

■ Relax in the Cairngorms

short stays

► **ESCAPE** to the Scottish Highlands staying at the newly refurbished four-star Macdonald Highlands Hotel, in the heart of the Cairngorms National Park, with their exclusive summer short break deal. Guests can enjoy a two night stay from £89 per room, per night, and indulge in a fresh cream tea on your first day and full Scottish breakfast each morning. Children under 12 can stay free, including breakfast! To book visit [MacdonaldHotels.co.uk/summer-online](http://MacdonaldHotels.co.uk/summer-online) or call 0844 879 9000. This break has to be booked by August 31 for stays until September 7.

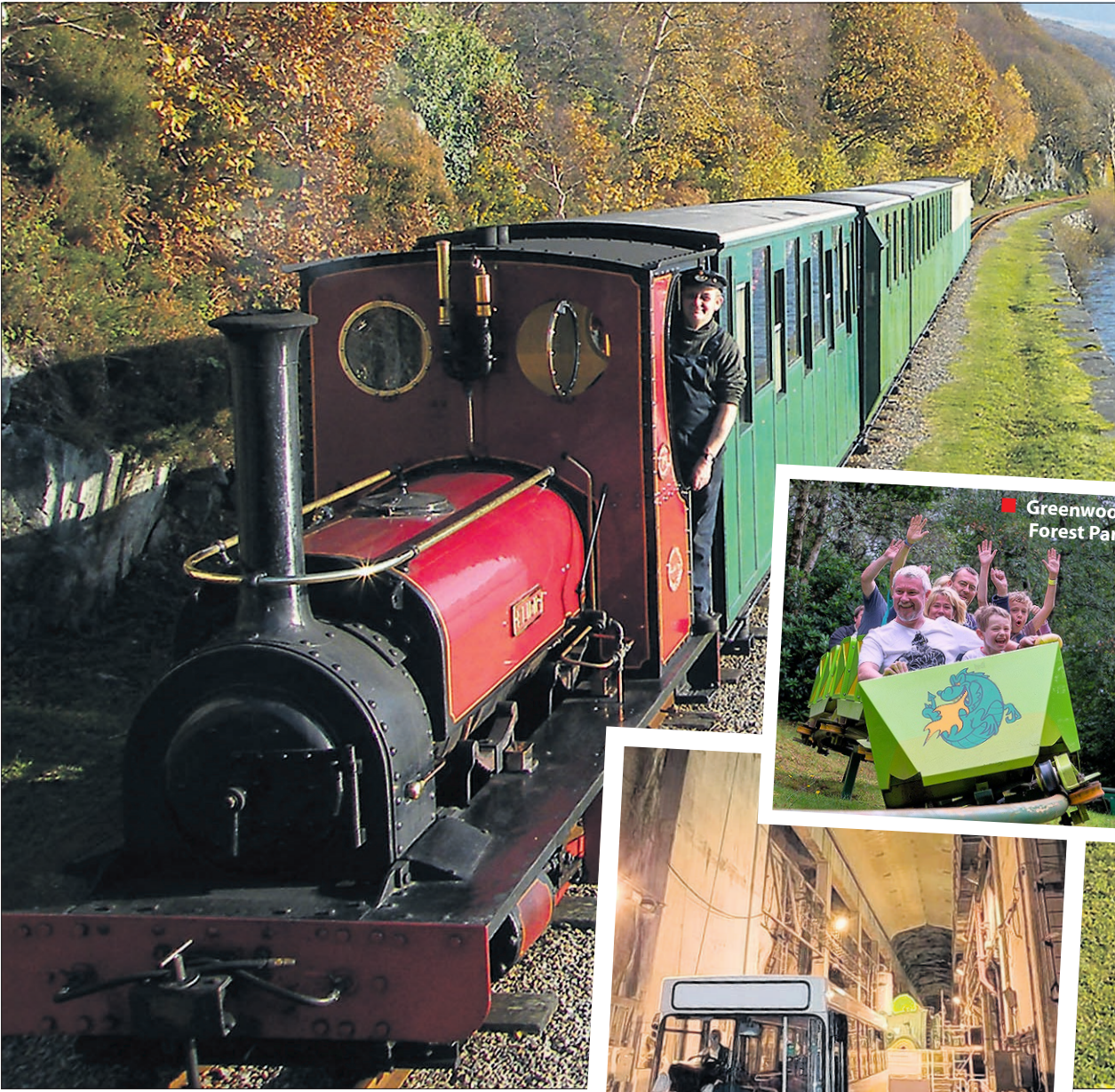
late breaks

► **SPEND** August Bank Holiday camping on the Cote d’Azur for £265 (saving 10%). The deal on a seven-night getaway, starting on August 24, with Venue Holidays, includes a fully-equipped Espace tent sleeping two adults and up to four children at Camping Les Pins Parasols at Frejus, a campsite offering sporting facilities for all ages including a swimming pool. Ferry crossings can be arranged by Venue and cost, for example, £118 for a weekend P&O Dover/Calais saver ferry crossing for car and passengers. Call 01233 629950 or click [www.venueholidays.co.uk](http://www.venueholidays.co.uk)



■ Campsite at Les Pins Parasols at Frejus

# TRAVEL



The quarry closed in 1969 but a few years later part of the line was re-opened as a tourist attraction, using the same steam engines. Today, the Llanberis Lake Railway runs along the shores of Lake Padarn, passing the 13th century Dolbadarn Castle built by Llywelyn. The hour-long, five-mile return journey is a leisurely way to enjoy views of the Snowdonia range. The other small railway in Llanberis runs up Mount Snowdon. Although the train was operating during our visit, the snow-topped summit (where the café has been transformed in an £8m project) was out of reach so we decided to leave that until next time.

NEED TO KNOW

- **ADRIAN CAFFERY** was a guest of Attractions Of Snowdonia. Details of all the places he visited can be found at [attractionsofsnowdonia.com](http://attractionsofsnowdonia.com)
