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## DAYS OUT

## DAYTRIPPER

# LET'S VISIT... LLANDUDNO

*The queen of Welsh resorts is undergoing a modern makeover, Boudicca Fox-Leonard finds*

**S**omething is afoot in Llandudno. The Victorian seaside resort has long been a favourite with pensioners from nearby Liverpool and Manchester: on a clear spring day, white-haired holidaymakers sway up the promenade in search of a reasonably priced lunch. But the town now pulls visitors from further afield.

It could be the trendy MOSTYN contemporary art gallery (note the fashionable capitals). The regenerative powers of an art gallery have already been established by the likes of Bilbao, Margate and Hastings. Or perhaps it's the advent of adventure tourism - as well as the natural geological thrills to be had on the Great Orme limestone headland, the world's fastest zip line is nearby - attracting young Lycra-clad types keen to refuel on speciality shots and local ales. Llandudno boasts two craft breweries, the Great Orme and Wild Horse (made using Snowdonia

water), coffee roasters Heartland Coffi, as well as three gin distilleries in the surrounding bay area. Jon Hughes, owner of Providero, a speciality coffee shop on Mostyn street, says: "Once you start to dig a bit deeper, you can find pockets of creative industries and communities."

If it all sounds like hipster hype, consider this: two of Llandudno's hotels, The Lawton Court and The Elm Tree Hotel, were named winners in the best service and bargain hotel categories respectively in TripAdvisor's 2017 list of best hotels worldwide. Tales abound of disappointed holidaymakers driving back because there's no space at Llandudno's inns.

Fortunately though, with direct trains from Manchester and London, Llandudno is ripe for daytripping.

Two such daytrippers, Chris Taylor and Sheri Rigby, both 24, pitched up after looking up Llandudno on Google



## THE ART GALLERY



**MOSTYN GALLERY**  
Wales's foremost contemporary gallery originally opened in 1902, but was shut from the First World War until the late Seventies. An expansion in 2010 and a RIBA Award-winning design mean it feels light and airy. Highlights include turning the gallery into a skate park for Glitch Festival in September last year.



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THE NATIONAL STRESS TEST

Wales is the least stressed, Northern Ireland the most

People aged 55-64 are nearly twice as stressed as the over-65s

Twice as many women as men feel stressed

People in the media have the least good work-life balance

# Dishing out life lessons with a budget

As Channel 5's *Rich House, Poor House* launches, two Telegraph writers spill the beans about living the high life - and surviving on a shoestring

ave you ever wondered what you'd do if your weekly budget was quadrupled? Or how

her with the sum of £1,025 - the amount given to the

of spending all that money in just five days "quite

Images. "It looked really nice online," says Rigby, looking back at the graceful, white, stuccoed terraces from the pier's boards.

Known as the "queen of Welsh resorts", the freehold of most of the town centre (and Great Orme) is owned by the Mostyn Estate, which was responsible for laying out the town in 1849. Llandudno was also a favourite of the Liddell family, whose daughter Alice so inspired Lewis Carroll.

The current Lord Mostyn, Gregory, 31, inherited the estate (valued at £48million) in 2011. And while the estate has protected the classical Victorian frontage of the town, it has been wily enough to realise that there is a finite number of years that coaches will be delivering Llandudno's staple tourists. Anticipating dwindling audiences for entertainment such as Codman's Punch and Judy show, a pier staple for 150 years, it has set its sights on the future. The





Telegraph journalists to take on our Big Budget Challenge, they found out just how different their day-to-day lives would be.

Telegraph Lifestyle intern Lucy Rahim lives in Brighton, and as an arts graduate trying to earn a living in London, she's more accustomed to making her money go further than most. When we presented



In his words: "I work hard and live a comfortable life, and it's been a long time since I had to watch the pennies." So living on a budget of just £139.80 (the same amount given to the Wilson family in the first episode of *Rich House, Poor House*) definitely had its challenges. Here, we find out what Lucy and Lee learnt about their spending habits - and themselves.

being hotly debated. "Llandudno is a town of contrasts," says Lin Gummings of the MOSTYN gallery. "We have people coming for the walking and outdoors, but also those who love arts and culture. Visitors tend to say, 'Wow'. It's not what they expect."



