

# HERITAGE NEWS

**BLAENAVON WORLD HERITAGE SITE NEWSLETTER ISSUE 15 - Winter 2012**

## **BLAENAVON SET FOR WINTER WONDERLAND SPECTACULAR**

Blaenavon Heritage Town is gearing up for the annual Blaenavon Winter Wonderland on Saturday 1 December, a real treat for all the family! With a traditional Victorian fun fair and covered Christmas Market selling quality gifts. Enjoy mulled wine and Christmas carols while you explore this special Heritage Town.

Santa will be making a return with his real reindeer. Children can also visit him in his grotto with plenty of photo opportunities for children who want long lasting memories of this special moment. With Children's craft workshops, find something for all the family!

Enjoy Christmas musical performances from Blaenavon Town Band, Blaenavon Junior Band and Blaenavon Heritage VC Primary choir and brass band. The Winter Wonderland will showcase this special Heritage Town featuring some unique independent shops, start your Christmas shopping in Blaenavon!

This community event is a collaboration between Torfaen County Borough Council, Blaenavon Regeneration Partnership, Blaenavon Town Council, the Rural Development Plan, Blaenavon Communities First and many other stakeholders in the town.

For more information about the Winter Wonderland or Blaenavon Heritage Town please visit [www.visitblaenavon.co.uk](http://www.visitblaenavon.co.uk) or 01495 742333.



**A Guide to  
Blaenavon  
Ironworks**  
*Page 2*

**Get your Walking  
Boots Out!**  
*Page 6 - 7*

**Councillor  
Neil Lewis MBE  
(1945-1912)**  
*Page 11*

**Coming Events**  
*Page 12*



[visitblaenavon.co.uk](http://visitblaenavon.co.uk)

[www.fb.com/visitblaenavon](http://www.fb.com/visitblaenavon)

# A Guide to Blaenavon Ironworks

“Blaenavon Ironworks and World Heritage Landscape” is an attractive and authoritative Cadw guide to the history and surviving remains of the Blaenavon Industrial Landscape.

Written by Peter Wakelin, a key contributor to Blaenavon’s recognition as a World Heritage Site in 2000, the book is packed with specially commissioned photography, historic images and striking reconstruction drawings.

The introduction interweaves the history of Cadw’s Blaenavon Ironworks — begun in 1787 as one of the first ironworks in the world planned as a steam-powered, multi-furnace site — with the transformation of the surrounding landscape as quarries and mines reshaped the hills, communities sprang up and transport networks expanded. A detailed tour of the ironworks follows. The latest edition (2011) contains expanded sections on the cottages in Engine Row and the Truck Shop, which have been refurbished to give visitors an impression of life at the ironworks in its heyday.

The book also contains tours of Blaenavon town and six other key locations in the World Heritage landscape: Pen-ffordd-goch (Keeper’s Pond), Pwll-du, Garnddyrys Forge, Govilon Wharf and Llanfoist, Upper Yard, and Big Pit.

The 68-page, full-colour guidebook costs £4.50 and is available at Blaenavon Ironworks or from Cadw’s online shop ([cadwshop.co.uk](http://cadwshop.co.uk) — postage and packaging extra).

# Arweinlyfr i Waith Haearn Blaenafon

Arweinlyfr deniadol ac awdurdodol gan Cadw i hanes a gweddillion Tirwedd Ddiwydiannol Blaenafon yw “Blaenavon Ironworks and World Heritage Landscape”.

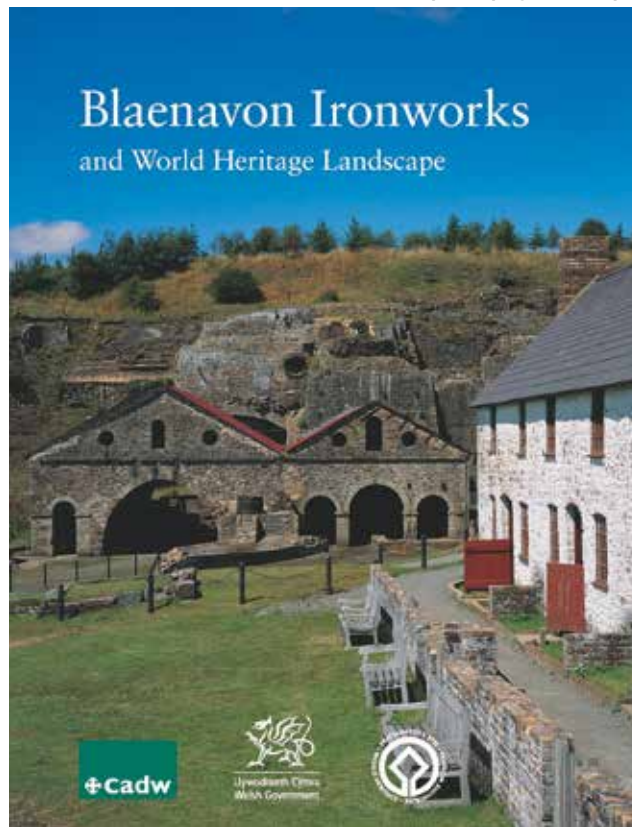
Mae’r llyfr a ysgrifennwyd gan Peter Wakelin, cyfrannwr allweddol i gydnabyddiaeth Blaenafon fel Safle Treftadaeth y Byd yn 2000, yn doreth o ffotograffiaeth comisiwn, delweddau hanesyddol ac adluniadau trawiadol.

