

Access all areas – Cadw announce free entry on St David's day

Sites including Caernarfon, Caerphilly and Kidwelly castles will be opening their doors to visitors without charge as part of Wales's celebrations of its patron saint, believed to have died on 1 March 589.

Free entry to its sites on St David's Day is part of Cadw, the Welsh Government's historic environment service's continued efforts to enhance, expand and introduce new schemes and initiatives aimed at generating an interest, encouraging participation and improving access to Wales's heritage sites.

Schemes aimed at widening access to Cadw's heritage sites include:

- Free, educational visits – Schools, home educators and other qualifying learning groups can apply for facilitated or un-facilitated visits to a number of Cadw sites free of charge.
- Fostering families scheme – A partnership with Action for Children, foster children and the families who care for them can visit all historic monuments in Cadw's care free of charge by signing up to the Action for Children scheme. We also accept Maxcard holders.
- Timebanking scheme – A partnership with Spice Time Credit Network and Timebank UK, this scheme enables volunteers registered for these programmes, who work in support of their local communities, to 'spend' credits earned through time giving on visits to all monuments in Cadw's care.
- Cadw Rewards Scheme – Free, self-led supported visits to organisations working with families and individuals with complex needs are offered. This includes groups such as Local Authority family services teams, for individuals, families and/or groups working towards improving their circumstances; Rehabilitation charities, such as MIND and those supporting Dementia; Agencies involved in rehabilitation following drug and alcohol dependency; and Agencies supporting Back to Work initiatives
- Cadw Monument Pass – A new pass which will offer holders repeat access to a site of their choice. The pass is part of an expansion to its membership product offer, in an aim to cater for a range of visitors' requirements, and a cost will apply. Applications for the pass can be made via the Cadw website, where full terms and conditions are also available.

Disabled visitors and their carers, children under 5, visitors to Open Doors

events and community education and youth groups also enjoy free access to Cadw sites. Full details of all schemes are available on the Cadw website.

In addition to introducing schemes to widen access to heritage sites, investment has also been made to improve physical access at a number of Cadw sites. Over recent years bridges have been installed at Caernarfon and Harlech castles, both part of a World Heritage Site, offering an alternative to the previous staircase leading up to the entrance of both monuments, to improve accessibility to the sites. More recently a new lift has been installed at Criccieth Castle, offering more visitors the opportunity to view the interpretation and exhibitions at the new and enhanced visitor centre.

Lord Elis-Thomas said:

“Our patron saint was famous for advocating doing the little things. Opening our sites free of charge on March 1 serves both as a small thank you to those who have contributed to record visitor numbers over recent years, whilst providing others with an insight into what our majestic Cadw sites have to offer.

“Making sites as accessible and attractive to as many people as possible has been a real priority for Cadw, and with so many sites having recently taken great strides in achieving this.

“From Criccieth Castle to Castell Coch, I’ve had the enormous pleasure of seeing first hand improvements ranging from new visitor centres and vantage points to renovations, improved accessibility and cutting-edge displays – all delivered without detracting from the brilliance of the original buildings. We are so fortunate in Wales to have such a truly unique, world class offering and I’m pleased to see new programmes and initiatives being introduced to compliment this, encouraging yet more people to enjoy, understand and learn about Welsh history.

“Our heritage and our culture belong to us all and I look forward to joining people from across Wales in celebrating it, both on St David’s day and beyond.”

Cadw is the Welsh Government’s historic environment service working for an accessible and well-protected historic environment. For more information, please go to [Cadw’s website](#) (external link).