

The Village Alive Trust **Ymddiriedolaeth y Pentre Byw**

**WHAM - Wine and Heritage Alive in Monmouthshire**



**Sponsored and Supported by  
The Heritage Lottery Fund, Cadw Welsh Heritage,  
Whitecastle Vineyard, The Village Alive Trust**



**LOTTERY FUNDED  
ARIENNIR GAN Y LOTERI**



# WHAM - Wine and Heritage Alive in Monmouthshire

OH-14-06836

## Evaluation Report

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# WHAM!

## Wine and Heritage Alive in Monmouthshire!

Craft on Open Day



Cover Schools Curriculum Pack

The Village Alive Trust thanks Julia Willis, Deputy Head, the staff and children of Cross Ash Primary School, Monmouthshire, for their help in compiling and testing the text materials in this pack.

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Mae Ymddiriedolaeth Village Alive yn ddiolch i Julia Willis, Deputy Bannwr, staff a phlant Ysgol Gyfunol Cross Ash, Sir Fynwy, am eu help wrth hysio a pharhŷ deunyddiau testun yn y pacys hwn.

Gallir copïo deunyddiau © The Village Alive Trust i ddibenion addysgol.

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# From Barn to Bread

## O'r Ysgubor i'r Dorth

*A Resource for Schools • Adnodd ar gyfer Ysgolion*

Resources for teachers including:

**FACT FILES**

- Life in Stuart Times
- History & Heritage
- Welsh Language
- Medieval Bread Making & Diet

**ACTIVITIES**

- Quiz, Crossword & Wordsearch
- Map
- Literacy & Numeracy
- Make a Barn
- Make Medieval Bread • Recipe

Adnoddau ar gyfer athrawon gan gynnwys:

**FFEILIAU FFEITHIAU**

- Bywyd yn Oes y Stiwrtiaid
- Hanes a Threfnadaeth
- Y Gymraeg
- Gwneud Bara a Deiet yn yr Oesoedd Canol

**GWEITHGAREDDAU**

- Cwis, Croesair a Chwliair
- Map
- Llythrennedd a Rhifedd
- Gwneud Ysgubor
- Gwneud Bara Canoloesol • Rysiat

Available as a download • Ar gael i'w lawrlwytho: [www.villagealivetrust.org.uk](http://www.villagealivetrust.org.uk)

The WHAM! Project took 3 years to achieve its aims of restoring the Croft Barn (Grade II\*) and equipping it as a learning space for all ages. The Barn, built in 1581, which was near dereliction at the start of the project, was carefully restored and a small servery and accessible toilet discretely embedded in an area of the barn where modern concrete had been removed. The project was careful not to disturb bats and swallows during the work and to use traditional materials and techniques as far as possible. Once restored, the barn has hosted events for adults, children and mixed groups learning about heritage and viticulture in the adjoining vineyard. Over 500 children and adults have experienced 'hands-on' learning. Curriculum resources have been produced for schools and continue to be available via the Village Alive Trust's website. Digital and print interpretation and oral recordings of children making bread to a medieval recipe continue to be available for future visitors. An estimated 1000 hours of volunteer time has managed every aspect of the project, enabling members of the Village Alive Trust and its partners to gain skills in restoration, project management and in recruiting and managing learning programmes.

### 1. THE AIMS OF WHAM! - see HLF application OH-14-06836

1. **WHAM will restore the derelict Grade II\* Croft Barn at the centre of the project linking heritage and wine.** The barn will be brought into productive use as learning centre, conference venue and display for interpretation. The project will conserve Croft barn as an important illustration of the transition to framing in a cruck structure in the late sixteenth century; and show its history of changing ownership and use which reflects agriculture in North Monmouthshire over the last 400 years.  
**Achieved!**
2. The restoration project will include **Interpretation** to illustrate the barn's historical context, using digital and other technology.  
**Achieved!**
3. WHAM will use the restoration of Croft Barn and con-current **Learning Programme** to
  - a) enable Village Alive Trust members to develop greater knowledge and skills related to heritage conservation;
  - b) provide opportunities and a renewed sense of purpose for local volunteers to come together across a scattered, isolated rural community;
  - c) create a school curriculum package for teachers relating to both the built heritage and historic and current viticulture;
  - d) develop a learning programme to gain skills in cultivation of vines;
  - e) organise school visits linked to curriculum outcomes will open up a new area of local heritage; and
  - f) encourage adult groups to visit to learn about the building and its conservation.**Achieved!**
4. **WHAM volunteers** will run every aspect of this project, including: budgetary management and control, due diligence and probity in managing contracts and professionals, quality assurance for restoration works and learning outcomes, publicity and communication skills, digital media presentation, visitor management and audience development.  
**Achieved!**