- **THE family stayed at Coed Gelert in Beddgelert, a purpose-built development of three two-bedroomed cottages and two three-bedroomed cottages, each with its own enclosed garden and parking. The owners live onsite to ensure a warm welcome.**
- **THE Snowdon Sherpa bus service, offering easy access to other areas of the national park, stops within a few yards of the cottages**
- **FOR more information call Joan Firth on 01766 890880 or click [snowdonia-cottages.net](http://snowdonia-cottages.net)**

■ Coed Gelert cottages, right



BEST BRITISH BREAK . . .

► **ENJOY** a two night break in Devon, price £50 per person, based on four sharing, at Woolacombe Bay Holiday Parks, from August 23. Call 0843 208 0368 or click [www.woolacombe.com/bp](http://www.woolacombe.com/bp)



■ Woolacombe beach

**ADRIAN CAFFERY** explores Snowdonia’s many attractions

# RANGE ROVERS



■ Gelert’s grave in Beddgelert, the Llanberis Lake Railway and Portmeirion

home to lots more eco-friendly fun including karts, canoes, treehouses, a barefoot trail and the longest sledge run in Wales. On the Sunday we went to church, as you do. This was no ordinary church, though. No prayers or hymns, but it was a heavenly place for Cerys. The church in question has been turned into The Fun Centre, an enormous soft play area in Caernarfon. There are the usual ball pools and rope bridges but what really separates the toddlers from the teens here are the 25ft drop vertical slides. They are such a thrill that the centre hosts adults-only evenings. No break in Snowdonia is ever complete without a visit to the fairytale village of Portmeirion. The mix of contrasting classical, palladian, arts & crafts and gothic styles somehow gel perfectly. With its fountains, grotto, lighthouse and Italianate bell tower, it’s a magical place. Our guide regaled us with tales of celebrities who have stayed in the self-catering cottages, including George Harrison, Brian Epstein and Noel Coward, who wrote Blythe Spirit in five days there. And he told us how the pet cemetery was established by one of Portmeirion’s eccentric tenants, who preferred the company of dogs to humans and read The Bible to them from behind a screen. Unlike in Gelert, there’s no reason to suspect they were sent to doggy heaven with the errant thrust of a sword.