

A LIVING MUSEUM

COLLECTIONS AS AN EXCUSE

Ah! And the ferreiro, which concerns me directly, does the non-existent crackling of the fire in the forge or the sound of the anvil on which iron is forged count for anything to visitors? And can the gathering of parishioners be evoked on snowy days in a cold forxa where the tools, placed on absurd panels, remind us that they were handled with skill by a sturdy ferreiro?

No friends, it is only where the artisan gives life to his craft that things make sense and are not mere tools which, unfortunately, we associate with the past.

José María Naveiras Escanlar

In 1989, the collection was moved to the old Rectory House of Grandas de Salime, a 19th century building that was fitted out as a museum after a refurbishment in which, taking advantage of a technical lowering of the water level, structural elements recovered by Pepe and several council residents from the ruins of the villages flooded by the Salime reservoir were integrated.



Official opening of the Museum in the Rectory House.

The new location was in itself a heritage element that showed the structure of traditional houses and allowed the exhibition area to be enlarged, developing José María Naveiras' concept of a "living museum" with fewer restrictions. The reproductions of the settings rehearsed in the ground floor of the Town Hall found their natural location in the Rectory House and new ones were incorporated. However, due to the size of the collections, it was necessary to abandon the original use of some rooms, such as the stables on the lower floor, in favour of the exhibition of other collections, mainly those related to traditional trades.

Donations and, to a lesser extent, purchases, increased the quantity and quality of the collections, with the aim of bringing "everything housed in the Museum to life". There were demonstrations of traditional trades and activities, workshops and seminars. This consolidated the participation of artisans and local people in the daily activities of the institution.

After several attempts to make the most of the space in the Rectory House by reorganising the rooms, the need for the Museum to grow became evident. An extension was undertaken, now with new buildings reproducing traditional architecture. Its construction made it possible to incorporate new trades and settings that complemented those of peasant roots. A water mill was installed, which for years provided a service to the villagers interested in using it and the Museum also gained space for its internal activity with a metal and carpentry workshop and areas for temporary exhibitions, activities and offices. In 2004, the newly built chapel was inaugurated, the final milestone in a period of constant growth.



In the forge of the Rectory House.

Although he did not achieve his initial aspirations, José María Naveiras managed to materialise the concept of a comprehensive and living museum, the final result being a brilliant recreation of the domestic spaces and productive activities as his chronicler had known them.