5. WHAM will offer **open days, talks, demonstrations** of traditional building techniques and recording oral histories linked to the site, to draw a range of individuals and groups. School groups will have their own programme of school-based and activities on site, using the curriculum materials we provide. Senior citizens who may be isolated and virtually housebound in this rural area, will be encouraged to come on special visits.

**Achieved!**

6. WHAM will provide a base for the Village Alive Trust with display area and small conference facilities. We hope to gain **skills in managing a complex restoration and a learning programme** in partnership with the owners of the Barn.

**Achieved!**

## 2. OUR STORY

### *Background*

Having seen the Village Alive Trust's restoration of a neighbouring property, Great Trerhew barn, in partnership with its owners, the owners of the Croft Barn, which was once part of Great Trerhew estate, approached the Trust for assistance. Croft Barn, Listed Grade II\*, was then in a state of terminal decline. It was covered in ivy on the north side, with overgrown saplings and undergrowth blocking a comprehensive view of the structure. Almost all the undaubed oak laths covering the window openings had rotted away. Some roof slates were missing and there were gaps in the masonry. Inside, the Barn still retained inappropriate concrete standings inserted after WWI, when it was owned by the local authority.

### *Uncovering Croft Barn before restoration*



The owners of Croft Barn, Nicola and Robb Merchant, joined the Trust in 2011 and discussions began about the potential for a restoration project. As a first step, the Trust commissioned a Costed Condition Survey of the Barn and the Royal Commission on Historic and Ancient Monuments Wales (RCHAMW) offered a survey of roof timbers using dendrochronology to determine a building date. This, somewhat surprisingly, gave a precise felling date of 1581 for the main roof timbers. Already, the history of the Barn required revision.

Early in 2013, the Trust applied to *Cadw: Welsh Heritage* for funds to repair the Barn. Cadw made a grant offer later that year. Meanwhile, the Barn continued to be at serious risk of decay and the Trust made plans to support the structure, should that be necessary.

## Project Management



During 2013 / 14, Trust members considered the best approach to both save the Barn and to offer a learning resource to the local community. These discussions culminated in an application to the *Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF)* under the *Our Heritage* programme to restore the Barn, to install a servery and disabled loo, to interpret its history and heritage, and to offer courses in heritage and viticulture, using the adjoining vineyard, and resources for schools. Our application was turned down in December 2014, due to lack of HLF funds. We were encouraged to resubmit and received a grant offer early in 2015.

### *Emergency protection*



By late 2014, bad weather had further increased the vulnerability of the barn structure. Before knowing the outcome of the HLF bid, the Trust funded emergency measures to sheet the Barn to avoid further deterioration. Finally, with funds in place, the contractor, *Nigel Sobik & Son*, started the main contract work in March 2015.

Given the sensitivity and importance of the Barn, every effort was made to source appropriate materials and to use traditional repair techniques. For example, an original undaubed lath in situ was carefully copied as a template to replace the laths missing from most of the window openings. This work was carried out by *Crickhowell Joinery*.



Gareth putting in new laths

Another example of care in providing the right materials was the extensive search for flagstones for the floor. After chasing a number of suppliers and seeing samples, flagstones of the right size, thickness and colour were finally obtained from a small quarry just over the border in Herefordshire. Great care was taken to avoid any impact on the historical fabric of the barn, except where replacement was essential to support the structure or to provide disabled facilities meeting the relevant standards.

