

*St. Fagans Museum of Welsh Life*

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# **An examination of the Conservation Principles and Cultural Influences of St. Fagans Welsh Folk Museum and its Founder Iorwerth C. Peate.**

## **Introduction**

St. Fagans Museum of Welsh Life is a renowned landmark and one of the first of its kind in the United Kingdom. Following a trend of open-air museums in Europe and guided by the principles of its founder Iorwerth C. Peate, it has recorded and exhibited Welsh culture spanning hundreds of years. This essay will explore the conservation principles and cultural influence of St. Fagans. In particular, it will examine the ideas of Peate and the continued use of oral history traditions as prominent influences on the establishment and development of St. Fagans. Concentrating on the chronological development of the site from its opening, this essay will address these origins alongside conservation ideas and theories and address the overarching themes of continuity and authenticity and the relative success of the museum. This paper aims to highlight the conservation of Welsh culture at St. Fagans and, in turn, the museum's contribution to the European open-air museum trend. Moreover, addressing the local history of the area and making comparisons to contemporary sites will contextualise St. Fagans in its wider geographical and contemporary setting.

## **History of St. Fagans**

The village of St. Fagans is itself steeped in history. The first castle was supposedly built on the site in 1091 by one of the last Welsh lords in the area. It has been suggested that later castles were built on the same spot due to the elevated position in the landscape: providing defence and views of the countryside.<sup>1</sup> The 17<sup>th</sup>-century English-style castle which remains was the Glamorgan residence for



*Figure 1 St Fagans Manor House*

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<sup>1</sup> Judy Edwards. "St. Fagan's Castle and 'other' Earls." *Friends Newsletter [National Museums and Galleries of Wales]*, Feb 2012, 7.

the Earls of Plymouth from the mid-19<sup>th</sup>-century.<sup>2</sup> In 1946, Other Robert Ivor Windsor-Clive, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Earl of Plymouth, offered St Fagan's Castle and its grounds to the National Museum of Wales. The site was designated for the development of a folk museum which, in his eyes, was a vital addition to the museum's portfolio and a gift to the people of Wales.<sup>3</sup>

## Development of the Folk Museum

The main instigator for the creation of a Welsh folk museum was Iorwerth C. Peate, who was inspired by the late 19<sup>th</sup>-century, early 20th-century Scandinavian open-air museums, particularly Skansen near Stockholm, which was opened in 1891.<sup>4</sup> These museums were part of a 'European movement to preserve traditional ways of life.'<sup>5</sup> Up until this point, history had primarily been focused on wars and important men, and museums had curated trophies and curiosities. For example, the British Museum's collections are largely from foreign civilisations, often contested stolen items taken as a result of colonialism and display less native English material.<sup>6</sup> This new wave of European open-air museums sought to collect items from the lives of ordinary people and display cultural development, from the noble to the poorest in society.<sup>7</sup> Skansen was a huge



Figure 2 Welsh Bygones Gallery

success that led to the democratisation of history and was a leading example for future folklife museums in other countries<sup>8</sup>. Although the folk museum at St. Fagans did not open until 1948, the collecting of folk artefacts had already begun in the 'Welsh Bygones' gallery, which was part of the National Museum in Cardiff from 1926.<sup>9</sup> St. Fagans was to supersede this collection and was the first national museum in the United Kingdom

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>3</sup> Iorwerth C. Peate. *St. Fagans: Handbook* (Cardiff: National Museum of Wales, 1961), 5.

<sup>4</sup> RCAHMW, "St. Fagans Museum", *Coflein*, 2021, accessed Jan 25, 2022, <https://coflein.gov.uk/en/site/31920/>

<sup>5</sup> St. Fagans National Museum of History, *Guidebook* (Cardiff: National Museum of Wales, 2018), 7.