Mae’r cyflwyniad yn ymblethu hanes Gwaith Haearn Blaenafon Cadw - a ddechreuodd ym 1787 fel un o weithfeydd haearn cyntaf y byd; wedi ei gynllunio fel safle a oedd yn cynnwys sawl ffwrnais ac yn cael ei bweru gan ager - wrth i’r dirwedd amgylchynol drawsnewid, gyda chwarelau a mwyngloddiau ail-ffurfio’r bryniau, daeth cymunedau i fodolaeth ac ehangwyd rhwydweithiau cludiant. I ddilyn, ceir taith fanwl o amgylch y gwaith haearn. Mae’r rhifyn diweddaraf (2011) yn cynnwys adrannau ehangach am y bythynnod

yn Engine Row a’r Siop Dryc, sydd erbyn hyn wedi eu hailddodrefnu i roi i ymwelwyr flas o fywyd yn y gwaith haearn pan oedd yn ei anterth.

Mae’r llyfrau hefyd yn cynnwys teithiau yn nhref Blaenafon a chwe lleoliad allweddol arall ar dirwedd Treftadaeth y Byd: Pen-ffordd-goch, Pwll-du, Gefail Garnddyrys, Glanfa Gofilon a Llan-ffwyst, Yr Iard Uchaf a Phwll Mawr.

Mae’r arweinlyfr lliw 68-tudalen yn costio £4.50 ac mae ar gael yng Ngwaith Haearn Blaenafon neu ar lein o siop Cadw ([cadwshop.co.uk](http://cadwshop.co.uk) - tâl ychwanegol am gludiant).



## Blaenafon Cheddar Company Update

**Susan Fiander-Woodhouse of the Blaenafon Cheddar Company updates us on the past twelve months...**

2012 has been yet another great year for our family business with six Major awards. Two Gold Stars in the Great Taste Awards, two True Taste Awards & three Medals in the British Cheese awards, which has brought more media interest & tourism to our Town

We have taken part in a competition for ITV1 due to be shown early in 2013. We have filmed with ZDF German prime time TV & entertained journalists from the Netherlands, Germany & London for Tourism.

We have had several pre booked coach tours which totalled 140 visitors which benefited both the Heritage Museum & the Market Tavern.

Ten Smartbox groups have visited us from all over the UK, with 1569 visitors in total up until October.

Excluding our work days Monday – Saturday 10am-5pm, we have worked an extra eighty one days promoting our town at shows & events with fourteen talks given during the evenings.

We hope that many more of you will visit us to purchase your Christmas goodies, Cheeses & Alcohol, Hampers, gifts & local produce. We can send gifts via post.

Gift Wrapping free!

Visit us at 80 Broad Street, Blaenavon or Telephone 01495 793123.

## Y Diweddaraf gan Blaenafon Cheddar Company

**Dyma'r diweddaraf gan Susan Fiander-Woodhouse, Blaenafon Cheddar Company am y deuddeg mis diwethaf...**

Bu 2012 yn flwyddyn ardderchog arall i'n busnes teuluol, gyda chwe phrif wobr. Dwy Seren Aur yn y Gwobrau Gwir Flas, dwy wobr Gwir Flas a thair medal yng ngwobrau Caws Prydain, sydd, wedi dod â mwy o sylw'r cyfryngau a thwristiaeth i'n tref.

Fe wnaethom gymryd rhan mewn cystadleuaeth ar ITV1, a bydd hon yn cael ei darlledu ar ddechrau 2013. Rydym wedi ffilmio gyda gorsaf deledu Almaenaid ZDF a chroesawyd newyddiadurwyr twristiaeth o'r Iseldiroedd yr Almaen a Llundain.

Rydym wedi croesawu cyfanswm o 140 o ymwelwyr ar deithiau bysiau a drefnwyd o flaen llaw ac fe wnaeth yr Amgueddfa Trefadaeth a'r Market Tavern elwa'n fawr ar hyn.

Mae deg grŵp Smartbox wedi ymweld â ni o bob cwr o'r DU, gyda chyfanswm o 1569 o ymwelwyr hyd at ddiwedd Hydref.

Ac eithrio ein diwrnodau gwaith dydd Llun - ddydd Sadwrn 10am-5pm, rydym wedi gweithio wythdeg ag un diwrnod ychwanegol i hyrwyddo ein tref mewn sioeau a digwyddiadau, gyda phedair ar ddeg o sgysiau yn cael eu cynnal gyda'r nos.

Gobeithiwn y bydd mwy ohonoch yn ymweld â ni i brynu'ch nwyddau Nadolig, caws ac alcohol, basgedi o nwyddau, anrhegion a chynnyrch lleol. Medrwn anfon anrhegion drwy'r post.

Rydym yn lapio anrhegion am ddim!