### THE TRAM TRIP

**GREAT ORME TRAMWAY** Britain's only cable-hauled public road tramway has been open since 1902. Climb 1,500 metres up the Great Orme Country Park and Nature Reserve. Once there, visit the Great Orme Copper Mines - a

labyrinth of Bronze Age tunnels - or change trams at the Halfway Station and continue your journey to the summit. Expect queues of excitable children. Less-elegant thrills can be had over at Llandudno's Cable Car.

### LUCY RAHIM: BIG SPEND

It has been an extraordinary week. It's remarkable how having a £200 daily budget changes the way you live. Not only can you treat yourself lavishly for no reason, you can ease some of the less enjoyable aspects of life, such as housework or taking public transport.

I must admit it has been extremely enjoyable being able to stay in a glamorous hotel and eat delicious food. It has made me reflect on my own life and has left me with the desire to be more adventurous in general, and to make more time for fun.

It was, however, really quite stressful, and I have learnt that, more than



anything, money gives you choice. Having the option to spend lavish amounts on food, drink and socialising was much more difficult than I expected, not being used to that kind of wealth. I lacked the prior knowledge about the "right" places to spend it. I wanted to make

**Big spender Lucy splashed out on a few of life's luxuries**



the most of the time and found that simple decisions (such as choosing where to buy lunch) became much harder when I didn't have my normal budget limitations.

By Friday, I understood that this choice works both ways. Yes, I could spend £20 on a working lunch, but it was still acceptable to eat leftovers from home. I could have taken taxis absolutely everywhere, but did it really make sense when the Tube was faster? Moreover, my environmental concerns about cars were just as valid whether I was rich or poor. Which leads me to my final lesson from the week: responsibility.

I came to realise that, as nice as it had been to spoil myself, there were plenty of other people who could benefit from my extra funds. So I decided to donate my final £150 to three different charities. It is easy to feel powerless in this frightening world, but with money on my side, I really felt I had the capacity to make a difference. And, ultimately, that meant far more to me than all the week's treats and presents combined.

### LEE KYNASTON: TIGHT BUDGET

When I began living off £139.80 for a week - the amount given to the Wilson family in Channel 5's new series *Rich House, Poor House* and the average amount households in the bottom 10 per cent income bracket have to spend - I thought it would be easy. It was not. It was challenging, compromising and at times downright demoralising.

Budgeting is something I've not had to do on a daily basis since I was 22. But regardless of your income, it's a useful skill, because budgeting makes you question every purchase - right down to the last vegetable. To question your spending choices is good, even if it only saves you pennies because you shop at the local fruit and veg stand, not a supermarket.

Other things I learnt: that treats are contextual and don't have to cost much (I enjoyed my Americano all the more because it seemed like a total indulgence) and that our fondness for contactless and debit card purchases leads us down the path to profligacy. If you ever have to tighten your belt, use



cash - it's the best way to focus the mind.

Highlights of the challenge include walking everywhere - good exercise and an even better mindfulness exercise; making my mum a Mother's Day card and reducing my alcohol consumption by about two-thirds.

**Austerity Lee had to budget carefully for the basics**

Lowlights were having the same thing for lunch three days running and having to sponge drinks off friends on my one big night out - even if the cheeky blighters said that was par for the course.

My budget was pretty much spent on me alone. How a family of four would manage boggles my mind. To say the past few days were an education would be an understatement. I ended the week with not a penny in my pocket but with an understanding of the hardship families less fortunate than my own face on a daily basis - and that's something money simply cannot buy.



### THE LUNCH SPOT

**JOHNNY DOUGH'S** Proprietor Morgan Austin says the ice cream he serves is "as good as anything you'll get in Italy". Said ice cream hails from the Red Boat in Beaumaris, a short hop down the coast in Anglesey, and Morgan takes pride in serving up local produce at his wood-fired pizza restaurant: Great Orme goat's cheese, Menai Strait mussels and Anglesey lamb all make for toppings. The coffee is roasted by Heartland Coffi and the beer brewed by Wild Horse. It might be local, but it's certain to suit metropolitan taste buds.