<sup>6</sup> Dalya Alberge, "British Museum is world's largest receiver of stolen goods", *The Guardian*, Nov 4, 2019, accessed, Apr 5, 2022, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/nov/04/british-museum-is-worlds-largest-receiver-of-stolen-goods-says-qc>

<sup>7</sup> Sten Rentzhog, *Open Air Museums: The history and future of a visionary idea* (Sweden: Jamtli Förlag and Carlsson Bokförlag), 4.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>9</sup> National Museum of Wales "A Brief History of St. Fagans", *St. Fagans National Museum of History*, 2021, accessed Nov 13, 2021, <https://museum.wales/stfagans/stfagans-history/>

to ‘reflect the culture of ordinary people.’<sup>10</sup> The style of an open-air museum also made this culture more tangible to visitors, allowing them to experience Welsh folk history in a more immersive environment. In 1948, the year of the museum’s opening, Peate stated that the task was ‘not to create a museum which preserved the dead past under glass but one which uses the past to link up with the present to provide a strong foundation and a healthy environment for the future of their people.’<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, the museum was intended not simply for public enrichment but also academic study.

As an academic and poet, Peate published numerous books and information pamphlets on Welsh folklife and architecture. In the late 1920s, while working in the archaeology department of the National Museum of Wales<sup>12</sup>, he realised that the nation was losing its traditional buildings and the associated craft skills.<sup>13</sup> Thus began his lifelong work to record and preserve Welsh cultural heritage.<sup>14</sup> With many generations of his family being traditional carpenters, Peate took a particular interest in



Figure 3 Iorwerth C. Peate

craftsmanship.<sup>15</sup> However, his views of traditional artisans were often romanticised compared to the poverty-stricken reality of the trades. That being said, Peate’s advocacy for folk studies as a scholarly discipline was monumental, and he spent many years researching, writing, and lecturing on the topic.<sup>16</sup> As a nationalist, Peate hoped the establishment of a folk museum and the encouragement of folk studies would spark a ‘Welsh renaissance’ and, eventually, fulfil his hopes of an independent Wales.

As a staunch pacifist, Peate mourned the destruction of the Welsh landscape and traditional houses during the war and felt that time was ‘snapping at his heels’ to complete his

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<sup>10</sup> St. Fagans, *Guidebook*, 7.

<sup>11</sup> National Museum of Wales “A Brief History of St. Fagans”.

<sup>12</sup> Laura Clements, “The story of Wales’ best-loved museum as St. Fagans hits 70” *Wales Online*, Aug 4, 2018, accessed Nov 25, 2021, <https://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/wales-news/story-wales-best-loved-museum-14981627>

<sup>13</sup> Greg Stevenson, *The Welsh House: Foreword*, (Ceredigion: Rhydlewys, 2004). Viii.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> Catrin Stevens, *Writers of Wales: Iorwerth C. Peate*, (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1986), 18.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

