



The Black Book of Carmarthen will be on display in the town's St Peter's Church.

# Manuscript comes home 750 years after publication

THE oldest surviving Welsh manuscript will be available to see in its home town, more than 750 years after it was published.

A replica of The Black Book of Carmarthen, housed at The National Library of Wales in Aberystwyth, will be on view at St Peter's Church in Carmarthen next month.

Thought to have been compiled before 1250, the book is the earliest surviving text written completely in Welsh, and contains references to the medieval figures of King Arthur and Merlin.

It contains poetry written between the 9th and

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12th centuries and is kept under specifically controlled conditions to safeguard its ancient structure.

"We're really excited to have such a historic text on display in Carmarthen," said Jenny Fox, a member of The Friends of St Peter's Church. For anyone interested in the book's vast history, an expert will be on hand to answer people's questions and to enlighten them on its fascinating past."

The book made head-

lines across the country in 2015 when it was revealed to contain previously unseen material.

Thanks to high resolution photography and UV lighting, experts were able to uncover pictures and text that had been erased by a former owner of the book in the 16th century.

Invisible to the naked eye, ghostly faces were revealed on some of the pages, adding to the book's sense of mystique and legend.

Despite being regarded as one of the most important books in Wales, many people in Carmarthen have never laid eyes on

the historic text, and there have been continued calls over the years for the original manuscript to be kept permanently in the town.

"I've never even seen it," admitted Jenny, "and I know a lot of people who have never got round to going to see it in Aberystwyth, so the fact that a copy of it is going to be seen in its home town, more than 750 years after it was published here, is amazing."

The book will be on display at St Peter's Church during their Bosworth Day event on Saturday, August 19, between 10.30am and 3.30pm.