



Postgraduate/Distance Learning Assignment coversheet & feedback form

**THIS SHEET MUST BE THE FIRST PAGE OF THE ASSIGNMENT YOU ARE SUBMITTING
(DO NOT SEND AS A SEPARATE FILE)**

For completion by the student:		
Student Name: Carole E Ballard Student University_Email: 28000729@student.uwtsd.ac.uk		
Module code: AHAN7030 Module title: Exhibiting the Past: Museums, Collections and Heritage Part 1 - Written report (1500 words)	Student ID number: 28000729	Educational support needs: Yes
Assignment title: Essay based on a supervised research project.		
Assignment due date: 6 th May 2020 11.59pm – Inc 1 Week – 13 th May (extension)		
This assignment is for the module of the degree 1 st ☐ 2 nd ☐ 3 rd ☐ 4 th ☐ 5 th ☐ 6 th ☐		
I confirm that this is my original work and that I have adhered to the University policy on plagiarism. Signed Carole E Ballard.....07.05.2020..... Email submission: if you are submitting this form via email, please tick this box ☒ X (as a substitute for your signature) to confirm that you agree to the above declaration. yes		

Assignment Mark

1 st Marker's Provisional mark	
2 nd Marker's/Moderator's provisional mark	
External Examiner's mark (if relevant)	
Final Mark	

NB. All marks are provisional until confirmed by the Final Examination Board.

For completion by Marker 1 :

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Date:

External Examiner's comments (if relevant)

External Examiner's Signature:

Date:

PART 1:Written report (1500 words) a critical evaluation/review of ONE of any museum exhibition you have seen during the last 6 months

A Review of the Kite Centre Museum in Tregaron. C E Ballard 7.5.2020

The Red Kite Centre (fig1) and Museum, more commonly known as The Kite Centre, is located in the Old Victorian Church School, Tregaron, Ceredigion (Vita, 2020). The Kite Centre offers a triple attraction for visitors of a school room, conservation area and museum and is run entirely by volunteers (Vita, 2020).

The museum, by its location and presence, is overlooked if one is not actively seeking entertainment or education as the name is somewhat misleading and does not instruct the tourist to the actual content of the building, that being, both a museum of local life and a centre for wildlife (fig2).



Figure 1 Tregaron Kite Centre

Located on the B4343 is just outside Tregaron on the road to Llanddewi Brefi. N 52° 13.100 W 003° 56.064 30U E 436166 N 5785733 (Vita, 2020) it is almost hidden on a side street as one leaves Tregaron, going towards Pontrhyfendigaid, some 500 yards or so with little

signage to it. Although mentioned in some tourist pamphlets, it is a little oddity for this out of the way little village.

The museum has excellent accessibility to those with mobility issues, a wheelchair path, and wide doors allow entrance, although toilet facilities are inadequate, it is a very welcoming and friendly (Kite Centre, 2020).



Figure 2 Kite Centre Board

Tregaron's past is a varied and extensive and range of cultural history, being a town of mature age, has a wealth of evidential history from the Monastical era to the drovers (Toulson, 2005) to current day. Every century offers bountiful gifts of cultural and academic information from the area and shows how it has developed as a large village.

Sad then, it is when a local museum set in a most quaint and glorious old building is limited in what it can present to visitors to the area because of funding,

space and lack of advertising presence or perhaps even disinterest, leaving it to a small group of 'admirers'.

Unlike the British Museum (The British Museum, 2020) or the Motor Museum of Pendine Sands (Carmarthenshire County Council, 2020), south of Tregaron, the Kite Centre does not have the same 'call' of interest.

It struggles on, by tapping into the local educational system and the occasional visitor, and is very much a 'voluntary' system with cream teas and smiles to hope people keep returning.

However, it fails when one reads Luke and Garvin's explanation of what a Children's Museum should look like, when, in *Hand to Hand* (2015:p7) they question the learning environment and strategies, visual impact, value and characteristics of what children's museums should look like, for example questioning the purpose, asking questions such as;

- What are the long-term benefits/impacts of children's museum visits on children/families?
- What is the role of research in a children's museum? How can it help children's museums to adapt, evolve, innovate?
- How do we grow a culture of research in our museums, in our partnerships, and our communities?" (Luke and Garvin, 2015:p13).

Their questions and answers are based around interaction, immersion and creating a perfect interactive exhibition for all.

The problem here in the Kite Centre, is that there has been zero growth or improvement for a while, and the questions Luke and Garvin asks are not answered in this museum. The Children's Museum of Indianapolis during the summer months, have a temporary gallery with the inviting name '*Try It Out!*'. At its entrance, a staff member greets customers and explains that all the family is welcome to participate in the activity inside and provide feedback (Foutz and Thoma, 2015). Nothing exists like it at the Tregaron museum. There is little to commend its self-publicity. The lack of a real web presence puts it at a disadvantage, albeit with the progression of Facebook (Kite Centre, 2020). In comparison to the Museum in Aberystwyth, it is very low-key and perhaps not advertised as a tourist destination as it could be (Ceredigion County Council, 2014).

In truth, it holds a wealth of under-used information and collected artifacts, some of which are loaned. What it perhaps needs are fresh eyes, a revamp, and a look in how to present its antiquities to make it more appealing and should include local life, and even the myths and legends locals have spun around Tregaron to create this 'legend' of a town.

The building is light and airy, with natural light keeping it looking bright with a sprung floor. Unfortunately, the arrangement is non-descript with no order and little help or knowledge from the volunteers.

The exhibits, the older they are, and the more valuable must be 'relevant' to a modern-day viewer.

There is little point putting up photos of local people (fig3)



Figure 3 General Photos

if those local people are not highlighted in Tregaron's history and locals do not know of them.

In other words, though the relics and photographs are old, the presentation needs bringing up to date.

There is no need for 'Whizbang' computer-generated programmes to dazzle the audience as Stonehenge (English Heritage, 2014) and the new displays at Nottingham Castle (The Framework, 2020) do, and frankly, the museum is too small.

However, the Kite Centre has lapsed into that genre of a "boring old museum' school trip we remember well. In contrast, The Science Museum in London (Science Museum, 2020) fairs well, with a little interactive media, which also comes along with financial support from Toshiba (Henning and Macdonald, 2006:p314), suggesting that the use of media could result in funding as well as interest in museum artifacts.

It seems unfair to critique this way, but alas when effort has been attempted to display things, and work has gone into new displays, such as large panels displaying drovers (fig4) by a sewing team, the fact that it is ten foot above head level, no one can appreciate the sewing or details in it. The museum was once a Kite feeding centre before bureaucracy, licences and health and safety took over which stopped many people feeding the carrion bird.



Figure 4 Drover's Board

The kite itself was almost extinct until a new breeding programme took hold in Wales in 1986 (RSPB, 2020). In recognizing this and as the Cors Caron (Tregaron Bog) Information centre, the museum displays wildlife information posters ("Cors Caron National Nature Reserve, near Tregaron," 2020). The children of Tregaron junior school created a huge banner (fig5) to celebrate the wildlife from materials gathered from the Bog alas, the same height about ten to fifteen above the head and hard to see, especially if one is a child.



Figure 5 Cors Caron Bog Display



Figure 6 Welsh Costumes

Some of the exhibits are wonderful, but out of reach. There is a beautiful costume cabinet (fig6), but signs are on the card, on a string, and tied up (fig7).



Figure 7 Strung Signage

The lower parts of the walls are just photos and printed panels about Tregaron history but 'unfriendly' to the eye, and again way above the height of children.

It is certain that due to the foot area, audio guides would not help here, and in any case, Robert Storr criticizes the use of audio guides as "The bane of the museum" (Storr, 2007:p24) suggesting that, "museums should be about visual display and interactivity" (Storr, 2007 "p24).