Extensive surveys were required to determine the use, if any, of the barn by bats and any mitigation measures required. This work was carried out by *Pure Ecology*. The survey found some evidence of bat use in the area of the barn designated for the new servery, so the plans were amended to avoid this space and to place the servery in the centre area under the loft floor.

The main works were completed by June and a website and a learning programme planned ready for the launch on 20<sup>th</sup> June 2015. More than 100 people attended the opening of the barn and speakers included David Davies MP and representatives of HLF and Monmouthshire County Council.



Celebrating the Restoration of Croft Barn and launch of Learning programme

*Learning heritage skills - Welsh Stick Chair Making*



The Board reviewed progress at the end of the 2015 season and planned the 2016 programme of 'Open Fridays'. Volunteers manned the Barn every Friday from the end of April to the end of September 2016 providing refreshments and talks on the history of the barn to visitors. At the end of the 2016 season, the Board again reviewed progress on meeting objectives and decided that the 2017 programme would focus on schools. The final output of the WHAM! Project was a Conference for owners of Listed buildings facing similar repair issues entitled Stop the Rot in May 2017, supported by Monmouthshire County Council conservation officers.

*Schools Day in the Barn making bread to a medieval recipe*





Learning for children included: bread making with medieval ingredients, costume and domestic life and how a thrashing barn was used in Stuart times. A partnership with Cross Ash Primary School enabled curriculum materials to be developed and tested for year 5 and year 6 pupils. A bilingual *Curriculum Pack*, covering activities for Key Stage literacy, numeracy and Welsh language is available to local schools in hard copy and to download from the Trust website. The children also recorded their impressions of activities in the Barn as Oral History.

### **WHAM! Finance (provisional figures)**

<i>Income</i>		<i>Expenditure</i>	
Cash	£20,000	Heritage	£95,200
Grants	£98,400	Learning for people	£12,200
		Heritage for Community	£11,000
<b>Totals</b>	<b>£118,400</b>		<b>£118,400</b>

The WHAM! Project finished to time and to budget, largely thanks to the work of Vivienne Morgan Jones and her superb management of grant draw-down and financial controls.

### **The difference WHAM! made**

#### **- For Heritage**

*Croft Barn restored*



**Heritage** - a priceless heritage asset has been saved, conserved and made accessible to hundreds of people through visits, website, interpretation and curriculum materials - these will continue to be available for schools on the Trust's website. This would not have been possible without HLF and Cadw funds.

Using the AR  
 "talking  
 farmer  
 Williams  
 Phillips c1600"



**Interpretation** - following extensive research into the history of the barn and of viticulture in south Wales going back to the twelfth century, we searched for ways of making this history accessible without impinging on the character of the building, yet with maximum

engagement. We commissioned two bilingual pull up banners: one showing the history of the barn and the other the history of local viticulture. These have been popular on Open Fridays and other events and supplement the take-away leaflet which gives details of the construction of the barn.

Using digital technology we also introduced an innovative form of interpretation: an *Augmented Reality* (AR) banner and ipad in which "William Phillips, farmer of Great Treerhiw in 1600" explains in Welsh and in English, how the barn was used to thrash and store grain and life in the seventeenth century. The AR was produced by *Jam Creative, Penarth*, and is the first such installation in south Wales. Production involved researching and writing a script, translation, employing a professional actor and filming in a green studio, using historical costume and old implements borrowed from local farms. The pull-up banner and programming was then configured by *Jam Creative*. The kit is entirely portable and a huge success with children and adults. It complements other resources for schools learning about The Stuarts and covers literacy and numeracy key stages of the National Curriculum.

### - For People

**Learning Programme** - another first for the Trust was developing a learning programme focused on heritage skills and viticulture - see programme literature at annex A. Over two years, courses on offer included: vine nutrition, vineyard pests and diseases, varieties and soils, pruning and trellising; Welsh stick chair making, agriculture in the last 400 years, history of Croft Barn, maypole dancing for boys and girls, craft weaving and wine tasting.

