

Recordiodd Oasis eu halbwm "(What's the Story) Morning Glory?" yn Stiwdio Rockfield ym 1995 Stefan De Bastelier

'Is this the real life, is this just fantasy?' are probably some of the most famous opening song lyrics in the world – and from a chart-topping single recorded in a small studio in south Wales.

From Queen, Simple Minds and the Manic Street Preachers, to Oasis, Coldplay and Kasabian – they have all been to Monmouth and experienced the Rockfield studio as they've made international music history right here in Wales.

But the studio itself is now set to become centre stage, thanks to money raised by National Lottery players.

A new project led by local sixth formers is aiming to capture the many and varied musical memories the studio has amassed during its 50 plus years in the business. These include hosting Queen as they recorded Bohemian Rhapsody on a piano that's still in use there today, and filming the Super Furry Animals as they fired guns outside the studio for use in their track 'The Undefeated'.

Students gain national qualification

Supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), 13 A Level students from nearby Monmouth Comprehensive will be contacting bands and musicians from throughout the studio's history, collecting their stories and memories to become part of a special exhibition called From Stables to Studios: The Story of Rockfield, Monmouth and Music.

Volunteering after school and on weekends as part of their Welsh Baccalaureate qualification, the students will also be talking to local residents and collecting their memories of bumping into famous faces in the local pub, and encountering more than one or two musical divas around town.

Richard Bellamy, Head of the HLF Wales, says that this project tells a great story: “The Rockfield studio history is fascinating in itself, but this project will go further by exploring its relationship with the local area and how that has impacted on its development.

“In addition the students involved will receive training to help undertake interviews, as well as create and market the exhibition, so they’ll be developing various life skills that will be valuable in later life.”

Local gems like Rockfield often taken for granted

Joanne Davies, who is helping coordinate the exhibition, explains the background to the project: “Although Rockfield is known as one of the most influential recording studios in the UK, and indeed the world, surprisingly little is currently exhibited locally about this Monmouth gem.

“Although it’s early days, we’re already overwhelmed by some of the funny and intriguing titbits that we’re unearthing including local residents who remember selling shoes to big name rock stars, or playing pool with band members in the local pubs.

“It’s these kind of stories that we want to dig up and share with others. I would like to encourage anyone with any anecdotes or memories about Rockfield to come forward and let us know how much it rocked you!”

And what did the stars think of Rockfield?

Even before musicians and bands have been contacted to share their stories, the Rockfield visitor book has plenty of its own tales to tell. Ian Brown, of the Stone Roses, had this to say about the studio: “Put the heating on more often and I might one day come back”. While Liam Gallagher, formerly of Oasis, was clearly taken with its charming Welsh location: “Thanks to Rockfield studios for the pleasant surroundings in this wonderful rural atmosphere!!”.

Rockfield’s 'rural atmosphere' wasn’t everyone’s cup of tea, however, as Eddie Duffy from Simple Minds commented about his time there: “It’s been a pleasure. Can’t wait to come back as long as you kill that cock, or at least set his watch to the right time.”

From Stables to Studios: The Story of Rockfield, Monmouth and Music is due to launch in April. In the meantime, you can find out more about Rockfield yourself by visiting the Rockfield website.

Notes to editors

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