

~~AMGUEDDFA GYDA~~
AMGUEDDFA GENEDLAETHOL CYMRU
NATIONAL MUSEUM OF WALES



THE
MUSEUM SCHOOLS SERVICE

CARDIFF
Published by
THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF WALES
1950

THE MUSEUM SCHOOLS SERVICE

FOREWORD

The Museum Schools Service of the National Museum of Wales came into active being when two Museum Schools Service Officers were appointed in 1949. In the last quarter of the year they paid visits to a third of the secondary schools in those areas of Wales and Monmouthshire (all except two counties and one borough) which are contributing to and participating in the service. These initial tours were explanatory and exploratory and they made clear the necessity for a re-statement of the nature and aims of the service. This is meant to supply that want. It will, in the first place, be as well to describe the scope of the National Museum itself.

THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF WALES

The National Museum of Wales comprises the parent institution in Cathays Park, Cardiff, and the branch museum known as the Welsh Folk Museum, at St. Fagans.* The former houses five departments each in charge of a Keeper who is helped by an Assistant Keeper or an Assistant. The Welsh Folk Museum has a Keeper in Charge and an Assistant Keeper. The departments in Cardiff are those of Geology, Botany, Zoology, Archaeology, and Art, whereas the subject of the Folk Museum is that known as Folk Life. Three of the departments are concerned with man's natural background, the other three (regarding the Folk Museum for convenience as a department) with his history, heritage, and cultural achievement. Each department concentrates, so far as is possible, on the Welsh aspect of its subject: the purpose of the Museum has been described as "To teach the world about Wales, and the Welsh people about their own fatherland."

Each of the departments has large collections of the objects of its study (Geology, of rocks, minerals, and fossils; Botany, of plants, and so on). A selection of them, but a small proportion of the whole, is exhibited in the public galleries; the majority are kept in reserve and are used for study. The Welsh Folk Museum at St. Fagans is of recent development and grew out of a Folk Life Department in Cardiff where much of its exhibited material is still shown.

The Museum has published many guides, handbooks, and other publications prepared by members of the staff, for use by the public and students. Those now in print are listed on pp. 10-12

* There are also the Legionary Museum at Caerleon and the Turner House Art Gallery at Penarth.

THE MUSEUM AND SCHOOLS IN THE PAST

The museum has always given considerable help to schools. It has received school parties, either classes or small groups, and given them guidance and instruction in subjects they have asked for. The subjects taken were, necessarily, those of the departments. One hundred and twenty-five such parties were dealt with in the year ending 31st August, 1949.* Keepers and their Assistants have advised and helped and made material available for many pupils including those preparing for the Higher Certificate and other examinations. They are in touch with many teachers and by discussion and advice assist them in their work. Loans of lantern slides, specimens, photographs and other materials were made. There was, before the war, a "County Scheme" by means of which a Keeper of one of the museum departments toured and lectured to all secondary schools in one county (or two thinly populated ones) each year.

All this represented a considerable contribution to education, but it had several weaknesses. In the first place, although the museum is a national institution the services described above were, by the accident of geography, and with the exception of the "County Scheme," principally to schools in the southern counties. In the second place it was not, so far as the museum was concerned, organised assistance: the schools proposed that the parties should come, the museum welcomed them, and gave them the guidance they asked for; but the members of staff who dealt with the parties did not always have previous knowledge of what preparatory work they might have done. It is to provide a nation-wide service, and one that will be continuous in its nature that the Museum Schools Service has been brought into being.

THE MUSEUM SCHOOLS SERVICE

HISTORY

The proposal for a service came from the Permanent Secretary of the Welsh Department of the Board of Education in 1944, when the provisions of the Education Act of that year gave the Minister power to make grants for educational services. It was inaugurated three years after the end of the war, in 1948, and the first appointments were made in 1949. Since the number of schools in Wales is so large, it has been decided that the service shall in the first place be confined to secondary schools.

* The year covered by the most recent Annual Report of the Museum

ADMINISTRATION

Because the service is one in which the museum and the educational authorities of Wales co-operate it is controlled by a committee, the *Museum Schools Service Committee*, representative of the two. This comprises eight members appointed by the Museum Council, and thirteen from educational bodies (six from the Welsh Joint Education Committee; four from the teaching profession, being one each nominated by the National Union of Teachers, the "Joint Four" and the Welsh Secondary Schools Association, and one from the University extra-mural staffs; one from a University training department, one from the Training Colleges and an assessor from the Welsh Department of the Ministry of Education). The Committee has power to co-opt two members. Its functions are policy, finance, and higher appointments.

There is also a *Museum Schools Service Executive Sub-Committee* having an equal representation from the museum side and from educational bodies. It numbers fourteen, seven appointed by the Museum Council and seven by the Museum Schools Service Committee. The Executive Sub-Committee is, as its name implies, concerned with the detailed running of the Service in accordance with the policy laid down by the Committee. It meets more frequently than, and makes periodic reports to, the parent Committee.

The Director of the National Museum of Wales is the Chief Executive Officer of the Service.

STAFF

The service will be carried out by Officers, known as Museum Schools Service Officers, one attached to each of the five departments of the Museum and one to the Welsh Folk Museum. They will have teaching experience and degrees or other qualifications which fit them to teach in geology, botany, zoology, archaeology, art and folk life respectively. A knowledge of Welsh is highly desirable in all; it is, of course, essential for the person teaching folk life.

The officers, on appointment, undergo a period of training in the museum, acquainting themselves with the resources which will be at their disposal and learning museum methods of teaching through things (see section on methods).

Up to date two officers have been appointed: Mr. D. Emlyn Evans, B.A., to Geology, and Miss Alice Williams, B.A., to Archaeology. It is probable that officers in Botany and in Art will be appointed early in 1951.