



‘Stories change minds and museums are good at telling them.’

We profile TimeScape Rhayader/Amserwedd Rhaeadr Gwy, rural mid Wales’ newest all-weather attraction.

2024 was a good year. We reopened after redevelopment, got Levelling Up funding to employ four temporary staff and finished by celebrating the community play which started everything off 30 years ago. ‘The Lost Harp – Y Delyn Golledig,’ by Peter Cox

was the first time that local stories were publicly told and valued. That inspired change.

We created CARAD, (Community Arts Rhayader and District) an independent charity running arts and heritage projects for social benefit. We bought two industrial units, one becoming an arts venue and one a new Rhayader Museum and Gallery. The Heritage minister opened it in 2009, calling us, ‘A flagship organisation and shining example of community arts and heritage work in Wales’. Six months later our core funding was cut as part of significant Wales wide cuts.

In 2012 we restructured. Two Trustees took on volunteer management roles supported by a part time Finance Officer. Volunteers opened the Museum four days a week and curated six exhibitions a year. CARAD’s income came from Trusts and Foundations or from delivering the cultural and community engagement elements of partners’ environmental projects.

During lockdown, our activities changed from being largely outreach to digital and we evaluated how to tell our stories in changing times. We wanted to show their relevance to and influence on national and

international concerns around identity, community resilience, land use and climate change. A Welsh Government capital grant and an Art Fund revenue grant gave us six times as much exhibition space. However, spiralling costs meant that the display content and creative design was done by our volunteer managers, which was challenging but incredibly satisfying. Over sixty volunteers of all ages worked with us, many of them disabled or neurodiverse. We renamed the museum TimeScape Rhayader/ Amserwedd Rhaeadr Gwy.

We harnessed our diverse creative experiences to tell stories about the people and politics, nature and community, faith, and folklore of Rhayader and the Elan Valley’s reservoirs and uplands. Stories that inspired national change. We ask visitors to consider their views and what personal choices they will make to affect our futures.

2024 was also the Year of the Dragon. A hugely significant object in our collections is our giant copper Dragon made as a millennium project by artist Richard Taylor, a powerful sculpture with great dynamic energy. It is an Ouroboros, representing cycles of

regeneration, renewal, and hope. Her recycled scales were beaten by people both locally and abroad and marked to celebrate someone they loved. She has been central to our community activities. Because she was on a trailer, millions of people have seen her at agricultural shows, arts and food festivals, carnivals, large civic celebrations in Wales and England and on television. She has her own festival which coincides with the Welsh Museums Festival and now, a

27% despite shorter opening times, volunteers by 37% and local visitors by 40%. We start 2025 as we began 2012, being volunteer led, determined to positively affect our community’s future but seeing more cuts to mid Wales’ cultural organisations.

The possibilities are fantastic. Museums are brilliantly placed to look outward, to reach every child and design creative projects that can inform and change people’s perceptions of today’s challenges.

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permanent home in TimeScape. The mix of arts, heritage, and symbolism that she embodies, creates an impactful metaphor. By building stories around her about the natural, built, emotional, and ideological world around us we have found a powerful way to engage people. She fires the imagination.

We opened fully in July 2024 for three days a week, with a paid supervisor supporting volunteers. Reviews are inspiring, visitor numbers up by

Stories change minds and museums are good at telling them. We can empower our communities and help achieve our legislator’s good intentions. We just need the resources to be able to do that effectively.

**Cath Allan, Chair of Trustees,
CARAD – Community Arts
Rhayader And District
TimeScape Rhayader/
Amserwedd Rhaeadr Gwy**

carad.org.uk



Outdoor boards artist Suzybee Brady.