If a museum is going to cater to children, it should have things displayed from the ground to at most adult waste.

There is little point trying to post small cards of description halfway up a wall, in a small case when a child cannot read it.

Storr says exhibitions are commonly said to tell stories and create a narrative of the subject (Storr, 2007:p24); therefore, it is not unreasonable to ask a museum to place a high value on the lives it represents. Lack of organisation in this larger room is hindered by a large, wooden display stand with enlarged pictures and a poster on each one, which cuts off the whole of the back of the room from the front (fig8).



Figure 8 Room Divider



Figure 9 The Schoolroom



Figure 10 The Welsh Not

In the second room, there is a Victorian Schoolroom (fig9) with artifacts connected to the Welsh Language; however, too many desks take the majority of valuable space. It does have some lovely items in it, like examples of the 'Welsh Not' (Unknown, 2020) (fig11) and blackboards, harking back to when the building was a school. However, then there are stuffed animals (fig10), which are out of place and a little bit frightening and uncomfortable for children, in a scenario where they usually would be at ease.

These animals are alien to the classroom have no explanation in any way, and they should be removed altogether and perhaps placed elsewhere

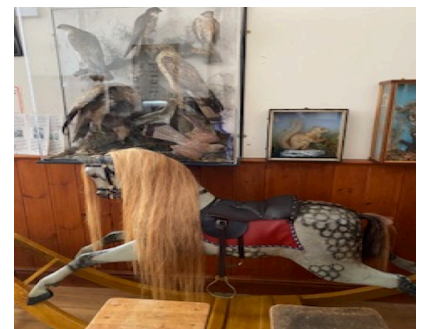


Figure 11 Stuffed Animals with Rocking Horse



Figure 12 Baneri Tregaron Banners

The only relevant display for Tregaron In that room is a collection of banners, but again ten-foot-high called just "Baneri Tregaron Banners," (fig12) which give a precis history of Tregaron but they are so high, you cannot appreciate them with only a single A4 print out to explain them (fig13).

A few items, mainly toys, but none of which coincide with the museum contents.



Figure 14 The Gift Shop

Nothing links the souvenirs to the history of Tregaron or the Kite Centre bar, a few rulers and pens, and the rest are items that can be purchased in any toy-shop.

The café, which is possibly an excellent priority earner, is not even open at certain times and had ten empty tables.



Figure 13 Baneri Tregaron Banner Sign

Tregaron was forefront in banking and having its unique monetary notes. There are myths and legends created out of the stories of local people, the United Kingdom's most significant drug haul, monasteries, highwaymen, drovers, and much more the museum could tap into, from this bounty of history. Instead, artifacts have little or no information, signs are tiny and unfriendly to the reader, and a thorough update is needed.

The truth is, the artifacts which they have are good, they are just not displayed as well as they could be, and are a miss-match of singular items and the signs and the exhibits need more impact to catch the attention of the visitor to maintain interest with signage that is none conducive to any modern-day museum.

There are too many aspects of the museum to be good at any. Three different purposes which lead to no real purpose of the museum at all and nothing specific. A hands-on approach to artifacts is needed to inspire the children. The Kite Centre is not a Child-friendly museum. Perhaps a slim down and focus of what should be in there in order to represent Tregaron, neither visually, or educationally.

It would be nice to see more local people displaying their memories and keepsakes, giving it more of a Welsh feel, again, albeit bilingual, feels very nationally broke. Income from a more researched souvenir trade can keep it going or help, too, as well as looking into arts funding.

I intend my project to be based on this museum but will be focussing on a more interactive experience of Welsh Life and people.

I hope to achieve more connectivity between the items on display with a prominent running theme and the intended audience.

Carole Ballard 28000729 6.05.2020

Museum Details

Free Entry

Open April-Sept; Mon-Saturday, 10.30-4.30pm

Open most weekends during Winter from 12 pm to 4 pm.

Souvenir shop, Snack café and tea.

Parking Accessible.

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