

Walk: EOC 05
Location: St. Fagans / Museum of Welsh Life

Directions: Personally I always travel from London to the Castle by coming off at J32 M4 and going via A470 to Merthyr and then the A465 Heads of the Valley Road to the Castle, tuning off the 465 at Glynneath. This route have found works out 15 minutes faster than carrying along the M4 TO J45 and cutting up the A4069 from Swansea to the Castle. However Satnav's first preference is to go via Swansea, which is reasons is slightly faster despite being 10 miles longer. The reason why it is not faster in practice is down to some 50 mph speed limits on the M4, so I recommend you program your sat nav to go to St. Fagans via Merthyr Tydfil. You do joint the M4 at J32 and so have to come back on yourself for a mile to get off at J33.

St. Fagans is a small town, which in the absence of the tourist attraction coming up on my sat nav, I have used as the destination point for sat nav. However you ignore sat nav for last mile or so as you do not want to go into the town itself. You want the Museum of Welsh Life, which has its own exit off the A4232 (J33 M4) before the St. Fagans turn off.

Going via Swansea M4 J45:

Distance (miles): 56.3

Time (hours): 1.06

Going via Merthyr Tydfil and Heads of the Valley Road:

Distance (miles): 46.0

Time (hours): 1.11

Length of Walk: 1-2 hours – depending how long you potter around the old houses.

Dates Walked: 11/11/2008, 28/12/2008,

Parking: £2.00

Pop in to: The row of terraced houses showing a typical Welsh family's standard of living from mid C 19th onwards, each house decked out in the furnishings of the time. As you walk from one terraced cottage to the other you advance through the time zones - fascinating.

Description: As we arrived outside the large café and gift shop complex through which you pass to get to the Museum of Welsh Life, you would be forgiven for thinking this is all an indoors museum. My wife at first refused to get out of the car, not wanting to go into a 'boring museum'. But she absolutely loved St. Fagans' Museum of Welsh Life and it is suitable for dogs as it is all outside. Aside from the £2.00 parking fee, entrance is completely free.

Go through the shopping area and you come back outside into a wooded area, with old Welsh Houses from stone age period to present day, dotted randomly around the woods, linked by gravel and tarmac walkways. What seems to be happening is that when a historic house is knocked down for a new road or some such, they take it down brick by brick and rebuild it at the Museum. So you end up with a whole collection of differently designed fairly basic Welsh houses representing all the ages. You can walk into each one, leaving the dogs outside, then continue your walk around the forest paths, popping into each house that takes your fancy.

There is also a smart country house nearby which is worth having a look inside, as are its formal walled gardens, terraces and decorative lily covered 'ha-ha'. (A ha-ha

as defined in Wikipedia: “expression in garden design that refers to a [trench](#), the inner side of which is vertical and faced with stone, with the outer face sloped and [turfed](#), making the trench, in effect, a sunken [fence](#) or [retaining wall](#). The ha-ha is designed not to interrupt the view from a [garden](#), pleasure-ground, or [park](#), and to be invisible until seen from close by.”

You can spend 2 or more hours wandering around and probably a whole day if you were really interested in reading up and studying the design of each dwelling and its period. Well worth a visit.

Pictures taken on 11/11/2008:

