



# LIFE IS... GALLERY



ST FAGANS NATIONAL MUSEUM OF HISTORY

# Life is... looking good

Human beings enjoy looking good. Since prehistoric times, we have used jewellery, clothing and grooming to express ourselves and our place in society. Explore this section to see how fashion and style have evolved over time, and what these items can tell us about the individuals who wore them.

## Clothing

From memories of childhood to special going-out dresses, clothes often remind us of key moments in our lives. Whether positive or negative, emotional ties often dictate that we keep hold of these clothes – they are markers of the lives we have lived.

## Jewellery

Wearing jewellery is not a modern trend. The earliest modern human graves contained shell beads and pierced animal teeth, suggesting that decorating clothing was a fashionable way of expressing people's individuality and perhaps status within their group. Jewellery from early Wales not only reveals how social standing was expressed and displayed but also clues to changing styles of clothing.

## Grooming

Trimmed, straightened, combed or curled, humans have been cutting and styling their hair for decoration and self-expression throughout history. Hairstyles are markers and signifiers of social class, age, marital status, racial identification, political beliefs and attitudes about gender.

## Discussion...

What is your morning routine?

What do you wear to look good? What is your favourite outfit?

Is looking good for yourself or for other people?

What clothes do you wear? Do you wear different clothes for different occasions or times of day/year?

What are your clothes made from?

Have a look in the mirror. What does your hairstyle say about you?

Do you wear any jewellery?

Do you wear a uniform? Do you like wearing a uniform? Why/why not?

Are there differences between what boys and girls wear? Should there be?

## Related exhibits in the gallery...

### Life is death –

For further information about mourning and how widows, in particular, had to keep to a strict dress code after the death of their husband.

## **Life is bed –**

Find out about the different types of clothing that are worn for bedtime.

### **Also visit...**

#### **Tailor Shop (seasonal)**

Take a look at how clothes would have been made especially for each individual in the days before mass production.

#### **St Fagans Castle**

Take a look at the portraits in the castle. What can they tell you about the people in them?

#### **Bryn Eryr**

Visit a Celtic home to see a loom that was used to make cloth.

### **Related education sessions**

Tudor costume (KS2)

## Life is... food

In this section of the gallery explore how food and drink have been prepared and eaten in the past, from cooking in medieval times, eating supper in the 18th century to the cafe culture of the 1920s. Consider just how much you can learn about someone's life from what food they had, and what your food might tell someone about you.

Consider the stories behind some foods and the people who served and ate them from written and oral accounts. Explore the family history of Italian immigrants who came to Wales during the 20th century and how they served the communities they were a part of. Take a look at related objects, both beautiful and practical, such as the large coffee machine which came all the way from Italy in 1921 to be used in Swansea.

See how food has always been used to bring people together through the theme of feasting. Learn about how food was involved in special events from over 2,000 years ago and take a closer look at the special equipment used for these gatherings. See how important food has been in human life.

### Discussion...

What is your favourite meal?

What food is grown in Wales?

What food is imported/bought into Wales?

Where do you buy your food?

Who makes your food?

Do you eat at a table?

Does food play a part during special occasions?

### Related exhibits in the gallery...

**Life is work** – Explore farming production and how much work went into growing and preparing the food.

### Also visit...

#### Gwalia Stores

Take a look at the store from Ogmere Vale. This store once served a large community selling a variety of different foods. Take a look at the foods available and see if you can spot any brands still around today.

#### Rhyd-y-car Houses

Visit this row of houses to see how growing your own food was an important part of life over a variety of different periods. See what was grown and how the use of the garden space changed.

### **Melin Bompren Flour Mill**

Take a look at this still-active flour mill from 1851 and see how grain is made into flour.

### **Bakery**

Visit the bakery to see how bread used to be made in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The bakery still makes and sells bread.

### **Related Education Sessions**

Gwalia Stores (Foundation)

Life in Iron Age Bryn Eryr (KS2)

Llys Llywelyn (KS2)

# Life is... work

Until the Industrial Revolution, most people lived off the land, first by gathering and hunting and then by farming. Discover how working the land was hard physical work, dictated by the seasons and harsh climate.