Dewch i'n gweld yn 80 Heol Lydan, Blaenafon neu ffoniwch 01495 793123.



## **Blaenavon Museum Looks to the Future!**

## **Amgueddfa Blaenafon yn Edrych tua'r Dyfodol!**



Blaenavon Community Heritage and Cordell Museum recently celebrated its tenth anniversary with an event at Blaenavon Workmen's Hall, enjoyed by people who have supported the museum over the past decade. The museum, located next door to Blaenavon Library in Lion Street, was opened on 1 August 2002 thanks to the aid of European funding, the support of Torfaen Council and the enthusiasm of dedicated volunteers, notably the late Robert Gulliford MBE.

The museum, staffed by unpaid volunteers, has recently increased its numbers with the introduction of university internships. These 'Millennium Volunteers', interested in heritage and social history, are assisting local volunteers in attaining museum accreditation and are helping with the collection, interpretation and presentation of artefacts. This work will ensure that the museum's collection is safeguarded for future generations with the type of care that meets professional museum standards.

The museum also offers a family history research service and boasts a wealth of local records. The museum aims to enlarge these facilities and looks forward to closer collaboration with local schools, Torfaen Voluntary Alliance and other tourist attractions. A 2013 calendar, containing local photographs, has recently been launched and is available to buy from the museum.

For more information telephone: 01495 790991.

Yn ddiweddar fe wnaeth Amgueddfa Cordell a Threftadaeth Cymuned Blaenafon ddathlu degawd gyda digwyddiad yn Neuadd y Gweithwyr Blaenafon yng nghwmni pobl sydd wedi cefnogi'r amgueddfa yn ystod y cyfnod hwnnw. Cafodd yr amgueddfa, sydd wedi ei lleoli nesaf at Lyfrgell Blaenafon yn Stryd y Llew, ei hagar ar 1 Awst 2002 diolch i gymorth arian Ewropeaidd, cefnogaeth Cyngor Torfaen a brwdfrydedd gwirfoddolwyr ymroddedig, yn enwedig y diweddar Robert Gulliford MBE.

Yn ddiweddar, mae'r amgueddfa, sy'n cael ei staffio gan wirfoddolwyr di-dâl, wedi cynyddu'i niferoedd gyda chyflwyniad interniaethau prifysgol. Mae'r 'Gwirfoddolwyr Mileniwm', sydd â diddordeb mewn treftadaeth a hanes cymdeithas, yn cynorthwyo gwirfoddolwyr lleol i ennill achrediad, ac yn cynorthwyo gyda chasglu, dehongli a chyflwyno arteffactau. Bydd y gwaith hwn yn sicrhau bod casgliad yr amgueddfa yn cael ei ddiogelu ar gyfer y cenedlaethau i ddod, gyda'r math o ofal sydd yn bodloni safonau proffesiynol.

Mae'r amgueddfa hefyd yn cynnig gwasanaeth ymchwilio i hanes teuluoedd ac yn ymfrostio mewn cyfoeth o gofnodion lleol. Nod yr amgueddfa yw ehangu'r cyfleusterau hyn ac mae'n edrych ymlaen at gydweithio'n agos gydag ysgolion lleol, Cynghrair Gwirfoddol Torfaen ac atyniadau eraill i dwristiaid. Cafodd calendr 2013 sydd yn cynnwys ffotograffau lleol, ei lansio yn ddiweddar a gellir ei brynu yn yr amgueddfa.

Am ragor o wybodaeth ffoniwch: 01495 790991.



# Summer of 2012!

Stephanie Nummelin updates us Summer 2012...

Blaenavon returned to its roots during this year's World Heritage Day and celebrations took place in our lovely historical buildings - the Workmen's Hall the World Heritage Centre and the amazing Cultural Olympiad stunned audiences against the back-drop of the Iron Works.

The way in which we relate to and interpret our unique link with the past is often open to debate! Our amazing history has many stories to tell and the way in which we do this is also a part of our on going celebration of our heritage.

For us at Brownings, one of the most important things this year was finding the grave stone of Lewis Browning, thanks to the devoted crew working in St. Peters Churchyard. Lewis, our earliest historian of the town understood the role of history and heritage - he knew that it was ever changing and above all, forward thinking and filled with optimism.

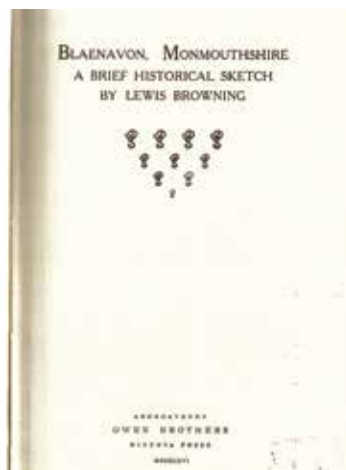
On Saturday December 1st the Blaenavon Heritage Craft Group will be in Browning Books. The group are holding workshops (for which there will be a small charge) and also selling beautiful hand-made gifts.

Brownings will be hosting the group on following Saturdays throughout the Festive season too.

