Ceredigion

Ceredigion (/ ?k?r??d??i?n / ; Welsh pronunciation : [k?r??d??j?n]) is a county in Mid Wales . The county was created as Cardiganshire (Welsh : Sir Aberteifi) in 1282 in the area of the former Kingdom of Ceredigion . The historic county was abolished in 1974 and reconstituted in 1996 as Ceredigion . The county had a population of 75 @,@ 900 at the 2011 UK census . Aberystwyth , which is the largest town , is one of the two administrative centres ; the other being Aberaeron . Aberystwyth houses Aberystwyth University , Bronglais Hospital and the National Library of Wales . The inland town of Lampeter houses part of the University of Wales Trinity Saint David .

The county is mainly rural with large parts being hilly or mountainous land . There is level , low @-@ lying land on the coastal strip that runs along the margins of Cardigan Bay . There are a number of sandy beaches popular with visitors here , linked by the long @-@ distance Ceredigion Coast Path . More than half the population speak the Welsh language and the county is considered a centre of Welsh culture .

At one time , Ceredigion had more industry than it does today . Lead , silver and zinc were mined here , and many of the sailing ships trading round the coast of Wales were built here . However these industries dwindled over time , and the economy became almost completely dependent on dairying and the rearing of livestock , which were sent to the English market . During the last century , livestock farming has become less profitable , and the population of Cardiganshire has been in decline as people emigrated to more prosperous parts of Wales and to countries abroad . More recently , the population has started rising again as elderly people move into the county for retirement , and various government and European Union initiatives have encouraged tourism and other alternative sources of income .

History

Cardiganshire has been inhabited since prehistoric times ; 170 hill forts and enclosures have been identified across the county and there are many standing stones dating back to the Bronze Age . In pre @-@ Roman , and possibly Roman times , a part of southern Cardiganshire was in the territory of the Demetae and possibly part of that of the Ordovices . According to Nennius , a 10th @-@ century Welsh chronicler , Ceredig , son of the Welsh invader Cunedda , settled in the area in the 5th century . It remained a kingdom ruled by his descendants until it expanded and changed its name , first to Seisyllwg in the late 7th century and , after the union of Seisyllwg with the Kingdom of Dyfed , it was incorporated into Deheubarth in the mid 10th century .

Many pilgrims passed through Cardiganshire on their way to St Davids . Some came by sea and made use of the churches at Mwnt and Penbryn , while others came by land seeking hospitality at such places as Strata Florida Abbey . Both the abbey and Llanbadarn Fawr were important monastic sites of scholarship and education . Place names including ysbyty denote their association with pilgrims .

In 1282 , Edward I of England conquered the principality of Wales and divided the area into counties . The name Cardiganshire was an Anglicisation of the name for the historic kingdom of Ceredigion . One of thirteen traditional counties in Wales , Cardiganshire was also a vice @-@ county . Cardiganshire was split into the five hundreds (administrative area) of Genau 'r @-@ Glyn , Ilar , Moyddyn , Penarth and Troedyraur . In the 18th century there was an evangelical revival of Christianity , and non @-@ conformism became established in the county as charismatic preachers like Daniel Rowland of Llangeitho attracted large congregations . Every community built its own chapel or meeting house , and Cardiganshire became one of the centres of Methodism in Wales with the Aeron Valley being at the centre of the revival .

At this time Cardiganshire was largely cut off from the rest of Wales by poor communications , and the Industrial Revolution largely passed it by . In the uplands , wheeled vehicles were rare in the 18th century , and horses and sleds were still being used for transport . On the coast , trade in herrings and corn took place across the Irish Sea . In the 19th century , many of the rural poor emigrated to the New World from Cardigan , between five and six thousand leaving the town

between 1790 and 1860 . Aberystwyth became the main centre for the export of lead and Aberaeron and Newquay did brisk coastal trade . The building of the railway from Shrewsbury in the 1860s encouraged visitors and hotels sprang up in the town to accommodate them .

This area of the county of Dyfed became a district of Wales under the name Ceredigion in 1974 under the Local Government Act 1972 , and since 1996 , has formed the county of Ceredigion . According to the 2001 census , Ceredigion has the fourth highest proportion of Welsh speakers in the population at 61 % ; only Gwynedd , the Isle of Anglesey and Carmarthenshire have a higher proportion .

= = Geography = =

Ceredigion is a coastal county , bordered by Cardigan Bay to the west , Gwynedd to the north , Powys to the east , Carmarthenshire to the south and Pembrokeshire to the south @-@ west . Its area is 1 @,@ 795 square kilometres (693 sq mi) . In 2010 the population was 76 @,@ 938 , making it the second most sparsely populated county in Wales .