Mechanisation came late to Wales as new technology was more expensive than people's wages. The tractor only became widely used during the Second World War, to increase food production and reduce imports at risk from attacks by German submarines.

The Industrial Revolution brought with it a shift in the working lives of many people in Wales. It led to the development of towns, rapid population growth and the first experience of modern unemployment. Life down the mines was hard, unpleasant and dangerous. And it wasn't only adults who worked in the mines.

The mining industries caused the death of many workers through ill health and accidents at work. The worst mining disaster in British history was at Senghenydd. It cost the lives of 439 men and boys. Discover how, before the state pension in 1909 and the welfare state in 1948, people had to rely on help from charities, societies and their communities when they couldn't find work.

For a long time women were the hidden workforce. From childcare and housework to the tin industry and the munition factories during the Second World War, discover how women have always contributed to working life but how their contributions have not always been fairly recognised.

## Discussion...

What is work?

What do the adults in your life do?

What job would you like when you grow up?

Why do we work?

Is work safe? Should work be safe?

Is work important?

## Related exhibits in the gallery...

**Life is food** – Discover what foods are grown in Wales and what foods need to be imported.

**Life is death** – There was money to be made from death. Discover the different roles that people had, from gravedigger to funeral director.

**Life is fun** – Holidays only became a possibility for many people in Wales during the 20th century. Find out how they enjoyed their free time.

## Also visit...

**Llwyn-yr-eos**

Visit a working farm to see how they would have lived and worked. There is also a laundry room which traditionally would have been used by women for the weekly wash.

### **Gwalia Stores**

Not everyone in south Wales worked down the mines. Gwalia Stores was a successful department store selling everything from paint to butter to the mining community in Ogmore Vale

### **Tannery**

The tannery produced leather goods and would have smelt awful! Children worked in the tanneries.

### **Bakery**

The baker was up before dawn to make sure that bread was baked and ready to be sold every morning.

### **Smithy**

The smithy is still in use today by our blacksmith making all kinds of metal items.

### **Tudor Trader's House**

This house shows that the separation between work and home is still relatively new. The family in the Tudor trader's house would have lived on the first floor and goods used for trading would have been stored on the ground floor.

### **Big Pit National Coal Museum**

Big Pit is a real coal mine and one of Britain's leading mining museums. With facilities to educate and entertain all ages, Big Pit is an exciting and informative day out. Enjoy a multi-media tour of a modern coal mine with a virtual miner in the Mining Galleries, exhibitions in the Pithead Baths and historic colliery buildings. There's also the underground tour. Go 300 feet underground with a real miner and see what life was like for the thousands of men who worked at the coal face.

## Life is... fun

In this part of the gallery explore the fun side of life in Wales. Revel as we explore how fun life can be and just how people enjoyed life in the past from over 2,000 years ago right up to recent history.

Come and see how sport in Wales brings people together. Explore how as we have grown as a people so have our places of fun –take a look at the history of building the Principality Stadium and how it opened for the 1999 Rugby World Cup. Listen to the roar of the crowd enjoying the spectacle as you sit down on the chairs from the original National Stadium.

Explore the theme of home entertainment and see just how the people of Wales relaxed in their homes. See the variety of toys from all over Welsh history, from the Romans playing board games to Lego in the 20th century. Take a look at the changes in technology for listening to music in the home, from the phonograph and the gramophone in the late 19th century to the boom of the home radio in the 1930s. Find out about the campaign for Welsh-language television and how campaigners succeeded with S4C launching in 1982.

Discover how people enjoyed their holidays in Wales, such as the Dodds family in their caravan. Take a peek at how we remember our holidays as well seeing examples of postcards sent by people across Wales and consider what your favourite part of Wales might be.

### Discussion...

What do you do for fun?

Where do you go for fun?

Who do you have fun with?

Where do you go on holiday?

Does everyone get to have fun?

### Related exhibits in the gallery...

#### Life is looking good –

When heading out to events or parties we want to look our best. See how people in the past wanted to look good while having fun.

