

Commemorating the Basque child refugees in Cumbria

Between 1937 and 1939 well over 100 children from the Basque region of Spain were welcomed to Cumbria as they fled from Franco's forces during the Spanish Civil War. The largest group was housed in the refurbished workhouse building in Brampton. The story of the Brampton hostel can be told because of the recent gift to Carlisle Archive Centre of the enormous archive of the organisers of the hostel project, Charles and Lady Cecilia Roberts, by their descendants. Over the last year local families who are descendants of some of these children along with some members of the Brampton community and the Basque Children's Association '37UK have sought to commemorate this event with a plaque placed on the wall of the care home which is now on the site of the old workhouse building. On April 17th the plaque was unveiled by younger members of the Eckersley family in the presence of their mother, Carmen, who was one of the children who came to Brampton in 1937, as well as the descendants of Valentin Sagasti, another child at the hostel. The Basque Children's Association '37UK was one of a number of other regional organisations who contributed to the cost of the plaque.

Others who attended the unveiling included Gerald Hoare and Simon Martinez from BCA37UK, a number of descendants of Charles and Lady Cecilia Roberts, members of Brampton Local History Society, various representatives of Brampton Parish Council and Anchor Homes, and Rob David, whose book *Happy and Safe*, about the Brampton hostel, was published last year.

Rob David



Photos:

1. The plaque placed on the building.
2. The group who attended the unveiling of the plaque on 17 April.

