



Young
Planners
Cymru

YPC at the
St Fagans
National
History
Museum

31 July 2009

YPC at the St Fagans National History Museum

Young planners gain an insight into the challenges faced with preserving the past

At a recent event organised by Young Planners Cymru, Gerallt Nash the curator of St. Fagans National History Museum, along with Janet Wilding, the museum's Project Manager, took a group of young planners on a guided tour of the site where over 40 historic buildings from across Wales had been re-erected in their traditional form. The museum originally opened in 1948 and is regarded as one of Europe's most outstanding open air museums displaying a range of buildings and ancient monuments dating back as far as the 13th Century.

The tour commenced with an introduction to the park at the re-erected Pen-Rhiw Chapel which was first opened in 1777. The Unitarian Chapel was typical of early Welsh nonconformist chapels however in this instance was first thought to have been used as an agricultural barn, before being adapted in 1777 for use as a chapel.

As a profession we often face challenges in how to allow for the adaptation of historic buildings to compliment a modern day use; however in discussing the changes that had occurred to the chapel, its most



YPC members at St Fagans

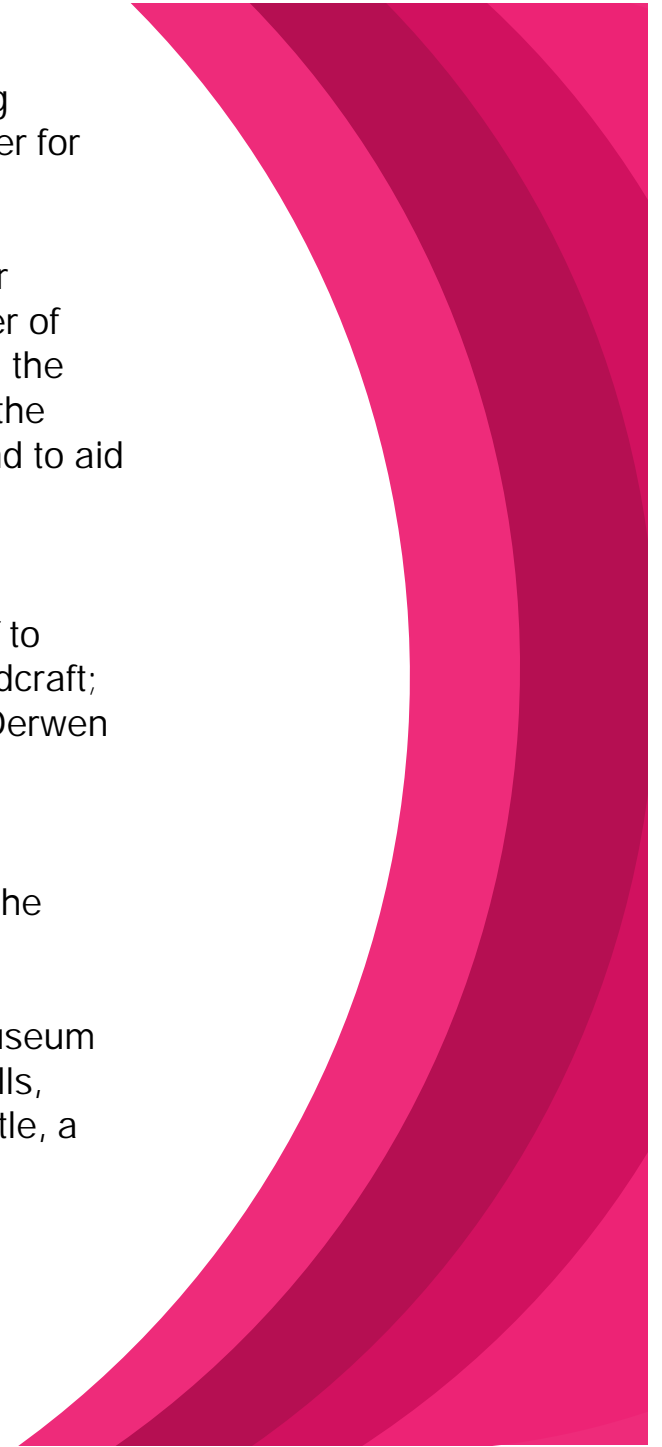
recent use presented a most intriguing conundrum in how do you manage a building traditionally designed to accommodate a small number of visitors each week, to cater for almost 650,000 visitors a year?

It was highlighted that a degree of flexibility was required to maintain the vernacular character of building's found at the museum, whilst also allowing for the high number of visitors visiting the park each year, for example through amending materials used in the flooring of each of the building's or through installing under-floor heating, to reduce the effect of changes in humidity during the day, to protect the fabric of the building's and to aid in managing maintenance costs.