Exciting news too that 'Tati Bocs' Creative Women Craft Enterprise Group will be at 'Vintage Vision' during Blaenavon Winter Wonderland with workshops for small people (small charge) and selling crafts.



*Yours truly,  
Lewis Browning.*



# Town Team off to a Roaring Start!

A successful inception meeting of the Blaenavon Town Team aimed at revitalising our town centre took place on the 2nd October. The Town Team is comprised of a partnership between traders, local residents, volunteers and young people and is supported by Torfaen County Borough Council's Regeneration Officers.

Issues holding the town back were discussed and taken on board and a willingness to get involved and contribute to the life of the town centre was the main outcome of the meeting with many local people indicating a desire to support future projects.

Gillian Dentus, a local resident went along and later said: "I found it very interesting and was really incredibly surprised by the number of people that went to the meeting but this shows that people really do want to improve their town and get some footfall back into Blaenavon. I was pleased to hear people talking about the things that could be done to promote the town as something unique. I've heard from people since the meeting and they're saying that they are really pleased that it was held and that they were impressed with the way it was run".

The Council's recently appointed Town Centre Manager, Richard Morgan, said: "The Town Team is a chance for people from all walks of the community to come together and do something for the town. We've asked people what they'd like to do to improve the town centre, and now we're helping to formalise a number of projects that the community can deliver". Projects might include work to improve footfall in the town centre, keeping it clean and tidy and well presented through floral displays. Meetings are already underway relating to potential new businesses and attractions for Blaenavon.

The Team has the full support of the Council's Regeneration Team. If you would like to get involved contact Richard at [richard.morgan@torfaen.gov.uk](mailto:richard.morgan@torfaen.gov.uk)



## Wall to Wall!



Dry stone walls are the traditional stock proof boundaries for the common land and are an important heritage feature in their own right. But their care and repair remains a battle as there are many miles of them across the common land. So, we are delighted that four of our volunteer rangers have passed their level 1 in dry stone walling and two more have passed level 2. A big well done to them because as trainer Martin Rathbone says, "they don't give it to you just for turning up". In other words, it's tough, and involves a full week of walling 9am - 4pm with the test on the Friday, not to mention the weather conditions which were atrocious. New taster days will be running soon. For those game enough to give it a go get in touch: [sarah.lewis@torfaen.gov.uk](mailto:sarah.lewis@torfaen.gov.uk)

## Look out for Moss Theft on the Commons

On the 18th October Forgotten Landscape Project staff and volunteer rangers, encountered people stealing moss from the common land. Moss is popular because it is used by florists to make hanging baskets and wreaths. But it is a crime to gather it on privately owned land. All wild plants are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act and cannot be uprooted without the landowner's consent. Moss is a particularly important plant because it holds water and helps reduce the flood risk downstream during periods of heavy rain. It also absorbs carbon dioxide from the air so reducing pollution. So commercial harvesting can have a significant effect on our environment. If you see anyone gathering moss or other wild plants from the commons please inform the police by calling 101.

## New signs welcomed by local farmers

New signs have been displayed along Abergavenny Road between Govilon and Blaenavon and in the Blorenge Mountain car parks, to try to prevent speeding, dog attacks, distress to animals and also the feeding of animals which can result in vehicle accidents and injury to animals.

These issues have caused a problem for the commoners who keep their animals on the land. The scenic area attracts dog walkers, however the commoners are asking dog owners to keep their dogs under control especially during lambing season. Dog attacks are a serious problem but are relatively rare. Most owners are unaware that even by their dog chasing a sheep or getting too close to it whilst it is pregnant can cause the sheep to abort the lamb.

Another issue relates to members of the public leaving piles of food scraps and vegetable peeling for animals on the side of the road. Food left can attract animals to the busy road leading to them being hit by cars.

Alan Stinchcombe who keeps his sheep on the land explained, 'If a sheep and its lambs get separated after being chased by dogs, it's difficult for them to find each other. Sometimes the lambs don't survive. We lose a sheep or lamb every week either because they're hit by cars or attacked or scared by dogs.'

Speeding vehicles are a problem along the commons roads. PC Rob Maddocks, who works with the Forgotten Landscapes team, covers the area. He explained, 'The commons roads have a 60mph speed limit but there are many sharp bends and steep drops. Animals often walk on the road, attracted by food, and we're urging drivers to use caution and drive carefully.'

Alan Stinchcombe added, 'We're not asking people to stay away from the area, but this is our living and we would just like people to be considerate to our animals.'



# Get your Walking Boots Out!

Ten new trails have been developed over the last year to allow visitors to access the World Heritage Site's important points of interest. To test the quality of the trails the volunteer rangers organised a walking festival in October and attendance was good. The event has allowed us to get feedback on the new trails prior to a formal launch next April. Over the winter we will be preparing the trail leaflets and each trail will have its own unique heritage theme: industrial archaeology, managing the commons, geology, wildlife and folklore – for those of you who like a scare! The trail guides will enable visitors to discover the 'treasures' of the landscape. They will also include games to make the trails fun for families with young children.

Look out for details of the Spring 2013 launch event at: [www.visitblanavon.co.uk/forgottenlandscapes](http://www.visitblanavon.co.uk/forgottenlandscapes) and in the local press.



