

# Go Jump

KIM SMITH VISITS COASTAL PARADISE PEMBROKESHIRE IN WEST WALES FOR A WEEKEND OF THRILLS AND SPILLS



**Standing on the** edge of a cliff, about to throw myself off, my thoughts sift through all the good things in life. Mid-flight, I decide it can't get much better than this.

It sounds like suicide, but I'm actually coasteering, aka rock-climbing, cliff-jumping, swimming in sea caves and probably anything else my dad told me not to do when I was a young 'un living by the beach.

I agree that catapulting oneself off a cliff does sound a little zany, but when you're bubble-wrapped in rubber and have a crash hat on, you'll be surprised how safe you feel.

Although there is a close call while we are cliff-climbing for one adventurer in our group. Katie, from Pennsylvania, slips on a rock and by luck,

wedges her foot in the cliff face and is grabbed from behind by her friend Jess, to prevent a fall. Phew.

So, yes, there is an element of risk to the activity, but you don't get an adrenaline rush from wading in the shallow end of a kids' pool, do you? Plus, there are two experienced instructors on hand — to give you one, like they did Katie, when you need it.

After starting out with



some small jumps, we gradually upgrade to flips, bombs and higher platforms, with the biggest drop measuring about 20 feet. Admittedly my screams are loud enough to be heard across the other side of the Irish Sea, but despite my wails, I am one of two swashbucklers to tackle the highest perch offered to us.

"I'm not going to die doing this?" I ask instructor Paul Ellis, looking for reassurance. "I won't lie. It can hurt a bit sometimes," he replies and I consider demoting myself to the lower step. Oh bugger it, I think, and throw myself in the drink after a "one, two, three, go" pep talk.

Following our last jump, we make our way back up the cliff and haul butt into the mini-bus, which takes us to a much-appreciated hot shower at the Preseli Venture lodge, our hosts for the aptly titled Adrenaline Cocktail weekend.

It's been a big day on the picturesque Pembrokeshire coast. Kayaking beneath lofty sea cliffs and natural arches around a sheltered bay filled in the morning hours, complete with games of tag (two paddle hits on the back of your kayak and you're gone) and British Bulldogs.

Pembrokeshire is for sea kayakers what Hawaii is for surfers. With its clean Atlantic ocean waters, beautiful coastal scenery and the odd seal, it provides a state of nirvana for water enthusiasts. A few of us got a different view of the coast too, thanks to a capsized kayak, but that's all part of the fun, right?

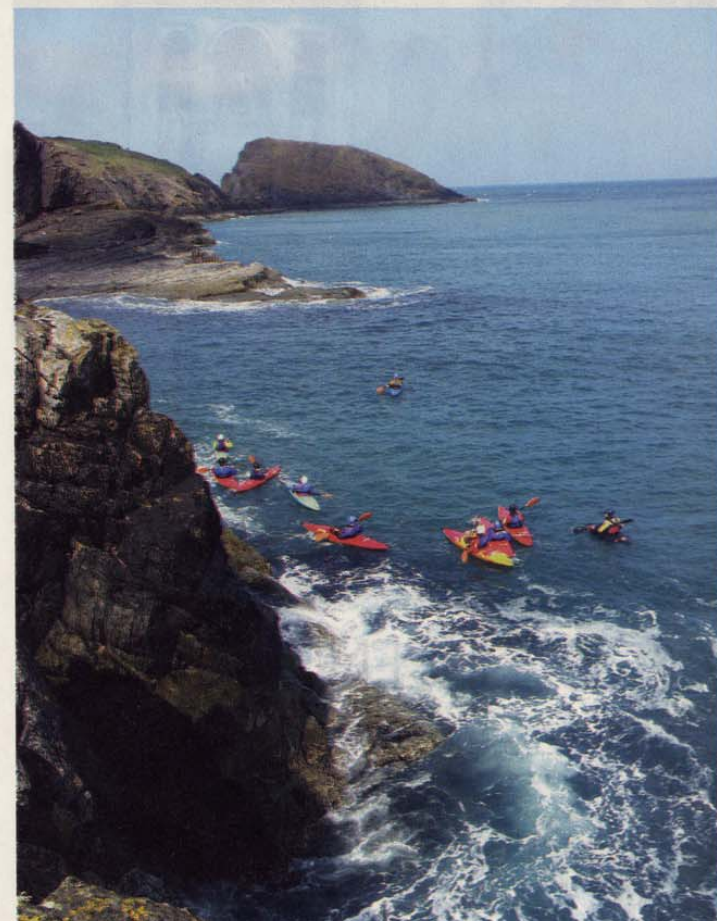
After a long wash, some yummy home-cooked grub and a few games of pool, we head outside for a bonfire under the stars, complete with toasted marshmallows. Our group, a happy mix of Australians, Brits, Americans and a guy from Egypt, mill around drinking beer and hot chocolate, going over the excitement of the day and swapping mindless chit-chat. The relaxing wind-down is just what we need after our action-packed day. Around midnight, we decide to hit the hay in the hope our bodies will recover some, before a big morning of hiking the following day.

The seven-mile trek around the coastline doesn't start off well, as I trip over either a rock or myself for the mother of all face plants. Lauren, my friend from Oz, is walking behind me and I hear her trying to hold it in.

"It's OK — go on," I tell her as she bursts into hysterics.

A few steep hills have us panting and questioning why we are doing this on a Sunday morning, but the amazing scenery and euphoria and sense of accomplishment on completion of the massive slog help make sense of it all.

It's what the whole 'living on the edge' weekend has been about — pushing boundaries and having a good time, with the ability to laugh at yourself, faceplants and all. Even cliff-hanging Katie managed to laugh about her close call. ■



**So, yes, there is an element of risk to the activity, but you don't get an adrenaline rush from wading in the shallow end of a kids' pool, do you?**

■ Preseli Venture's Adrenaline Cocktail Adventure Break costs £189 and includes two nights' accommodation, meals and three half-day activity sessions (choice of hiking, coasteering, kayaking, mountain biking and surfing) with equipment and qualified instruction. See [www.preseliventure.com](http://www.preseliventure.com) or call 01348-837 709. For more information on the area, see [www.visitpembrokeshire.com](http://www.visitpembrokeshire.com) or for a free holiday guide, call 0870-510 3103.

