





Other side: Caernarfon Castle, overlooking the river Seiont, is distinguished by its angular towers and walls of colour-banded stone.

Above: Conservation work at the castle has included the stabilisation of the carved stone eagle, which gave the Eagle Tower its name.

Part 1: Description of the Site

Beaumaris Castle

B1.1 General Information

B1.1.1 Location

Country: Wales, United Kingdom

Local authority: Cyngor Sir Ynys Môn/Isle of Anglesey County Council

National grid reference SH607762: Longitude 4° 5' 19" W: Latitude 53° 15' 53" N.

B1.1.2 Summary Description

Beaumaris lies on the south-eastern coast of Ynys Môn/the island of Anglesey, close to the northern end of the Menai Strait and almost equidistant from Caernarfon and Conwy. The castle is at the northerly end of the town, approximately 165 yds (150m) from the sea. King Edward I established the castle and town in 1295 to extend his control over the new county of Anglesey and the Menai Strait that divides the island from the mainland.

B1.2 Cultural Information

B1.2.1 Archaeology

To a large extent the structure of the castle remains as it was constructed in 1295–1330. Domestic buildings within the inner ward have been removed; the eastern part of the moat has been filled in and the castle dock is no longer connected to the sea. The walls of the outer ward remain at their full height. The two gatehouses and the walls of the inner ward remain at the extent and height reached before construction ceased in 1330.

B1.2.2 History

Edward I may have chosen the site for the castle in August 1283 but an uprising of the Welsh population in 1294 precipitated its construction. Edward quelled the revolt by April 1295, removed the entire population of the important Welsh town of Llanfaes to a new settlement at Newborough, in the south of the island, and ordered the construction of his new castle.

From the outset the direction of the project was specifically entrusted to Master James of St George, already Master of the King's Works in Wales. Work proceeded rapidly — with over 2,000 workmen on the site — and, by February 1296, the walls of the inner ward were at least 20 feet (6m) high. However after 1298, when resources — including Master James — were diverted to Scotland, there was little more work done at Beaumaris for eight years.

In 1306 a new constable, John of Metfield, reported on the incomplete state of the castle. Master Nicholas de Derneford succeeded Master James and the inner and outer walls were raised to parapet level. The inner towers and gatehouses never reached their planned height. The Llanfaes Gate also remained unfinished but a barbican was added to strengthen the south gatehouse. Work ceased about 1330 and little apart from maintenance was done in the later Middle Ages.

The castle was besieged during the Glyn Dŵr Rebellion and it may have been in Welsh hands from 1403–5.

By 1609 the castle was officially classified as utterly decayed. It was a royalist base in the Civil War but surrendered to parliament in 1646. The castle passed into the ownership of the Bulkeley family in 1807.

In 1925 Sir Richard Williams-Bulkeley placed the castle in State care under a deed of guardianship. The Commissioners of Works (a predecessor of Cadw) re-excavated a large part of the moat and cleared the walls of encroaching vegetation. Conservation of the fabric has continued to the present day.

Although Edward intended from the outset to establish a borough adjacent to the castle, it was not provided with town walls initially. Permission for these was granted by 1414 after the reoccupation that followed the rebellion of 1403, but only one section, 45 feet (15m) long, remains — a scheduled ancient monument behind No 44 Church Street. The walls are not included in the World Heritage Site.

B1.2.3 Military Engineering and Architecture

The site chosen for Beaumaris Castle lacked the natural defences of Harlech or Conwy. On the other hand it had direct and level access from the sea and there were no physical features to constrain development. The site would allow the king and Master James of St George to plan the most fully developed concentric castle in Wales. In all there would be four lines of defence.

- The nearly square inner ward containing domestic buildings, which have been reduced to ground level, was surrounded by a curtain wall 15.5 feet (4.7m) thick, with a continuous internal wall passage. It incorporated two twin-towered gatehouses, four circular corner towers and two intermediate D-shaped towers. The curtain wall is 36 feet (11m) high but lacks the planned crenellations above the wall walk. All the towers would have been higher with circular turrets above their roofs. At the heart of the defensive plan were two gatehouses — one to the south and one to the north. These were intended to be larger versions of the great gatehouse at Harlech. At ground level were the main entrances to the castle, each accommodated in a passage between the twin towers. A succession of obstacles protected the gate passage — a pair of outward opening doors secured by a drawbar, two portcullises and a pair of doors opening inwards. Between each obstacle was a small space covered by arrowloops and murder holes, where anyone entering could be detained or attacked. The next space was larger and was supervised from porters' rooms on either side and covered by murder holes. These rooms in turn led to the right and left to two spiral staircases, set in their own towers, rising to the apartments above. Another pair of doors and a further portcullis protected the end of the passage into the inner ward. Only the towers to the north gatehouse approached their planned height of about 60 feet (18.3m) and the inner part of the south gatehouse never rose above foundation level. A barbican was added to the south gatehouse in or after 1306 to provide another hazard for any intruder.
- The outer ward is an encircling area of open ground about 60 feet (18.3m) wide, commanded from the battlements of the inner curtain wall.
- A lower and less massive curtain wall surrounds the outer ward. It is octagonal on plan with 12 round towers of different designs and spacing. There were to be two gatehouses, each

with twin towers. Their gate passages are offset from those in the inner gatehouses. The southern entrance, the Gate next the Sea was defended by a drawbridge and its gate passage had two murder slots and a pair of doors leading into the outer ward. The northern gatehouse, the Llanfaes Gate is so incomplete that it is difficult to tell what its final form would have been. It is likely that its towers would have guarded a gate passage similar to the Gate next the Sea, with similar defences.

- A water-filled moat about 70 feet (21m) wide surrounded the whole castle but part is now filled. The area enclosed by the moat was 127 yards by 119 yards (116m by 109m).

The different heights of the two curtain walls and the disposition of arrowloops were designed to provide fields of fire to command all the ground within crossbow range beyond the moat. Defenders on the inner curtain wall could also command any part of the outer curtain if it were lost to an enemy.

A tidal dock allowed ships of up to 40 tons to be unloaded within walls built out from the outer curtain wall and allowed the garrison to maintain the water level in the moat. It was protected on one side by Gunners Walk, a spur wall. Remains of foundations show that the town wall was intended to protect the other side of the dock. Gunners Walk also contained a corn mill that would have contributed to the castle's ability to withstand a prolonged siege.

However there is no trace of a well for drinking water within the castle or of a system for collecting rainwater. The way in which the garrison would have been provided with water remains to be discovered.

Beaumaris Castle demonstrated the state of the art of military engineering at the end of the 13th century. It also provided a base for the consolidation of English power in Anglesey and for the control of the Menai Strait. It was built at a time when most of Edward's aims in Gwynedd had been achieved and the castle was therefore never completed.

The architecture of the castle was designed to over-awe the Welsh people and re-assure the English settlers in the borough. In its incomplete state it is an impressive monument although, as it never reached its full height, it is not as splendid as originally intended.

The two inner gatehouses would have provided four self-contained apartments of similar design to the two at Harlech. Facing the inner ward, where defence was least critical, the range of arched windows to the first floor of the north gatehouse show the quality of architecture that was intended for both gatehouses. The vaulted chapel, housed in one of the D-towers, demonstrates a more delicate design. Practical ingenuity was demonstrated in the wall passages and the batteries of latrines within the inner curtain wall. In terms of residential arrangements, Beaumaris would have offered a wider range of accommodation for court requirements than any other castle in north Wales.

The quality of construction at Beaumaris is evidenced by the way in which the castle survived 400 years of neglect. The mass of the walls was built with Carboniferous Limestone from the Penmon area on Anglesey, roughly squared and mostly laid in courses. Quoins, lintels, patterning and the like were generally in sandstone, probably also from Penmon. A more compact limestone was used for the finer detail in the chapel.

B1.3 Environment

B1.3.1 Geology and Topography

Beaumaris Castle stands on a level, coastal plain close to sea level — the *beau mareys* or 'beautiful marsh' that gave the place its name. It is founded on boulder clay and is the only one of the castles in Gwynedd not built upon rock.

B1.3.2 Vegetation and Wildlife

The Isle of Anglesey County Council has published the Anglesey Landscape Strategy, which identifies the distinct landscape character of the coastal area adjoining the eastern Menai Strait, an area typified by the wooded flanks along the strait. Beaumaris lies towards the northern boundary of this area, where the land is lower and was originally coastal marshland.

The council published a Local Biodiversity Action Plan in 2002. This identifies wildlife habitats and species found in the area and, where appropriate, describes the protection that is provided.

Adjacent to Beaumaris Castle the Menai Strait below mean high water is a candidate Special Area of Conservation (cSAC). 'Y Fenai a Bae Conwy/Menai Strait and Conwy Bay cSAC' was selected for its marine and intertidal plants and animals. Immediately to the north-east of the castle the area between mean high and mean low water is designated as Glannau Penmon-Biwmares Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) for its intertidal and geomorphological features. None of the former marshland remains and a recreational area known as the Green now lies between the castle and the sea. The Menai Strait has been proposed as a Marine Nature Reserve.

The area of parkland north of the castle has been designated as Baron Hill Park SSSI for the lichens that grow on its mature trees. This parkland, in addition to being an important wildlife site, is an important feature in the landscape of the area, providing a pastoral setting for the castle.

B1.3.3 Historic Landscape

Beaumaris Castle adjoins the 18th-century deer park of Baron Hill and lies within a landscape of outstanding historic importance (*Register of Landscapes of Outstanding Historic Interest in Wales*: Penmon Area). The coastal plateau shows continuity of land use from the late prehistoric period and, by the late 13th century, Llanfaes was a flourishing town and port. The town was uninhabited following the removal of the population to Newborough.

The new, free borough of Beaumaris was established to the south of the castle. It became the principal port and distribution centre for north Wales until the 18th century. The rise of the Bulkeley family was marked by the enclosure of the deer park at Baron Hill. The principal landscape elements in the setting of the castle are the town, the park and the Green, laid out on former marshland.

B1.4 Interests

B1.4.1 Ownership and Responsibility for Care

The freehold of Beaumaris Castle belongs to Sir Richard Williams-Bulkeley of Baron Hill, Beaumaris. The castle is a scheduled ancient monument, a Grade I listed building and part of a World Heritage Site. The monument is mostly in the care of Cadw, an executive agency of the Welsh Assembly Government. The exception is the area of the unexcavated moat east of the castle. This is occupied by a public recreation ground and is the responsibility of Beaumaris Town Council.

