland gets 'em in'

HOTEL HEAVEN

This month: Stapleford

Ah yes, the crunch of tyres on gravel, the Capability Brown gardens, the mellow honeystone of your country house with its attentive staff. OK, so you may live in a one-bedroom hovel with dodgy plumbing and no garden, in fact no balcony. Or windows. But Sir can always dream – or splash out on a night at Stapleford Park in deepest rolling Leicestershire.

One of Britain's finest stately homes

Coasteering
at Preseli Venture
MAXIM magazine
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