The main settlements are Aberaeron , Aberporth , Aberystwyth , Borth , Cardigan , Lampeter , Llanarth , Llanddewi Brefi , Llandysul , Llanilar , Llanrhystud , Llanon , New Quay , and Tregaron . The largest of these are Aberystwyth and Cardigan .

The Cambrian Mountains cover much of the east of the county ; this large area forms part of the desert of Wales . In the south and west , the surface is less elevated . The highest point is Pumlumon at 2 @,@ 467 feet (752 m) , other Marilyns include Pen y Garn and Llan Ddu Fawr . On the slopes of Pumlumon five rivers have their sources : the Severn , the Wye , the Dulas , the Llyfnant and the Rheidol , the last of which meets the Afon Mynach in a 300 feet (91 m) plunge at the Devil 's Bridge chasm . The largest river is the River Teifi which forms the border with Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire for part of its length . The towns of Lampeter , Llandysul , Newcastle Emlyn and Cardigan are all in the Teifi Valley , and each has communities on each side of the river , in different counties . Other significant rivers include the River Aeron which has its estuary at Aberaeron , and the River Ystwyth and the River Rheidol both of which reach the sea in Aberystwyth harbour .

Ceredigion 's 50 miles (80 km) of coastline has sandy beaches . In 2011 Ceredigion 's beaches were awarded five Blue Flag Awards , four Green Coast Awards , and fourteen Seaside Awards . Ceredigion is one of only two places in the United Kingdom with a permanent presence of bottlenose dolphins . Another member of the fauna is the red kite ; these may be seen in various localities in the county , but at the Red Kite Feeding Centre near Tregaron , they are fed each day , and large numbers congregate along with hungry crows and other birds .

Ceredigion had the largest population growth of any county in Wales , with a 19 @.@ 5 % increase from 1991 to 2003 . Tourism and agriculture , chiefly hill farming , are the most important industries . In addition , two universities are within the county boundaries : Aberystwyth University and the Lampeter campus of the University of Wales , Trinity Saint David . The Welsh Plant Breeding Station is near Aberystwyth and linked to the University . The National Library of Wales , founded in 1907 , is also in Aberystwyth . Ceredigion is an extremely rural county ; the largest town , Aberystwyth , has fewer than 15 @,@ 000 permanent residents and the remainder of the population of the county is scattered over 150 small towns , villages and hamlets .

The county has no large commercial areas . The nearest substantial settlements are located at least 1 hour 45 minutes drive away . Approximate road distances from Ceredigion 's largest town , Aberystwyth , are : Swansea , 75 miles (121 km) to the south ; Shrewsbury , 76 miles (122 km) to the east , in the English county of Shropshire ; and Wrexham , 82 miles (132 km) to the northeast . The capital , Cardiff , is over 100 miles (160 km) from most parts of the county . Although Ceredigion and Gwynedd share a boundary , it is not possible to travel directly between the two by land as all road and rail links avoid the Dyfi estuary and pass through Dyfi Junction or Machynlleth in Powys .

Dylan Thomas lived in New Quay and Talsarn and frequented Aberaeron and Lampeter . The Dylan Thomas Trail runs through part of the county , linking the places associated with the poet . The

Ceredigion Coast Path is a long @-@ distance footpath following the coastline from Cardigan to Ynyslas , a distance of about 60 miles (97 km) . It can conveniently be divided into seven sections and has some spectacular scenery .

= = Local government = =

Between 1888 and 1974 , the county was governed by Cardiganshire County Council , which took over the functions of county administration from the Quarter Sessions court in 1889 . The county was abolished in 1974 by the Local Government Act 1972 ? and it was succeeded by the district of Ceredigion in the new county of Dyfed . This district became a unitary authority on 1 April 1996 under the name of Cardiganshire ; to change its name back to Ceredigion the following day . It has , apart from minor realignments , identical borders to the former county .
A referendum was held on 20 May 2004 on whether to have a directly elected mayor for the county , the first in Wales . The Llais Ceredigion political initiative had been formed with this aim but the proposal was rejected .