Map 1
Anglesey, Caernarvonshire and Merioneth under Edward I

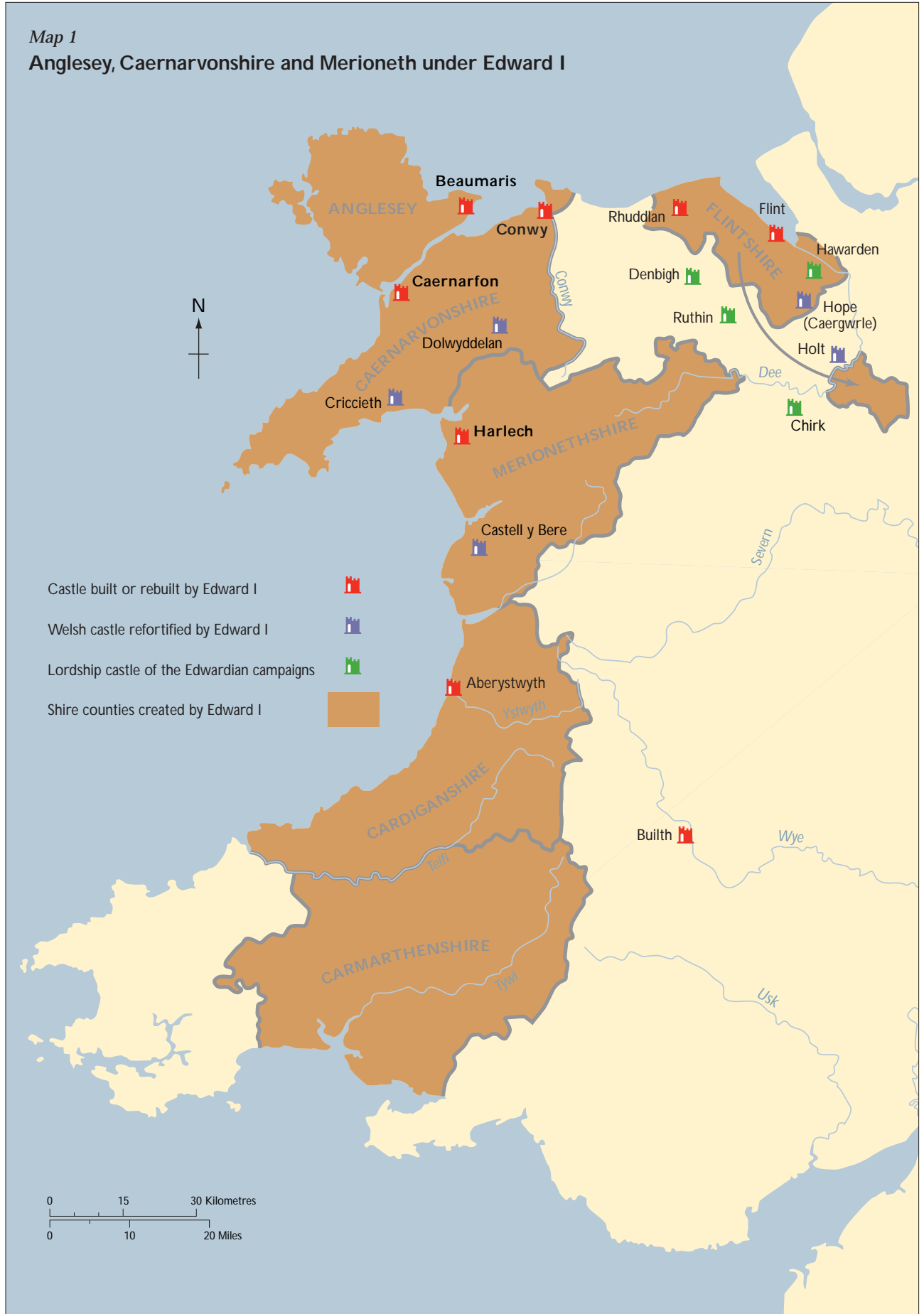
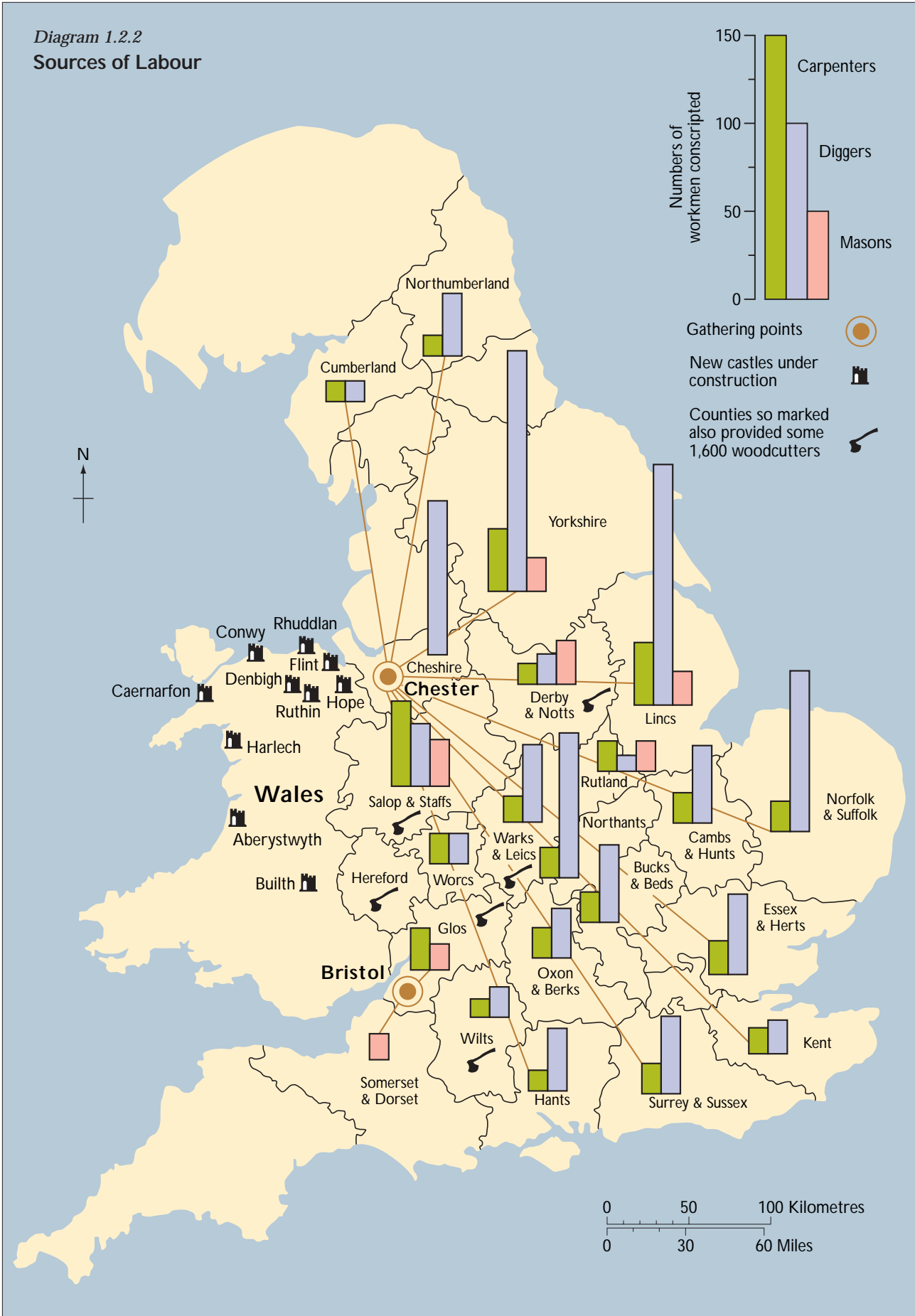


Diagram 1.2.2
Sources of Labour



Caernarfon Castle and Town Walls

CA1.1 General Information

CA1.1.1 Location

Country: Wales, United Kingdom

Local authority: Cyngor Gwynedd/Gwynedd Council

National grid reference SH477627 (Castle): Longitude 4° 16' 32" W; Latitude 53° 8' 21" N

CA1.1.2 Summary Description

Caernarfon Castle and the walled town are situated on a rocky outcrop between the mouths of two rivers, the Seiont and the Cadnant, on the Menai Strait. (The Cadnant is now concealed in a culvert.) King Edward I established the castle and town in 1283 to confirm his defeat of Llywelyn, prince of Wales, and conquest of Gwynedd. Caernarfon became the centre of government for north Wales and the county town for Carnarvonshire, one of the three new counties established by the English.

CA1.2 Cultural Information

CA1.2.1 Archaeology

Nothing remains of the motte-and-bailey castle at Caernarfon, begun about 1090 by the Normans, or of any buildings erected by the princes of Gwynedd between about 1115 and 1283.

The ground plan and most of the upstanding remains visible today are those of the castle begun in 1283 by Edward I. In the 19th century the stone steps and newels in several of the towers were renewed and battlements were restored. The Chamberlain Tower was restored, the top of the Well Tower completed and the roof and floors in the Queen's Tower were replaced. The remains of the earthen mound in the upper ward and buildings that had encroached on the Town Ditch were also removed.

Further work dates from 1908–13 when the Eagle, Black and Watch Towers were repaired and the roof and floors to the Queen's Tower again renewed.

The town walls and the ground plan of the walled town were also begun in 1283. The only major addition was the chapel of St Mary, built into the north-west corner of the town wall. However the East Gate (also known as the Exchequer Gate or Porth Mawr), the West Gate (or Water Gate or Porth yr Aur) and Tower 8 were altered to provide accommodation in later centuries. The town hall of Caernarfon was built over the East Gate in 1767 — but removed in the mid-20th century — and the gate arch was given its present form in 1833. Five openings were broken through the walls to accommodate the increase in traffic in later years.

Cottages, which had been built in the ditch, were removed between 1917 and 1963 to expose the outside of the town walls to view.

CA1.2.2 History

Edward I chose a previously fortified site for his most imposing castle in Wales and its associated walled town. There was a Roman fort, *Segontium*, a little way inland, and the Normans built a castle on the north bank of the Seiont. The Welsh held Caernarfon from about 1115 until Edward's victory in 1283.

As Master of the King's Works in Wales, Master James of St George was in overall charge of the building programme and of the work at Caernarfon. As the design and construction of three major castles — Caernarfon, Conwy and Harlech — as well as other works in Gwynedd were all in hand at the same time, Master James is likely to have had a number of assistants.

Walter of Hereford was master mason from 1295 to 1308 and may have been employed at Caernarfon earlier. Henry of Ellerton was responsible for the work undertaken after Walter's death.

