

## **Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales**

**Update for the Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee  
January 2019**

### **Highlights from 2018**

#### **Growth in Visitor Numbers**

This included welcoming 1,800,000 visitors to our seven national museums – with 42% coming from outside Wales. This was highest ever number of visitors since the Museum was founded in 1907 and an increase in attendance of 101.7% since 2001, when the Welsh Government introduced free entry. We also reached over 150,000 followers on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, and 1.6 million people viewed almost 6.2 million pages on our website.

#### **St Fagans National Museum of History Redevelopment**

We made history with the completion of the £30 million redevelopment of St Fagans National Museum of History in October, a project that was only made possible with significant support from the Heritage Lottery Fund and the Welsh Government.

We involved people across Wales in creating three new galleries and reconstructing Llys Llywelyn, a medieval court – creating history with rather than for people, thus facilitating people's access to their cultural rights. We also collaborated with artists, craftspeople, young people, academics and community groups to reimagine the Museum.

We raised £960,000 for the St Fagans capital fundraising appeal, which included gifts from the Garfield Weston Foundation, the Foyle Foundation and the Moondance Foundation. The opening of a new gift shop and restaurant at St Fagans was also part of the redevelopment project.

The site received thousands of visitors over the first weekend and the galleries have been well received. Visitors have spent time on activities in the galleries, have responded to the content, and are already providing feedback. St Fagans has already won several awards including the RICS Tourism and Leisure award for Wales and Highly Commended across the UK; Best Craftsperson or Apprentice award, Heritage Angel Awards Wales and Best Rescue of a Historic Building over £5 million, Heritage Angel Awards Wales.

#### **Events & Exhibitions**

We hosted 29 exhibitions and 13 displays across our museums and partner organisations, telling inspiring stories and celebrating Wales's vibrant culture and Welsh language.

We worked with the Japanese Government Cultural Agency and the National Museum of Japanese History to bring *Kizuna: Wales Japan Design* to National Museum Cardiff in summer 2018. *Kizuna* was a major exhibition of Japanese Art and Design - the first ever on this scale outside London – which attracted nearly 60,000 visitors over a 12 week period.

We marked the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our partnership with the Derek Williams Trust with *Who Decides?* - a major exhibition of modern and contemporary art run in partnership with homelessness charity The Wallich. The ground-breaking exhibition attracted over 91,000 visitors and was conceived and curated by 12 women and men who have experienced homelessness in Wales.

Of particular relevance in the current climate of #MeToo the photography exhibition for our new permanent photography gallery was *Women in Focus*, which invited us to examine how photography has been used to misrepresent women through objectification and idealization.

*Lle Hanes* at the National Eisteddfod in Cardiff saw us working in partnership with the National Library of Wales, the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales, Cadw, People's Collection Wales, Cardiff Story Museum, Glamorgan Archives and others to bring together objects and stories about Cardiff Bay.

We developed a new Events Strategy and Action Plan for 2018-23. Programmes delivered included: celebrations of Diwali, Black History month, Pride and LGBT+; new programmes including Silent Discos and Sleepovers; as well as the re-introduction of Halloween and Christmas Nights as market leader events at St Fagans National Museum of History.

## **Partnerships and Participation**

We collaborated with over 120 charities and public sector organisations. Our partnerships enables us to focus on long-term needs, ensuring we use our resources effectively to benefit people in Wales.

We are a leading cultural partner and provider in the programme *Fusion, creating opportunities through culture*, which saw us work with a huge range of partners including eight local authorities. We are also one of twelve organisations across the UK to be successful in obtaining funding from the National Lottery through the Heritage Lottery Fund to develop *Kick the Dust*, a five-year programme to increase youth engagement with heritage in Wales.

We opened a chill out room at the National Waterfront Museum, which was later highly commended at the Wales Council for Voluntary Action awards. The concept was inspired by a teenage volunteer with autism and allows people to take time out, relax and feel calm.

## **Learning for Life**

We remain the leading provider of learning outside the classroom in Wales, welcoming 187,249 pupils and students, and over 420,995 informal learners in 2017/18.

