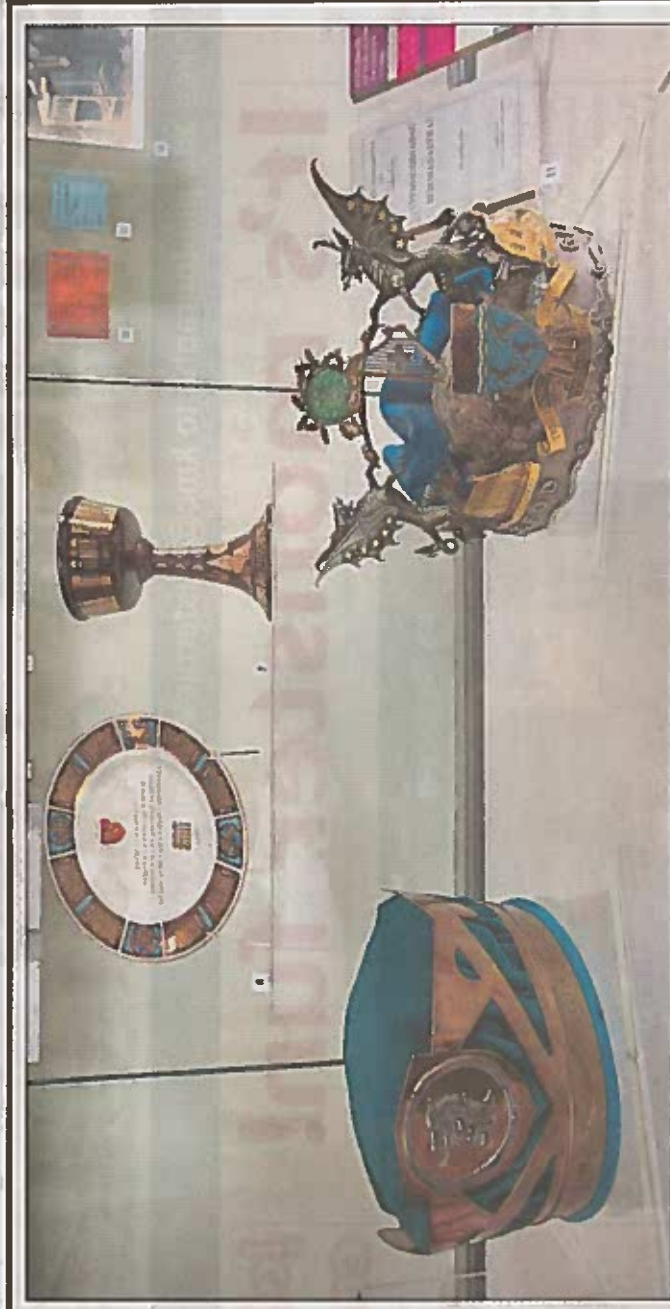


CARDIGAN CASTLE: New era for historic site as castle finally opens its gates to the public



Among the displays are items celebrating the Eisteddfod PIC. Owen Howells

Nine hundred years of history

DESPITE its name, Cardigan Castle has seen many developments since its medieval beginnings, so is no longer a typical 'castle'.

Visitors to the site today will see a wide-range of architecture and experience many different historic eras, from its fortified walls to its Regency-style gardens, and Victorian plant species to its stunning Georgian mansion.

The Castle Green House, home to the site's last private owner, Miss Wood, will host three permanent exhibitions telling the story of the Castle and the people that lived there.

The Eisteddfod Exhibition - believed to be the world's first permanent chronicle of the cultural event - will celebrate the Castle's claim to fame as the birthplace of the Eisteddfod.

Visitors can learn about the iconic tradition of Eisteddfodau in Wales and why the Castle's owner, Lord Rhys, a Prince of Wales, hosted the first event in 1176.

A second exhibition will pay homage to the remarkable story of the last private owner and her struggles to remain in the Castle she loved.

The Barbara Wood Exhibition uses audio and visual display,

artefacts and possessions from Miss Wood's former home to help bring her story to life.

Visitors can also explore The Cardigan Castle Story, narrated by Welsh actor and Hollywood star, Matthew Rhys. Located in the medieval North Tower, an audiovisual display will take visitors from the Castle's origins to present day.

A temporary exhibition space, housed in Castle Green House's former Drawing Room, will also be used throughout the year to showcase up-and-coming talent.

Local historian and CBPT trustee, Glen Johnson, said: "These exhibitions are truly unique as they capture not only the history of the site, but share the stories and character of the people that lived there."

During work on site, a total of 9,500 archaeological artefacts were discovered, including medieval stone structures and a new part of the castle dating back to the 1170s.

Also found was an underground room, a segment of dolphin skull, a medieval arrow head and pottery, plus more recent items such as a NAAFI mug from the Second World War.

Some of the items found will be among those on display.