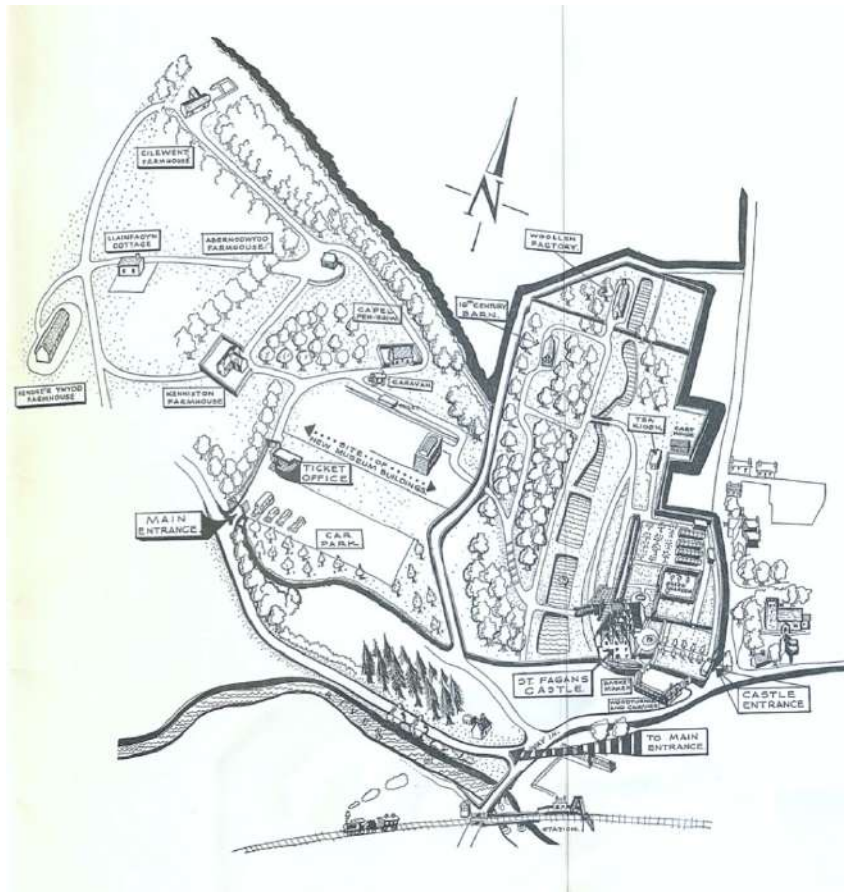


Figure 4 1960s map of St. Fagans

research.<sup>17</sup> His book ‘The Welsh House’, published in 1940, resulted from his endeavours and indicated how Peate recognised the world would never be the same after the war. <sup>18</sup>Indeed, it proved to be a watershed moment for traditional building practices, which had already been eroded by the industrialisation of Welsh towns and the colonisation of English construction styles and materials. However, it is challenging to define authentic Welsh culture and tradition, with a history of ‘immigration, emigration, and assimilation of foreign cultures’<sup>19</sup>. This highlights a naivety in Peate’s philosophies which very much adhere to an idea of Welsh cultural purity.

In the museum’s early days, the Welsh culture on display was associated almost entirely with agricultural life, which mirrored the Scandinavian patterns already set out in open-air museums to show folklife before the advent of industrialism.<sup>20</sup> Before the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, most of Wales was agricultural land, with a few towns hosting markets for the sale of produce. The country was sparsely populated with small holdings scattered across usable arable land and the

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 26.

<sup>18</sup> Stevenson, *The Welsh House: Foreword*, viii.

<sup>19</sup> Stevenson, *The Welsh House: Foreword*, x.

<sup>20</sup> Rentzhog, *Open Air Museums*, 115.

remainder being left as wasteland.<sup>21</sup> As Wales has been agricultural for most of its recorded history, this was seen as the ‘authentic’ Welsh heritage rapidly being lost to industrialisation. As shown in Fig. 4, many of the first buildings at St. Fagans were farmhouses and barns, the re-erection of which relied heavily on private sponsorship or fundraising efforts as no government grants were awarded.<sup>22</sup> This demonstrates the reactive nature



Figure 5 Kennixton Farmhouse

of conservation and curation at the museum. For instance, one of the most iconic buildings in St. Fagans, Kennixton Farmhouse, taken from the Gower peninsula, was gifted to the museum by Mr J. B. Rogers and financed with a grant from the Welsh Committee of the Festival of Britain.<sup>23</sup> Individuals most often gifted the buildings, typically because it was their family home. As was the case with the Rogers family, the last of whom lived in the farmhouse around 1920. Similarly, Hendre’r-ywydd Uchaf farmhouse was donated by J.E. Foulkes and funded by the Denbighshire County Council and the Pilgrim Trust.<sup>24</sup> Therefore, private donations were at the core of St. Fagans Folk Museum during its origins; these sponsorships were a means through which wealthy benefactors could support the cause of conserving Welsh culture.



Figure 6 Recording of oral histories

However, Peate’s philosophy and St. Fagans’ purpose were about more than just the preservation of built fabric. As addressed previously, many folk items were put on display to illustrate Welsh life and humanise the museum experience. According to Peate, the collection of mere objects was useless if they were not put in their proper context so that visitors could discover the language, lore, and social significance associated with them.<sup>25</sup> In the 1960s, this idea fuelled the collection of

<sup>21</sup> Alan Price, “Welsh Agriculture in 1800”, *British Isles Past and Present*, 2022, accessed Feb 5, 2022, <http://www.islandguide.co.uk/wales/wales-1800.htm>

<sup>22</sup> John Williams-Davies, “Fifty years of history at the Museum of Welsh Life.” *Calendar of Events* [National Museums and Galleries of Wales], 1998, 4.

