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# ACADEMIC WEEKLY DIGEST

YOUR WEEKLY DIGEST OF KEY RESEARCH FINDINGS

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## LEVERAGING FOLKLORE AND FANTASY TO PROMOTE TOURISM

Tourists are fascinated with folklore and countless destinations market themselves as the setting of myths and legends. Wales is closely associated with Merlin and King Arthur and is home to major fantasy film productions.

This mixed-methods study done by [Prof Nigel Morgan](#) and colleagues concludes that folklore and fantasy have untapped potential for Wales and similar destinations.

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## LEVERAGING FOLKLORE AND FANTASY TO PROMOTE TOURISM DESTINATIONS: THE UNTAPPED POTENTIAL OF WALES

Prof Nigel Morgan

Many destinations market themselves as the birthplace or setting of famous myths and legends, many of which continue to influence literature, film and video games, sparking their audiences' curiosity to visit these locations. Wales is traditionally the birthplace of the magician Merlin (Myrddin), home of King Arthur and the Lady of the Lake and its Celtic language inspired J.R. Tolkien's Elvish language of Lord of the Rings and The Hobbit. As a major media centre, Wales is also home to well-known fantasy productions, including A Discovery of Witches, His Dark Materials, and Willow.

Together these legends and fantasy films offer tourism opportunities but Visit Wales makes little direct marketing capital of them.

This study sprang from suggestions proposed within the research team at a 2022 UK Parliamentary Committee Inquiry into Visit Wales's international marketing that Wales could better capitalize on its folklore.

An online survey tested the viability of a differentiation strategy for Visit Wales incorporating folklore and, having established its potential, a co-design workshop was held with 36 tourism and creative sector stakeholders to identify opportunities and challenges. We conclude that there are untapped opportunities for this folklore-rich but resource-constrained small destination, insights that have relevance elsewhere.

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**Tourists are fascinated with myths and legends and countless destinations market themselves as the setting of famous stories but there remain untapped marketing opportunities, especially for small destinations with globally-known legends**

Yen, D., Jang, J., Wei, L., Morgan, N. & Pritchard, A. (2023). Leveraging Legends to Promote Destinations: The Case of Visit Wales, *Journal of Policy in Tourism, Leisure & Events*.

Link: [bit.ly/3ZBeNER](https://bit.ly/3ZBeNER)