



**Appendix 4 - Historic Visitor  
Centre: Case Studies**



Caerphilly Visitors Centre, South Wales



Cholmley House Visitor Centre, Whitby



Car Park entrance with ticket office, Whitby

## 1. Caerphilly Visitor Centre, South Wales

1.1 Caerphilly Visitor Centre was built 8 years ago on the site of the former cheese market in the heart of the town centre. The Centre is located opposite Caerphilly Castle, an internationally renowned castle attracting between 80,000 - 100,000 tourists annually. The development of the Visitor Centre was achieved through a partnership between Caerphilly County Borough Council, the Welsh Development Agency and the Wales Tourist Board who all played a part in enhancing the reputation of Caerphilly as a tourist centre.

1.2 The Visitor Centre is one of the best tourist information centres in the country with a gift shop which sells locally produced crafts and Cegin Cymru sells fine Welsh food produce. A café and toilet facilities are located on the ground floor.

1.3 The Visitor Centre itself is modelled on Castle Coch and is in a completely different style to Caerphilly Castle. The style is more in keeping with the new shopping centre and newly remodelled Twyn Community Centre. The balcony is made up of 400 medieval arrows constructed in iron. A public space (Twyn Square) with seating also provides a setting to the Centre.

## 2. Cholmley House Visitor Centre, Whitby

2.1 The visitor centre/museum opened in March 2002 and marks the completion of major new landscaping works conducted by English Heritage on the Whitby headland. The four year-project has been achieved by a joint partnership between English Heritage, Scarborough Borough Council and the Strickland Estate with funding contributions from the Heritage Lottery Fund and the European Regional Development Fund as part of its Regional Challenge.

2.2 A total of £5.7million has been spent on the Stanton Williams project as well as on creating new public access to the abbey grounds (these remain in private ownership, with English Heritage as their guardian), new walkways and a new landscaped car park.

2.3 The new visitor centre has been "dropped" discreetly behind the fine classical façade of the mansion house, which was built by the Cholmley family in the late 17th century. The rare 17th century cobbled garden courts in front of the house

have been restored and serve as the grand entrance to the centre. For some visitors, this forms the starting point for their visit. Others, entering from the southern car park via a landscaped ticket booth, may explore the abbey first and then come to the centre.

2.4 The two storey centre contains galleries a shop and café. The interpretation combines the best of modern technology with displays of artefacts, excavated from the headland. On the first floor, a large screen brings Whitby's history from the Anglo-Saxon period to the 20th century in a series of computer generated videos.

2.5 'Talking Heads' are interactive presentations featuring costumed personalities from the Whitby's past and include St. Hild, Hugh Cholmley and the renowned local Victorian photographer Frank Meadow Sutcliffe and Bram Stoker who describes how the atmospheric Abbey ruins inspired his classic horror story 'Dracula'.

2.6 In another presentation on the ground floor, 'How do we Know' archaeologists Richard Morris and Peter 'Buzz' Busby, explain.

2.7 An audio tour also allows visitors to find more information about significant events and episodes as they walk around the site.

2.8 Opening times:

- Now - September 2002 - 10am – 6pm
- October 2002: 10am – 5pm
- November - 31 March 2003: 10am – 4pm
- 24, 25, 26 December 2002 and 1 January 2003: Closed

2.9 Admission Prices:

- Adults: £3.60
- Concessions: £2.70
- Children £ 1.80
- Family £9.00 (2 adults and up to 4 children)

