Lord Rhys' original Eisteddfod recreated to



Castell Aberteifi, Ceredigion Louise Noakes

The first concert to be staged on the lawns of the recently opened castle, *Beirdd a Chantorion* has brought together west Wales' finest poets and musicians, marking the completion of the 900 year-old site's new dedicated Eisteddfod exhibition.

Earlier in the day, the castle's funders were joined by the First Minister of Wales, Carwyn Jones, for their first tour of the site since the £12m restoration project ended in April.

The castle's restoration was made possible thanks to a £6.2m grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) and £4.3m from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) through Welsh Government.

Further funding was received through a Communities Asset Transfer grant of nearly £800,000, with support from Cadw – the Welsh Government's historic environment service, Big Lottery Fund, The UK Association of Preservation Trusts, The Architectural Heritage Fund, Ceredigion County Council, Cardigan Town Council and The Prince's Regeneration Trust.

Cris Tomos, Castle Director, said: "2015 is truly a year of celebration for Cardigan Castle, and *Beirdd a Chantorion* was the perfect way to mark the completion of the world's first dedicated Eisteddfod exhibition and commemorate the rebirth

of this amazing site."

First Minister of Wales Carwyn Jones said: "Cardigan Castle is one of Wales's most iconic castles due to its history, setting and importance to the local community and more widely to Wales. I am delighted that the Welsh Government, through Cadw, has provided support and funding to the Cadwgan Trust on its rewarding journey in restoring and conserving the castle. It is also pleasing that EU funds of over £4million have helped towards the development of a sustainable heritage attraction and multi-functional cultural, community and learning resource which will attract visitors, create jobs and bring wider economic benefit to the town and surrounding area. I wish Cardigan Castle and all those associated with it every success for the future."

Ted Sangster, Interim Chair of the Heritage Lottery Fund Committee for Wales, said: "We're thrilled to finally see this historic Welsh building opening its doors to the public once again, marking a new chapter in its colourful history.

"Thanks to National Lottery players, we have supported this project as part of our ongoing investment in heritage based tourism for the benefit of local people and Wales' economy. This project really demonstrates the value of investing in heritage and provides an opportunity for us all to find out more about our Welsh heritage, creates new opportunities for people to volunteer and learn new skills and at the same time, brings investment into the local economy. We are thrilled to see years of hard work come to fruition."

Ros Kerslake, Chief Executive of The Prince's Regeneration Trust (PRT), added: "We are delighted that Cardigan Castle is finally opening its doors to the public following a successful restoration that has been more than 15 years in the making.

"This has been one of Wales' most important heritage regeneration projects and we feel very privileged that we played a part in helping it to bring it to fruition.

"PRT has worked with Ceredigion County Council and the Cadwgan Building Preservation Trust on the project since 2004. We contributed very significant support which has helped deliver their vision of the castle becoming a major visitor destination that could transform the town's economy.

"The castle opened in April, and we are thrilled that this ambition is well on its way to becoming a reality."

Notes to editors

The concert

Acclaimed harpist, Claire Jones, was joined by mezzo-soprano, Eirlys Myfanwy Davies and baritone, Deiniol Wyn Rhys.

Local choirs also took to the stage, performing new versions of well-known songs, led by the event's musical director, Rhys Taylor.

Reigning winner of the National Eisteddfod Chair and renowned Cardigan-born poet, Ceri Wyn Jones, teamed up with fellow poets Tudur Dylan and Emyr Davies, and provided the audience with witty entertainment between the musical acts.

Ceri said: "As a local lad, I have great admiration for those who have worked so hard work to raise Cardigan Castle from its own ashes. And to get the opportunity to perform last night was a matter of no little pride. I hope the concert demonstrated the castle's long-term commitment to the Welsh language and its rich, contemporary and exciting

culture.”

About Cadwgan Building Preservation Trust (CBPT)

CBPT originally formed in 1999, will restore Cardigan Castle to its former glory, thanks to partner funding and the support of the local community.

The trust has received £6.2m from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) and £4.3m from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) through Welsh Government, for the restoration of Cardigan Castle, while creating new, sustainable uses for the historic buildings.

Further funding was received through a Communities Asset Transfer grant of nearly £800,000, with support from the Welsh Government, Cadw, Big Lottery Fund, The UK Association of Preservation Trusts, The Architectural Heritage Fund, Ceredigion County Council, Cardigan Town Council and The Prince’s Regeneration Trust.

About The Prince’s Regeneration Trust:

The Prince’s Regeneration Trust (PRT) is a world-leading regeneration charity working in hard hit areas of the UK to rescue and re-use local buildings in order to transform lives.

Over the past 18 years they have worked on projects saving 1.3million square feet of buildings - enough to fill 30 football pitches - and have created 1,650 jobs.

PRT is committed to:

- focusing on the most deprived communities in the UK, on buildings where other efforts have failed and on projects that are far too complex for communities to undertake themselves
- calling on communities to apply to us for expertise to get regeneration underway
- running a national roadshow touring 36 locations over three years that will give world-class advice and practical guidance for communities who want to rescue buildings themselves

PRT is leading on the development of social investment in regeneration and will provide hard evidence of the effect of their work in areas like training for young people, welfare of elderly people and new business start-ups.

All of the charity’s work draws upon PRT’s unique ‘knowledge bank’ made up of their own team of experts working in partnership with other leading specialists.

Find out more about PRT today by going to The Prince's Regeneration Trust website or their Facebook page or follow them on Twitter: @PrincesRegen.

Further information

For media queries please contact Jamie Robins or Sophie Harris at Equinox Communications on 02920 764 100, email: cardigan@equinoxcommunications.co.uk.