Construction of the castle and the town walls and gates was all in hand in 1283. By 1292 the town walls and the two gates were probably finished and the external walls and towers of the castle facing the River Seiont had been raised to a good height.

The new borough had been provided with a complete and defensible enclosure during this first phase of construction (1283–92). The north side of the castle, which faced into the walled town, was less urgent. The ditch that separated it from the town was complete but only the lowest stages of the walls had been built.

During this phase Caernarfon had been established as the centre of government for north Wales and the county town of Caernarvonshire, one of its three constituent counties. After 1292 the king's resources were diverted to work elsewhere and expenditure on the castle was greatly reduced.

In 1294 Edward was surprised by the widespread and open revolt of Madog ap Llywelyn, who assumed the title 'prince of Wales'. The Welsh destroyed nearly half of the walls, took the castle from within the town and burnt everything combustible.

The revolt was put down and a second construction phase (1295–1330) began with the rebuilding of the town walls in 1295. The completion of the northern defences of the castle followed in the next five years. There was then another gap of three years when Edward I was campaigning in Scotland. From 1304 to 1330 work continued so that the structure of the castle was in much the state that can be seen today. More work was clearly intended as evidenced by foundation walls and the incomplete Queen's Gate.

Caernarfon continued as an exclusively English borough until after the Act of Union in 1536 (Statute 27 Henry VIII c.26), when legal distinctions between the Welsh and English subjects of Henry VIII were abolished. The castle had not been besieged since the Glyn Dŵr Rebellion (1403 and 1404) and peace in Wales had led to neglect. Reports in 1538 and 1620 showed that, although the masonry was sound, roofs and floors within the towers had decayed and, in some cases, collapsed.

During the Civil War (1642–48) the castle was garrisoned for King Charles I and changed hands three times. In 1660 orders were given for the castle to be demolished and the materials sold. Although welcomed by the town, these orders were never carried out.

The industrial revolution began to affect Caernarfon in the early 19th century. John Wood's map of 1834 shows the 'slate quay' on the bank of the Seiont alongside the castle and a 'rail road' from the slate quarries in Caernarvonshire.

In 1815 the earl of Uxbridge, the constable of Caernarfon Castle, had expressed an interest in purchasing the castle from the Crown. The Commissioners of Woods, Forests and Land Revenues ordered a survey that recorded the generally derelict condition of the structure and a variety of uses within it. The commissioners decided that it should not be sold but no other action was taken until the architect, Anthony Salvin, was asked to visit and report in 1845. Within six months extensive repairs had been authorised.

The initial reason for the repairs appears to have been concern for public safety but Caernarfon Castle was fortunate in its choice of architect. Salvin was one of the most knowledgeable architects of the day and an expert in medieval military architecture. He concentrated on repair and consolidation of the masonry, leaving restoration to his successors. However little more was done until 1870, when Sir Llewelyn Turner was appointed deputy constable. In the next thirty-one years Turner removed a large mound in the upper ward (this may have been the motte of the earlier Norman castle), restored the Queen's, Chamberlain's and Well Towers and the King's Gate, repaired the Queen's Gate and re-instated most of the battlements and wall passages. He also succeeded in removing most of the encroachments that cluttered the exterior of the castle walls. He had managed all this at no cost to the Crown by using the income from public admission fees and raising subscriptions locally.

A survey in 1906 showed that some of Turner's early work was in need of renewal. In 1908 control of the castle passed to the Office of Works, which was the government department responsible for all monuments in State care. This department's view was that repair and consolidation were preferred to restoration and this has been the philosophy that has been followed to the present day.

Since 1908 Caernarfon Castle has been maintained by the State as an ancient monument and has passed through various administrative changes to Cadw, an executive agency of the Welsh Assembly Government.

During the 20th century care of the greater part of the town walls has passed into the same hands and a large number of later buildings standing against the walls had been cleared by 1963.

As Caernarfon was to be the designated 'capital' of north Wales, Caernarfon Castle had a special significance for the monarchy. The eleventh child of Edward I, Edward of Caernarfon, was born in the incomplete castle in 1284 and created prince of Wales in a ceremony at Lincoln in 1301. Later princes of Wales were invested at Caernarfon in 1911 and 1969.

CA1.2.3 Military Engineering and Architecture

The Castle

All the castles that now form the World Heritage Site depended on access from the sea. At Caernarfon there was only restricted space between the rivers Seiont and Cadnant. Within the site was a Norman motte established around 1090. This determined the shape of the upper ward and it was not removed until levelled in 1872. (This was probably not the intention of Master James and his team because the towers in the upper ward were designed to accommodate the Norman ground levels.)

Although a site with a length of 191 yards (175m) was available, it was nowhere more than 78 yards (71m) wide. There was therefore not enough space for the development of a full concentric plan, even though the principle was well established in the 13th century. The site could also be overlooked from high ground on the other side of the Seiont so a low outer curtain wall would be ineffective.

The solution was to build a single high curtain wall of great strength — at least 12 feet (3.7m) thick on the side facing the river — with massive faceted towers to allow flanking fire from at least two levels of arrowloops. Within the curtain, the garrison could move between arrowloops through internal wall passages, generally on two levels. *In extremis* the separate towers would become self-contained for tresses.

The principal access to the castle was via a drawbridge over the wide rock-cut ditch that separated the castle from the town. This led to the twin-towered King's Gate. It was protected by five doors, six portcullises with overlooking arrowloops, and murder holes. If it had been completed there would also have been a right-angled turn into a smaller passage with a second drawbridge into the lower ward. The lower and upper wards (the latter containing the

Norman motte) would have been separated with a defensive structure linking the King's Gate to the Chamberlain Tower opposite. A second twin-towered gate, the Queen's Gate, would have been approached directly from the river by way of a ramp with a turning bridge.

There are seven major single towers — Eagle, Queen's, Chamberlain, Black, North-East, Granary and Well Towers — and two smaller towers — a watch tower looking up river and a cistern tower where rainwater was collected. The larger towers each contained two or three principal central rooms and some were entered through separate ground-floor anterooms. That in the Eagle Tower also leads to a postern gate. This was intended to lead to a defended water gate with a dock for boats delivering to a postern at the base of the Well Tower.

A number of domestic buildings lined the inside of the south curtain. The largest was the great hall, which had its own postern with steps down to the river. Wells sunk beneath the Well Tower and the Granary Tower gave good supplies of drinking water.

As a piece of military engineering, Caernarfon Castle was evidently effective. After completion it resisted two medieval sieges, in one case with a garrison of only 28 men. However, it was also conceived from the outset as a royal palace. The magnificence of its architecture and the quality of materials and detailing were designed to convey the king's power and wealth to the people. The wealth of accommodation was intended for the highest officials and, on occasion, the royal court. Only Beaumaris — the last of the castles in north Wales — offered better residential arrangements.

Architecturally, Caernarfon was more ambitious than either Conwy or Harlech. Decisions to use faceted rather than round towers; to face the walls and towers on the riverside in banded masonry reminiscent of the walls of Constantinople; and to create elaborate features such as the Eagle Tower and the King's Gate with carved decoration demonstrated the relative importance of Caernarfon. The Victorian restorations were generally in the spirit of the original and in matching materials.

The principal building stone was Carboniferous Limestone ashlar, almost certainly from Penmon, Anglesey. Ashlar work, dressings and some paving were done in light brown Carboniferous sandstone, from either Penmon or another site on the Menai Strait. Grey grit stone was quarried more locally for some interior work at low levels.

Timber used in the restoration — little or no medieval carpentry survived — was oak. It is assumed that it was imported from North America as such massive logs would not have been grown in Britain in the 19th century.

The Town Walls

The town plan is a rough gridiron of streets covering a much smaller area than Conwy. The walls are about 810 yards (734m) in length with seven D-towers, one round corner tower and two twin-towered gateways. The towers are numbered in an anti-clockwise direction from the castle to the castle. The walls and towers are provided with arrowloops. The D-towers are open backed so as to provide no cover for an attacker who managed to scale the wall. The towers were provided with wooden bridges to allow the continuous wall walk to be patrolled. The bridges could be thrown down against an enemy. The wall walks and battlements are in different states of repair as, although a substantial length is in State care, the remainder has a number of different occupiers. Only a small length of wall walk between Towers 4 and 6 is accessible at present.

The East Gate was the principal entrance to the town and was reached by crossing a bridge over the River Cadnant, originally with five stone arches and a drawbridge. The drawbridge was replaced with a stone arch in the 16th century. The arch over the East Gate was widened and raised in 1833. Rooms above the gate housed the royal exchequer and later the town hall (1767) and the Guildhall (1873). These were removed in the 1960s.

The West Gate was of similar design and led onto the foreshore. It was converted to house the Royal Welsh Yacht Club in the 19th century.

Tower 8, north of the West Gate, was enclosed and extended to provide a public bathhouse in 1823. It is now used as holiday accommodation.

St Mary's Chapel was built in, or soon after, 1303 as a chantry chapel by Henry of Ellerton. It stands against the interior face of the walls at the north-west angle, with Tower 7 containing its vestry.

The town walls were mostly built in Carboniferous Limestone. They were not as well built as the castle and a number of other stones are mixed in, either from the original construction or inserted during repairs.

CA1.3 Environment

CA1.3.1 Geology and Topography

Caernarfon Castle stands on a low ridge of black Ordovician shales, probably overlaid with compacted gravel that is now concealed from view.

The walled town, to the north, is built on a gentle slope, underlain by Precambrian rocks.

CA1.3.2 Vegetation and Wildlife

Gwynedd Council published a draft Biodiversity Action Plan in 2002. This identifies wildlife habitats and species found in the area and, where appropriate, describes the protection that is provided.

Adjacent to Caernarfon, the Menai Strait below mean high water is a candidate Special Area of Conservation (cSAC). 'Y Fenai a Bae Conwy/Menai Strait and Conwy Bay cSAC' was selected for its marine and intertidal plants and animals. The western boundary of the World Heritage Site is separated from the Strait by an urban promenade and sea wall that can be seen on John Wood's map of 1834.

The lower part of the Seiont valley (within the buffer zone for the World Heritage Site) is largely built up on its northern bank but much of the watercourse and inter-tidal mud on the southern shore is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and the wooded bank is subject to a tree preservation order.

Rock pipits use the castle and town walls and are known to breed on the walls. Bats may use the castle and town walls as a roost site but there have been no surveys. Otters use the Seiont river corridor. Lampreys are known to be present in the tidal mud of the estuary, which also provides a route for the migration of Atlantic salmon and sea trout. All these species have some degree of international or national protection.

