

COASTEERING IN PEMBROKESHIRE MARCUS FELLOWS BRAVES THE WAVES OFF THE SCENIC WELSH COAST

Roller coaster ride

BARE ESSENTIALS

Pembrokeshire, in Wales, has a beautiful Atlantic coastline and more seaside awards than any other county in the UK. It's become a home for adrenaline junkies, offering sports from surfing, via paragliding, to the latest craze – coasteering.

It's February, the cold snap's hit, the country's at a standstill and I'm about to launch myself 60ft from the side of a disused quarry into a raging, grey Atlantic below.

This is coasteering, which has been billed as everything you weren't allowed to do at the seaside as a child. You climb, scramble on, jump off and swim round rocks on as rugged a coast as you can find. Why bungee jump when you can raise the stakes by jumping into the sea over razor sharp rocks?

Although clambering around the edge of Pembrokeshire in freezing weather may sound ridiculous, it is quite fun. This part of Wales not only pioneered the sport, but also has one of the most beautiful coastlines in the country.

Oh buoy

A day of coasteering starts by making sure we're properly kitted out. Helmets are a must, as are buoyancy aids (you don't have to be able to swim). And if those are musts, the 6mm wetsuits provided to keep out the chill are a godsend.

Our group – me, my poorly briefed girlfriend and a group of American students – soon discover the importance of working as a team. When trying to get through the waves and alcoves, teamwork is essential, if only to make sure no one is washed out to sea. With such danger being a mere wave away, relationships are built quickly. Despite the freezing temperatures,



You're going to get wet: Exploring the rugged Atlantic shoreline. Below, a leap of faith off 60ft cliffs

the kit is up to the job of keeping us warm. Who'd have thought that bobbing up and down in the sea could feel more comfortable than standing on the shore?

Our guides treat us to a bit of a mid-coast nature lesson on the creatures among whose habitats we're wandering. Then we arrive at the disused coastal quarry, nicknamed the Blue Lagoon, because of its vibrant colour and the fact its waters remain relatively calm even on the roughest of days.

Feeling jumpy

It's here that I have to face my 60ft jump. With some trepidation, I hurl myself into the water. The rest of

the group follows and we work our way up to higher platforms for further leaps, getting more and more pleased with ourselves until we hit the highest spot.

Now we realise just how tough this whole game can be. Tom, one of our guides, shows us up by performing a perfect and graceful backflip from the top. I think I'll wait until next winter before trying that one.

■ Marcus went coasteering with Preseli Venture. Packages can include accommodation and equipment. Tel: 01348 837709, www.preseliventure.com

For more adventure sports in Wales, go to www.adventure.visitwales.com