## Commons Update

Last week saw the first issue of our commons update newsletter. It covers all aspects of commons management including: bracken management; the availability of our specialist machinery ring to local commoners; the installation of road signs warning drivers of the likelihood of encountering sheep, ponies and cattle on the commons roads; heather burning plans; fire breaks and the publication of a new advisory leaflet 'Common Sense' for visitors on commons do's and don'ts. If you want to know more and would like to receive this update electronically please email Alvin Nicholas the Forgotten Landscapes Commons Officer - [alvin.nicholas@torfaen.gov.uk](mailto:alvin.nicholas@torfaen.gov.uk)

## CommonSense

Our new CommonSense leaflet is now available. It explains what common land is and who has rights to use it. It also provides helpful information on how, as a visitor, you can make the most of your time out in the open countryside of the World Heritage Site and who to contact if you witness an incident.

The leaflet is available in Welsh and English at the Blaenavon World Heritage Centre and the Abergavenny Tourist Information Office. You can also download a copy from our website: [www.visitblanavon.co.uk/en/ForgottenLandscapes/Conserving-the-Commons/CommonSense.aspx](http://www.visitblanavon.co.uk/en/ForgottenLandscapes/Conserving-the-Commons/CommonSense.aspx)

Please let us know if you have any comments or suggestions to improve the leaflet – [steven.rogers@torfaen.gov.uk](mailto:steven.rogers@torfaen.gov.uk)



## 'Handmade Christmas' at the Blaenavon World Heritage Centre

For the ultimate Christmas shopping experience, visit the 'Handmade Christmas' event at Blaenavon World Heritage Centre on the evening of December 7th 2012 from 6 – 9pm.

For just one night the Blaenavon World Heritage Centre will be turned into a Christmas shopping extravaganza, with a variety of quality craft and food stalls and make and take workshops.

Why not come along and do some last minute Christmas shopping or try your hand at one of the make and take workshops. Alternatively you could just browse the beautiful gifts on offer with a glass of seasonal mulled wine and listen to the choir to get you into the Christmas Spirit.

The event is organised by Forgotten Landscapes Partnership in conjunction with Willowlane Craft Fairs.

For further information [www.visitblanavon.co.uk/events](http://www.visitblanavon.co.uk/events) or contact the Blaenavon Tourist Information Centre on 01495 742333.



# WECAN!

What have Rhymney Brewery, Rock UK Summit Centre and Capita Symonds all got in common? The answer is that they are all supporting and benefiting from WECAN.

Hosted by Groundwork Wales, WECAN is a transnational European funded programme with the goal of using the natural environment to drive social and economic regeneration in the Valleys Regional Park (VRP), which covers the south Wales valleys (see [www.thevalleys.org.uk](http://www.thevalleys.org.uk)).

VRP partners, including the Forgotten Landscapes Partnership in the World Heritage Site, have begun to define the green assets (e.g. trails, wildlife, birdlife, green spaces and countryside roles), that need to be maintained without relying on public sector funding.

These green assets are investment opportunities for businesses and are being added to [www.wefundthevalleys.com](http://www.wefundthevalleys.com), which is like a dating agency! In short, we are linking businesses aims and priorities and their ability to provide labour, materials, know-how or financial support, with an attractive green asset, to create a perfect match!

For example, some businesses want to support the environment and communities to legitimately increase their chances of winning contracts. Others, however, want their employees to do something practical or to develop skills that they need in the workplace.

Seven businesses to-date have provided £70,000 worth of support for WECAN projects. Also, thanks to WECAN and partners, two Valleys businesses are currently discussing how they can support the World Heritage Site and the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority. For more information see [www.wefundthevalleys.com](http://www.wefundthevalleys.com), contact Phil Burkhard, WECAN Project Manager (01 443 849965 or [phil.burkhard@groundwork.org.uk](mailto:phil.burkhard@groundwork.org.uk)) or follow us on twitter at: [@fundthevalleys](https://twitter.com/fundthevalleys).

# WECAN!

Beth sydd gan Fragdy Rhymni, Canolfan Rock UK a Capita Symonds yn gyffredin? Yr ateb yw, mae pob un ohonynt yn cefnogi ac yn elwa ar WECAN.

Rhaglen trawswladol a ariennir gan gyllid Ewropeaidd, sy'n cael ei gynnal gan Groundwork Wales yw WECAN, a'i nod yw defnyddio'r amgylchedd naturiol i sbarduno adfywio cymdeithasol ac economaidd ym Mharc Rhanbarthol y Cymoedd (y Parc), sy'n cwmpasu cymoedd De Cymru (gweler [www.thevalleys.org.uk](http://www.thevalleys.org.uk)).

Mae partneriaid y Parc, yn cynnwys Partneriaeth Tirweddau Angof yn Safle Treftadaeth y Byd, wedi dechrau diffinio'r asedau gwyrdd (ee llwybrau, bywyd gwylt, adar, mannau gwyrdd a swyddogaethau cefn gwlad), y mae angen eu cynnal heb ddibynnu ar arian sector cyhoeddus.

