

## **AMGUEDDFA CYMRU – February 2018: Background Information for the Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee**

Amgueddfa Cymru regards 2018 as a year of opportunity, as we begin to implement the Thurley Review recommendations, and in October, complete the redevelopment of St Fagans.

### **Successes in 2017**

We will be building on successes achieved in 2017, which included:

- **Growth in Visitor Numbers.** This included welcoming a record 297,792 visitors to the seven museums in August – the best ever August visitor figure achieved by Amgueddfa Cymru – up on August 2016 by 18.9%.
- **Exhibitions.** 2017 was an exceptional year for exhibitions, especially at National Museum Cardiff, which hosted the spectacular contemporary art exhibition 'From Bacon to Doig', as well as 'Agatha Christie', 'Dinosaur Babies' and 'Who Decides?' (the latter curated by clients of The Wallich, the homelessness charity). Dinosaur Babies (a charging exhibition) attracted over 50,000 visitors and achieved its income target of £180k.
- **New permanent Photography Gallery.** Enhanced by a wonderful gift by Wales's most significant living photographer, David Hurn, Amgueddfa Cymru now has one of the best photography collections in the UK.
- **Schools.** 180,000 school visits to our museums, making us once again the largest provider of learning outside the classroom in Wales. Of these, 12,000 school pupils enjoyed the brand new activity spaces in the Weston Centre for Learning at St Fagans between 1 September and 30 November.
- **Fundraising.** We secured over £600,000 in the last three months of 2017 alone from trusts, foundations and private donors towards the costs of the St Fagans project.
- **Apprenticeships and volunteers.** We appointed four new mining apprentices at Big Pit, including our first female guide at the site, supported craft apprenticeships at St Fagans and appointed a blacksmith at the National Slate Museum. 700 people volunteered their time at Amgueddfa Cymru in 2017 and of these people 42% were under the age of 25 years old.

### **What Does 2018 Have In Store?**

1. **St Fagans as an exemplar project.** The transformation of St Fagans is said to be currently the Heritage Lottery Fund's most significant project in the UK, with the biggest grant ever to Wales (£11.5 million) along with support from Welsh Government. With exemplary contemporary architecture, and innovative participative galleries, it will be a new model for a museum of history, engaging visitors through the head, the heart and the hand, and asking searching questions and prompting critical thinking about key stages in the nation's past. Once St Fagans is fully re-opened in autumn 2018, it will take its place on the international stage as one of the great national museums of history in the world.
2. **Greater engagement with virtual visitors:** The website recently moved over to the flagship .wales /.cymru domain and has been completely redesigned to improve orientation, e-commerce, and to provide more up-to-date content about Wales and its place

in the world. It attracts around 1.5 million visits a year. Engagement on social media has increased by 460% over the last three years, since the implementation of our updated Social Media Policy and training programme. Award-winning campaigns such as #welshdino enable us to reach an estimated average of 2 million screens on any given week, and we continue to build on this success.

3. **Increase in number of physical visitors.** Despite having to restrict access to substantial part of St Fagans during the redevelopment, Amgueddfa Cymru has managed to sustain its visitor numbers at just below 1.7 million per annum by increasing numbers to other sites, particularly National Museum Cardiff, where visits have risen from 360,000 to 495,000 per annum over the last five years. This success is a result of a stronger temporary exhibition and learning programme, and also press coverage valued at £7 million a year across all sites. St Fagans in turn is expected to attract an additional 250,000 visits per annum within five years of completion.
4. **Economic impact.** Every £1 invested by the Welsh Government in the National Museum generates £4 of additional expenditure in Wales. This is the highest of any publicly funded cultural institution in Wales, contributing £83m of Gross Value Added (GVA) to the Welsh economy. Visitors from outside Wales have increased as a proportion of total visitors from 37% in 2012 to 42% in 2015 (a further survey is scheduled for 2018), so we would expect to see our economic impact increasing. The Value Wales Toolkit estimates £27,242,693 money generated for Wales and the UK against the delivery of the St Fagans redevelopment construction contract, which included a Community Benefit Plan.
5. **Higher Education and Research.** The Museum is the only national institution in Wales, other than universities, that has Independent Research Organisation (IRO) status. This enables the Museum to apply directly to the Research Councils for funding. In 2016 the Museum appointed its first Head of Research, supported by an eminent Research Advisory Committee. We have active MoUs or active partnerships with all Welsh universities encompassing public programmes, research and support for their capital developments and much of this work will come into fruition this year.
6. **Income generation.** In 2016/17 - the last full financial year - the Museum raised £10.3 million in income from all non-GIA sources (including Enterprises, research and expert consultancies, donations and sponsorship). The Museum is now significantly expanding its income generation activities, and intends to recruit a Commercial Director to take this forward.
7. **Partnerships with other museums in Wales.** The Museum works closely with the Federation of Museums in Wales, and supports local museums through loans and exhibitions. This includes our 10 year relationship providing exhibitions with Oriel Y Parc in Pembrokeshire National Park. In 2014, after a 20 year absence, Amgueddfa Cymru and the Federation collaborated in hosting the UK Museums Association's most innovative and successful annual conference to date. The conference is due to return to Wales in 2020 or 2021. A legacy of the conference was the Welsh Museums Festival, and Amgueddfa Cymru will once again be working closely with local museums to deliver this year's festival in October.
8. **Welsh language.** St Fagans is the home and the leading public centre for the Welsh language among cultural institutions in Wales. The National Slate Museum Llanberis

