Copper Kingdom Project strikes gold

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Today the Heritage Minister, Alun Ffred Jones visited Amlwch, to meet with representatives from the Amlwch Industrial Heritage Trust who now hope to create a major attraction and facility based on this heritage.

Cadw, the Welsh Assembly Government historic environment service, has supported the ‘Copper Kingdom’ project through its £19m European funded Heritage Tourism Project backed by £8.5m from the European Regional Development Fund. This is part of a wider project on Anglesey under the banner of Mona Antiqua which represents a total investment for Anglesey of £900,000 with £355,000 of that total being invested in the Copper Kingdom Project.

The Heritage Minister, said: “I’m delighted to meet with the Amlwch Industrial Heritage Trust today and to learn more about these exciting plans for the area. The industrial heritage of Anglesey has often been overlooked, this project will enable the area to tell the story of Amlwch’s Copper Mining heritage and promote the internationally significant archaeology of Parys Mountain. These developments will increase visitor numbers significantly and will encourage visitors to spend more money and make a greater contribution to the economic development in the area.”

The project has also been supported by a £497,000 Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) grant. Dei Tomos, member of HLF’s Committee for Wales, said: “The Amlwch mines were once the world's most important producers of copper and had a significant impact on the landscape and people of Anglesey. Our investment will help conserve the iconic features of the mining heritage on Parys Mountain and train volunteer guides to help locals and visitors get the most out of the site.

“The money will also fund training courses especially for young people to help create a local workforce skilled in conservation. This will help lead to future jobs in the area whilst creating a team of young people who are passionate about playing their part in taking their local heritage into the future.”

Major works can begin shortly both on the mountain and in Porth Amlwch. This new investment will under-pin the work already carried to by the local authority, to upgrade the square in Porth Amlwch and provide a location for coaches to unload and visitors to park their cars.

Trust Chairman Gareth Wyn Jones is proud of the achievements of the Trust over the last five years in influencing and providing a vision for the project and achieving its realisation. He said: "The Trust has been hugely successful in obtaining the funding to take this project forward, but realises that without the efforts of our colleagues in both Menter Mon and Isle of Anglesey County Council the project could not have achieved its objectives; we are immensely grateful to them. We look forward to seeing the new facilities opened and we continue with our endeavours to secure the area’s heritage."

“We wish to hear from members of the local community about their family recollections of the mining at Parys Mountain so that they may contribute to the emerging proposals for the mining museum heritage centre. It is key to the project that local people are proud to share their knowledge and heritage with others.”

The Trust has recently employed Alison Price as the Heritage Development Officer for the project. Over the coming months there will be a variety of events and opportunities to participate in this exciting project. During Adult Learners Week 14th – 20th May 2011 there will be activities based at the Memorial Hall that will give a greater insight to the aims

of the project. One of the first activities is called AIM which stands for ‘Amlwch i mi’ and will give participants the chance to share their knowledge of Amlwch heritage and to learn from others.

Notes to editors

Components of Project at Porth Amlwch
Copper bins: local enterprise agency Menter Mon, have successfully applied for funding from WAG,WEFO, Isle of Anglesey County Council and Cadw in order to create an iconic heritage centre in the former Copper Bins on the quay side. The building has been designed by the acclaimed Donald Insall Architectural practice based at Conwy under the direction of Elinor Gray Williams.

It is envisaged that the construction work on the heritage centre will commence in April and that the new centre and enhanced visitor facilities will be opened for the 2012 visitor season.

Sail loft: The Trust will keep open the existing facilities at the Sail Loft for the coming summer season and disruption from the proposed work will be kept to a minimum. In the following season Menter Mon and the County Council will oversee the redevelopment of the Sail loft with enhanced catering facilities and improved disabled access.

Components of the Project on Parys Mountain
A major grant from The Heritage Lottery Fund will be harnessed to conserve significant buildings at Parys Mountain, such as the iconic summit windmill and Cornish Beam Engine House. The restored structures will be conserved for future generations and interpreted for the public. Access on the mountain’s heritage trail will be improved in the process by providing a shorter and spectacular route. The project will offer significant levels of participation from among the town’s community in hands-on conservation and archaeological projects and acquiring heritage related skills. The project will involve local training Agency, Parys Training, and utilise the educational expertise of Coleg Menai and Bangor University.