Mae'r asedau gwyrdd dan sylw yn gyfleoedd i fusnesau fuddsoddi ynddynt ac maent yn cael eu hychwanegu at [www.wefundthevalleys.com](http://www.wefundthevalleys.com), sydd fel gwefan i gariadon! Yn fyr, rydym yn cysylltu amcanion a blaenoriaethau busnesau a'u gallu i ddarparu llafur, defnyddiau, dealltwriaeth neu gymorth ariannol, ag ased gwyrdd deniadol, i greu'r pâr perffaith!

Er enghraifft, mae rhai busnesau am gefnogi'r amgylchedd a chymunedau i gynyddu'u cyfleoedd o ennill contractau mewn ffordd gyfreithlon. Mae eraill, fodd bynnag am i'w cyflogeion wneud rhywbeth ymarferol neu ddatblygu sgiliau sydd eu hangen arnynt yn y gweithle.

Hyd yn hyn mae saith busnes wedi darparu gwerth £70,000 o gymorth i brosiectau WECAN. Hefyd, diolch i WECAN a'i bartneriaid, mae dau fusnes yn y Cymoedd yn cynnal trafodaethau ar hyn o bryd ynghylch y ffordd orau iddynt gefnogi Safle Treftadaeth y Byd ac Awdurdod Parc Cenedlaethol Bannau Brycheiniog. Am ragor o wybodaeth gweler [www.wefundthevalleys.com](http://www.wefundthevalleys.com), cysylltwch â Phil Burkhard, Rheolwr Prosiect WECAN (01 443 849965 neu [phil.burkhard@groundwork.org.uk](mailto:phil.burkhard@groundwork.org.uk)) neu dilynwch ni ar twitter: [@fundthevalleys](https://twitter.com/fundthevalleys).





# Spreading Christmas Cheer!

**Secretary of Blaenavon Male Voice Choir, Allan Williams updates us on what the Choir has been doing this year...**

For over 100 years the Blaenavon Male Voice Choir has raised many thousands of pounds for charities all over Britain and beyond. We have visited the USA on four occasions, Canada, Hungary, France and Spain. This year a very successful tour was undertaken to Jersey.

The choir's annual concert has always been a great success and this year it takes place on Saturday 1st December in the Workman's Hall Blaenavon. Our guest artists are soprano Jess Robinson and Bass Baritone Meilir Jones, both of whom are winners of the National Eisteddfod. They are students at the Royal Welsh College of Music in Cardiff.

Each Christmas we try to spread happiness and goodwill by singing carols at local nursing homes and to the patients at Nevill Hall Hospital, Abergavenny.

During January and February 2013 local concerts are to be confirmed in Cwmbran and Croesyceiliog respectively. On St David's Day the choir will perform a concert in Llangatock.

Choir rehearsals are held every Tuesday and Thursday between 7:30pm and 9:30pm at the Busy Bees centre in Park Street, Blaenavon. New members are always welcome to share the friendship and joy of singing. Find out more by contacting our choir secretary Allan Williams on 01873 830912 or visit our website at [www.bmvc.org](http://www.bmvc.org)

# Lledaenu Llwenydd y Nadolig!

**Mae Allan Williams, Ysgrifennydd Côr Meibion Blaenafon, yn rhoi gwybod beth mae'r Côr wedi bod yn ei wneud eleni...**

Ers 100 mlynedd a mwy, mae Côr Blaenafon wedi codi miloedd o bunnoedd i elusennau ar hyd a lled Prydain a thu hwnt. Rydym wedi ymweld â'r UDA bedair gwaith, ynghyd â Chanada, Hwngari, Ffrainc a Sbaen. Eleni, aethpwyd ar daith hynod lwyddiannus i Jersey.

Mae cyngerdd flynyddol y côr bob amser wedi bod yn llwyddiant ysgubol, ac eleni bydd yn cael ei chynnal ddydd Sadwrn 1 Rhagfyr yn Neuadd y Gweithwyr Blaenafon. Ein hartistiaid gwadd yw'r soprano Jess Robinson a'r Bas-Fariton Meilir Jones, sydd ill dau yn enillwyr yr Eisteddfod Genedlaethol. Maent yn fyfyrwyr yng Ngholeg Brenhinol Cerdd Cymru yng Nghaerdydd.



Bob Nadolig, rydym yn gwneud ein gorau glas i ledauen llawenydd ac ewyllys da drwy ganu carolau mewn cartrefi nyrsio lleol ac i'r cleifion yn Ysbyty Nevill Hall, Y Fenni.

Yn ystod mis Ionawr a Chwefror 2013 bydd cyngherddau lleol yn cael eu cadarnhau yng Nghwbrân a Chroesyceiliog. Ar Ddydd G yf Dewi, bydd y côr yn perfformio mewn cyngerdd yn Llangatwg.

