



winding house
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Our Journey

As the award winning Winding House launches its most ambitious exhibition yet, we take a look at our achievements in the five years since we opened and give a glimpse into the exciting plans for the future.



Our Visitors

Over 60,000 people have visited the Winding House since it opened in 2008 and we have welcomed visitors from Aberbargoed to Australia.

Well done! Worth the visit.

Visitor from Bridgend, July 2013

Beautiful establishment full of interest and amusement for children and adults alike. A lovely welcome from lady in café and generally. Will definitely come again.

Visitor from New Tredegar, February 2014

The smell of the engine room is divine! Lovely to see the machinery up close and all round...we will be back!

Visitor from Tenby, March 2014

Amazing! This is so wonderful to see your history!

Visitor from New Zealand, June 2014

Some excerpts from Trip Advisor reviews:

A real find! June 2014

Thrilled to be visiting again. May 2014

The exhibitions are wonderful. October 2013

The Winding engine was, as ever, truly awesome! August 2013

We asked children what they liked doing best in the museum:

Doing and learning things. Aged 9, Caerphilly

Looking and finding out about the Winding House! It's very big. Aged 9, Aberdare

Everything. Aged 9, Phillipstown



Fantastic place tucked away in the heart of the Welsh Valleys! #quality.

Twitter, January 2014

Thanks to everyone at the Winding House for a really fun filled, educational activity.

Facebook, August 2013

Nearly 99% of our visitors say they want to visit us again and that their visit was 'Better' or 'Much Better' than they expected.

"The Winding House is one of our borough's treasures and draws thousands of visitors from across the world each year. I'd like to thank the staff and volunteers who ensure that this wonderful resource is available for everyone to enjoy."

Cllr. Ken James, Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Planning and Sustainable Development
(On award of Accreditation 2013)

Our Volunteers

The Winding House has been supported by over 3,200 volunteer sessions since it opened - contributing to all aspects of the museum.

Engine Volunteers

This committed group maintain and care for the Victorian winding engine as well as 'running' it on the last Saturday of each month. They are essential to the future of this unique piece of machinery.



Collections Volunteers

This is Hilary, who helps to care for and catalogue the museum's collections. Her dedication has helped to catalogue a large proportion of the 12,000 objects in our care.



Front of House Volunteers

Jan - one of our friendly front of house volunteers. She serves in the gift and coffee shops and chats to our visitors to make them feel welcome. She is mentioned in many of our positive Trip Advisor reviews!



CLOCH Project

This was a HLF funded partnership between Glamorgan Archives, libraries and museums for improving employability within heritage. We've hosted 2 placements - this is Marcus who has since been employed as a Library Assistant, here in Caerphilly County Borough.



Schools Work Experience

We regularly host keen school pupils on work experience. This is Ashleigh, who came to us on work experience aged 15. Many volunteer hours and a university degree later, and Ashleigh is now employed as one of our Museum Visitor Assistants!



In only 5 years, 12 Winding House volunteers have gone on to gain employment as a result of their experience gained with us. Equally important, volunteers have developed friendships, skills and contributed to the success of the Winding House.

"The winding wheel team were very pleasant and knowledgeable. Their genuine interest in the machine and its care is delightful. Well done guys." Visitors from Crickhowell, September 2013

Our Collections

In just 5 years, the museum collection has grown to over 12,000 objects telling the very personal history of Caerphilly county borough.

Caring for our objects

Professional museum staff are trained to care for our objects - monitoring and controlling humidity and temperature in the galleries and museum store to prevent damage to our objects.

The largest object!

Our Victorian winding engine still in situ in its winding house is certainly the largest object in our collection. Caring for it has its challenges but we have the volunteer team to help!



The oldest object

The oldest object in our collection - this Roman ring is over 2,000 years old. It was found on Cefn Brithdir mountain and declared as 'Treasure'.



The youngest object?

This Sinclair ZX81 personal computer was used by a family from Penpedairheol in the 1980s. We collect more modern items like these as they help tell the story of our past as much as older ones do.



Want to see more?

We change the exhibitions regularly to show as many objects as possible but anyone can make an appointment to view the catalogue of objects at our Heritage Research Centre and may request to view them.

"This Standard gives museums the opportunity to demonstrate the quality of their work as stewards of our cultural heritage. The Winding House is an excellent example of what happens when dedicated staff and volunteers put the Standard into action and I would like to congratulate all involved."

Minister for Culture and Sport, John Griffiths (Awarding Accreditation standard 2013)

Our Community

The Winding House represents the history of the whole of Caerphilly county borough. Community groups, Communities First, individuals and local history groups from all over the County Borough have been supported by and worked with us over the years.

Local History Groups

We invite all of the history groups in the County Borough to regular meetings at the Winding House to socialise, network and share ideas with us.