<sup>23</sup> Peate, *Handbook*, 24.

<sup>24</sup> Iorwerth C. Peate, *Hendre’r-ywydd uchaf: A late 15th Century House*, (Cardiff: Museum of Welsh Life, 1962), 1.

<sup>25</sup> Williams-Davies, “Fifty years of history at the Museum of Welsh Life.”, 4.

oral histories, traditions and local dialects through sound and film recordings and manuscript material, intending to create a national archive covering all aspects of folklife.<sup>26</sup> Historically, the variations in Welsh culture between regions have been particularly noticeable in the language. Dialects differed across Wales and could be considered on a spectrum rather than a unified vernacular, which is still the case today. This cultural diversity was why Peate felt it necessary to record all such aspects and vocabularies for future generations.

Another purpose of the Welsh Folk Museum was to preserve and demonstrate traditional crafts and skills. Not only were craftsmen required to dismantle and reassemble the historic buildings, but they were also encouraged to produce and sell wares in the museum shop. Artisans were given workshops so that the visitors could



Figure 7 Display of craft skills (thatching)

observe their skills in action. In the museum's early years, two resident craftsmen were a woodturner and a basket-maker.<sup>27</sup> In addition, the museum began researching and recording traditional foods in the 1970s.<sup>28</sup> The purpose of this was to encapsulate all aspects of Welsh culture and ordinary life. The work of recording local dialects, folk tales, songs, and traditional customs was not only done on-site but members of staff were appointed to drive the length and breadth of Wales.<sup>29</sup> Meanwhile, the translocation of buildings continued, and both the tangible and intangible elements were presented to the public in tandem.

In the early 20<sup>th</sup>-century, open-air museums became principal institutions in the “rescuing” of traditional buildings. St. Fagans was one of the last to be founded on the ideas of the inter-war period.<sup>30</sup> Before the Second World War, many conservation ideas were based on nationalism; they typically had this in common, whether realised through private or state initiatives.<sup>31</sup> However, after the Second World War, the conservation movement became more measured in its practice, and ‘the aggressive outward projection of nation ceased almost entirely.’<sup>32</sup> Although this was the case in many western countries, those not ravaged by war did not undergo such a radical change. For

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<sup>26</sup> Peate, *Handbook*, 30.

<sup>27</sup> Peate, *Handbook*, 18.

<sup>28</sup> National Museum of Wales “A Brief History of St. Fagans”.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> Rentzhog, *Open Air Museums*, 153.

<sup>31</sup> Miles Glendinning, *The Conservation Movement: a history of architectural preservation*, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013), 259.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 259-260.

example, places like Switzerland and Scotland continued with some pre-war nationalist ideas.<sup>33</sup> Likewise, despite Wales feeling some effects of the war, nationalism was at the forefront of the development of the museum at St. Fagans.

## Bringing the museum into the 21<sup>st</sup> century

By the 1970s, the museum had expanded its facilities, adding multiple galleries, offices, and workrooms, thereby bringing Peate's plans to fruition. However, as the museum developed, the changing political and economic climate in Wales resulted in the country going through a cultural metamorphosis. During the 20<sup>th</sup> century, industrial communities had



Figure 9 Rhyd-y-car Terrace

come to dominate the landscape of Wales, but by the 1980s, these were under just as much threat as the agricultural heritage. At this point, the museum felt a change of direction was needed, and, as such, Rhyd-y-car Terrace was relocated to the museum.<sup>34</sup> Originally built in Merthyr Tydfil in 1795, this row of cottages served as housing for workers in the iron-ore mine until coal took over



Figure 8 Derwent Bakery

as the most important industry around 1850.<sup>35</sup> These buildings mark a turning point in the museum's development, but they also provide an interesting case of how history was presented to the public. The museum decided to use this terrace of houses as a "timeline", with each displaying a different period in history, specifically 1805, 1855, 1895, 1925, 1955 and 1985.<sup>36</sup> Unlike other buildings within St. Fagans that capture a single snapshot in time, these houses display a progression in their historical development and are one of the most popular sites amongst visitors. Rhyd-y-car Terrace was also the first occurrence of 'periods within living memory' being represented in Wales or globally, making this small

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 262.