Mae'r côr yn ymarfer bob dydd Mawrth a dydd Iau rhwng 7:30pm a 9:30pm yng nghanolfan Busy Bees yn Stryd y Parc, Blaenafon. Mae croeso bob amser i aelodau newydd ddod i rannu'r cyfeillgarwch a phleserau canu. Dysgwch fwy drwy gysylltu ag ysgrifennydd y côr, Allan Williams ar 01873 830912 neu ewch i'n gwefan [www.bmvc.org](http://www.bmvc.org)



## Join the Team of Heritage Waller's!

Are you looking for an opportunity to get active in some beautiful countryside,

make a real difference to improving it and meet new people at the same time?

Then joining a friendly team of volunteers to repair important dry stone walls could be just what you've been looking for.

land secure. This means that livestock grazing will be more effective in benefiting wildlife.



Wall repaired by Volunteer Rangers in World Heritage Site  
Atgyweirwyd y wal gan Gwiffoddol yn Sallie Trefadaeth y Byd

The valuable heritage skill of dry stone walling is being revived by the Forgotten Landscapes Partnership (FLP), thanks to funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund and other partners. Through training teams of volunteer rangers to carry out repairs to the damaged walls of the World Heritage Site, the project has made 1.25km wall on common

The volunteer training and task days take place several days a month, led by those who have come through the FLP training programme, overseen by a Dry Stone Walling Association certified trainer. Find out about this and all the other volunteering opportunities with the FLP Scheme by contacting sarah.lewis@torfaen.gov.uk or calling 01495 742333.

### **John Rodger MBE, former Coordinator of the Blaenavon World Heritage Site pays tribute to Councillor Neil Lewis MBE on behalf of the Blaenavon Project Team at Torfaen County Borough Council.**

Neil Lewis was a great champion for Blaenavon and rejoiced in the area's international acclaim as a World Heritage Site when inscribed by UNESCO in December 2000.

For the crucial years when Blaenavon was seeking World Heritage Site status and during the first ten years when that international recognition was being used to achieve

the renewal of the area, Neil provided constant support and strength as the Blaenavon Member of both the Town and County Borough Council. There have been many set backs as well as triumphant moments in trying to "Build a Future on the Past" at Blaenavon but Neil's determination to succeed was constant in hard times as well as good.

As Chairman of the Blaenavon World Heritage Day Committee he led with great enthusiasm and was always a prominent and smiling figure in his Victorian top hat and tails, even on the Heritage days it poured with rain. Neil had the total respect of those who worked on the

Blaenavon Project and liked to be regarded as part of "the team". In return his ability to work in harmony was greatly welcomed by all those involved who were always pleased to support him.

Neil's positive interest in World Heritage extended beyond Blaenavon and for a number of years he was the Chairman of the UK Local Authorities World Heritage Forum, in this role he became widely known throughout the UK and was greatly respected by all those who met him.

His life's work, for his beloved town was recognised when he was awarded the MBE by the Queen in 2010. All those who new him were

delighted that his good works were recognised and nobody could be more deserving of an award for public service.

While recognising his constant efforts and good works, it is as a cheerful, positive and conciliatory person that we will remember him most.



# Councillor Neil Lewis MBE (1945-2012)

A Tribute by Councillor Bob Wellington, Leader of Torfaen County Borough Council

It is with great regret that we must report the death of Councillor Neil Lewis MBE a highly respected and irreplaceable member of the Blaenavon community who passed away at his home on 16 October 2012, surrounded by his family, following a long illness.

I have known Neil for many years and considered him to be a very close and personal friend. We were colleagues for some considerable time, serving as Elected Members of the former Borough of Torfaen and, since Local Government reorganisation in 1996 to 2008 as Members of Torfaen County Borough Council. Throughout this time we worked very closely together, sharing a passion for the regeneration of the Eastern Valley of the South Wales Coalfield, in particular Blaenavon.

Blaenavon was awarded World Heritage Site status in 2000. I know that Neil was extremely proud of the recognition this status gave to his home town and surrounding area. Neil was in the vanguard of the drive to regenerate Blaenavon; he worked relentlessly as a Town Councillor, where he served as Mayor of Blaenavon and at County Borough level as the Member for the Blaenavon constituency and Executive Member for Regeneration overseeing a massive programme of regeneration in the town. Neil was crucially instrumental in the regeneration of Blaenavon with its Ironworks, Big Pit mining complex, World Heritage Centre, Library, Workmen's Hall and much more.



Dapper, charming and endlessly engaging, Neil exuded real love for the town of his birth and struck everyone he met with his sincerity and drive. Neil took his lobby to a

national level, serving as Chair of The Local Authority World Heritage Forum (LAWHF), a network of local authorities in the UK that have the whole or part of an Inscribed World Heritage Site within their administrative boundaries. Meeting regularly at the House of Commons, Neil used his connections to further the development of Blaenavon and to learn from others while sharing his own experiences. Neil worked hard to engage in this dialogue, grasping every opportunity to secure prosperity for his beloved Blaenavon.

Neil was devoted to many local organisations and sought every opportunity to support the extensive sporting and cultural organisations that thrive and prosper in the town. These include Blaenavon Workmen's Hall, Blaenavon RFC, Blaenavon Blues, Blaenavon Town Band, Blaenavon Male Voice Choir and the Blaenavon World Heritage Day Committee.