### THE FISH AND CHIPS

**FISH TRAM CHIPS** Located next to the tram stations, this is a locals' favourite. "Everything is cooked fresh. Nothing sits around. His fryer is empty until you go in and order," says one enthusiastic local.



Find out more about Channel 5's *Rich House Poor House* at [tgr.ph/richhousepoorhouse](http://tgr.ph/richhousepoorhouse)







# NATION OF SHOPKEEPERS

Celebrating Britain's unique retailers

**GYNELLE LEON**  
**PRICK CACTUS SHOP, DALSTON**



## THE WALK

**THE GREAT ORME** Rugged Great Orme rises to nearly 700ft. Set off from the foot of the pier along the 9km footpath that circles the headland and emerge at West Shore. Stop halfway at the café, or cut across country for a shorter, steeper walk. Mind the wild goats.

**I**t all goes back to a holiday in Marrakesh in 2011. I was in the Majorelle Gardens with my best friend and I remember being surrounded by cacti, amazed by the contrast between their vivid green and the brilliant blue of the buildings and the sky. I'd never seen any so large. It was a pleasure for all the senses, and I wanted to have a memory of the experience, so when I got home I bought my first succulent – the variety of plant that encompasses cacti. It was a *Euphorbia ingens*, and it was to be merely the first in my collection.

Next I bought a bowl of clumping *Mammillaria*, which is a bulbous type and one that you see quite a lot. But I wanted more than just the common varieties; I wanted flowering cacti, which you can't get in a garden centre, so I started going to Chelsea Flower Show each year to buy rarer types.

By this point my flat was looking like a jungle. I loved my cacti but it was hard to find more than a few kinds, and so in 2014 I came up with idea of opening a cactus shop. I quit my job as a fraud and compliance analyst and sold my flat.

I'd never come up with an abstract idea and made it happen, but equally I'd really never wanted something so much as I wanted to make the shop successful.

I feared that something might happen to stop me opening it, and I was often

confronted with things I needed that I hadn't thought of. But I opened in July 2016, and it got off to a good start because it was so hot. People wanted plants that matched the weather.

But even when it got cooler, the demand didn't taper off. I sold lots at Christmas, and lots for Valentine's Day – in particular the *Hoya kerrii* succulent, which is a heart-shaped variety.

The shop is a mix between a typical retail store and a gallery. Even if visitors can't afford some of the bigger



Succulent mad: Gynelle Leon

plants they can come and learn about them. It's white and minimalist, like a modern home, and the cacti don't make a strong smell, but they make the place feel fresh because they're removing so much carbon dioxide from the air.

People think cacti are on trend, but what they don't realise is that they've been popular in waves from the 1800s onwards. But I think keeping plants shouldn't be a trend – it's a way of life.

I'm always looking for more plants to add to the shop, and drive to Holland and France to see private collections. The only limit is what I can fit in the back of my van.

Interview by Tom Ough

492 Kingsland Road, London E8 4AE, prickidn.com



Spiky: one of the cacti on offer

JAY WILLIAMS, RUI SCHROER, BOTH FOR THE TELEGRAPH



## THE PIER

Currently the walk down to the end of the 2,295ft pier feels like a bit of a disappointment – all empty kiosks and a tired amusement arcade not retro enough to be kitsch. However, the view back down to Llandudno and Snowdonia beyond is more rewarding than any one-armed bandit.

## THE SHOP

### MOSTYN GALLERY SHOP

A delight for design and art magpies. The shop sells prints, original art work, fashion, ceramics and jewellery from UK makers and artists.



## THE BEACH

### WEST SHORE

West Shore, with its stretches of golden sands backed by white-topped Snowdonia, is a more attractive prospect than the famed Victorian North Shore, which has been unattractively storm-proofed with stone. West Shore is popular with kite fliers, kitesurfers and families. Stick around for sunset.



## THE COFFEE

### PROVIDERO

The number of laptop users is high at Llandudno's premiere coffee haunt. Owner Jon Hughes opened the exposed brick and industrially-lit space two months ago, following

the success of a first shop in Llandudno Junction. "We do get the odd coffee tourist coming in," says Hughes. Non-coffee drinkers have a choice of over 30 teas, home-made soups and freshly made sourdough.

