

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).

[Recruitment events to identify skills](#)

talent for over 100 new vacancies coming to South East Wales

The establishment of this new £30m centre, which is receiving support from the Welsh Government, was announced by the First Minister last July and is expected to create 300 highly skilled and well paid jobs. These recruitment events are part of a local employment drive to help fill the first tranche of vacancies being created.

Supported by the Welsh Government, Coleg Gwent, Newport Job Centre, Careers Wales, and the Career Transition Partnership, the initial three CAF recruitment open days are being held as follows and people are being encouraged to go along:

- 1 March 2018 – Coleg Gwent (City of Newport Campus): 12:00pm – 7:00pm
- 7 March 2018 – Newport Job Centre (Charles Street): 10:00am – 1:00pm
- 8 March 2018 – Careers Wales, Ystrad Mynach (Sue Noake Leisure Centre) 10:00am-2:30pm

The new assembly hub is being designed so that CAF can build a range of different trains, including diesel multiple units (DMUs), electric multiple units (EMUs), trams and high speed trains. The employment opportunities are wide ranging – from technicians, engineers and logistics specialists, through to production and testing operatives, to communications, payroll, finance, logistics and purchasing personnel.

Welsh Language and Lifelong Learning Minister, Eluned Morgan said: “That Newport has been able to secure this new facility, against stiff competition from more than 100 other sites across the UK, is a major coup for the Welsh economy. In addition to bolstering our already impressive manufacturing sector, the job opportunities on offer present a massive boost to the local economy and I would encourage as many people as possible to attend these recruitment events because the scope of vacancies available is wide ranging.”

Richard Garner, CAF’s UK Director, said: “As a dynamic, people-focused and fast growing rolling stock business, we pride ourselves on sourcing the best talent and will invest in developing our people to maintain the high level of expertise and professionalism”.

“We firmly believe our people are our strength and everyone working for CAF plays a vital part in the success of the company. We are on the look-out for talented people to join our team and welcome applications from keen, motivated and enthusiastic individuals who relish responsibility and are looking for an exciting, challenging and rewarding career. In return for your hard work and commitment, you can expect to join a global brand at an exciting time in our journey and the chance to develop your skills further in a supportive and collaborative working environment.”

The new facility, which will be the first of its type in Wales, will enable

the Company to assemble, test and commission new vehicles and will have capacity to undertake future manufacturing projects as well as maintenance and servicing activities.

For more information about the recruitment events please email careers@cafrail.co.uk

[NHS Wales responds to busiest January on record](#)

NHS Wales Chief Executive, Andrew Goodall, said:

“Our latest figures show that last month was the busiest ever January on record for our A&E Departments. A&E attendance by those aged 85 and over, was the second highest ever for any month on record. Flu has also had an impact on capacity across our system with the highest rates for six years.

During this busy time, our NHS and social care staff have continued to deliver emergency and planned care with compassion and professionalism. I would like to thank them for their exceptional commitment and hard work during this extremely challenging period.

Despite the increased workload, their second highest month of activity on record, the Welsh ambulance service maintained its record of meeting the national target for responding to red calls in every month since the new response model began.

We have worked closely with health boards and partners to develop plans for the winter period, and invested an extra £60m to deliver emergency care and ensure planned care can continue. Despite increased pressure, the number of people having to wait more than 36 weeks for treatment actually decreased at the end of December and we expect to see reductions in waiting times up to the end of March. More cancer patients were treated within the target time in January to December 2017 than in any previous year.

We continue to invest in social services to support our healthcare system and despite the exceptional demand the numbers of Delayed Transfers of Care were the third lowest December on record. This month, the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Services announced an additional £10m for social services to support people in their homes and communities and relieve pressure on the NHS.

We will continue to respond to areas of performance that need to be

improved but despite record levels of demand on service, our staff have provided a resilient and professional response to support patients this winter.”