Pied wagtails, not a protected species, are also known to roost on the castle walls.

CA1.3.3 Historic Landscape

The physical features that defined the plan of the castle and borough of Caernarfon — the River Seiont, the rocky shore of the Menai Strait and the Cadnant stream, and the mill pool — were all clearly evident when John Speed mapped them in 1610, although the town was already growing outside the walls. By the 1830s urban growth had led to the development of the Slate Quay, between the castle and the river, a promenade facing the strait and the culverting of the Cadnant under new streets. The construction of Victoria Dock, which enclosed a large area of water to the north of the town, and of the railway, which avoided the medieval remains, allowed Caernarfon to take its present form. The 20th century saw the

removal of much of the housing that had crowded around the walls and two major road schemes — a bypass to the east of the town centre and the conversion of the railway tunnel to a road linking the northern and southern approaches.

The castle still dominates the town centre, while the town walls exclude most traffic and general commercial activity from the medieval town.

The Gwynedd Archaeological Trust has characterised the wider historic landscape around Caernarfon in its publication *South Arfon/Dyffryn Nantlle Character Areas*.

CA1.4 Interests

CA1.4.1 Ownership and Responsibility for Care

Caernarfon Castle and Town Walls are scheduled ancient monuments, Grade 1 listed buildings and part of a World Heritage Site.

The freehold of the castle belongs to the Crown. Responsibility for its care has been transferred to Cadw, an executive agency of the Welsh Assembly Government. If government use of the castle were to cease in the future, the property would be returned to the Crown Estate.

The ownership of the town walls and the responsibility for their care is shown in the following table:

<i>Section of town walls</i>	<i>Ownership</i>	<i>Care</i>
Castle to East Gate	National Assembly for Wales	Cadw
East Gate, southern part	Title being investigated	Cadw, subject to confirmation
East Gate, remainder	Gwynedd Council	Cadw
East Gate to Northgate Street	National Assembly for Wales	Cadw
Northgate Street to Market Street	Gwynedd Council: in 1957 the predecessor authority resolved to convey to the State three arches made to allow access to Church Street, Market Street and Northgate Street. This conveyance may never have been completed but the State accepted responsibility for maintenance	Cadw
Market Street to St Mary's Church	National Assembly for Wales	Cadw
Adjacent to St Mary's Church	The Church in Wales	The Church in Wales (except the length south-west of the church, which is the responsibility of Cadw)
Thence to the West Gate	Unknown	Unknown
Tower 8	The Landmark Trust	The owner
West Gate and wall to south	Royal Welsh Yacht Club	The owners
Thence to Castle Ditch	Gwynedd Council	Cadw
Thence to castle	The Crown	Cadw

Conwy Castle and Town Walls

CO1.1 General Information

CO1.1.1 Location

Country: Wales, United Kingdom

Local Authority: Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Conwy/Conwy County Borough Council

National grid reference SH784775; Longitude 3° 49' 27" W; Latitude 53° 16' 48" N

CO1.1.2 Summary Description

Conwy lies on the west bank of the river Conwy. King Edward I established the castle and walled town in 1283 as the first English settlement in Gwynedd, the heartland of the defeated Llywelyn, prince of Wales.

CO1.2 Cultural Information

CO1.2.1 Archaeology

The masonry of the curtain wall and towers of Conwy Castle remains much as it was constructed between 1283 and 1287, from foundations to turrets. Some of the domestic buildings inside the walls remain standing to different heights; others only to foundation level. All the medieval woodwork in floors and roofs has gone, leaving the original rooms open to the sky. The original entrance ramp and the watergate were removed to make way for new roads into the town in the 1820s.

Only two of the 15 stone arches, which replaced the original timber trusses over the great hall range and the royal apartments in 1346–47, are still standing.

The town walls survive in their original form except where breached for four additional roadways and a railway in the 19th century. All except one of the five breaches were provided with arched openings so that the 1,400 yard (1.3km) circuit is the finest and most completely preserved example of a medieval town wall left in Britain.

Vestiges of lime plaster remain to show that the whole of the exterior of the castle was originally rendered and whitened. The town walls were probably treated similarly.

CO1.2.2 History

The English gained command of the Conwy valley in January 1283 and in March King Edward I began arrangements for the fortification of the river crossing. The land on the west bank of the river had been granted to the Cistercian abbey of Aberconwy by Llywelyn the Great, prince of Gwynedd, in 1198.

In September 1283 James of St George secured land further up the valley for the relocation of the abbey, leaving the original site clear for the foundation of an English borough. Only the abbey church remained to become the parish church of the borough. It seems likely — from the extent of the planned town and the administrative

accommodation provided — that Conwy was intended to be the centre for one of the three new counties in Gwynedd but that role eventually fell to Caernarfon.

The castle, sited by the crossing point, was built with astonishing speed. All major works were complete within four and a half years and the town walls were completed in the same time.

Master James of St George directed the works as Master of the King's Works in Wales. Within three months James was also concerned with Harlech and Caernarfon and a degree of delegation would have been necessary.

The responsibilities of others are recorded in contemporary accounts. Richard the Engineer was particularly concerned with cutting the rock ditches. Henry of Oxford and Laurence of Canterbury were master carpenters. John Francis was a mason. Other recorded names include Jules of Chalons, William of Seyssel (on the Rhone), Peter of Boulogne, Roger of Cockersand, John of Sherwood and Robert of Frankby (on the Wirral).

The records are incomplete but, in those that survive, there are frequent indications that tasks were to be carried out under the direction of Master James, who had an office near the castle. James undertook specific tasks as a contractor as well as awarding contracts and directing labour. The labour force was drawn from a wide area of England and assembled at Chester and Bristol.

After 1292 maintenance work failed to match the quality of the original construction. Soon major repairs to roofs were needed. In 1346–47 roof carpentry was renewed and lead roofs were installed. In the great hall range and the royal apartments stone arches replaced wooden roof trusses. These were the last major modifications undertaken in the castle.

In 1627 the castle was sold to a private owner, Viscount Conway, but it continued to be neglected. During the Civil War (1642–48) it was garrisoned and fortified for the king by John Williams, a Conwy-born Archbishop of York. After changing sides, he surrendered the castle to the parliamentarians, who kept it on a war footing for five years.

The Conway family took possession again after the restoration of Charles II. The lead roofs were stripped and the castle abandoned to the weather.

The unreliability of the Conwy ferries, which had become a serious problem in the early 19th century, led to major changes in the town. The engineer, Thomas Telford, opened a road bridge — a smaller version of his suspension bridge over the Menai Strait — in 1826. The western end of the suspension bridge was anchored into the castle rock and Telford built a new gate (demolished in 1958) in the town walls to bring the road into the town. An arch was opened in one of the towers to take the road on towards Bangor. With the coming of motor traffic in the 20th century and the opening of a parallel road bridge in the 1950s, this attempt to thread a trunk road through medieval streets became a major problem, which was not solved until the opening of a road tunnel under the estuary in 1991. This was the first example in Britain of a very large investment in infrastructure to protect a World Heritage Site and its setting.

The engineer, Robert Stephenson, brought the railway from Chester to Holyhead through the walled town in 1848. The line crossed the river by a tubular bridge close by Telford's more elegant suspension bridge and swept past the castle rock. The southern side of the town walls was breached on a skew that required a very wide Tudor arch to restore the line of the walls. The railway left the town towards the north-west through a short tunnel beneath the walls. Although no opening was required subsidence caused a severe fracture in one tower. This was underpinned in 1963.

The railway company undertook the repair of a serious breach in the Bakehouse Tower in the castle. This breach is believed to have been the result of an attempt to slight the castle in 1655.

The 19th century also saw the beginning of cultural interest in the medieval ruins at Conwy. One tower in the walls was restored and the northern wall-walk was opened to visitors. The Conway family's successors transferred the ruins to the Borough of Conway and Queen Victoria granted the office of constable to the mayor.

In 1953 the castle and town walls were leased to the State and an ongoing programme of consolidation was begun. Cadw now maintains them as an executive agency of the Welsh Assembly Government

CO1.2.3 Military Engineering and Architecture

The Castle

The site for Conwy Castle — 140 yards (128m) long and a maximum of 75 yards (69m) wide — was too restricted to accommodate a concentric system of defences. The principles behind the plan were therefore similar to those that shaped Caernarfon although the design and architectural treatment of the two castles were very different.

Although the site of the castle dominated the river crossing, it was itself overlooked from higher land within bowshot beyond the Gyffin stream to the south. The curtain wall had to be 90 feet (27m) high and there was a large area of dead ground in the Gyffin valley. However the steepness of the rock and the impossibility of under-mining protected the castle on this side. To the north and west the ground rose quite steeply and here the walled town would provide complementary defence.

The curtain wall was generally 10 feet (3m) thick with eight round towers rising to 135 feet (41m) above the river. A continuous wall walk ran around the top of the curtain. There were no extensive internal wall passages. Instead most arrowloops had spacious recesses to protect crossbowmen and allow them a wider field of fire. Each of the towers served to provide accommodation as well as defence, with fireplaces to the larger upper rooms. Some of these had their own latrines, designed to discharge outside the curtain wall.

The curtain wall enclosed an irregular area, divided into two wards by another strong wall.

The outer ward contained the main entrance, entered from the west barbican, which was reached by climbing a stepped ramp from the town. The approach to the entrance was defended by a drawbridge and portcullis, an outer door, the enclosed court of the barbican (overlooked from two towers, crenellations, arrowloops and murder holes) and the gate passage itself. This could be secured with drawbars, a portcullis and a wooden door. The north-west and south-west towers and the short length of curtain wall between together form an extended version of the twin-towered gateways seen elsewhere. In addition to providing a strong defence, this part of the castle would have housed the constable.

The outer ward was intended for the more public functions of the castle and for the domestic services.

On the south side of this ward was the great hall range. The line of the curtain wall, which it abuts, dictated its irregular plan. The great hall is thought to have been at the centre of the range, with a lesser hall, served through an ante-room, at one end and a chapel at the other. The wooden partitions dividing the range have long since disappeared.

The north and east sides of the court were lined with buildings to house guardrooms and domestic offices. Only the foundations remain. On the east side was the castle well. It is possible that the fissured rock, in which it is dug, would not hold water and that the well served as a cistern with an external piped water supply.

Each of the four towers reached from the outer ward contained two floors, each with one habitable room, and a basement for storage. Exceptionally the Prison Tower also has a well-concealed sub-basement, clearly designed as a prison cell.

