

Brynmawr Museum and Historical Society

Chairman's AGM Report 2025

Just under a year ago the members of our two former societies agreed to merge and this is the first AGM of the new combined society. There have been challenges along the way but the result is that both the Museum and the Historical Society events are flourishing. I am most grateful to everyone who is supporting the new organisation, whether carrying on what they did previously or in new roles. I must make a special mention of John Hill, our treasurer, who masterminded the merger and spent a huge amount of time and effort unscrambling the unintended consequences of deregistering the Museum Society with Companies House.

During the year the museum has hosted events, exhibitions and school visits. Most notable was the occasion of the unveiling of a Purple Plaque in memory of Minnie Pallister, attended by many dignitaries including Mark Drakeford MS who carried out the unveiling. This was followed by an excellent talk by Minnie's biographer, Alan Burge. The museum has also continued to receive donations including a Brynmawr Furniture table and chairs from the Quaker meeting house in Swansea, where they had been since new. A significant and sombre task was sorting through Eifion Lloyd Davies's extensive archive. The museum has kept items specific to Brynmawr but much valuable (though irrelevant to Brynmawr) material was gratefully accepted by the Gwent Archives in Ebbw Vale. Our volunteers have also undertaken outreach visits to local care homes, taking artifacts that have brought back fascinating memories for the residents.

Concurrently, our lectures have continued at the Social Club and have been very well supported. The highlight among the excellent talks was Mike Edwards' tribute to Eifion on the anniversary of his death. We were delighted to welcome Eifion's sister and other members of his family who had travelled from north Wales for the event, along with a record number of visitors who knew Eifion from his many activities. Mike entertained us with music and song to bring his presentation on Jane Williams to life.

The details of our finances are covered in the treasurer's report. Suffice to say that we are in a financially healthy position and, in the interest of encouraging attendance at our lectures, the committee decided to abolish the entry fee. We are reliant on the generosity of our members and on the funds we raise from the raffles and museum coffee mornings. Please support us in whatever way you can.

Looking forward, there are two key actions in which everyone can play a part. First, to grow our membership by encouraging attendance at our lectures, by word of mouth as well as our advertising on line and with sister organisations. Second, to find some younger members willing to help in running the society. This last year has demonstrated the risks of relying on a handful of stalwarts who are getting ever longer in the tooth. We owe a huge debt of gratitude to Viv, Alan and Eifion. Now it is our responsibility to build on their legacy in a thriving society for many years to come.

Nicholas