# Happy Birthday National Waterfront Museum!

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Welcoming on average a quarter of a million visitors each year from across Swansea, Wales, Britain and beyond, the museum is most certainly making its mark on Wales' cultural map and in November 2009, officially welcomed its one millionth visitor.

Since its inception, it has positioned itself as a catalyst for a new-era of museums with its interactive, hands-on technology and has become renowned for its imaginative events and exhibitions, innovative collections as well as award-winning education programmes.

It offers visitors the opportunity to explore the exciting human stories about innovation and industry in Wales, now and over the past 300 years. There are 100 audio visual exhibits including 36 state of the art interactive displays and some very large and now technologically obsolete objects from across Wales including the world's first steam locomotive, a brick press and one of the very few surviving coal wagons.

Over the last five years, the museum has presented visitors with more than 100 diverse exhibitions. Highlights include taking the national lead to commemorate the bicentenary of the abolition of slavery in 2007 and a display celebrating the work Isambard Kingdom Brunel - one of Wales's most influential engineers of the nineteenth century.

Featured objects have included cars, boats and trucks; sugar cane and cotton plants; a Welsh tea set that's been to Australia and back - twice and an anti-suffragette doll. The biggest was a half-tonne rowing boat and the smallest was the last drop of oil squeezed from the Llandarcy oil refinery.

The public events programme also continues to prove extremely popular. More than 1000 events have been staged from national competitions and cultural activities to the arrival of Dr Who's Cybermen and chickens, ducks and sheep from Swansea's Community Farm.

To mark the fifth anniversary, the Museum will host a special event for visitors on Sunday 17 October, 11am-4.30pm. Highlights will include the incredible Titan the Robot – a guest of the opening celebrations in 2005 – musical performances from West Glamorgan Youth Orchestra, arts and crafts, balloon wizardry plus much more.

The museum is also asking members of the public for their fondest memories over the last five years. These stories and pictures can be posted onto the National Waterfront Museum's Facebook page as well as on Twitter and written memories will be featured in main reception.

Speaking about this special occasion, Steph Mastoris, Head of the National Waterfront Museum, said: "Celebrating the arrival of our fifth anniversary is a real honour for us all at the National Waterfront Museum and we are delighted to have reached this milestone with fantastic visitor figures along the way.

"Summer 2010 (July, August and September) has been one of the best performing seasons for the Museum – the overall visitor figure for this period was nearly 18% higher than the average for the same period in the previous four years.

“As well as presenting visitors with a fascinating free day out, the museum plays a key role as one of Swansea’s major attractions thus adding to the city’s cultural offering and playing an important part in its regeneration.

“We’re delighted to be providing the quality of education, exhibitions and events, as well as levels of service that visitors come back to over and over again.”

Cllr Graham Thomas, Swansea Council’s Cabinet Member for Culture, Recreation and Tourism, said: “The National Waterfront Museum has been an outstanding success since being launched in Swansea.

“It’s important Swansea has cultural attractions of the highest quality if we’re to become a European city of distinction and the number of visitors who have flocked to the museum over the last five years speaks volumes about its standard and popularity.

“The National Waterfront Museum is also an iconic building that improves people’s perceptions of Swansea at a key gateway into the city. It combines with Swansea Museum to offer people of all ages museum experiences up there with the best in the UK.”

Dan Clayton-Jones, Chair of Heritage Lottery Fund Wales, said: “Wales’ unique industrial and maritime heritage is a crucial part of its identity which is why we allocated our biggest ever grant in Wales to help tell the full story to the public through this museum. We are delighted that so many people are visiting and that adults and children continue to learn about wales as the world’s first industrial nation.”

Speaking about the five year milestone the Minister for Heritage, Alun Ffred Jones AM, said: “I wish the National Waterfront Museum all the very best for its 5th birthday. I greatly value the contribution that it, and our other national museums, make to Wales' social, cultural and economic life."

**Further information**

Marie Szymonski, Marketing Communictaions Officer on 01792 638 970.

National Waterfront Museum website.