In addition, we programmed talks on Monmouthshire Houses with local historian, Grant Muter, and Barns: their Evolution, Dereliction and Restoration with Ken Bonham of [www.greatbarns.org](http://www.greatbarns.org). These events had a capacity audience. The Barn also hosted a meeting of architects organised by the Welsh Architects Association and Civic Trust Wales and a conference of the Historic Farm Buildings Group.

**Volunteers and management** - we estimate over 1000 hours of volunteer time has gone into WHAM! covering all the management tasks of record keeping, holding meetings, ordering supplies, negotiating with suppliers, financial management and grant draw down, monitoring outputs and quality assurance, manning open days, welcoming visitors, signage and refreshments, distributing publicity and press releases, rotas and communication between helpers, making ready the barn for events, sourcing supplies for school visits, risk assessments, photography and web site inputs and more...

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Estimated Volunteer hours</i>
Heritage conservation	460
Learning skills for people	375
Learning in community	190

### - For Community

WHAM! and the restoration of Croft Barn impacts visually on local people and the many people who pass the site en route to White Castle (Cadw) who now see the barn as it was

hundreds of years ago instead of a derelict hulk. The Learning programme, open days and events have brought hundreds of people into examining and discussing the value of heritage and appreciation of past craftsmanship. We cannot measure the economic impact directly, but we know that local suppliers have gained business and local hospitality providers report increased interest in people visiting and staying nearby.

<i>Events</i>	<i>Estimated Visitors</i>
Heritage Crafts	100
Courses: viticulture heritage	60 165
Talks and demonstrations	80
Groups	57
Schools	53 children 7 adults
Conference	40

One important spin-off from WHAM! is the collaboration between the Trust and Monmouthshire County Council's conservation officers, resulting in the conference entitled 'Stop the Rot' in May 2017. This collaboration included MCC sharing the Buildings at Risk Register (BAR), which was updated in 2016, with the Trust as the basis for a personal approach to owners of Listed buildings in the county. The conference offered owners support to spot the warnings signs when repairs are needed, ideas for practical repairs on a limited budget and networking and advice on conserving a heritage asset - *feedback from participants is at Annex 3.*

In addition, the community has learned from extensive **press coverage** of the restoration, learning programme and events in local media. A world-wide audience has also shared these experiences through a **dedicated web site**: [www.wineandheritage.org.uk](http://www.wineandheritage.org.uk) which promoted the project and its outcomes from March 2015 to February 2017. For example, between 4 June 2015 and 1 July 2015, the website recorded 627 Users and 1018 Pageviews - see sample statistics of website use at Annex 2. The Village Alive Trust website continues to carry information on the project and its outputs of conference notes and curriculum pack downloads.

### **3. REVIEW**

#### **What worked well and why?**

Having a *team* used to dealing with heritage conservation helped overcome difficulties in sourcing and managing the restoration of an old building, which will always spring surprises. This meant that when one member of the team was out of ideas, another member of the team could negotiate a solution. Having each member of the Project Board responsible for an area of work (e.g. grant draw down) made maximum use of our limited time and resources (*also see below*).

Using an experienced and skilled architect to guide and check the project and local *craftsmen* with the relevant skills to work on such an important building enabled the work to achieve a high standard.

A programme of heritage and viticulture combined appealed to a wide audience and gave a novel touch to events, which was popular.

The owners were a great help in making sure the barn was presentable for visitors and keeping an eye on security.

### **What didn't work so well?**

We did not allow for the swallows roosting in the Barn each summer causing considerable mess and limiting activities, especially where food would be served. This more than doubled cleaning and preparation time for events.

We also under-estimated how difficult the Barn would be to keep warm with its window ventilation and large doors - designed to create a draught to blow the chaff from the grain! A cold Spring and a need to keep doors closed, the space was less adaptable than envisaged.

The boundaries between the owners and project team could, occasionally, become blurred and strain communications. Although working as a team with discrete areas of responsibility, which were reported on at Board meetings, had many advantages for a small team with other commitments, it meant that not all information was shared immediately and this could give rise to anxiety, misapprehensions and lack of trust.

Schools did not find it easy to arrange visits because of timetable and financial constraints (for transport costs). We got round this by going into school towards the end of the project.

