

national
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National Wool Museum

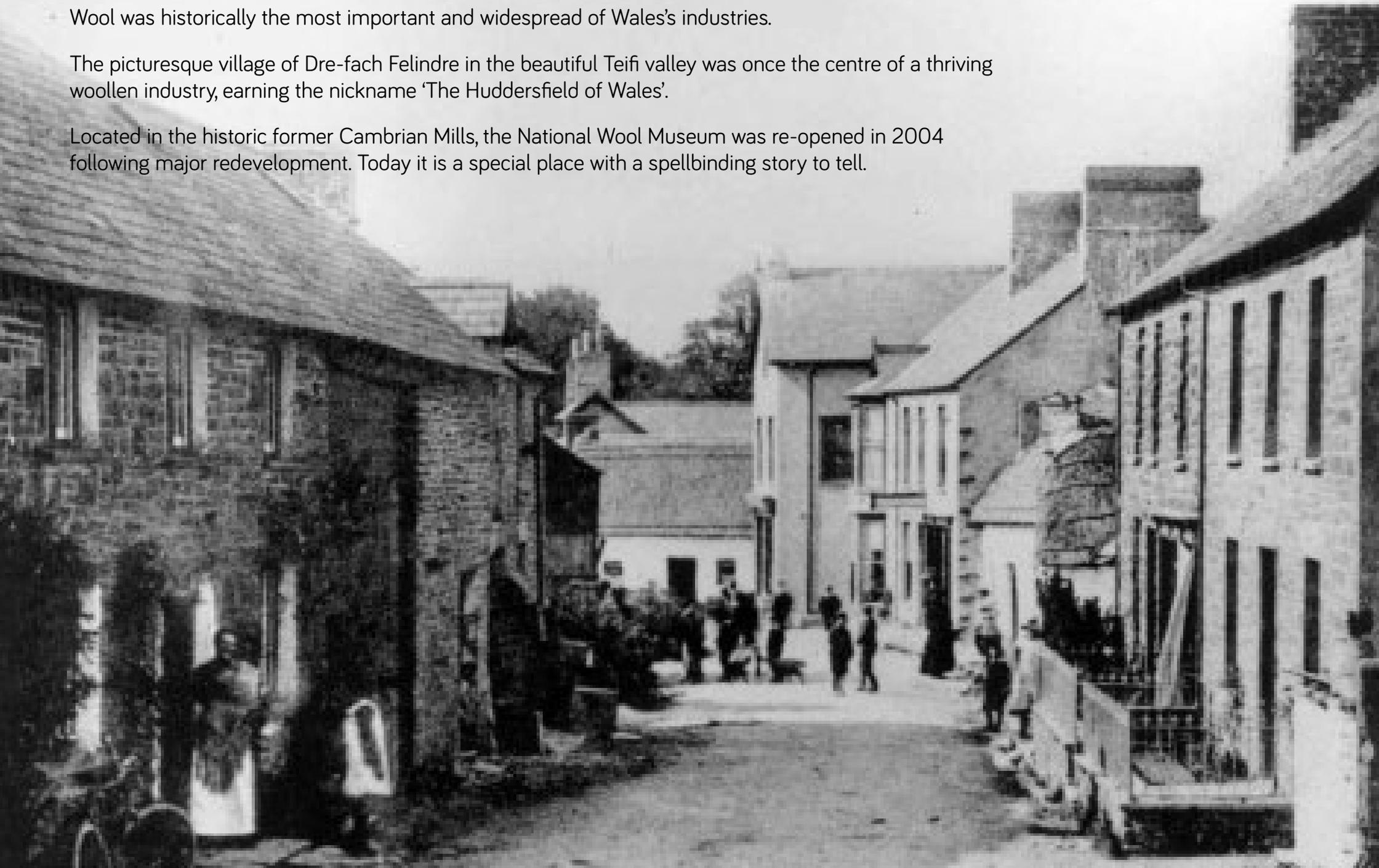


Background information

Wool was historically the most important and widespread of Wales's industries.