<sup>34</sup> National Museum of Wales "A Brief History of St. Fagans".

<sup>35</sup> National Museum of Wales "Rhyd-y-car Terrace", *Historical buildings at St. Fagans*, 2021, accessed Feb 20, 2022, <https://museum.wales/stfagans/buildings/rhydycar/>

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

terrace of even broader significance. It enabled visitors to see generational changes and make period comparisons with complete clarity.<sup>37</sup> This experience of living history allows for a deeper connection and understanding with the buildings, which, otherwise, might be lost through disassociation. The living history displayed encourages visitors to discuss personal experiences and thereby the authenticity of the curation.

The 1980s was a highly dynamic period for the museum, with a building being re-erected almost every year. Many of these buildings were not agricultural but reflected other aspects of Welsh life, such as Derwent Bakery from Aberystwyth and Meister School, Ceredigion.<sup>38</sup> This productivity continued into the 1990s, with the



Figure 10 Gwalia Stores

opening of The Celtic Village, the first buildings at St. Fagans to be created solely from archaeological evidence.<sup>39</sup> It also saw the translocation of more buildings, reflecting more industrial areas and heritage, such as Gwalia Stores and the Oakdale Workmen's Institute, both now landmark exhibits within the museum.<sup>40</sup> It is evident that St. Fagans began to diversify the buildings on the site to reflect the diversity in Welsh cultural heritage and become more proactive in its approach to 'save' industrial heritage at the very start of its decline.



Figure 11 House for the Future

At the turn of the century, St. Fagans went beyond a proactive approach to conservation and initiated a project to predict the future of architecture and domicile living. In 1999, a competition was set for a design that would give insight into what houses might look like in the new millennium, considering the growing concerns for sustainability and accessibility.<sup>41</sup> Despite this showing a forward-

thinking methodology, the 'House for the Future' by no means constitutes conservation. It is

<sup>37</sup> Rentzhog, *Open Air Museums*, 299.

<sup>38</sup> National Museum of Wales "A Brief History of St. Fagans".

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> ECD Energy and Environment, *House for the Future*, (Cardiff: National Museums and Galleries of Wales, 2001)

something far outside the realm of what Peate had set out to do with the site. Although a successful visitors attraction at the time, over 20 years later, the building has aged poorly, is not registered on the museum's website and is no longer open to the public. Unsurprisingly, it did not hold the public's attention for long as 'one day's future is history the next'.<sup>42</sup> Those familiar with it can still identify the building by its modern design and eco-roof when walking around the site. Still, it remains an abandoned reminder of a somewhat failed enterprise. It could be argued that part of its failure resulted from the lack of cultural connection, something emphasised by Peate and the museum's literature, without which the buildings are mere objects and can lack value.

However, St Fagan's experiments did not end with the house of the future. In 2016 the museum reconstructed two iron-age roundhouses based on previously excavated archaeological remains.<sup>43</sup> This proved a more successful endeavour than looking to the house of the future. Although not strictly conservation, it was a tangible exhibit of Welsh history that visitors could connect to more than something that was merely a prediction. It was so successful that the museum used this method again to construct Llys Llewelyn or 'Llewelyn's Court' in English. Curators consulted with academics and artisans and were able to reconstruct this royal court based on the archaeological and architectural evidence available.<sup>44</sup> These examples demonstrate the importance of cultural connection in the long-term success of St. Fagans Folk Museum. In 2019, the museum won the Art Fund Museum of the Year prize, being praised for 'living, breathing, and embodying the culture of Wales'<sup>45</sup>



Figure 12 Iron-age roundhouses

In its later development, the museum curators have been less reliant on the donations of buildings, and as such, the curation process is now less reactive. Despite still relying on sponsorship for the transplantation of structures, there is more freedom in curation, as evidenced by the more experimental installations highlighted above. The methods by which the buildings are moved have not changed much since Peate's day. The precise method of measuring and recording the built

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<sup>42</sup> Rentzhog, *Open Air Museums*, 327.