We also did not anticipate that Cadw would close the Tower and scale back the staffed access to White Castle, which is a draw for visitors. We would normally have drawn these visitors to visit Croft Barn to experience our learning programme.

### **What would have happened without WHAM?**

Nothing! - the Croft Barn would not have been saved. In particular:

- \* Hundreds of people would not have learnt about its history and heritage.
- \* Dozens of people would not have gained wider knowledge and skills.
- \* Schools would not have curriculum resources and children would have missed an unforgettable bread-making day.
- \* Volunteers would not have acquired skills in project management and negotiation, presentation and history.
- \* The aesthetic of the approach to White Castle would not have changed for the better.
- \* The fact that a small community group can achieve such a successful restoration and project would have been lost to the community.

### **Some comments from visitors to the restored barn:**

*"Beautifully restored, lovely to hear the history"* Tom Cockyne, Cardiff

*"Fabulous, really interesting"* John and Julie Collier, West Sussex

*"Just stunning, so friendly. Thank you!"* Amy Milton-Clark, Cornwall

*"How interesting to see it preserved."* Sue and Stephen Murphy, Ross-on-Wye

*"Wonderful to see all the hard work has paid off. Bendigedig."* A Thomas, Pontypool

*"I recommend [the visit] to other schools and any other people .. Cool to know how they made bread. We will remember it because we did it."* Rob, Rosa and Jake (aged 10 and 11 years)  
Cross Ash School

## **4. LESSONS LEARNED**

1. Never skimp on planning and defining roles so that the team is prepared for the unexpected.
2. Think outside the box about the result (anticipate swallows and draughts!).
3. Trust each other to deliver responsibilities and be prepared to double up or to stand back if others have the right skills for the situation.
4. Enjoy! It should be fun as well as hard work.

### **Management team:**

Pat Griffiths (Chair); Jean Prosser (Secretary); David Binding (Treasurer); Vivienne Morgan Jones (Grants administrator); Robb and Nicola Merchant (Owners).

### **Contractors and Advisers**

Architect: Morgan & Horowskyj Architects, Abergavenny

Community Enabler: Shirley Hughes, Raglan

Main Contractor: Nigel Sobik & Son, Llanddewi Skirrid

Design, print and translation services: Artmatters, Gilwern

Illustration: Eric Evans, Llangattock Lingoed

Digital interpretation: Jam Creative, Penarth

Ecology services: Pure Ecology, Ledbury

Website design and maintenance: W3 Websites Without Worry, Abergavenny

**The Village Alive Trust expresses thanks to the owners of the Croft Barn, the funders HLF and Cadw, staff and children of Cross Ash School, the contractors and the many volunteers who contributed to this project.**

## **ANNEXES**

## 1. Learning programmes 2015/16 /17

## 2. Website Use

## 3. Feedback from 'Stop the Rot' conference

### ATTENDANCE:

28 owners  
8 Village Alive  
4 speakers  
5 no shows  
5 apologies  
In attendance:40

### FEEDBACK FORMS:

21 owners  
3 speakers  
Feedback forms: 24

### FEEDBACK:

Please help us by giving your views:

1. Do you understand more about owners' responsibilities?  
Yes 20 No 0 I already knew 1
2. Would you contact the Village Alive Trust for advice about your Listed building?  
Yes 18 No 0 Does not apply 3

If answering 'Yes', please give your name:

.....

3. Was it worth coming to the conference?  
Yes 24 No 0

4. Any other comments:

Informative; good to meet people with similar problems  
Well run, organised, interesting and varied speakers  
Well done  
Enjoyed the meeting - it was very interesting  
Quite informative and helpful. Enjoyable. Interested in further help if OK  
Why not PD rights?  
Very beneficial; learnt lots - thank you for so much organising  
Excellent conference, most useful, inspirational, encouraging.  
Hope to see more  
Thank you  
Thank you, today was very helpful.  
Swap shop materials not needed for those that are! Just an informal information swop!  
Very good event. Thank you!  
Thank you ever so much for all your hard work - you have done a tremendous job!



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