The picturesque village of Dre-fach Felindre in the beautiful Teifi valley was once the centre of a thriving woollen industry, earning the nickname 'The Huddersfield of Wales'.

Located in the historic former Cambrian Mills, the National Wool Museum was re-opened in 2004 following major redevelopment. Today it is a special place with a spellbinding story to tell.

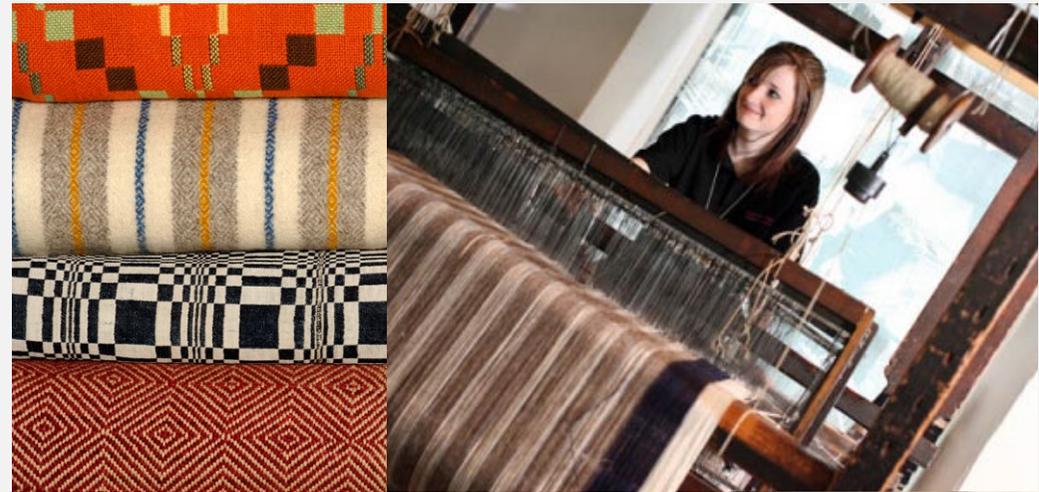


What will I find there?

The National Wool Museum tells the story of the woollen industry in Wales, in particular its impact on the Teifi Valley during the 19th and 20th centuries.

Shirts and shawls, blankets and bedcovers, woollen stockings and socks were all made here, and sold in the surrounding countryside – and to the rest of the world.

You will see the process from fleece to fabric, demonstrated by our experienced craftspeople on our historic machinery, and be able to follow the story of Cambrian Mills.



What story do we tell?

The National Wool Museum tells the story of the rise and fall of the woollen industry in the Teifi Valley in west Wales.

Why did the woollen industry thrive in rural West Wales?

There were several factors:

Technological Advances:

