

**Cyfeillion Amgueddfa Cymru - Friends Museum Wales**  
**70fed Cyfarfod Blynyddol Cyffredinol – 70th Annual General Meeting**  
**Tachwedd 7<sup>fed</sup> 2024 7<sup>th</sup> November**  
**Chair's Annual Report**  
Covers the 12 month period from **1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025.**

### **Members of the Board of Trustees**

The saddest event of this year was the unexpected death of Christabel Hutchings who died suddenly in January 2025 and she is still sorely missed. She was not only a well respected member of our Board of Trustees but involved in a lot of other organisations especially in Newport, her home town. The first talk we had after her death was a Memorial Lecture in memory of Christabel by Dr. Mark Lewis, a senior Curator in Roman Archaeology. He worked with Christabel and they had a mutual admiration and respect for each other. Many of her colleagues from Newport attended the talk as did her daughter Rhian.

It is with some sadness too, that I resign as Chair after 7 years. There have however been some very positive and enjoyable sides to my time in the post. I have worked with some very committed, knowledgeable, idealistic, efficient, diligent and inspirational people both in the Friends' organisation and also from all the sites included within Amgueddfa. I have met artists, scientists, journalists and writers whom I would never have otherwise met in normal life.

Nigel Morgans has been proposed as Chair and it is agreed unanimously by the Board of Trustees that Nigel be elected as the new Chair subject to his election to the Board at this AGM. He has been a stalwart member of the Board since he joined and has all the qualities needed to fulfill the role.

Emrys Jones, the Membership Secretary, is also standing down. He has reorganised the Friends' Membership database, keeps it up to date, sorts out gift aid, answers members' emails on membership and is more than willing to give advice or help to the new Membership Secretary Rosie Marx in her transition to the post, subject to her election to the Board at this AGM.

Our finances are in good order with the responsibility for them undertaken taken by Lyn Owen, our treasurer, and we continue to raise money and make donations to the Amgueddfa Cymru which is due to our membership attending talks, visits and other events. This in turn relies on those who organise the Events. Lyn's financial report follows after my report and I want to thank her for the effort and accuracy with which she carries out her task. With the change over to the new account which is free of charges there have been hurdles to jump but Lyn has never failed to solve any problems that have arisen.

Diane Davies, the Editor of Oriel, our much acclaimed Friends' Magazine continues to be responsible for the whole process of producing the magazine and all that it entails.

Nigel Morgans has taken responsibility for arranging visits abroad.

Heather Graves and Len Metcalf have continued to organise day visits and 3 or 4 day visits in this country and Heather has taken on the responsibility of Events co-ordinator.

Diane Davies Len Metcalfe and John Wilkins are staying on the Board and I'm grateful to them and all the trustees for the knowledge, ideas and commitment they have shown.

We are very lucky to have five new co-opted members - Rosemary Marx, Fiona Peel, Jayne Pugh Elisabeth Wheeler and Wendy Winney who all wish to become full members with voting rights at the AGM this year.

Sofia Lazaridi remains as our link with the Museum. Sofia has been a very important presence at our Board meetings as she gives us up to date information about events in the Museum and about Museum personnel that may be able to assist us by giving talks, tours around their exhibitions or access to their work spaces.

**Events** We have put on over 20 very varied events and organised visits to many exciting places at home and abroad which are tailored to the interests of our Members and as a result in 2024 we were able to donate £32,000 to be shared among the following projects at Amgueddfa Cymru.

Two sums of money were donated towards the Gwen John Exhibition taking place in 2026: £10,000 for bespoke frames for Gwen John's drawings – images on one side and notes and 'scribbles' on the reverse which give a greater depth of understanding of the image itself to the viewer. Another £5000 is to be used for the publication that will accompany the Exhibition not only in Cardiff but also when it goes to Scotland and then to Connecticut and Boston. We donated £10,000 to the National Slate Museum for a display case which will become part of the permanent display at the Museum and £5,000 was donated for the 'Time Walk' – a playful way of engaging children in the history of slate. £2000 was donated for sponsoring the Organ Concerts.

After the AGM last year we had a fascinating talk by Dr. Dafydd Wiliam on the Vulcan Hotel prior to its opening. St. David's Day was celebrated with Welsh traditional music and of course Christmas Lunch was a splendid occasion. There was also the 'Pop-up' last minute event where forty members came to see NYE, the story of Nye Bevan and the NHS which was an excellent production at the Millennium Centre.

I want to thank all the Board members who have arranged these visits and talks with some very interesting people. They have given you an amazing choice of events to attend and enabled you to meet new people and old friends with similar interests to your own.

### **Digital Development**

We continue to inform you via our Newsletters and our Website which are the main sources of information. Many more of you are getting used to the technology involved and the majority of you, access our information that way. We post out Oriel, Events calendars and flyers twice a year to all members. Any intervening correspondence goes out to 77 members who have no computers or printers, by post. We can also be found on Facebook and Instagram, thanks to Marj Sheen and her knowledge of these digital platforms.

Many more Members now regularly use our Website and use it for accessing forms to join the Friends, accessing up to date information on event changes and past editions of Oriel. The Friends' website received from August 2024 to July 2025, 49,363 visits and the average hits per day in that period was nearly 700. I would like to thank Meurig Williams for maintaining the Website and making changes to it as soon as it is necessary and ensuring there is bilingual access to the information. We have recently purchased a Card Machine to be used for paying for entry to talks. The Museum has very kindly given us a new colour printer to use for all the printing and photocopying we do and I want to thank them profusely for that gift.

### **Membership - Emrys Jones**

At the end of our 2024 -25 year, up to the end of March 2025, we had 755 members on our database. This was encouraging as we had welcomed 32 new members during the year but sadly lost 11 members. However a number of members (46) had not yet renewed their membership despite sending reminder emails and letters. They were removed from the database at the end of April 2025. The renewal date is 1<sup>st</sup> April each year but members can join or rejoin at anytime.

New members often join us on a recommendation from their friends but can also access information and application forms from leaflets in the Museum. Due to the imposition of charges on our Subscriptions Account we now have one Treasurers account for all payments and no imposed charges. All members who paid by Standing Order have had to cancel their existing Order and take out a new one using the new account number in readiness for 2025 -26. Although we sent out details of how to do this, on several occasions, we have had a reduction in numbers as many existing Standing Orders are historical and belong to non participant members.

I want to thank the Museum Staff for their support including Jane Richardson, the Chief Executive of Amgueddfa Cymru who has been extremely supportive of the Friends and also to all the staff of the Museum with whom we have come into contact. They have been more than helpful in the many requests we make of them. Some staff members give talks for us, some write articles for Oriel, many have shown us around new exhibitions. Many thanks to them but also a very big thank you to you our members who support us in so many different ways.

**Gwen Williams, Chair, Friends Museum Wales**