East Gallery exhibitions

With each new temporary exhibition, we ask the residents of Caerphilly county borough to support us with loans. Our latest exhibition is showcasing loans from nearly 60 families - ensuring that our exhibitions really do represent the whole of the County Borough.



Supporting others

From Communities First heritage schemes to reminiscence work in sheltered accommodation, our staff and resources have supported the community work of many other providers throughout the county borough and continue to do so.



Museum in the community

We have museum displays in Bargoed and Caerphilly Libraries telling the story of the local area. We are working to identify further sites within the county borough.

Supporting local business

Many of the items in our gift shop have been produced locally. From jewellery produced right on the doorstep in New Tredegar to real coal figurines from Merthyr Tydfil.

“This impressive new visitor attraction clearly provides an important hub for the local community past, present and future.”

Visit Wales VAQAS assessor (2011)

Our Learning

We provide a unique schools service within the county borough which fully supports the national curriculum as well as offering numerous innovative learning projects for both children and adults.

Schools and more

We have 5 different schools workshops from the Romans to the Victorians. Uniquely relevant to the local area, they take place at the Winding House, in schools and in one case an exciting partnership with Cadw brings the sessions to Caerphilly Castle.



We work with local universities to support their work - most recently working with students from University of South Wales on a photograph exhibition. We have also created bespoke workshops for home learning groups, pupil referral units and one off projects such as the Gelligaer Cemetery Excavation event.

Innovation and beyond

For example, the Winding House was the lead on a national project to research Welsh Baccalaureate provision in museums, libraries and archives.



We hosted Ty'n y Wern school history club in their research and display on WWI (which won a Welsh Heritage Schools award) and worked with the National Museum, South Wales Miners' Library and Butetown Jazz society to celebrate Black History Month with local schools.

In addition to these projects, we are developing adult learning provision (supporting Adult Learners Week) and also hosting an event with Communities 2.0 using technology nostalgia to develop digital skills.

"The education programme for schools focuses on real stories and objects and encourages children to think and discover. The delivery of the programme is energetic and enthusiastic and is some of the best I have witnessed in museum learning."

Sandford Heritage Award judge

Our Exhibitions & Events

Exhibitions are at the core of our visitor experience - providing access to the collections as well as presenting history in an informative and interactive way. Our events programme is designed to appeal to a very wide variety of people and helps us tell the history of the county borough in a new way.

So many events!

From historical interest talks to children's crafts and object handling. We also support national events such as Adult Learner's Week and Open Doors with our own linked events as well as the very popular 'engine running' on the last Saturday of every month.



Excellent exhibitions

All of our exhibitions - from the permanent West Gallery exhibition telling the history of Caerphilly county borough, to the temporary exhibitions of the East Gallery have carefully chosen objects which tell local stories along with interactive elements throughout to keep everyone engaged.

Family time

Acti-Time (for 5-11 year olds) is the latest addition to our events programme - crafts and activities with a historical twist. We are shortly to launch our Museum Minis activities for under 5s too.



What do you think?

We ask all our visitors - children and adults - to let us know what they think of the museum. We encourage feedback on-site, on Trip Advisor, Twitter and Facebook. We tweak our services to reflect any suggestions received.

"The museum is very well presented with a great range of interpretation methods. An excellent attraction, with plenty to interest both children and adults. The Winding House fully merits the accreditation of 'Quality Assured Visitor Attraction.'" Visit Wales VAQAS assessor (2013)

Our Future

In the last 5 years, we have developed a successful and award winning museum in partnership with our local community. As we look to build on this in the future, we are developing partnerships to strengthen our work outside of the Winding House. We want to bring the museum and its collections out into the communities it serves.

Here are just some of our plans for the future:

- Developing exhibitions for the East Gallery with continued community involvement.
- Development of schools and out of schools activities to support and promote education and family learning from early years to teenagers.
- Supporting the Welsh Government's Culture and Poverty agenda and integrating its aims into our work programme.
- Building on partnerships with other heritage providers within the Council as well as Local History groups and external organisations such as Gwent and Glamorgan Archives to conserve and promote the heritage of the county borough in a strategic way.
- Provision of meaningful volunteering opportunities which lead to development of skills and employment - including support of the 'passport to work' scheme.



- Working with Communities First to assist in the achievement of their aims throughout the county borough - from working with excluded pupils to supporting communities first groups with celebrations of their local heritage.
- Developing and caring for our collections to help tell the story of the county borough.



Awards achieved by the Winding House: Museum Accreditation (The national quality standards scheme for museums awarded by Arts Council England in partnership with CyMAL), Visitor Attraction Quality Assured Scheme (VAQAS), Visit Wales, Sandford Award in Museum Heritage Education, Learning Outside the Classroom quality badge, Top 10 Valleys essential and "People's Choice" (Valleys Heart and Soul marketing campaign)