

Historic environment

Introduction

The historic environment has an important role to play as a catalyst to economic and social regeneration. It is a significant employer and sustains many jobs through the purchase of goods and services as well as the giving of grants. The historic environment is also a major factor in Wales's tourism appeal, with visiting historic attractions cited as one of the main reasons to visit the country. The Welsh Assembly Government published its first stocktake of the state of Welsh heritage on 16 March 2007ⁱ.

Wales has:

- ◆ around 30,000 listed buildings of architectural or historic interest, 4,000 scheduled monuments, and over 500 conservation areas;
- ◆ two designated world heritage sites: The Castles and Town Walls of King Edward in Gwynedd, and Blaenavon Industrial Landscape. The site of the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and associated canal system has been put forward as one of the UK's three nominated World Heritage Sites for 2007–09.
- ◆ In 2005–06 about 100,000 people in Wales were employed in tourism, around 10% of Wales's total workforce. Tourism is worth £3 billion a year to Wales.

The Welsh Assembly Government supports the historic environment through its Cadw division and the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales (RCAHMW).

Cadw is a Welsh word meaning 'to keep' and is the Assembly Government's historic environment service. The service was created in 1984 and has been a division of the Welsh Assembly Government since July 2005. Cadw's aim is to promote the conservation and appreciation of Wales' historic environment by providing advice, grants and visitor attractions.

RCAHMW surveys, interprets and records the built heritage of Wales and makes information available to the public. It is an Assembly Sponsored Public Body (ASPB), sponsored by Cadw. It's yearly Remit Letterⁱⁱ from the Welsh Assembly Government sets out the role of the Royal Commission in relation to the strategic agenda of the Welsh Assembly Government.

The Welsh Assembly Government is also advised by two panels of experts:

- ◆ The Ancient Monuments Advisory Board (AMAB), a panel of 9 experts that advises the Welsh Assembly Government on its responsibilities for ancient monuments - whether in State care or private ownership.
- ◆ The Historic Buildings Advisory Council (HBAC) advises the Welsh Assembly Government on its responsibilities for historic buildings.

Together, these four organizations are known as Hanesyddol Cymru/Historic Wales.

Overview of current statutory powers of the Assembly

"Ancient monuments and historic buildings" is Field 2 of Schedule 5 of the *Government of Wales Act 2006*. This means that the National Assembly for Wales can seek Measure-making powers over cultural matters through Legislative Competence Orders.

The following secondary legislation responsibilities of the Second Assembly will transfer to Welsh Ministers in the Third Assembly:

- ◆ Protection (including listing) of ancient monuments and historic buildings in Wales, and related matters, and their promotion as tourist attractions.

Forthcoming EU and UK primary legislation

- ◆ The UK Government's Heritage Protection White Paper *Heritage Protection for the 21st Century* was published on 8 March 2007ⁱⁱⁱ.

EU policy

The European Union aims to preserve and support Europe's cultural diversity and to help make it accessible to others.

- ◆ The Communication on Culture focuses on the economy of culture, intercultural dialogue, digitisation of cultural heritage and on how arts and culture can help to connect the citizens and the EU.

Key Assembly Government strategy documents and action plans from the Second Assembly:

The Environment Strategy for Wales^{iv} is the Assembly Government's long term strategy for the environment of Wales. One of its five main environmental themes covers landscapes and seascapes and their historic component.

Legacy issues from the Second Assembly

The Culture, Welsh Language and Sport Committee's legacy paper^v highlighted the following issues relating to ancient monuments and historic buildings for the attention of the Third Assembly:

- ◆ The UK Government's Historic Environment White Paper.
- ◆ Cultural tourism.

Useful links

1. The section of the Welsh Assembly Government website covering the Historic Environment:
<http://new.wales.gov.uk/topics/cultureandsport/historic/?lang=en>
2. Cadw:
<http://www.cadw.wales.gov.uk/>
3. The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales (RCAHMMW):<http://www.rcahmmw.org.uk/>
4. Historic Buildings Advisory Council for Wales (HBAC):
<http://www.cadw.wales.gov.uk/default.asp?id=118&navId=12&parentId=12>
5. Ancient Monuments Advisory Board (AMAB):
<http://www.cadw.wales.gov.uk/default.asp?id=117>

Further information

For further information on any aspect of the historic environment, please contact:

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ⁱ Welsh Assembly Government, 16 March 2007, *The Welsh Historic Environment: Position Statement 2006*
http://www.cadw.wales.gov.uk/upload/resourcepool/Position_Statement9954.pdf

ⁱⁱ Welsh Assembly Government, 18 March 2007, *RCAHMMW Remit Letter*
<http://new.wales.gov.uk/about/departments/dlhc/localgovculturepubs/CSPublications/RCAHMMRemit0708?lang=en>

ⁱⁱⁱ UK Government, 8 March 2007, **Heritage Protection for the 21st Century - White Paper**
http://www.culture.gov.uk/Reference_library/Consultations/2007_current_consultations/hpr_whitepaper07.htm

^{iv} Welsh Assembly Government, 17 May 2006, Environment Strategy for Wales
<http://new.wales.gov.uk/956559/910682/environment-strategy?lang=en>

^v 14 March 2007, Culture, Welsh Language and Sport Committee, CWLS (2) 04-07 (p3)