The inner ward provided a secure residence for the king and queen and a seat for the royal court. It was defensible even if the outer ward were lost. The separating wall lay behind a deep ditch cut in the rock. This was crossed by a drawbridge operated from, and leading to a small gatehouse covering a narrow passage to the inner ward.

The inner ward was also accessible directly from the River Conwy. The elaborate watergate has disappeared but the remains of steps lead up to the east barbican, which protected a narrow entrance passage (overlooked with similar defences to the western entrance) through the curtain wall. From here private stairs led up to the two eastern towers.

The inner ward had four towers similar to those in the outer ward, except that each was crowned with a turret and two contained rooms that signified their greater importance.

The inner ward also contained an L-shaped two-storey building housing the royal apartments. The three principal rooms were on the first floor and appear to have been approached by external staircases from the open courtyard. On the ground floor were service rooms and a parlour. The King's Tower and the Chapel Tower were accessible from both floors of the two-storey building and provided more royal apartments. The Chapel Tower contained a small vaulted chapel of great beauty. An ingenious arrangement permitted the king to hear mass from a watching chamber. The royal apartments were enriched with large traceried windows.

The Stockhouse and Bakehouse Towers were entered from the court of the inner ward and the upper rooms may have been intended for guests.

The castle is known to have had two gardens. The larger of these was to the west outside the castle ditch. A smaller garden was laid out within the east barbican to provide a pleasant prospect from the royal apartments.

The appearance of the castle must have been very different when it retained its lime rendering and whitening. Now the whole of the underlying masonry is exposed.

The bulk of the rubble walling, which was laid to courses, was of gritstone, which was probably quarried near the site. Most of the lintels used the same stone, which was strong but not easy to work, and red and white mottled sandstone was used for moulding and carving. This was probably Triassic sandstone, shipped from Chester. There is documentary evidence that this was the stone used for the arches built in 1346–7.

The Town Walls

The plan of the town established by Edward I was based on a number of practical requirements:

- Mutual defence with the castle;
- Creation of sufficient burgages to encourage settlement from England;
- Provision of accommodation for the government of one of the new counties of north Wales (although this was later transferred to Caernarfon);
- Use of the River Gyffin as a defence and source of power for the town mill;
- Maximum protected use of the beach on the River Conwy for coastwise trade; and
- Incorporation of the abbey church and, possibly, an attempt to obliterate the inheritance of the Welsh princes.

The resulting ground plan was an approximate triangle with modifications to suit the topography and to ensure the best possible lookout from the highest point in the town.

The town wall was divided into sections; each about 150 feet (46m) long, with a wall walk and D-plan towers with semi-circular faces to the countryside and open gorges (backs) to the town. These gorges were provided with wooden bridges to allow continuous patrols of the wall walk. Crenellated parapets and defensive platforms would allow the citizens to hold them with maximum protection but, if an enemy took any sections, the bridges could be thrown down and defence of the remainder could continue. Steps up to each tower would allow any section to be reinforced. There were no parapets facing the town so that an attacker would have nowhere to hide.

The total length of the walls is 1,400 yards (1.3km). As built, they varied in height because of the sloping ground but were at least 20 feet (6m) high on the outer face. There are still 21 towers standing up to 50 feet (15m) high. They are now numbered in an anti-clockwise direction from the castle to the castle. Tower 13, which is the only circular tower, commanded a view of the whole town as well as the country outside. There were three twin-towered gates; the Upper Gate towards the open country; the Lower Gate towards the shore; and the Mill Gate, which gave access to the mill on the impounded River Gyffin. There was no direct link between the defence of the town walls and the castle, indicating that the defence of the town was the responsibility of its citizens. The connecting lengths apparently had no parapets or wall walk.

An additional spur wall, projecting into the river, was built to protect the landing place for ships, either from storm or attack. It originally ended in a round tower. This probably was washed away early in the history of the town.

Tower 16 was extended and adapted for residential use by 1305 in association with a pre-conquest building immediately behind the wall. It was known as Llywelyn's Hall and used by the English for administrative purposes before being removed to Caernarfon. Three arched windows were cut through the town wall at this point to light the building.

Inside the section of the wall from Tower 18 to the castle — in or around the castle garden and including the Mill Gate — was accommodation for the exchequer, the wardrobe and the Master of the King's Works, the principal departments supporting the royal authority in north Wales. This probably explains the provision of twelve individual latrines on the top of the wall between Tower 18 and the Mill Gate and the incorporation of domestic rooms into one of the towers of the gate.

The southern and western ranges of the walls were built of the same Silurian grit as the castle. The northern range and the spur wall used much Ordovician rhyolite, either quarried on Bodlondeb Hill close by or salvaged from Deganwy Castle, across the river. The range parallel to the river is entirely of rhyolite.

Conwy Town Walls are a unique survival. They still define the town, which retains its medieval street pattern, and allow it to be perceived as a unit, closely linked with the castle.

CO1.3 Environment

CO1.3.1 Geology and Topography

Conwy is founded on a ridge of Silurian grits or sandstones running from the original Conwy river crossing in a westerly direction. The grit is underlaid northwards by Ordovician Black and Brown Shales with tidal flats on the east. The grit beds are inclined to the south by about 50°.

The castle and the southern walls lie on the ridge, while the remainder of the walls is founded on the shales. The weakness of these was demonstrated when a large vertical crack appeared in Tower 11 following the construction of a railway tunnel beneath the walls in the 1840s.

The steep dip of the gritstone gave rise to two problems. It was difficult to find a reliable water supply within the castle and water may have been piped from springs west of the town and supplemented with rainwater collected on site for storage in the cistern in the outer ward. The sloping beds also tend to break away and it has been necessary to consolidate the rock in modern times.

CO1.3.2 Vegetation and Wildlife

Conwy County Borough Council has published the Conwy Local Biodiversity Action Plan, 2003. This identifies wildlife habitats and species found in the area and, where appropriate, describes the protection that is provided.

The Conwy estuary is due to be notified as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The boundary will generally be at mean high tide level but it will include Conwy Quay, except where there is an extant planning permission for development.

Otters are known to use the estuary and the tributary Gyffin, although there are no confirmed records of sightings in the vicinity of the castle or quayside. Wildlife is generally under-recorded in this area.

There are also two extant SSSIs within the vicinity.

Benarth Wood is a mixed deciduous woodland on Silurian rocks that covers 54 acres (22 hectares) and overlooks the castle and town from the south and forms part of its essential setting. The woodland lies within the park attached to Benarth Hall. This park is designated Grade II in the *Register of Landscapes, Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in Wales: Part I: Parks and Gardens: Conwy, Gwynedd and the Isle of Anglesey* (Cadw and ICOMOS-UK, 1998).

The Cadnant SSSI adjoins the town walls on the north and is of particular geological interest. It was designated because a railway cutting had exposed a complete sequence through the Cadnant (Black and Brown) Shales — the sequence that underlies most of the walled town.

CO1.3.3 Historic Landscape

Conwy lies within an outstanding historic landscape that includes the lower part of the estuary of the River Conwy and its hinterland on either side (*Register of Landscapes of Outstanding Historic Interest in Wales: Creuddyn and Conwy Area* (Cadw, Countryside Council for Wales, and ICOMOS-UK, 1998). Within this landscape, Gwynedd Archaeological Trust has characterised a number of areas in and around Conwy, including Area 2006: Conwy, Area 2007: Conwy Morfa, and Area 2014: rolling meadows, west of Afon Conwy.

The principal hill feature on the eastern bank is the Great Orme peninsula, while Conwy Mountain dominates the west bank. Both rise to more than 656ft (200m) above sea level. The area has been settled since prehistoric times and there is evidence from the Bronze Age to the 19th century of copper mining on the great Orme. There are Palaeolithic and Neolithic remains and evidence of Iron Age settlements and hill forts. Signs of Roman and Norse occupation have been found.

The Welsh fortified an isolated hill at Deganwy in the post-Roman period. On the site of Conwy itself there was a Cistercian monastery — the abbey church is still in use as the parish church. Conwy Quay, between the town walls and the river was built in the 19th century and it provides business premises for the fishing and tourism industries.

Conwy was established at the lowest convenient crossing point of the River Conwy — marked by two road bridges and one railway bridge — and it remained the dominant settlement in the area until Llandudno was developed as a seaside resort from the 1850s. The most important development of the 20th century was the construction of the new A55 road, which crosses the estuary in an unobtrusive tunnel.

Within the town walls a few buildings survive from the 16th century (including Plas Mawr and Aberconwy House) but most buildings date from the 19th century.

CO1.4 Interests

CO1.4.1 Ownership and Responsibility for Care

Conwy Castle and Town Walls are scheduled ancient monuments, Grade I listed buildings and part of a World Heritage Site. The freehold of the castle and town walls belongs to Conwy Town Council. The National Assembly for Wales holds them on lease for 99 years from 1 April 1953. There are a number of conveyances and supplemental and separate leases relating to adjacent land.

The care of the castle and the medieval walls, gates and towers is the responsibility of Cadw acting on behalf of the Welsh Assembly Government until 1 April 2052.

The leased area of the town walls does not exactly match the area of the scheduled ancient monument. In particular, the Telford Tower on Castle Square, the interiors of Towers 1, 2, 3, the twin towers of the Lower Gate, Towers 8, 9, 10 (the Bangor Arch), 11, 16, 17 and 18 are excluded from the lease and occupied by others.

Harlech Castle

H1.1 General Information

H1.1.1 Location

Country: Wales, United Kingdom

Local authority: Cyngor Gwynedd/Gwynedd Council

Harlech lies within Parc Cenedlaethol Eryri/Snowdonia National Park. The National Park Authority is the local planning authority for the area.

National grid reference: SH581312; Longitude 4° 06' 29" W; Latitude 52° 51' 35" N

H1.1.2 Summary Description

Harlech is situated in the former county of Merioneth, which King Edward I carved out of the lands of Llywelyn, prince of Wales, after his defeat and death in 1282. The castle was begun in 1283. It stands on a rocky outcrop overlooking an area of marsh and dunes extending to the sea.

H1.2 Cultural Information

H1.2.1 Archaeology

The surviving remains were constructed in two main stages. The first was the rapid construction of an enclosure and landward defensive works in 1283. The raising and thickening of these works followed in the second stage, completed by 1289. At the same time the two seaward towers were built. All the walls and towers remain to their full height although much of their crenellation has been lost.

The slighter defences of the 'Way from the Sea' are less complete as are the walls that enclosed the castle rock.

