

Making historical buildings fit for the future

RURAL buildings preservation charity, The Village Alive Trust, is spearheading a conference in June entitled 'Historical Buildings - A Sustainable Future' with illustrious speakers including top advisor on heritage buildings in Wales, Richard Keen and the presenter of Discovering Welsh Houses, Michael Davies.

The Trust is running the event at The Priory Centre, Abergavenny on Friday, June 26th, in conjunction with Cadw, Monmouthshire County Council and The Civic Trust for Wales. The day before, June 25th, delegates can see buildings saved by the grant-funded efforts of the Llangattock Lingoed-based Village Alive Trust.

The conference is for those who aim to make the most of their historic building - whether it is a house, church, farm or commercial site. Owners, heritage building specialists and advisors, and those who provide traditional materials and building techniques are expected to attend.

The speakers, Richard Keen, chairman of the Historic Buildings Advisory Council for Wales, Michael Davies, Cliff Blundell, Edward Holland, Geraldine Delaney and Monmouthshire County Council's conservation manager, Simon Robertshaw, will be followed by the presentation of the trust's inaugural Conservation Award, which has attracted nearly a dozen entries for work on Monmouthshire's heritage buildings.

Keynote speaker Mr Keen has made over 40 television programmes and published many books and articles on aspects of Welsh history and landscape. Formerly curator of the National Museum of Wales and advisor to the National Trust, he has also served on the Ancient Monuments Board for Wales. Michael Davies, architect and BBC presenter of Discovering Welsh Houses, will be 'demystifying listed buildings'. A regular lecturer on building conservation his celebrated projects include the restoration of the Shell Grotto at Pontypool Park and visitor centres at sites including Raglan Castle.

Cliff Blundell, author and building limes consultant to the Aberglasney Restoration Trust in Carmarthenshire has saved over 50 buildings in west Wales from the destructive effects of modern materials. He will speak on the conservation of Welsh vernacular buildings. Edward Holland, projects advisor for The Prince's Regeneration Trust and vice president of The Village Alive Trust, will speak on recycling historic buildings. Geraldine Delaney, consultant director with Heritage and Regeneration UK will take 'small things make a big difference' as her topic, while Simon Robertshaw, a chartered surveyor with a Masters in Historic Building Conservation, will talk about 'planning to enhance your traditional building'.

The conference fee is £25 for individuals, with a discount for early bookings and £55 for companies and public bodies. Information and a booking form can be found at www.villagealivetrust.org.uk or by emailing village.alive@waitrose.com