[Finance Secretary meets his Irish counterpart to discuss Ireland/Wales trade links post-Brexit](#)

The 2014-2020 Ireland/Wales programme is providing €100m (with €79m coming from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) to support collaborative projects in the areas of innovation, adaptation to climate change and tourism, heritage and culture across the Irish Sea.

For more than 20 years EU funding has successfully fostered partnerships across the Irish Sea, to address economic and environmental challenges and to support sustainable development.

The Welsh Government is now looking to develop a successor programme of activity with the Irish government beyond 2020 as outlined in its policy paper “Regional Investment in Wales after Brexit”.

Mark Drakeford said:

“We highly value our relationship with Ireland and we are committed to deepening our engagement outside the EU given the close bond, common values, trade and cultural links between the 2 nations.

“As an outward facing nation, we want to maintain and build on our international networks, including through continued participation in co-operation programmes. We place great value on the ETC programmes, including our cross-border programme with our nearest neighbours.

“They provide the means to find real solutions to shared challenges which transcend borders. We must ensure that we do not lose, but rather sustain, the excellent and creative partnerships which have been built up across the maritime border with Ireland.”

Following talks with his Irish counterpart, the Cabinet Secretary will visit University College Dublin where he will meet representatives of a number of organisations that have benefitted from the Ireland/Wales programme including:

- Acclimatize – a project led by University College Dublin in partnership with Aberystwyth University which aims to combat the effects of pollution on bathing waters, helping to boost tourism and support marine activities
 - Ecostructures – a project led by Aberystwyth University, in collaboration with University College Dublin, Bangor University, University College Cork and Swansea University which is developing new methods of enhancing the quality of coastal structures, including sea-walls and tidal lagoons, through more ecologically-sensitive design
 - CALIN (Celtic Advanced Life Sciences Innovation Network) – a project delivering a pan-Ireland-Wales platform for industry driven innovation in the area of Nanohealth via a collaboration between Swansea, Cardiff and Bangor Universities in Wales and UCD, Dublin City University, Trinity, Cork (Tyndall) and Galway Universities in Ireland.
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75% of alcohol in Wales is drunk by just over a fifth of the population – new report

Within this – the 3% of the population who are harmful drinkers, account for 27% of all alcohol consumed.

In October 2017, the Welsh Government unveiled a new Bill that will, if passed by the National Assembly for Wales, introduce a minimum price for the sale of alcohol. The Bill is designed to reduce hazardous and harmful drinking in Wales.

The report published today by the Sheffield Alcohol Research Group at the University of Sheffield concludes the greatest impact of a minimum unit price would be on the most deprived harmful drinkers – those groups at greatest risk of experiencing harm due to their drinking.

The report reveals the population of Wales buys 50% of its alcohol for less than 55p per unit, 37% for less than 50p per unit and 27% for less than 45p per unit. It finds heavier drinkers are more likely to buy alcohol sold below these thresholds.

The Sheffield Alcohol Research Group at the University of Sheffield were commissioned by the Welsh Government in June 2017 to update the 2014 model-based appraisal of the likely impact of a range of minimum unit pricing policies in Wales.

The research also shows:

- Moderate drinkers consume an average of 211 units of alcohol per year

compared to 1,236 for hazardous drinkers and 3,924 for harmful drinkers.

- Harmful drinkers spend an average £2,882 a year on alcohol compared to £1,209 for hazardous drinkers and £276 for moderate drinkers.
- Alcohol-attributable deaths and hospital admissions are concentrated in hazardous and particularly harmful drinkers who are more deprived.

Health Secretary, Vaughan Gething said:

“People who drink alcohol at hazardous and harmful levels drink 75% of the alcohol consumed in Wales. The introduction of a minimum unit price would be effective in reducing alcohol consumption among these groups, as well as reducing the number of alcohol-related deaths and hospitalisations.

“The report shows the greatest impact of a minimum unit price would be on the most deprived harmful drinkers, while moderate drinkers would experience only small impacts on their alcohol consumption and spending. This is because moderate drinkers tend to buy alcohol which would be subject to little or no increase in price under the policy.

“If passed, this law will potentially save lives.”