

The epic story continues – Harlech Fire and Sea Festival gets underway

On Sunday, visitors to the festival will learn more about the legend of Meirion and his struggle to harness the power of the magical Harlech Torc. The journey will take them to Harlech beach, with a re-enactment of the Harlech Torc washing up onto the shore and taken up to the castle. As dusk falls, those attending will be invited to bring a picnic and barbecue and stay on the beach for an evening campfire, which will be lit and attended by the Knights of Ardudwy. Joining the campfire session will be professional Welsh musicians, singers and fire dancers. Narrator Siân Miriam will tell the tale of Meirion, the Morfeirch and the Harlech Torc with the help of renowned puppeteer, Owen Davies.

Just ahead of the second Harlech Fire and Sea Festival, the Minister for Culture, Tourism and Sport, Lord Dafydd Elis-Thomas will formally launch the Harlech Torc at the visitors centre, Harlech Castle on Friday, 25th May.

Also attending will be Andrew Coomber, the silversmith commissioned to design and make the new Harlech Torc by Harlech Tourism Association. The new Torc is made from five metres of silver, gilded with gold and enamel. The ends are sculpted with the head of Meirion and a Morfeirch (seahorse).

The original Harlech Torc dates to c.1300-1150 BC during what is referred to as the Penard phase of the Middle Bronze Age. Made from four meters of gold, it is a flange-twisted torc of Tara type. The torc was found in a garden near Harlech Castle in 1692. You can see it today at St. Fagans National Museum of History, Cardiff.

Lord Elis-Thomas, said:

“This festival is an excellent way of showing the wealth of stories, myths and legends we have in Wales – and sharing them in an innovative way with our visitors and local people while also celebrating Wales’ fantastic coastline.

With Harlech Castle as a backdrop to the celebrations, this promises to be a legendary event and I’m pleased that Visit Wales and Cadw has been able to support the series of events.

I look forward to unveiling the Harlech Torc, which will be an added attraction for the Castle and visitor centre – following investment and since its opening, we’ve seen a significant increase of visitors 13% on the previous year to Harlech Castle.”

Harlech Tourism Association were recipients of Visit Wales Tourism Product Innovation Fund (TPIF) in support of Wales’ themed years.

Visitors will be able to request to wear the new Torc for a photograph when staff and volunteers are available to assist.