We launched *Ar Lafar*, a festival for Welsh Language learners, developed with the National Centre for Learning Welsh at the National Slate Museum, the National Waterfront Museum and St Fagans National Museum of History. Over 635 Welsh language learners participated in the Festival, which has now been established as an annual event.

We reached over 192,000 users via our vibrant digital learning programme. New bilingual digital experiences include the development of a Roman iBook at the National Roman Legion Museum and Google Virtual Reality Expedition at Big Pit National Coal Museum, created as part of Google's Expeditions Programme to reach 1 million school-children across the UK. The expedition helped to prepare learners with additional learning needs for their visit underground and was the first expedition to be created in the Welsh language.

We also developed our Early Years programme for children under five, to support families who face disadvantage and in particular families living in Pioneers Areas.

## **Income Generation and Fundraising**

We continued to diversify our funding from research, charging, trading company profit and revenue fundraising which resulted in an overall increase in net income of 46% and £1.9 million in donations.

One initiative going from strength to strength is the programme for Cruise Ship Passengers at the National Slate Museum, with 1,200 passengers from the MV Corinthian visiting the museum. Passengers paid for a welcome package which included a typical quarryman meal, a presentation on community history and a chance to meet one of the Museum's very own quarrymen.

## **Research and Conservation**

In the last 10 years, our scientists have discovered over 400 new species of living and extinct species from over 65 countries.

We currently have 68 pioneering research projects ranging from natural sciences and art, to history and social sciences.

Our 5 million objects and intangible heritage include some of the finest masterpieces of impressionist art outside Paris.

## **Supporting Skills and Volunteering**

We appointed four new mining apprentices at Big Pit National Coal Museum, including our first female guide, supported craft apprenticeships at St Fagans

National Museum of History and appointed a blacksmith at the National Slate Museum.

Over 700 volunteers donated 29,000 hours of their time. Of these people 42% were under the age of 25 and 4% of our new volunteers consider themselves BAME. 8% of our volunteers consider themselves to have a disability or additional learning needs. We worked with organisations such as the Down's Syndrome Association and the National Autistic Society to make our volunteer programme more accessible. In April 2018 we also received the Investors in Volunteers award for our outstanding work with volunteers.

## **What does 2019 have in store?**

### **Learning for Life**

We are developing programmes and resources to meet the needs of the new curriculum currently in development and are developing a close working relationship with Postgraduate Certificate in Education courses across Wales. We hope to launch the Skills Report in 2019 and will continue with the apprenticeship scheme at Big Pit National Coal Museum.

### **Evaluation**

We will be undertaking a detailed summative evaluation of the St Fagans National Museum of History redevelopment to ensure lessons learnt are shared with the wider sector. We will also be re-branding the St Fagans Food Festival to celebrate its tenth Anniversary and offering craft courses across Amgueddfa Cymru.

### **Health and Wellbeing**

Amgueddfa Cymru is participating in the Mind Cymru Time to Change Campaign and is developing a range of initiatives to support staff well-being. We will also be applying for additional funding to support new health and well-being programmes. We are working towards submitting an Investors in People standard award. 69% of staff participated in the survey over the summer and 28 members of staff are now working together across Amgueddfa Cymru to develop an Action Plan for the workforce.

### **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 2018. The Museum's contribution through the construction work for the St Fagans National Museum of History redevelopment project was £27 million over overall investment in the Wales and UK economy.

## Exhibitions

Building on our role in leading photography in Wales we are planning a major photography season. This will feature the internationally renowned photographers Martin Parr, Ernst and Hilla Becher and August Sander for autumn 2019.

*David Nash: Sculpture through the Seasons* will be David's first major solo exhibition in Wales and will highlight the importance of Capel Rhiw as studios and environment for Nash's 'family of sculptures'.

The Fossil Swamp AC-NMW has been working with the Brymbo Heritage Group for several years to conserve world-class fossil finds from the Brymbo Steelworks site. The exhibition will be used to discuss why we now need to move from fossil fuels to more sustainable energy sources with links to the Future Generations and Environment Act supporting government and Amgueddfa Cymru Visions.

*Snakes*, our major charged exhibition for families, will take place during summer 2019.

*Leonardo 500* - To mark the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Leonardo's death in 2019, the Royal Collection Trust has organised a UK wide programme where they will lend 12 Leonardo drawings each to 12 UK venues. This will be a charged for exhibition.

