



Trampolines and zip lines hang in cathedral-sized caves at Blaenau Ffestiniog

Go underground at Llechwedd Slate Caverns

Slate mining once dominated the economy in northwest Wales: slate from these hills supplied most of the roofs in Victorian Britain and was transported around the world. Its decline over the last century hit local communities hard and left quarried hillsides, great caverns and dark tunnels in its wake.

They're all visible around the small town of Blaenau Ffestiniog. Surrounded on all sides by Snowdonia National Park, its quarry-scarred landscape means it didn't qualify for park status. Yet the area has a hard beauty of its own, and once you head downwards you discover another world. You can explore the Llechwedd Slate Caverns just outside town via numerous tours, and adventurous can spend two hours exploring the eerily magnificent mines on a

Caverns tour, using zip lines, rope bridges and footholds hammered into the walls, gazing into dark holes and across cathedral-sized caves. It's a great feeling - you get to put your hands on history, and set your heart pounding.

If that sounds a bit much, operators Zip World also offer Bounce Below, a series of enormous interconnected trampolines and slides. Trampolining in a cave is a unique experience, and the atmospheric lighting and chiseled walls around you give the giggling fun of bouncing up and down a nice counterpoint.

Fly high and low on record-breaking zip lines

Outdoor zip lines offer up a different perspective. You can build up quite a lick heading down these, a physical thrill that's

matched by the awesome spectacle of North Wales swooshing by beneath you. Blaenau Ffestiniog's three zip lines take you down from the hills above to the mine itself. At Bethesda, northwest of Blaenau, Zip World Velocity (zipworld.co.uk) boasts the longest line in Europe and the fastest (up to 100mph) in the world. More records are smashed elsewhere. Go Below, outside the appealing town of Betws-y-Coed, has the world's longest underground zip line and can take you to the deepest point in Britain that's accessible to the public - almost 400m below ground.

Snowdon: A mountain for all comers

Betws-y-Coed is a great base for exploring Snowdon, at 1085m the highest point in England and Wales. It's famous for its views



Rolling through woodland at Coed Llandegla



Tryfan offers some of the most enjoyable scrambling in Britain