and the National Wool Museum Drefach are also the leading Welsh language institutions in their regions. 22% of Amgueddfa Cymru's visitors across all sites are first language Welsh speakers or are learning the Welsh language. In partnership with the National Centre for Learning Welsh and to support Welsh Government's Strategy to increase the number of Welsh speakers, we have established a festival, *Gŵyl ar Lafar* for Welsh learners to practice their Welsh in heritage and cultural settings. We have also joined Work Welsh to support and deliver Welsh language training for our workforce in 2018.

9. **Cultural participation and social inclusion.** The Museum's development of volunteer programmes, in partnership with community organisations like DrugAid Wales and the homeless charity The Wallich, is described by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation as "a beacon" for the rest of the museum sector in the United Kingdom. We have been successful in obtaining Heritage Lottery Funding for the development phase of Kick the Dust. As part of this five-year programme we will work in partnership with Barnardo's, Promo Cymru and Llamau to engage with young people aged 11-25 living in areas of multiple deprivation, at risk of exclusion and/or experiencing Adverse Childhood Experiences.
10. **Culture and poverty.** The Museum leads the UK museum sector in developing programmes to enhance the life chances, through cultural participation, of children experiencing poverty. We work with the Knowledge and Analytical Service (KAS) in Welsh Government to lead the evaluation strand for the Fusion: Creating Opportunities through Culture initiative. We are also a lead cultural partner and provider in the Fusion programme, and will deliver strategic cultural projects linked to employability, empowerment, early years and family learning, and health and wellbeing. In 2018 this will include delivering the Cultural Ambition Project as a partner with CCSkills, MALD and the National Skills Academy.
11. **Supporting the Welsh Government's National Goals.** Amgueddfa Cymru works with Wales's national institutions in helping the nation to achieve the goals of the Well-being of Future Generations Act (2015) for education, health and well-being (for example, dementia programmes), addressing poverty, environmental change (for example, species taxonomy and monitoring) and economic development. Our Vision Commitments and Objectives are aligned with the Well-being Goals.
12. **International role.** Amgueddfa Cymru has long term partnerships, underpinned by MoUs, with national governments and museums in China and Japan. The Natural Sciences Department alone has long term partnerships with 40 overseas museums. As well as loaning individual specimens and works of art, the Museum has toured major income generating exhibitions over the last decade to the Gulf, the United States and Japan. Following the exhibition 'Nature's Song' from the Chongqing region of China in 2017, the Museum is working with the Japanese Government Cultural Agency and the National Museum of Japanese History to bring a major exhibition of Japanese Art and Design - the first ever on this scale outside London - to open at National Museum Cardiff in June 2018. This project has received the strong support of the Japanese Embassy and Japanese companies in the UK.

## **How We Achieve This . . . . Our Unique Identity.**

**Our commitment to the public.** Our Vision as an organisation is ‘**inspiring People, Changing Lives**’, and this is the foundation of all our work. Research underpins everything we do, and the exceptional range of our research on visitor learning and cultural participation provides us with a depth of understanding of the social value and impact of our community partnerships, exhibitions and learning programmes.

**Inter-disciplinarity.** The Museum is the most inter-disciplinary national museum in the United Kingdom, embracing: Art, Design, Earth Sciences, Life Sciences, Archaeology, Social History, Oral History, Industrial History, and Learning and other Social Sciences.

**Geographical distribution.** The Museum has sites in North West Wales (Slate Museum, Llanberis), West Wales (Wool Museum, Drefach), South West Wales (Industrial and Maritime Museum, Swansea), and South East Wales (St Fagans and National Museum Cardiff in Cardiff; the Roman Legion Museum in Caerleon, and Big Pit in Blaenavon), as well as the National Collections Centre in Nantgarw. We also work in partnership with Wrexham Museum and Oriel y Parc, as well as local museums throughout Wales to enable access to the national collections.

**Collections and curatorial expertise.** Amgueddfa Cymru holds over 5 million items in total. Of these around 3 million specimens are in the natural science collection; through these, the Museum holds the only national evidence base for climate change in Wales over centuries, millennia and aeons - a vital resource for the nation now and in the future. It also holds the archaeological archive for over 50% of the historic environment in Wales, a total of 1,275,000 objects. It has the most significant collections of social history and oral history in Wales, comprising 396,823 items. The Museum also holds the national collections of Welsh and European art, including some of the finest Impressionist works in the world.