The only later structures within the castle are the foundations of two towers (1323–4) that were added to protect the approach across the wide and deep dry ditch.

H1.2.2 History

Although Llywelyn, prince of Wales, had been killed in battle in December 1282, the Welsh continued to resist King Edward I's invasion of their heartland. However the conquest was complete by April 1283 and the construction of a new castle at Harlech was ordered immediately. Money and men were brought in and the castle was enclosed in the same year. In the years to 1289 the inner curtain wall was strengthened; the towers and the gatehouse completed; and walls built around the 'Way from the Sea'.

Master James of St George directed the work as Master of the King's Works in Wales. There is no record to show which of his assistants was particularly involved. About the time it was completed Master James was given an additional appointment as constable of Harlech Castle, his residence for the next three years (1290–93).

The importance of direct access from the sea was proved during the Welsh rebellion of 1294. The castle was besieged but supplies brought directly from Ireland enabled the English garrison to hold out. In the light of this experience the north side of the castle rock was also enclosed within a wall.

Harlech Castle experienced the familiar cycles of neglect and urgent activity during the following centuries. In times of peace the constable might or might not reside in the gatehouse and the nominal garrison would be about 30 men. In 1404, during the rebellion of Owain Glyn Dŵr, an ill-equipped garrison surrendered after a long siege. Owain made the castle his court and residence and there is a tradition that it was the scene of his coronation as prince of Wales. Harry of Monmouth, the future King Henry V, besieged the Welsh garrison and recaptured the castle early in 1409.

The castle was again attacked in 1468 during the Wars of the Roses. A Yorkist force of 7,000–10,000 men took 50 prisoners at the end of a month's siege.

In the late 16th century the Meirionnydd Assizes were held in the castle, a regular use that contributed to its maintenance. This was to be put to the test in the Civil War (1642–48), when the royalist garrison was under siege for eight months. It was the last royalist stronghold to fall to parliament.

Despite an order for demolition the castle remained a property of the Crown. It has been maintained as an ancient monument since 1914. The masonry was consolidated and original ground levels were restored. It is now in the care of Cadw acting on behalf of the National Assembly for Wales.

The town of Harlech received its royal charter in 1284. It appears that it was never walled and there is little evidence of a formal ground plan in the present village

H1.2.3 Military Engineering and Architecture

There is no record to show that Edward I visited Harlech. However he was in Conwy for about six weeks in March and April 1283 and it seems likely that the decision to build was taken then. The chosen site offered a relatively level platform for construction 200 feet (61m) above sea level on top of a rocky outcrop with the best possible command of the coast. Master James of St George must have welcomed the opportunity to develop the principle of the concentric castle without the constraints he found at Conwy and Caernarfon. He was able to plan four lines of defence.

- The inner ward forms a quadrangle. On the east and west sides these walls are parallel but to the north and south they splay outwards to accommodate the great gatehouse and also, possibly, to achieve the most impressive architectural effect. The curtain wall varied from 8 feet to 10 feet thick (2.4m to 3m) and was originally about 50 feet (over 15m) high — this height being necessary because the ground to the east rose to give an enemy an advantage. At the heart of the defensive plan was the great gatehouse. At ground level was the main entrance to the castle, accommodated in a passage between the twin towers. A succession of obstacles protected the gate passage — a pair of outward opening doors secured by a drawbar, two portcullises and a pair of doors opening inwards. Between each obstacle was a small space covered by arrowloops, where anyone entering could be detained or attacked. The next space was larger and was supervised from porters' rooms on either side. These in turn led to the right and left to two spiral staircases, set in their own towers, rising to the apartments above. A further portcullis protected the end of the passage into the inner ward with, possibly, another pair of doors.
- The outer ward, up to 20 feet (6m) wide surrounds the inner curtain. It provided an open area, within which an attacking enemy would be exposed to fire from the walls and towers.

- The much lower outer curtain wall protected the outer ward. From its wall walk, crossbowmen could cover the ditch outside but if they had to withdraw, an attacker would find no protection from plunging fire from the inner curtain. The main approach to the castle from the east was defended by a gate and drawbridge. A second gate on the northern side gave access to the castle rock.
- The building platform formed a near-rectangle of 89 yards by 75 yards (81m x 69m). This was further protected with a deep ditch on the south and east sides. No ditch was necessary on the north and west because the castle rock sloped steeply down to the coast. The main approach crossed the ditch by way of a stone bridge with drawbridges and two towers added in 1323–24.

At the foot of the rock there was some form of dock, possibly with access for ships via a short canal. The sea was then very much closer to the rock than it is now. The castle rock was surrounded with an enclosing wall. Within the wall a stepped ramp, known as the 'Way from the Sea' led up the rock to the castle. At the bottom was a water gate and drawbridge. An upper gate, with another drawbridge, provided more protection before the final climb to a gate in the south-west tower.

The defensive arrangements at Harlech were sophisticated and can be seen as a step towards the full development of the concentric castle that would be seen at Beaumaris.

The outstanding feature is the great gatehouse. As at Conwy, the constable was housed where he could control all comings and goings from a lodging over the principal entrance.

At Harlech the accommodation was concentrated into one building designed to give maximum security and comfort for the constable and for distinguished guests. The twin-towered gatehouse provided two spacious suites on the upper floors. There was also a chapel on the first floor. Each apartment occupied a complete floor and contained rooms suitable for a great chamber, a smaller chamber and two bedchambers. Latrines and the chapel vestries were contrived in the adjacent walls. Each room had a fireplace, with flues gathered into multiple stacks carried to elaborate chimneys above roof level. Each apartment was reached by way of two spiral stairs in their own turrets, with access controlled by the porters below. The occupants could therefore have separate households. If the constable lived on the first floor, the second floor could have been intended for visiting dignitaries and even, on occasion, the king.

The gatehouse was a masterly design; combining great strength with a relatively high degree of comfort and style. An open external stair provided a ceremonial route to the great chamber on the first floor. Traceried windows brought light into the principal rooms through the least vulnerable walls and arrowloops elsewhere had generous embrasures for both window seats and defence.

The remainder of the castle's domestic accommodation was in single-storey buildings lining the inside of the inner curtain wall. The most important element was the great hall range with eight openings through the curtain wall — an unusual feature in such a strong castle. The kitchen of this range probably also served the great gatehouse. There was also a larger chapel, a bakehouse, a granary and another hall.

The castle is built mainly of the hard grey Harlech Grit quarried nearby. The texture varies and the masonry includes glacial boulders, natural flat blocks and others split to form the exposed face. There are slabs of local slate in the walls and in steps, lintels and arches.

The walling is in rubble laid to courses but the external faces of towers are in roughly squared blocks. Presumably this variation was to make the circular towers easier to build as the whole of the exterior appears to have been rendered and whitened — John Sell Cotman's etching, published in 1838, shows large areas still in place.

Dressings (window frames, door lintels, quoins and fireplace hoods) are generally of soft yellowish sandstone similar to that found in Anglesey. Some of the window frames show a pattern of holes where iron window grilles were fixed. The masonry is bedded in lime mortar made with sand from the seashore.

H1.3 Environment

H1.3.1 Geology and Topography

The bold and rugged headland, on which the castle is built, is a spur of the Harlech Dome, a famous geological feature formed in hard grit or sandstone belonging to the lower part of the Cambrian System. The heavily jointed character of the rock permits percolation of rainwater. This collected in a well in the inner ward.

H1.3.2 Vegetation and Wildlife

The Snowdonia Local Biodiversity Action Plan was published in 1999. This identifies wildlife habitats and species found in the area and, where appropriate, describes the protection that is provided.

The ecologist to the Snowdonia National Park Authority and the local recorder for the Botanical Society of the British Isles have provided the following report on Harlech Castle.

'The castle stands on a prominent outcrop composed largely of moderately base-rich rocks, at least in Snowdonian terms. This is reflected in many of the plants that grow here, particularly the bryophytes (mosses and liverworts), being generally calcicolous (lime-loving) in nature.

However, the flora of the outcrop indicates a much stronger base influence and it is likely that this is mostly due to centuries of lime/mortar that has leached out of the masonry. This in itself makes the site of some interest. The reporters noted an impressive list of bryophytes growing here, particularly on the more exposed rocks of the outcrop. Elsewhere, the vegetation is dominated by common grass species of little interest, indicative of regular mowing.

In botanical terms, however, the plant assemblage is unremarkable, though a few unusual species have been found here in the past, only one of which was found on this occasion. This was Rocky Sea-spurry (*Spergularia rupicola*) that is growing in some profusion on the outside of the west wall of the castle itself. This plant is normally found growing on sea cliffs and I suspect its presence here, uncharacteristically distant from the sea, is a throw-back from when the sea was closer to the castle several centuries ago. It would be a pity to lose this plant to over-zealous cleaning of the castle walls.

One other area of interest visited was the wet boggy area to the north of the castle at the base of the outcrop on which it stands, where a nice assemblage of species was found, though no rarities. This habitat is threatened by the dumping of rubbish, particularly garden waste and tree prunings.'

The ecologist noted no birds or animals of any significance and thought that reports of roosting bats on the site were probably incorrect.

Although level grass areas around the castle may be mown, the usual grounds management practice has been to allow a number of sheep to graze the castle rock.

The boggy area referred to is near the foot of a waterfall from the rock. Rubbish referred to may be from a neighbouring caravan site.

H1.3.3 Historic Landscape

Harlech Castle stands within a landscape of outstanding historic importance on the western flanks of the Rhinog Mountains (Ardudwy area in *Register of Landscapes of Outstanding Historic Interest in Wales*, Cadw, Countryside Council for Wales and ICOMOS-UK, 1998).

The landscape contains extensive archaeological remains, including Morfa Duffryn submerged forest coastline, Neolithic chambered tombs, Bronze Age funerary and ritual monuments, prehistoric trackways, Iron Age hillforts, Iron Age and medieval settlements and field systems, post-medieval gentry estates, parliamentary enclosures and evidence of mining and quarrying.

While the inland landscapes remain rural in character, there have been many changes in the coastal strip. There are many housing developments near the coast road and caravan parks with beach access on the Morfa — the coastal plain. Harlech, the only town in the area, has also seen additional housing at its upper level.

H1.4 Interests

H1.4.1 Ownership and Responsibility for Care

Harlech Castle is a scheduled ancient monument, a Grade I listed building and part of a World Heritage Site.

The freehold of the monument is owned by the Crown, together with the castle ditch and parts of the castle rock. Responsibility for its care has been transferred to Cadw, an executive agency of the Welsh Assembly Government. If Government use of the castle were to cease in the future, the property would be returned to the Crown Estate.