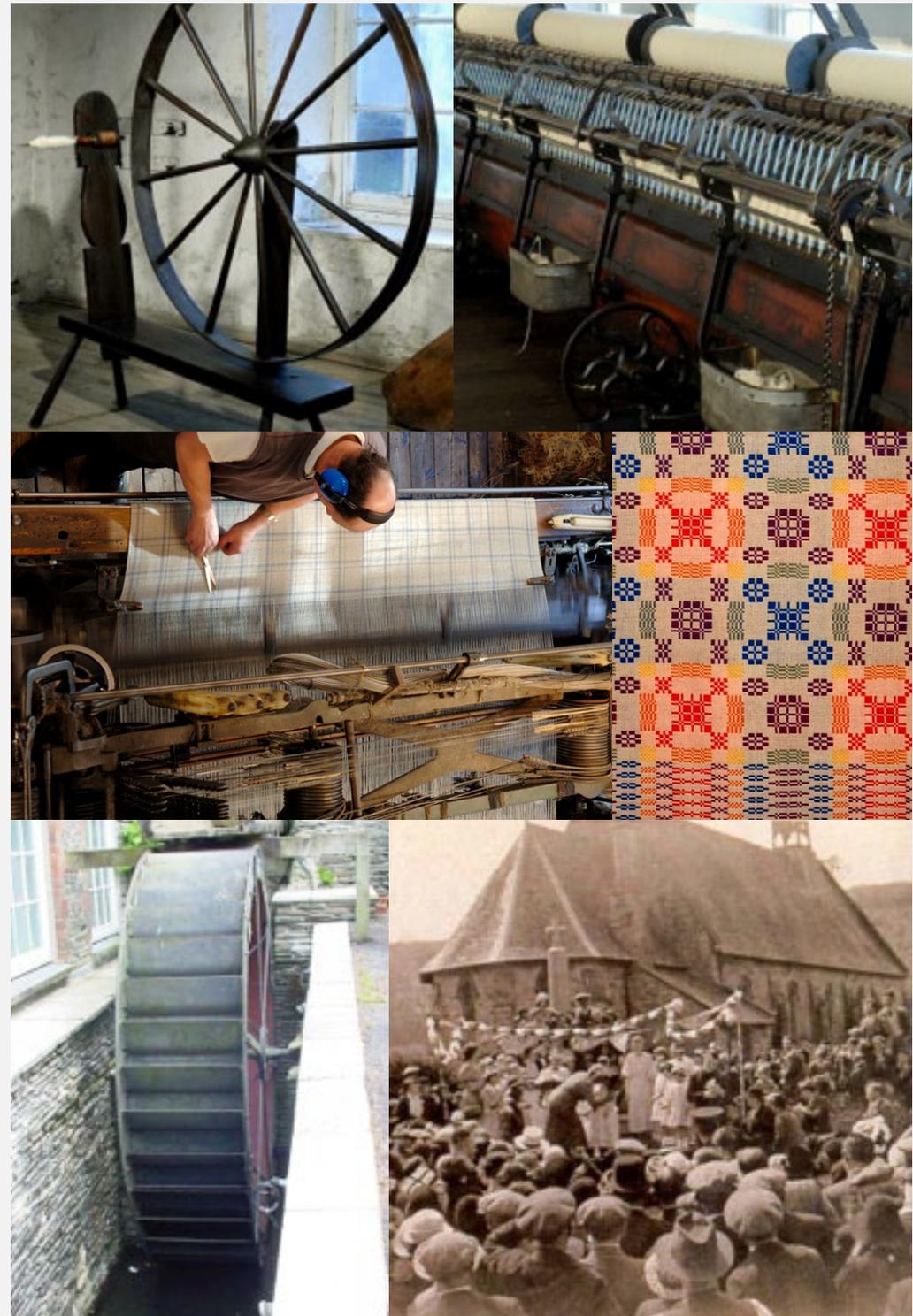
- The spinning wheel, which was able to spin one thread, was replaced by the Spinning Mule, which produced 400 threads.
- The power from the water wheel was replaced by a gas boiler.
- The hand loom was replaced by a power loom, allowing the cloth to be produced at a faster and larger scale.
- The carding bats were replaced by the carding engine, again allowing larger scale production.

Location:

- Fast-flowing rivers powered the water wheels to colour and wash the cloth and fleece.
- There was a network of railways connecting Henllan and Newcastle Emlyn to the industrial heart of Wales and further afield.
- The raw materials were available – plenty of sheep in a rural area.
- Many people in the locality were already able to spin, weave and produce cloth on a domestic level.

Impact on the local community:

In its heyday the woollen industry in the Teifi Valley boasted around 24 mills within a square mile. This had an impact on the local community, with the growth of social events such as the brass band, choirs, sport, a dance hall, shops and a bank, the church and chapel, the trade unions – Dre-fach Felindre was more like the mining villages in south Wales than a small rural village.



The woollen industry in the 20th century

The woollen industry flourished in the late 19th century. However, in the early 20th century it began to decline. The First World War helped revive the industry somewhat due to war production. However, after the war, the decline continued with many mysterious fires in the local mills. The Second World War again saw a boost to production but this was short-lived and the industry went in to terminal decline.

During the 1960s there was a short period where the fashion industry and the influence of Mary Quant saw a revival in the clothing industry using Welsh flannel.

Today, with only a 12 mills operating in the whole of Wales, there seems to be resurgence of interest in Welsh blankets and cloth.



For more information please follow this link
www.museumwales.ac.uk/wool/learning