<sup>43</sup> St. Fagans, *Guidebook*, 61.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 63.

<sup>45</sup> Mark Brown, "Revamped St. Fagans in Wales is 2019 Art Fund museum of the year", *The Guardian*, Jul 3, 2019, accessed Mar 27, 2022, <https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2019/jul/03/st-fagans-history-museum-wales-wins-art-fund-museum-of-the-year-2019>

fabric before dismantling it brick by brick remains; however, the introduction of technology has undoubtedly aided the process.<sup>46</sup>



Figure 13 The Vulcan pub reconstruction underway

At St. Fagans, one of Peate's original aims has endured: the recording of oral histories and Welsh culture. While the Vulcan pub is being installed on the grounds of St. Fagans, the museum has been recording the 'Voices of the Vulcan'<sup>47</sup>. Curators have conducted interviews with former patrons and landlords, which will be made into a short film that will be played in one of the

museum's galleries and will add depth to visitors' understanding of the new building.<sup>48</sup> The pub is very different from the farmhouses initially collected at the museum, which may result from curators having more freedom to choose buildings they feel are significant rather than relying on donations from individuals.

Oral history exhibitions at St. Fagans have become increasingly important even though they are not all tied directly to a building on the site. Not unlike the buildings themselves, the types of oral histories being recorded have expanded to suit the current needs of the museum and the Welsh public more generally. In 2021, in partnership with Race Council Cymru, the museum created a new exhibition telling the stories of the Windrush generation in Wales.<sup>49</sup> It reflects current political conversations and an effort by the museum to illustrate the history of Welsh minorities. Similarly, one of the recently displayed exhibitions was on Welsh pride and LGBTQ+ history.<sup>50</sup> Generally, St. Fagans continues in its mission to reflect the varying aspects of Welsh life while staying relevant to modern society.



Figure 14 Exhibition produced by minority community group

<sup>46</sup>BBC, "Work starts to move Cardiff's Vulcan pub to St. Fagans Museum", *BBC News*, Jul 12, 2012, accessed Feb 15, 2022, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-south-east-wales-18816130>

<sup>47</sup> Fflur Morse, "Voices of the Vulcan", *Amgueddfa Blog*, Mar 7, 2016, accessed Feb 15, 2022, <https://museum.wales/blog/1553/Voices-of-the-Vulcan-Filming-Oral-Histories-/>

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Racial Council Cymru, "New exhibition at St. Fagans National Museum", 2020, accessed Feb 21, 2022, <https://racecouncilcymru.org.uk/new-exhibition-at-st-fagans-national-museum-of-history-tells-the-story-of-the-windrush-generation-in-wales/>

<sup>50</sup> Mark Etheridge, "Collecting LGBTQ+ histories at St. Fagans National Museum of History", 2021, accessed Mar 15, 2022, <https://museum.wales/articles/2322/Collecting-LGBTQ-histories-at-St-Fagans-National-Museum-of-History/>

## A Legacy

As previously discussed, St. Fagans was inspired by early Scandinavian open-air folk museums and, as Skansen was intended to create a ‘Sweden in miniature’, so St. Fagans was to create a ‘Wales in miniature’.<sup>51</sup> Peate wanted



Figure 16 Skansen Open-air Museum

everything to be ‘genuine’ and avoided the American romanticised style of open-air museums that underwent a sort of ‘Disneyfication’.<sup>52</sup> Influenced by the European movement of folk studies, St. Fagans became a somewhat influential site in its own right. For example, in the development of the Ulster Folk Museum, the creators took inspiration from the Scandinavian models and Wales. In fact, academics who were at the heart of St. Fagans directly contributed to the ideas and methods implemented in Ulster.<sup>53</sup> Although a British folk museum was never realised, several open-air museums opened in England after St. Fagans was founded. To say St. Fagans directly influenced them would be unsubstantiated; however, it would be prudent to assume that these museums would have looked at St. Fagans and other European examples as a foundation for their own



Figure 15 Blist Hill Victorian Village

development. For instance, Beamish Living Museum, Weald and Downland Living Museum and the Blist Hill Victorian Village took inspiration from the same Scandinavian examples as St. Fagans; however, they each took a different focus. Both Beamish and Blist Hill display strong industrial heritage, whereas Weald and Downland is based more on agricultural heritage and craft skills. Despite similarities, no other British example highlighted presents folklife and traditions as holistically and with such nationalistic vigour as St. Fagans, exemplifying the museum’s somewhat unique dedication to Welsh culture.

