

WALES SUFFERED THE WORST SUMMER FOR YEARS



When, in 2001, Wales was suffering from the foot and mouth outbreak, one could have been forgiven for thinking that the Welsh tourism industry would not end up being in a worse state. The coastal areas were relatively unaffected, yet the Welsh inland was virtually deserted for a number of months. However, last year proved to be an even worse experience for the Welsh tourist board than 2001 and this year has so far followed suit.

The incredibly bad financial and reputation results were put down to the weather. However, there may well be other reasons for the rot. Firstly, Wales is becoming a victim of the general trend for Europeans to use budget airlines. Whereas English people, for example, used to take the car to take a cheap break in hilly neighboring Wales, some flight tickets are now actually cheaper than the price of the petrol to Wales. The result - Wales loses out.

However, the weather has to take a large chunk of the blame too. Wales does not have an immense amount to offer when the elements are not being favourable. Even this year's belated good weather is not expected to bring a final crowd of tourists. 43% of tour operators have admitted to dealing with less people than in recent years. 74% of them put the entire blame on the poor weather.

The number of international visits to Wales is dropping by something like 150.000 every year, a fact which is costing Welsh hotels, restaurants and other tourist organizations millions of pounds. Amongst improving advertising campaigns, the most important thing for the Welsh to do is to hope that the weather improves. If the summers in Britain continue in the same vain as in the last few years, there may well be a need for drastic changes.

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