

HLF makes history happen at St Fagans with £11.5million investment

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This is the biggest ever grant award in Wales to help Amgueddfa Cymru - National Museum Wales redevelop St Fagans: National History Museum to tell the stories of human life in Wales over 200,000 years and more.

The project, Creu Hanes - Making History aims to build on [St Fagans](#)' popularity as the UK's favourite visitor attraction* and combine the strengths of an open-air museum with those of a conventional museum. It will create an exciting new visitor experience integrating national collections of archaeology and social history together in an open-air museum for the first time anywhere.

Established as a museum in 1948, St Fagans was the first open-air museum in the UK and, as one of Wales' first national institutions it has an important part in defining the modern Welsh identity. It currently tells the story of how the people of Wales lived, worked and spent their leisure time over the last 500 years.

St Fagans is the second most visited open-air museum in Europe and Wales' most visited heritage attraction with over 600,000 visitors per year. It is also the largest provider in Wales of learning outside the classroom with 360,000 family visitors and 85,000 formal education visitors.

Creu Hanes is a £25million plan that Amgueddfa Cymru has set out to achieve over the next five years and beyond, to establish St Fagans as Wales' National History Museum. The project will also be supported by the Welsh Government which has already earmarked funding support of £6million.

The project aims to shape the future of St Fagans with the people of Wales, involving them in the process of developing the buildings, displays and activities. Visitors will be able to explore over 200,000 years of Welsh history through innovative exhibitions, authentic historical buildings, archaeological reconstructions and skill-sharing activities. People will be encouraged to add their own stories to reflect today's society and inspire people to feel a part of living history.

Volunteering will be fundamental to the success of the project and a volunteer manager will be appointed to help recruit local people and develop activities in partnership with local and national organisations to develop volunteering programmes. There will be 600 in-depth volunteering placements offered as well as opportunities for an additional 400 casual volunteers to work on seasonal events. Traditional crafts and skills training will be provided through apprenticeships and work placements which will lead to formal qualifications.

Dr. Manon Williams, Chair of the HLF Committee for Wales, said: "This transformational project will ensure the people of Wales and visitors to Wales have a truly inspirational and memorable

encounter with the story of what made our country what it is today. Making History - Creu Hanes will become an exemplar project for us, demonstrating how lottery money can have a positive impact on heritage, economic development, tourism, regeneration and skills.”

The Grade I-listed St Fagans Castle is one of the finest surviving manor houses in Wales. The museum features over 40 historic buildings from different parts of Wales and is set within a conservation area and Grade I listed landscape.

This first phase of the project will see the construction of a multi-purpose building featuring a gallery and activity space, a window to the open air archaeology and general visitor facilities including a cafe.

The new galleries and exhibitions will follow three main themes. The Making Wales gallery will explore identities of people over 200,000 years that made Wales as we know it now. It will aim to provoke debate about how our identity develops and changes over time and visitor opinions will be recorded for others to see.

Ways of Life will display social and oral history side by side with archaeological collections providing a window into the everyday details of lives past and present, so visitors can explore their natural curiosity about other people. A changing community-curated display will form a permanent part of this gallery. The first of such displays will reflect the lives of refugees in Wales.

Making History by Hand will be located in a new eco-friendly building, Y Gweithdy, in the open-air museum. It will be a gallery and activity space in one, a place of hands-on creativity where people will experience the skills and creativity of those who made the objects in the collections. The eco-credentials of the building will also be interpreted.

Three experimental archaeology projects will also be developed around the site and provide young people, school pupils, students, researchers and volunteers with an opportunity to get hands-on and involved in ‘live’ archaeology.

The current Celtic Village will be replaced with a recreation of the Iron Age settlement of Bryn Eryr in Anglesey, involving young people from Communities First areas and school pupils in the programme. The recreation of Llys Rhosyr, one of the courts of the princes of Gwynedd, will provide opportunities for trainee placements and apprenticeships, while a Bronze Age barrow will be created through working with young people on the Duke of Edinburgh scheme.

A digital programme is planned to allow people around the world to access the collections and develop new ideas and content.

Huw Lewis AM, Minister for Housing, Regeneration and Heritage, said: “I am delighted that Amgueddfa Cymru - National Museum Wales has won this vote of confidence from the Heritage Lottery Fund. St Fagans is already the UK’s favourite visitor attraction and a world class facility, but this new project will ensure that it is a world leader.

“This redevelopment will provide the people of Wales with excellent opportunities to learn more about their culture and heritage, and it will attract many more visitors from further afield, providing a

very welcome boost to our economy. The Welsh Government is providing significant match funding for this project, recognising its ambition and strategic benefit for the whole of Wales. I very much look forward seeing the project taking shape."

David Anderson, Director General of Amgueddfa Cymru, said: "Thanks to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), we will soon be starting work on Amgueddfa Cymru's most exciting project ever! With the generous support of the HLF as well as the backing of the Welsh Government, we will be creating another national institution for Wales. For the first time, Wales will have its own National Museum of History that will tell the story of everyone in Wales, from the past to the present.

"In the 1940s Iorwerth Peate established a Museum for the people of Wales – a concept which has been a huge success and one which should be preserved. The aim of the new developments is to build on Peate's vision.

"Over 130 organisations and societies have been involved in the plans for the future of the Museum so that they, as well as others, can help us tell the story of Wales in one place. St Fagans will then act as a gateway to other heritage attractions across Wales."

Elisabeth Elias, President Amgueddfa Cymru added: "On behalf of the Trustees of Amgueddfa Cymru, I add my thanks to the HLF. They open up a wonderful opportunity for the National Museum to transform the visitor experience at St Fagans and enable it to retain its position as a world leading open air museum."

Having received the HLF funding, which is a significant contribution to the £25million project, the museum will also be launching its own £1 Appeal. Similar to Iorwerth Peate's call for financial support to set up St Fagans back in 1946, Amgueddfa Cymru will be urging the public and private sector to show their support and help make history for generations to follow.

Notes to editors

Which? Travel Magazine September 2011 based on survey of 3001 people.

Further information

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