<sup>51</sup> Rentzhog, *Open Air Museums*, 7 & 114.

<sup>52</sup> Rentzhog, *Open Air Museums*, 263

<sup>53</sup> G. B. Thompson, “The Welsh Contribution to the Development of the Ulster Folk Museum”, *Studies in Folklife*, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969), 31.

When looking at other similar open-air museums and folk sites, most require visitors to pay anything from £10-£22 for a ticket. Skansken, Blist Hill, Ulster Folk Museum and the Weald and downland museum that have all been used comparatively in this paper charge for entry. It is significant to examine this given that St. Fagans continues to be free to the public, with just a



Figure 18 St. Fagans entrance

£5 daily charge for car parking on site. As a result of government subsidies<sup>54</sup>, St. Fagans has remained accessible to anyone and everyone who wishes to learn about Welsh culture. This is particularly important when you consider the objectives of the folk museum at its outset; to encourage Welsh pride and nationalism. This surely can only be achieved if access does not come with a hefty price tag. It is a testament to the National Museum of Wales and the Welsh Government that St. Fagans and its presentation of Welsh heritage has not been hidden behind a paywall.



Figure 17 School children being taught in the school at St. Fagans as an immersive activity

Over its history, St. Fagans Museum has had its own unique influence on Welsh culture and is a beloved site to many. The museum itself lives in the memories of visitors. Whether a result of family outings or school trips, it is a significant landmark in South Wales. The museum has even been used as a filming location for various films and TV shows, showing yet

another method of cultural influence. It can also be connected to the Eisteddfod, arguably one of the most significant Welsh events of the year, solely celebrating all aspects of Welsh culture. Despite its physical development and leadership changes, St. Fagans has remained true to its core of conserving and celebrating Welsh culture.

The tangible presentation of heritage represents a snapshot of a moment in time that is frozen and does not change. However, the museum's commitment to recording and preserving

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<sup>54</sup> St. Fagans, *Guidebook*, 3.



## Conclusion

In summary, giving a brief overview of the history has contextualised St. Fagans in its wider area. Similarly, the museum has been contextualised globally by identifying the sites that inspired its conception. The development of the folk museum from the 'bygones gallery' collection of folk items to the full-scale expansion of the museum in the 1980s illustrates the physical changes that have occurred on site. Likewise, analysing the work of the founder Iorwerth C. Peate and the cultural transformations in Wales has shown the theoretical changes over time. Overall, it is clear that philosophical changes have been reflected in the physical changes to the site. A strong thread throughout this paper is Peate's vision for St. Fagans. Peate's attitude that Welsh Culture should be examined holistically, and conservation should consider more than just the collection of mere objects is central to his principles. The curation of oral histories and the preservation of craftsmanship are vital to ensure this conservation method remains constant at the museum. A well-rounded presentation of Welsh folklife and traditions allows for a more authentic experience for visitors, which helps bring together intangible values with the tangible historic fabric.

Compared to contemporary conservation ideas, it is evident that nationalism was at the forefront of St. Fagans development. Its dedication to the heritage of Wales and its people has also led to its evolution over time. In more recent years, the representation of minority groups such as the LGBTQ+ community is evidence of the museum's desire to stay relevant. The increased freedom for curators to be more proactive than reactive in their collection of buildings means that the display of Welsh culture at the site may continue to become more diverse, as has already been demonstrated. Despite not fulfilling all of Peate's initial hopes for the museum, his efforts to establish a folk museum were successful, and his core principles have largely endured. The legacy of St. Fagans and its founder is significant and multifaceted as the museum continues to conserve heritage and contribute to and celebrate Welsh culture.

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