Supporting Welsh heritage at The National



A handcrafted banner. Credit: Aled Llywelyn.

This summer our Wales team are heading to Llantwd, Sir Benfro (Pembrokeshire) to connect with communities and share the work we support at The National Eisteddfod.

What is the Eisteddfod?

It’s Europe’s largest cultural festival and proudly, uniquely Welsh. Every year it changes location as it celebrates Welsh language, heritage and traditions.

The word ‘Eisteddfod’ means ‘seating place’, and one of the festival’s most iconic moments is the annual awarding of the Bard’s Chair to a Welsh poet – a tradition that goes back to the 12th century.

But it’s not just a week-long event. The Eisteddfod brings people together all year through music, poetry, art and community gatherings. It’s open to everyone and blends ancient customs with modern Welsh culture, from 18th-century ceremonies to today’s live performances.

Celebrating 850 years of history and culture

The first recorded Eisteddfod was held by Lord Rhys ap Gruffydd at Cardigan Castle in 1176.

Back in 2015 the castle was saved thanks to National Lottery players and this year we awarded Eisteddfod Genedlaethol Cymru £238,100 to tell the festival's 850-year story.

Prosiect 1176 is exploring the significance of the original Eisteddfod through performance, creativity and community participation. Bringing people together to learn about this important chapter in Wales' culture heritage will help it continue to inspire future generations.

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Lord Rhys has received a warm welcome along the route. Credit: Aled Llywelyn.

Led by Small World Theatre, the pilgrimage began at St Davids Cathedral and travelled through communities including Cenarth, Newcastle Emlyn, Talgarreg, Llangrannog and Maenclochog. Each location hosted performances celebrating local heritage and the enduring legacy of the first Eisteddfod.

It concluded with the Lord Rhys' return to Cardigan Castle for a full day of performance, music, poetry and family activities.

Now the puppet is making its way to the Eisteddfod Maes where it will share its story with thousands of attendees between 1–8 August 2026.

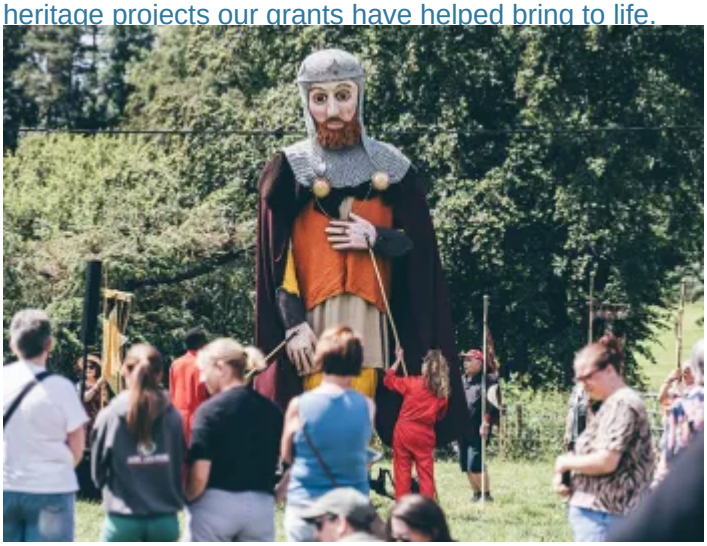
Meet the Heritage Fund

We'll also be joining the Eisteddfod celebrations in Llantwd.

Across the week we'll be sharing available funding opportunities and connecting with organisations and communities we've supported over the years including:

- Amgueddfa Lechi
- Broadcast Archive
- Capeli Cymru
- Llais Yr Afon

Since 1994 we've awarded over £600m of National Lottery and other funding to 3,600 projects in Wales. Discover more heritage projects our grants have helped bring to life.



A five-metre-tall puppet of Lord Rhys ap Gruffydd greets spectators as part of Prosiect 1176's celebration of the first Eisteddfod. Credit: Aled Llywelyn.







Credit: Carrie Davenport / Lyric Theatre.

Cultures and memories