National Waterfront Museum Swansea is working on their *1918: The Return to Peace* exhibition focusing on industry after the end of the war.

St Fagans National Museum of History is working with local communities on an event in February 2019 to commemorate the Victory Ball held at Oakdale Institute in 1919.

In 2019 we will deliver a Year of Discovery exhibition at Oriel Y Parc using AC collections of archaeology, geology and art to explore prehistoric Pembrokeshire, climate change and cultural ownership. We will also begin a collaborative three-year programming process with PCNPA, OyP and local stakeholders, with the intended outcome of developing new audiences and embedding community engagement at the heart of the OyP programme.

2019 will see us working in collaborative partnership with Wrexham County Borough Museum to produce an exhibition around the making of a replica Mold Gold Cape. The Mold Cape is a unique ceremonial cape of gold, made during the Early Bronze Age around 3,700 years ago and this exhibition will focus on the findings of experimental archaeologists to understand how this icon of Welsh archaeology was made.

Aberystwyth Old College: The hugely popular natural history exhibition *Wriggle: The Wonderful World of Worms*, will be presented at Aberystwyth University Old College in April 2019, in support of their Heritage Lottery Fund bid to create a museum

standard gallery and we look forward to further developing our relationship with the university.

We will be working with Chepstow and Abergavenny Museums to support future programmes and exploring new ways of working with museums and galleries in Wales with the Federation of Museums in Wales.

Building on the strong relationship between Amgueddfa Cymru and Japan, we aim to launch a digital image display of unique *Sakubei Yamamoto Coal Mining Paintings* to be held at Big Pit in 2019 – 2020.

### **Income Generation and Fundraising**

In 2017/18 - the last full financial year – out of a total income of £36.6m the Museum raised £9.5 million from all non-GIA sources (including trading company turnover, restricted and unrestricted donations and sponsorship). This included net unrestricted revenue income, available for the Museum's core activities, of £1.25m (including research and charging, trading company profits and recharges, and revenue fundraising). This is a 46% increase on 2016/17, reflecting the Museum's efforts in expanding its income generation activities. The Museum is expanding these activities further and is recruiting a Commercial Director to take this forward.

### **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.

### **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 1.6 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.

We have also introduced a technology first for UK museums: Museum ExplorAR, an Augmented Reality experience providing our visitors with an enhanced interpretation to some of our permanent exhibitions. Due to positive review and the results from our evaluation, the experience is being extended indefinitely with ideas for future content in the pipeline. We are also planning Virtual Reality (VR) experiences at two of our museums - with Museum's focus on new digital experiences as a potential income stream, we are developing the knowledge and skills to determine the feasibility of commercial digital ventures and the operational awareness to run them.

To further improve our reach and accessibility, we are in the process of commissioning accessibility testing for the website. This will result in a number of

recommendations around design, website architecture and content that will be implemented over 2019-20. The Museum is also exploring access needs in the galleries at National Museum Cardiff and how digital technologies can help. This will build on our work on iPads, phones and Augmented Reality to improve accessibility in our physical spaces.

### **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. We are in the process of finalising an MoU with the National Museum of Ireland, to be launched in the Spring of 2019 and are expanding our international partnerships, which will be even more important post Brexit to ensure that Wales remains to play a leading role on the international stage.

### **Partnerships with other museums in Wales**

The Museum works closely with the Federation of Museums and Galleries in Wales, and supports local museums through loans and exhibitions. This includes our 10 year relationship providing exhibitions with Oriol 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 continues to work closely with local museums to deliver the Festival annually since then. Amgueddfa Cymru has also been working with the Fed and others on developing a new Museums Strategy for Wales.

### **Roof Works at the National Roman Legion Museum**

In September 2018 the National Roman Legion Museum closed its doors to the public so that essential roof maintenance could take place. The museum will remain closed until autumn 2019 however, staff will continue to deliver the Museum's formal provision for schools during this period.

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

#### **Our commitment to the public**

Our vision '**Inspiring People, Changing Lives**', expresses our commitment to achieving social justice through cultural participation and 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.

**Interdisciplinary**

The Museum is the most interdisciplinary 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 (Waterfront 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.