### Also visit...

#### Cockpit

Take a look at the darker side of fun in Wales where people used to watch cockerels fight.

#### St Fagans Castle

Visit this Elizabethan manor house as it would have looked in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. See how wealthy and high status people enjoyed their summers, from leisure time in the gardens and listening to music to playing cricket.

### **Oakdale Workmen's Institute**

The 'Stiwt was built in 1917 as a community hub for the miners and their families. See how they used the space for education and relaxation.

### **Related Education Sessions**

Traditional Toys (Foundation/KS2)

Make a Toy (Foundation/KS2)

## Life is... bed

Beds are not only used for sleeping. Beds can play an important role in health, death, status and leisure.

Take a look at the Tudor bed of Sir Rhys ap Thomas, a wealthy lord whose exploits can be seen carved across the bed's frame. Can you spot the ones depicting the Battle of Bosworth? The bed itself shows not only Rhys's achievements but his family connections, something that was really important in Tudor times.

When exploring this space in the gallery take a look at the objects that have been used to make sleeping a more comfortable experience. See how people at different times in the past attempted to stay warm through new technology such as hot water bottles and electric blankets.

### Discussion...

When do you go to bed?

Is sleep important?

How important is your bed?

Do you have your own bedroom?

What else do you use your bedroom for?

Does everyone have a bed?

What kinds of beds are there?

### Related exhibits in the gallery...

#### Life is looking good –

Clothes have a variety of purposes. Take a look at how clothes are used in other parts of life.

#### Life is death –

Explore how the bed is used in death. From the concept of a deathbed to the person's final resting place.

### Also visit...

#### Abernodwydd

Visit this house to see a bed you'd have slept in sitting up. The bed is also covered in symbols to protect the person as they slept.

#### Kennixton Farmhouse

See a variety of different beds in this house, including a box bed by the fireplace on the ground floor and a large bed for the parents upstairs.

### **Llwyn-yr-eos Farmhouse**

This farmhouse is shown how it would have looked during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Explore the bedrooms upstairs to see its beds.

### **Llainfadyn Cottage**

Ten people lived in this small cottage. Take a look at how they squeezed everyone in and where they all slept.

## Life is... death

This section explores death and burial over 32,000 years, and the stories they tell us about the lives of those who have died.

Burial sites can provide us with clues about a person's status, wealth and religion as well as that of the community or society they were a part of. If the individual was buried with belongings, they can show evidence of what they did in life. For example, knives and spears suggest a life of hunting, fighting and farming.

Mourning and remembrance are also a part of death. The traditions and ceremonies with which we bury our dead have evolved over time along with our changing beliefs and attitudes towards death and dying.

During the second half of the 1800s mourning was big business as poor living conditions and limited healthcare meant that many people died young. Mourning had complex rules and etiquette. It became customary for families to go through elaborate rituals to commemorate their dead. This included wearing mourning clothes, having a lavish and often expensive funeral, curtailing social behaviour for a set period of time and placing an ornate monument on the grave.

### Discussion...

What do the objects on display tell us about the individuals who were buried?

Why was it assumed The Red Lady was female?

What objects are important to you and what would you like to be buried with?

How do we remember people who have died?

What do you think happens to people when they die?

### Related exhibits in the gallery...

#### Life is looking good –

Mourning clothes on display. Opportunity to discuss if we still wear special clothes for a funeral. Clothes are keepers of memories. They remind us of people, places and phases in our lives. Are clothes a way to remember someone?

#### Life is Work –

Until recently working life could be dangerous and death was not uncommon down the mines. The Senghenydd disaster – is working life still dangerous?

### Also visit...

#### Capel Pen-rhiw

If you visit Capel Penrhiw, be sure to look up at the ceiling to spot the biers which would have been used for carrying bodies.

#### Rhyd-y-car 1925 house

In this house you will be able to see a 'coffin drop'. These were installed in houses to help with removing bodies from the upstairs. During industrialisation Merthyr was hit by a number of water-borne diseases including typhoid and cholera.

### **Related education sessions**

Celtic warrior grave (KS2)