World Heritage Site

1.4.2 Economy and Tourism

Demography, Culture and Economy

About 293,000 people live in the local government areas in which the World Heritage Site lies — the Isle of Anglesey, Gwynedd and Conwy.

The diverse and high quality natural environment includes the Snowdonia National Park and the Anglesey Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and a long and varied designated heritage coast. The population density is low, with recent loss of population in Anglesey and inward migration to Conwy. The area possesses a strong cultural identity linked to the use of the Welsh language and maritime and agricultural traditions but there are environmental and cultural tensions due to the pressure for development. There are significant concentrations of multiple deprivation in the towns of the area while the most prosperous areas are clustered along the coast between the Menai Strait and Conwy Bay.

The economy is diverse including tourism, services, manufacturing and agriculture. There is little remaining activity in the formerly important slate and metal extractive industries.

Tourism is now the largest industry, dependent on the natural and historic landscape and supported by a large number of attractions and a variety of types of accommodation. Cultural tourism activities involve around 3.5 million staying visits in Wales each year. These include those visits principally motivated by cultural tourism and those forming part of a holiday trip. Many of these tourists include north-west Wales in their visit.

Cultural Tourism

The Wales Tourist Board (WTB) published *Achieving Our Potential — A Tourism Strategy for Wales* in 2000 with a key strategic objective 'To embrace a sustainable approach to tourism development which benefits society, involves local communities and enhances Wales' unique environment and cultural assets.' This was followed with a *Cultural Tourism Strategy for Wales* in 2003.

The most popular cultural tourism activity is visiting heritage sites (castles, churches, historic houses, ancient monuments). Heritage sites attract families, those whose families have grown up ('empty nesters') and the early retired. The market is biased towards the upper socio-economic groups.

Castles have long been an important element in the attraction of visitors and satisfaction ratings derived from surveys in 2000–01 show that nearly 90% of visitors to castles in Wales were satisfied with the 'enjoyment value' of their visit, while nearly 80% were satisfied with the 'service received'.

The World Heritage Site

The castles and town walls in the World Heritage Site are all among the major attractions in north-west Wales. They contribute substantially to the local economy by increasing demand for transport, accommodation, catering, shopping and other services. They also support and draw benefit from other attractions by contributing to the holiday experience provided in the area.

Cadw manages them within the estate in care as visitor attractions for tourists and residents in ways that are in accordance with the seven principles for the balanced

development of tourism set out by ICOMOS-UK in the document, *Statement of Principles for the Balanced Development of Cultural Tourism*:

1. The environment has an intrinsic value, which outweighs its value as a tourism asset. Its enjoyment by future generations and its long-term survival must not be prejudiced for short-term considerations.
2. Tourism should be recognised as a positive activity with the potential to benefit the community and the place as well as the visitor.
3. The relationship between tourism and the environment must be managed so that it is sustainable in the long term. Tourism must not be allowed to damage the resource, prejudice its future enjoyment or bring unacceptable impact.
4. Tourism activities and developments should respect the scale, nature and character of the place in which they are sited.
5. In any location, harmony must be sought between the needs of the visitor, the place and the host community.
6. In a dynamic world some change is inevitable and change can often be beneficial. Adaptation to change, however, should not be at the expense of any of these principles.
7. The tourism industry, local authorities and environmental agencies all have a duty to respect the above principles and to work together to achieve their practical realisation.

Over the years Cadw has commissioned surveys among visitors to provide information for its marketing plans for the estate. As the World Heritage Site includes four of the most visited monuments at which an entry charge is made, a number of surveys are available for Beaumaris, Caernarfon, Conwy and Harlech Castles.

How Many Visitors?

The annual number of visits to the World Heritage Site from 1986 to 2004 is shown in Table 1.4.2 and to the four castles in Diagram 1.4.2. There has been a reduction in the number of visits by about 15% over this period. Records for the four castles show that visits to Caernarfon and Harlech fell by 21%, to Beaumaris by 20% and to Conwy by 12%.

Ten years before this period, in 1976, over one million visits were made to the four castles. By the end of the period visits had declined by about 50%. This compares with a reduction of 37% for visits to all the properties in Cadw's care.

Visits to major monuments in the traditional holiday areas of Wales are subject to changes in the holiday market. In the 1970s many families took their main holidays in north Wales. Today, although it is still a holiday area, it is much more a destination for short breaks and day trips. Those monuments near the main roads and towns are more attractive to these visitors. In particular, the accessibility of Conwy was much improved after the new A55 road tunnel had freed the town's narrow streets and encouraged the authorities to make extensive improvements within the walls. The World Heritage Site is particularly attractive to those with an interest in history and landscape. These are attracted to all the monuments in the site and are more likely to include visits to the more remote monuments in their itinerary.

Table 1.4.2

Visitors to the World Heritage Site in financial years from 1986–2004

Year	86–87	87–88	88–89	89–90	90–91	91–92	92–93	93–94	94–95
Visits	651,536	672,146	666,223	600,517	670,542	577,941	583,320	564,379	545,385
Year	95–96	96–97	97–98	98–99	99–00	00–01	01–02	02–03	03–04
Visits	546,293	586,365	571,521	551,457	505,425	475,678	493,590	478,068	533,390

As there is open access to the base of the town walls in Caernarfon and Conwy and to sections of the wall walks in Conwy, there is no record of the number of visitors to these monuments but many visitors to the castles are likely to visit part of the town walls.

Who Visits the World Heritage Site?

Although figures vary widely from year to year, in most years over half the visitors come from homes in England, with a slightly higher proportion in the summer season. Around a quarter visit from overseas, with a slightly higher proportion in the winter. Scotland and Northern Ireland provide a much smaller proportion, while in most years less than 20% of visitors are from Wales. Comparatively few visitors are from the local communities, although all the monuments have arrangements for residents to visit without entry charges.

The distribution of visitors across the World Heritage Site also varies widely but Caernarfon Castle tends to attract most English and overseas visitors. Easy access to Conwy Castle via the A55 trunk road helps to make that castle popular with English visitors.

The location of all the monuments in the site in one of the more important holiday destination areas in the UK is highlighted by the very high proportion of visitors who visit the monuments in August and September while on holiday — usually more than 80% of all visitors in those months.

While the majority of visitors responding to surveys come from the middle, family raising years (35–54) in summer, this proportion is rarely much greater than 50%. As many bring young families, the number of child visitors is high. This is particularly so at Harlech Castle, set in an area popular for family holidays. The proportion of responses from younger people (16–34) rises in the winter — in some years to more than half — while the proportion of older people (aged 55 and over) declines in the off-season. In the summer older people make up 15% to 25% of visitors.

In broad terms, the World Heritage Site tends to attract more than two-thirds of its summer visitors and 80% of winter visitors from those in the professional, managerial, technical and more highly skilled occupational groups — with a minority from those less skilled or unskilled. In general terms medieval castles tend to attract people with more disposable income, more leisure time and a broader educational background.

While the great majority of visitors have English as their first language, around 6% put Welsh first.

A small proportion of visitors to the site have disabilities or special needs — up to 20% at Caernarfon Castle and below 10% elsewhere. The number of people in this group who do not visit the site because of perceived difficulties is likely to be higher.

The Nature of Visits

A more detailed survey of the Cadw estate in the summer of 2001 obtained 213 responses from visitors to the World Heritage Site. This sample was too small to permit reliable statistical analysis in detail but it did provide some indicators.

About 40% of respondents were making repeat visits to the same site. At least 80% expressed an interest in castles and historic sites and 60% in Welsh culture or history. Other visitors were interested in general sightseeing, day trips and attractions that would interest children. Most visits were planned on the day or in the preceding week, with visits lasting from one to three hours.

90% of visitors travelled by car, van or motorcycle. Harlech and Conwy are accessible by train, while Caernarfon had more visitors arriving by bus. Conwy also

benefits from its place in the Llandudno area bus network. Cyclists and walkers represented a tiny minority.

Over 80% of respondents had been informed about the monuments by publicity, promotion or information from a Tourist Information Centre. Previous visits, recommendations and local knowledge were the other main sources of information.

Visitors' Experiences

The 2001 survey also asked visitors about their experience. On a nine-point scale (where 9 indicated 'extremely interesting and enjoyable') all respondents rated their visit from 4 up to 9 with two-thirds of responses from 7 up to 9.

Visitors were asked about their likes and dislikes based on their visit.

The favourite qualities of the monuments were their historical interest, their architecture and their sympathetic conservation. The views of sea and mountains from the three mainland castles were highlighted, as was the tranquillity of Beaumaris.

The most favoured facilities were those providing information on the site, particularly *The Eagle and the Dragon* audio-visual show, the shop and the Regimental Museum at Caernarfon and models of the castles and their settings.

Responses to the management of the monuments welcomed the high quality of maintenance at all four castles, freedom to wander and the quality of service.

While more than a quarter of visitors expressed no dislikes following their visit, some thought that access and stairs were difficult at Conwy and Harlech while the cleanliness of the moat was criticised at Beaumaris.

There was felt to be inadequate information, poor signing and lack of a gift shop and tours at Beaumaris; poor public toilets managed by the local authority below the visitor centre at Conwy; and deficiencies in information at all monuments.

Restricted access to the wall walks at Beaumaris was criticised and there were safety concerns at Conwy and Harlech.

The most general requests for more facilities were for cafés and more events within the castles and for more interpretative information. Although the quality of the guidebooks published by Cadw was appreciated, some respondents thought these too expensive for most visitors and there were requests for leaflets and plans to be included in the entry price.

In terms of value for money (on a nine-point scale) fewer than 5% of respondents awarded less than 4 points, while nearly 80% gave from 7 up to 9 points.

The 2001 survey suggested a fairly high degree of visitor satisfaction. It did suggest a demand for on-site catering — not presently available at any of the monuments. Apart from practical difficulties for locating cafés inside the castles, this does imply that some visitors see the monuments as self-contained entities and do not explore the eating-places in the towns. It has long been Cadw's practice not to compete with local cafés, where these are available — as they are in these four towns. Comments on site access and safety sent mixed messages. Some visitors regretted restrictions on access to wall walks with low parapets (e.g. at Beaumaris and Harlech) while others wanted more lighting in dark places and more guardrails to reduce risk.

The 'Turn Back' Factor

There are established methods of obtaining responses from those who visit the monuments. Finding out why other potential visitors do not make a visit is more difficult. They may be turned back during their approach or at the entrance.