= = Economy = =

Farming has traditionally been the basis of Cardiganshire 's economy , with dairying and stock @-@ rearing being the main occupations . Before the first railway was built in 1866 , the stock used to be herded over the mountains to England , where Rugby , Northampton and London were important destinations . At one time there was a sizeable mining industry in Cardiganshire , but the reserves of lead , silver and zinc became unprofitable to mine by the early part of the twentieth century . Shipping was also important in the county , with coal and lime being imported in coastal vessels , and mineral ores and oak bark for tanning being exported . Shipbuilding was an important industry with most of Wales ' sailing vessels being built in Cardiganshire .
Cardiganshire had a substantial population in the early modern period but this declined during the nineteenth century as wider social and economic developments affected all aspects of Cardiganshire life . Traditional industries were in decline , agriculture was in decline and it was becoming increasingly difficult for a still @-@ rising population to earn a living within their native parishes and communities . By the first half of the twentieth century , falling livestock prices and greater world competition made farming unprofitable and many residents of Cardiganshire moved to other parts of South Wales , where there were better employment opportunities , and many more emigrated to the United States , Canada , Patagonia and Australia . Another factor was that the owners of the great landed estates , who had for so long dominated the politics of the county , were in many cases heavily in debt . This second factor contributed to the loss of landowner influence in the running of the county , a trend that became very apparent at the first elections to the Cardiganshire County Council in 1889 .
By the second half of the twentieth century , the declining population trend had gone into reverse . Increasing numbers of retired people were arriving to make their home in the tranquil surroundings , and after the Beacham Commission in the 1960s , the British government realised that the rural way of life in parts of Wales was in crisis , and started to react . Through government initiatives and local actions , opportunities in tourism , rural crafts , specialist food shops , farmers ' markets and added @-@ value food products began to emerge . However , in 2011 , at 3 @.@ 1 % , Ceredigion still had one of the highest proportions of its population working in agriculture , forestry and fishing , close behind such other places as Orkney and Shetland . Another use for marginal land in exposed positions is the provision of renewable wind energy ; Cefn Croes Wind Farm near Devil 's Bridge has 39 turbines and a nominal capacity of 58 @,@ 500 kW .
Farm incomes have been in decline over the years and , as well as being a European Objective I area , in 2001 Ceredigion was designated a regional " Tourist growth area " by the Wales Tourist Board . There is little industry other than farming , so tourism plays an important part in the county 's economy . Visitors stay in hotels , guest houses and homes offering bed @-@ and @-@ breakfast , self @-@ catering cottages , caravans and camp sites , spending money in local shops , dine in

local establishments and visit the county 's many attractions . Ceredigion prides itself on offering an unspoilt natural landscape , and Aberystwyth lays claim to being the capital of Welsh culture .

= = Sport and leisure = =

The main football team in the county is Aberystwyth Town F.C. which plays in the Welsh Premier League , its home matches being at the Park Avenue ground in the town . It has yet to come higher than third in the League but won the Welsh Cup in 1899 / 1900 and the Welsh Amateur Cup in 1930 / 31 , 1932 / 33 and 1969 / 70 . Cardigan Town Football Club , also known as the " Magpies " , play in Division 1 of the Ceredigion League which they won in 1968 / 69 , 1995 / 96 , 1999 / 2000 , 2000 / 01 and 2002 / 03 .

Leisure activities available in the county include beach activities , rambling , cycling , sea fishing , canoeing , sailing and horse riding . Many of the towns and villages along the coast have small harbours and facilities for sailing , dolphin watching and other maritime activities . The River Teifi is a renowned salmon fishing river and also has a series of rapids near Llandysul where canoeing , kayaking and white water rafting take place .

The county is rich in archaeological remains such as forts , earthworks and standing stones . Historic sites that can be accessed include Aberystwyth Castle and Cardigan Castle , as well as Strata Florida Abbey .

Other visitor attractions include the Cwmystwyth Mines , Devil 's Bridge , the Bwlch Nant yr Arian Forest Visitor Centre , Elvis Rock , Cors Caron (Tregaron bog) , the Vale of Rheidol Railway , Aberystwyth Cliff Railway .

The National Library of Wales is at Aberystwyth and there is information on local history at the Ceredigion Museum , also in Aberystwyth . There is also the technical museum Internal Fire ? Museum of Power , which is at Tan @-@ y @-@ groes near the coast road . Stately homes in the county open to the public include the Hafod Estate and Llanerchaeron .

= = Transport = =

The Cambrian Line provides mainline railway services between Aberystwyth and Shrewsbury , where passengers can join services for London and elsewhere . Passengers can change at Dovey Junction railway station for trains to Pwllheli . There are no motorways in Ceredigion . The A487 coast road links Cardigan with Aberystwyth , passing close to Newquay and through Aberaeron , and the A44 goes eastwards from Aberystwyth to Rhayader , Leominster and Worcester . There are local bus services between the main centres of population , and long distance services between Aberystwyth and Cardiff . A bus service known as " Bwcabus " operates in the south of the county offering customised transport for rural dwellers .

There are no commercial airports but the West Wales Airport near the village of Aberporth is licensed for the deployment of civil and military unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) s and is used for flying and testing these drones . There are no ports or ferry termini in the county but several of the coastal towns have facilities for yachts and small craft .