

## Rededication and unveiling of the renovated blue plaque at Beach House, Worthing on 28 January 2019

*Report on the event by Meirian Jump*

The Mayor of Worthing Councillor Paul Baker, representatives from BCA'37UK and local press gathered on Monday 28 January to witness the unveiling of a refurbished blue plaque dedicated to the 60 Basque refugees who made Worthing their home in 1937.

Carmen Kilner, Secretary of BCA'37UK, paid tribute to the people of Worthing who cared for and supported the child refugees, who arrived in their town over eighty years ago.

The children were part of a group of 4,000 who left their home country for Britain, fleeing the aerial bombardment of northern Spain by Franco and his German and Italian allies during the Spanish Civil War 1936-9. Without support from the British government, the children were housed in colonies across the UK and relied entirely on the generosity of volunteers in the local communities.

Carmen, daughter of one of the *Señoritas* - the young women who were teachers and assistants who accompanied the children - reminded the crowd of the original unveiling in 2007. The gathering twelve years previously had been attended by one of the surviving refugee children, María Teresa Grijalba, who had arrived at Beach House aged 14.

The Secretary also introduced Meirian Jump whose grandmother, Cayetana Lozano Díaz, was one of the *Señoritas* who made Worthing her home. She explained 'It means a lot to stand outside the building where my Grandmother arrived when she first came to this country all those years ago. The plaque is a reminder of the generosity of the British people who welcomed these children - escaping the horrors of fascism in their own country – with open arms.'

Beach House - where the children resided - is a striking early nineteenth century grade II listed building overlooking the coastline. The sun shone unseasonably for the unveiling, and Beach House resident, Mrs Mascha Richards, welcomed the small crowd into her home for a reception.

The plaque was one of three on the exterior refurbished by Worthing Council, the others dedicated to King Edward VII and Edward Knoblock, playwright, both of whom spent time at the property in the few decades preceding the arrival of the refugees.