In 2001 Cadw commissioned consultants to assess this problem and to research sales at the point of admission. They visited all four castles in the World Heritage Site and made site visit reports. Two of the castles — Caernarfon and Harlech — were included in their final report, in which the site visit reports were supplemented with photographic analysis and recommendations.

The consultants found few problems on the approach to Beaumaris Castle. They found the town attractive, signage clear, car parking 'handy', and the entrance easy to find. Problems thereafter were primarily due to the inadequate ticket office just inside the site entrance. The consultants estimated that 10–15% of visitors turn back before ticket purchase. The custodians thought this was due to a relatively high price when considered against family budgets but the consultants suggested that the inadequate ticket office 'makes it difficult to sell properly'.

The consultants identified more problems at Caernarfon Castle. Routes into the town were poorly signposted and the car parking was either expensive or remote. The approach to the castle was also difficult to find, partly because the entrance in the King's Gate could not be seen easily from the Maes (Castle Square). The ticket kiosk, located in the gate, was considered to inhibit sales through its location and design. The consultants thought that 15% of potential visitors were turned back at the gate because of these factors. However many more failed to get to the gate.

Although there was good main road signposting into Conwy and the castle was very prominent, the consultants considered that visitors found it difficult to find the visitor centre. They also commented on extensive graffiti and vandalism in the town. The layout of the visitor centre was criticised but the number of visitors who turned back before ticket sale was considered low.

There are particular problems in bringing visitors to Harlech Castle and the consultants recognised this. They considered that the approaches from the south were well signed but less so from the north. For good traffic management reasons visitors are brought to the car parks at the foot of the rock, with a daunting climb to the top through a 'high season' entrance kiosk. The main entrance on the rock is reached through very narrow streets.

The consultants thought that the visitor centre at Harlech was too small and unlikely to attract visitors. Cadw would not wish to see a more aggressive building sited in front of the castle. The consultants did not estimate the turn back factor for Harlech. It is probably quite high because of confusion caused by having to have two entrances. The proposal for a funicular railway in the town to link the two levels would be attractive to visitors if design problems can be resolved and a viable project designed.

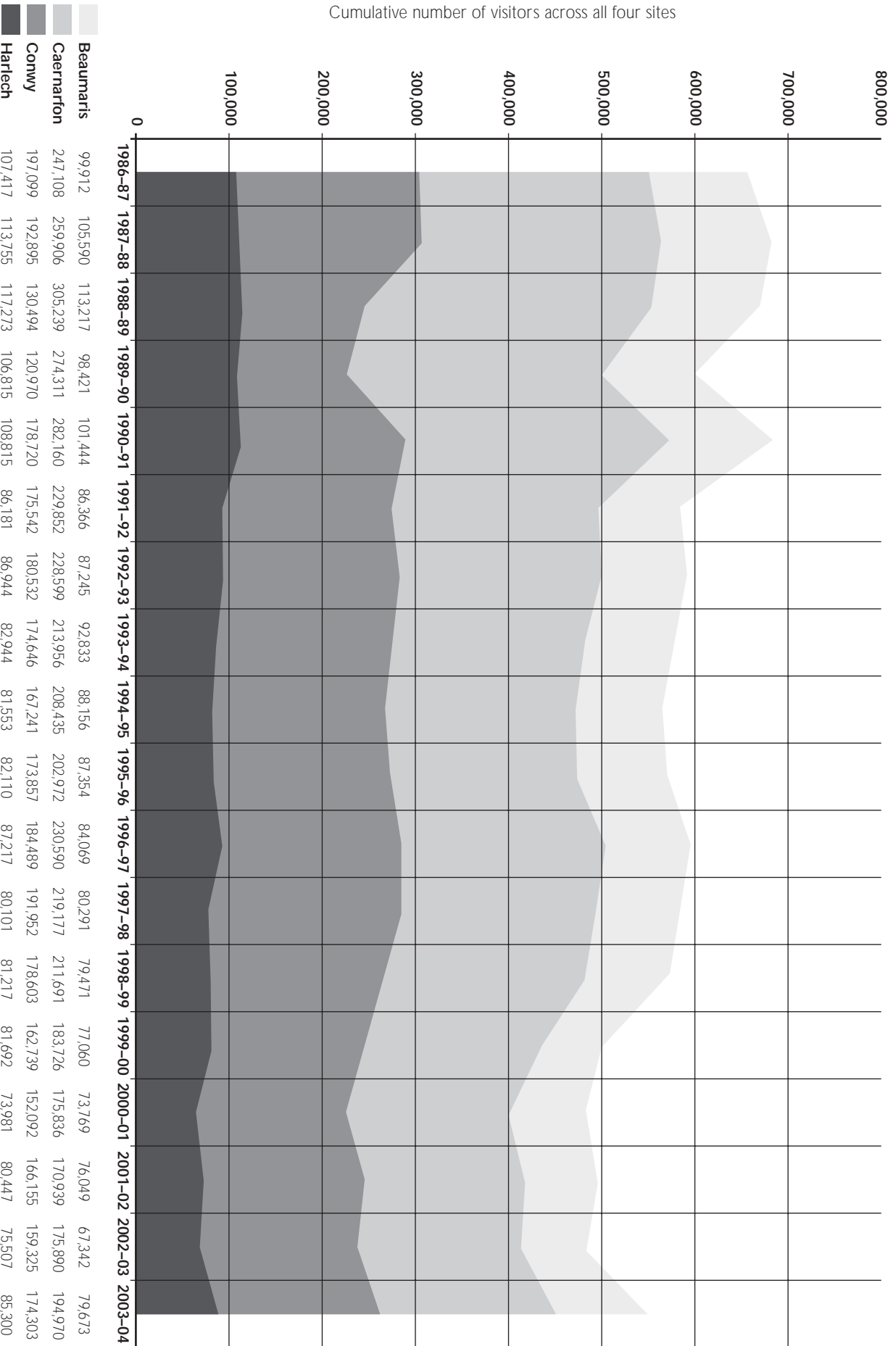
In their general comments the consultants recommended more consistent traffic and pedestrian signage, more training in sales of tickets and guidebooks for site staff and a clear statement of what visitors could expect in each monument — exhibitions, shop and audio-visual show where appropriate — outside the ticket sale point.

The consultants' comments were valuable as an independent view but the many complications of archaeology, land ownership and physical constraints made their recommendations less useful.

The Importance of Market Research

While market research makes an important contribution to the management plan for a World Heritage Site, the needs of the visiting public have to be balanced with other commitments — to conservation, protection, research and education — and cannot be given absolute priority.

Diagram 1.4.2 Number of Visitors to the World Heritage Site 1986-2004



1.4.3 The World Heritage Site and the Community

Many organisations have an interest in the World Heritage Site, because of its historical and cultural associations; its physical presence and impact on the four towns; and its importance for tourism and the economy. Some of these organisations have a national perspective while others are regional or local. Some look at the World Heritage Site from an expert viewpoint and others have a more general interest. There can therefore be no single community view.

During the preparation of the Management Plan, community organisations have been consulted in various ways. Cadw and the local authorities established a Steering Group to manage the process and contribute views from national and local government. The Steering Group conducted a postal survey of organisations with an interest in the World Heritage Site — 33 responses were received from 27 organisations, 40% of those invited. Cadw's management staff and custodians provided additional information obtained from their contacts with local interests and a number of specific issues were discussed with appropriate specialist organisations. The constables and deputy constables, who represent the Crown, and the freeholder of Beaumaris Castle were kept informed. The main findings of these consultations can be summarised as follows.

Awareness

A very high proportion of organisations were aware that the six monuments formed part of one World Heritage Site. Few organisations were interested in all the monuments. Most were interested in only one.

The Monuments and their Settings

A high proportion thought that the historic fabric was kept in good repair and that their setting had not been damaged by inappropriate development since the World Heritage Site was designated. Although there were significant variations between towns, only half considered that properties in the town were generally well maintained. A higher proportion thought that the town provided an appropriate setting for a World Heritage Site.

Access to the World Heritage Site

Three-quarters of respondents thought that access by car, bus and coach was convenient. Although more than half thought it reasonably easy to deliver and collect passengers with disabilities by car, less than half thought that access and parking were easy for disabled drivers. A high proportion of respondents did not think that access for cyclists was convenient, mainly because there were few places to leave a cycle in safety.

Access and Safety within the World Heritage Site

A high proportion of respondents thought that an able-bodied person could visit enough of the monuments to appreciate their original purpose, design and construction. However safe access to wall walks continues to be controversial. In general respondents preferred discreet barriers and signs to restricted access. Opinions about access for those who have to use wheelchairs or walking sticks were evenly divided. There will be legal requirements for equal access from 2004 but the legislation requires only 'reasonable modifications', a term that is very difficult to define for ancient monuments. Cadw is installing new designs of standardised warning signs. A majority of those consulted thought these effective and discreet.

Visitor Management and Services

A majority of respondents thought that visitors were made to feel welcome at those monuments that had staff on site and that staff were well informed and helpful. Most also thought that information on opening hours, charges and facilities was adequate. A high proportion found adequate interpretative information within the monuments. A minority thought that toilets in or near the castles were adequate and well kept and found access difficult — either because of steps or because they were not open as long as the monuments.

A high proportion of respondents applauded the guidebooks produced by Cadw. They also commented favourably on the shops provided in three castles and on places to eat in the four towns.

Three-quarters agreed that the number of visitors was not sufficient to cause erosion to historic masonry.

Pricing

Admission, publication and souvenir prices were considered reasonable by more than half the respondents.

Events

The thirty-nine events offered in 2003 included historical re-enactments, story telling, music and drama. Over half of the respondents thought that they added to the visitors' experience and attracted additional local visitors and tourists. All respondents would like more events to be arranged.

Promotion

A substantial minority of respondents was critical of the publicity provided by Cadw, the Wales Tourist Board and local tourist companies. Even more considered that TV, radio and press did not report interesting stories about the World Heritage Site.

Benefit to the Area

Respondents were aware of the general reduction in the number of tourists visiting the area in recent years. They were evenly divided or undecided as to the part played by the World Heritage Site in moderating this decline. A high proportion agreed that visitors to the World Heritage Site benefit the area by spending time and money in the towns. Just under half thought that the World Heritage Site encouraged local pride and interest but many others were undecided. There was overwhelming support for the proposition that free admission for most educational groups provides a valuable resource for schools and colleges in the area and students from elsewhere.

Although the number of responses to each question did not, in every case, provide answers that were statistically significant, the survey gave a broad indication of community views and pointed to areas where community benefits and relations can be improved.