

Mr Punch's 350th Birthday Celebrated at Ceredigion Museum

Submitted by: Visit Wales

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Ceredigion Museum in Aberystwyth is gearing up to a summer exhibition celebrating 350 years of Punch and Judy, making a great UK family day out (<http://www.visitwales.co.uk>).

On May 9, 1662, Samuel Pepys recorded seeing 'an Italian puppet play... which is very pretty, the best I ever saw' in Covent Garden. Now, 350 years later, that puppet character is still alive and well.

The exhibition kicks off with a day of Punch and Judy shows, in the Museum (<http://www.visitwales.co.uk/things-to-do-in-wales/the-arts-in-wales/museums-and-galleries-in-wales/>) and at the bandstand on the promenade and puppet making workshops on Saturday, July 21. There will be a chance to see the giant birthday card and string of sausages that have been making their way around the country as part of the nationwide 'Big Grin' celebrations. The exhibition at the Museum runs until September 1.

Jim Griffiths, clerk of Aberystwyth (<http://www.visitwales.co.uk/server.php?show=nav.10308>) Town Council, said: "Mr Punch has a long tradition in Aberystwyth, stretching back at least to the Victorian era. We've even had Punch and Judy festivals here in recent years, so it's great to see the old rascal celebrating his birthday at the museum."

The exhibition will feature the puppets of legendary Aberystwyth Punch and Judy performer, Bill Dane, who left his entire collection of puppets to Ceredigion Museum when he died. Also featured will be a film made by Aberystwyth University students, in which Mr Punch leaves his booth and visits local shops to meet his fans.

Ceredigion Museum Curator, Carrie Canham, said: "There will be lots of opportunity for everyone to join in the celebration. There's lots of activities planned, from birthday card making in the exhibition to traditional Punch and Judy shows."