

# LLANDUDNO

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**L**landudno is a popular Victorian seaside town in North Wales, known as 'Flandidno' to the locals. Travelling here is like going abroad; road signage is in Welsh as well as English. Motorists are often advised to 'Araf' meaning 'Slow'. The town has wide boulevards for the trams that once ran through it, art deco metalwork and ornate roofs similar to France and Romania. In fact Queen Elisabeth of Romania stayed here in 1890.

Llandudno seafront is lined with pastel coloured hotels, the choice of palette the requirement of the landlords, the Mostyn estate. We take the Great Orme Tour in a wonderful vintage 1958 Leyland Tiger Cub coach with an extremely knowledgeable driver. He explains that in 1848, Owen Williams, an architect and surveyor, presented Lord Mostyn with plans to develop the marshlands behind Llandudno Bay as a holiday resort. Over the next 20 years or so it developed into what we see today.

We stay for four nights and five days at the three star Somerset Hotel, which has a five star food hygiene rating and a car park for self-drivers. Daish's, which owns it, is also a coach operator and the majority of guests, who tend to be over 50, arrive by coach. It is a substantial property with 86 en-suite bedrooms, some with sea views, bar and dance floor and a games room that the children love. Guests stay on a half board basis, which means they only have to think about what to do for lunch each day. Brilliant.

There is a wonderful holiday feel. Guests chatter away to each other and new friends are quickly made. After checking into our family room complete with more than enough beds for us all, we go down to dinner. It is served at 6.30pm and we have the same table each night. What a luxury to indulge in a three course meal. There are options for meat eaters while vegetarians can choose a variety of salads. We enjoy the vegetable soup of the day and the desserts such as bread and butter pudding



*Llandudno with the backdrop of Snowdonia National Park*

and spotted dick are delicious, too. All very filling and satisfying fare. It is a mammoth task to cater for 140 guests each day and our waiter tells us that the hotel is at full occupancy throughout the year. Not a surprise at all. The little ones cope well, despite their tiredness, and generally we are at the table for about an hour and a quarter. Of course, there are some requests to visit the toilet. But behaviour is pretty good. They enjoy watching the other guests, too.

After a brief evening stroll along the seafront we return to the hotel to see the entertainment. What fun; we all take to the dance floor and there are covers of George Ezra's Shotgun and Pharrell Williams' Happy. Harriett's confidence grows throughout the week thanks to various guests dancing with her. It's a great way to meet people and to socialise. Bleary eyed we go to bed for a restful night's sleep in our comfy beds. There's a nice touch in the room because the housekeeper has left a note to say if you require anything just ask. Towards the end of our stay it becomes necessary for us to request a couple more towels and soap.

Breakfast is at 8.30am. The children particularly like helping themselves to cereal and local Welsh yoghurt while the cooked food is brought from the kitchen. There's a choice of full English breakfast through to scrambled egg or poached. It sets us up for the day.

We take the red hop on hop off bus tour and as the weather is nice, sit on the top. There's an audio guide where we learn that there are 160 wind turbines 10 miles off the shore that provide electricity for up to 400,000 homes. On a clear day these can be seen.