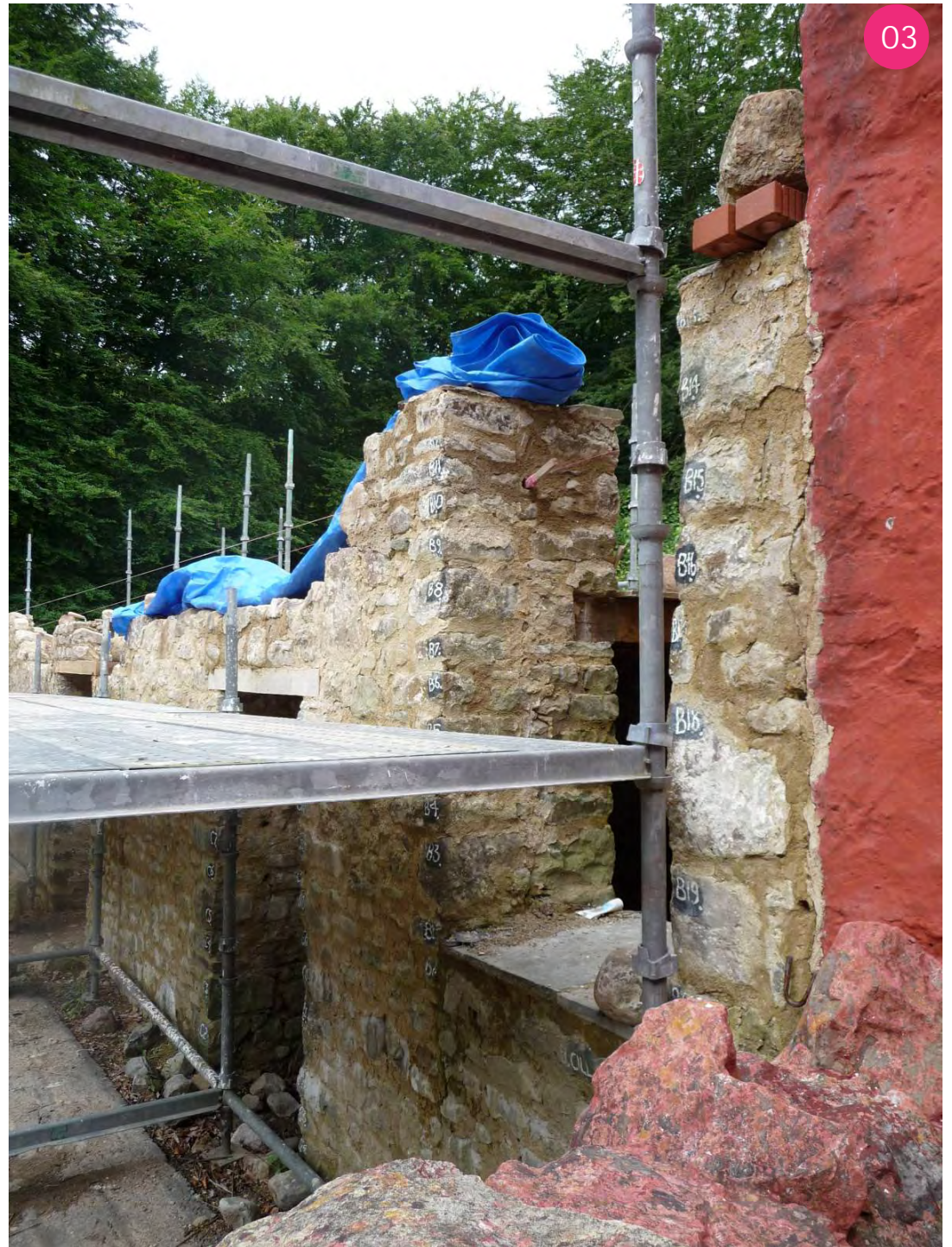
To re-erect and bring to life these old buildings requires a great deal of traditional craftsmanship and therefore the museum operates its own training program for staff to develop and preserve traditional skills which include: stone masonry; weaving; woodcraft; pottery; as well as traditional baking, as found in the large wood-fired ovens at the Derwen Bakehouse originally built in Aberystwyth in 1900.

The Bakehouse proved to be a popular attraction for the group, not least due to the selection of cakes being sold and the smell of freshly baked bread emanating from the ovens.

Suitably refreshed the group enjoyed a leisurely walk through the grounds of the museum taking in the variety of building's including traditional farm house dwellings, watermills, early 19th century commercial premises, as well as the magnificent St. Fagans Castle, a late 16th Century Manor House donated in 1946 by the Earl of Plymouth.



Kennixton Farmhouse barn
being re-erected on site whereby the
numbered bricks are being carefully
reset in their original position to
maintain the character of the original
building.



The tour was concluded at the St Teilo Church a recently completed project which is believed to have been built during the 13th Century and subsequently modified to its current form around 1520. During the initial de-construction of the Church a series of wall paintings were un-covered, hidden away under layers of limewash, which were dated to the early part of the 16th Century. The wall paintings have since been re-created using medieval techniques whereby the church is now presented in its pre-Reformation splendour for all to enjoy.

YPC members would like to thank the museum by aiding them in their pursuit to continue to preserve a wide collection of periodic buildings and monuments found throughout Wales.

The museum is currently seeking a variety of additional buildings but in particular a terraced group of shops to aid in the growth of the small urban quarter within the park. If readers are aware of any such buildings or if any historic buildings of particular architectural or cultural merit are in danger of being lost please contact Gerallt Nash on Gerallt.Nash@museumwales.ac.uk .

As a recently formalised group if you would like to become involved in future YPC events please email your details to info@youngplannerscymru.org.uk

Further pictures of the event can be found on the following pages.

For more information on St Fagans National History Museum please visit its [website](#).



Kennixton Farmhouse, Llangyndd, from the Gower, built in 1610, re-created in 1955. The original house consisted of a small parlour subsequently extended in 1680 and 1750, with the most recent extension the adjoining barn currently being re-erected on site .



Inside St. Tello's Church

Originally believed to have been built in the 13th Century and later modified to its current form around the 1520's. During the de-construction of the building a series of wall paintings dating from this period were uncovered (as shown above) which have subsequently been re-created to the Church's pre-Reformation grandeur. .