Blaenavon is a remarkable town with a unique culture which is warm and welcoming, yet strong in its determination to rejuvenate not only the fabric of the buildings but also the spirit for which it is renowned. Neil was the epitome of this cultural phenomenon and a man who worked selflessly all his life for his community. His devotion to Blaenavon was deservedly recognised in 2010 when he was awarded the MBE for "services to industrial heritage and the community of Blaenavon".

His judgement, counsel, generous and gentlemanly disposition will be sorely missed.



## Coming Events

### **The Blessing of the Crib**

26 November 2012

Carol Service, readings, prayers and Christmas lights switch on, Bethlehem Court, 7pm.

### **Blaenavon Male Voice Choir – Annual Concert**

1 December 2012

Come and join Blaenavon Male Voice Choir for their Annual Concert. Blaenavon Workmen's Hall, 7pm, Tel: 01873 830912.

### **Glorious Grouse**

1 December 2012

Energetic walk, 6 km/3.5 miles. The Blaenavon Landscape is home to the most southerly population of Red Grouse in the UK. Find out about the research and conservation activities which are being run through the Forgotten Landscapes. Meet at Foxhunter Car Park, booking essential, Tel: 01495 742333.

### **Browning Books Craft Event**

1 December 2012

Every Saturday throughout the festive month, Browning Books are pleased to welcome Blaenavon Heritage Craft Group to the shop. This lovely group will be making and selling beautiful gifts and offering informal workshops (for which there will be a small charge). We will also be serving 'vintage' tea and cakes so please join us! Browning Books, Broad Street, Blaenavon. Tel: 01495 790089.

### **Santa Steam Specials**

1/2, 8/9, 15/16 22/23 December 2012

Travel by steam to see Santa's Grotto, where there will be presents for children and sherry and mince pies for adults. Blaenavon Heritage Railway. Advanced booking essential to avoid disappointment. Tel: 01495 792263 or email: [santa@pbrly.co.uk](mailto:santa@pbrly.co.uk)

### **'Making' Christmas'**

2 December 2012

At a time where money is tight, there are hundreds of ideas to make Christmas less expensive. Come to Big Pit for the day and make Christmas a thrifty one. Whether it's making your own Christmas cards, 'up-cycling' unwanted gifts or just creating individual and unique Christmas decorations, you will sure to find something to help the whole family make your Christmas unique.

Big Pit, 11am-4pm, (small charge applies for craft activities), Tel: 01495 790311 or visit [www.museumwales.ac.uk](http://www.museumwales.ac.uk)

### **Celtic Café**

5 December 2012

Celtic Café Music Sessions every Wednesday during term time: acoustic folk sessions for young people. Instruments provided or bring your own, suitable for youngsters aged 8+. Parents welcome to join in or enjoy a coffee whilst the group play. New members welcome. Blaenavon World Heritage Centre. Tel: 01495 357816.

### **Handmade Christmas**

7 December 2012

An evening opening of the World Heritage Centre and café, with a range of craft stalls, choirs and Christmas decoration workshops and festive food. Blaenavon World Heritage Centre, 6pm-9pm.

### **A Christmas Carol**

9 & 10 December 2012

Get into the Christmas Spirit and bring the whole family along to see the Woodland Players in 'A Christmas Carol' at Blaenavon Workmen's Hall. For more information and tickets contact Pattie Jenkins 01495 742858.

### **Festive Trails**

15 December 2012–3 January 2013

Pick up a trail sheet when at Big Pit and see if you can solve the festive quiz. The whole family can join in and there will be special treats if you return your trail, completed, to the shop before you leave. Big Pit, Tel: 01495 790311 or visit [www.museumwales.ac.uk](http://www.museumwales.ac.uk)

### **Christmas at Stack Square**

16 December 2012

Join us for a traditional Victorian Christmas at Blaenavon Ironworks. This event will include, Christmas craft workshops, carol singing, festive storytelling and music, Father Christmas, families from BBC's Coal House. This is a free event with hot drinks and seasonal gifts available to purchase. 10.30am-4pm, Tel: 01495 792615 or visit [www.cadw.wales.gov.uk](http://www.cadw.wales.gov.uk)

### **Horeb Baptist Chapel**

24 December 2012

Candlelight Service, 6pm.

### **St Paul's Church**

24 December 2012

Midnight Mass, 10.45pm.

### **St Peter's Church**

25 December 2012

Christmas Eucharist with Carols, 10am.

### **Horeb Baptist Chapel**

25 December 2012

Family worship and Communion, 10am.

### **Love Food**

26 January 2013, 11am-4pm

Big Pit - Celebrate all things love and food at our third annual Love Food Event on Santes Dwywnwen weekend. Sample and buy the best of local Welsh produce to take home and share with your loved one! This year there will also be an opportunity to buy unique hand-made tokens and gifts for your special someone to share your love with them. Hosted in partnership with Taste of Torfaen.

### **Lovely Lovespoons**

11-15 February 2013, 11am-4pm

Big Pit - Bring along a wooden spoon and have a go at crafting your own lovespoon for your loved one - ideal gifts for Valentines or Mothers Day!

In April 2013 Big Pit will be celebrating its 30th Anniversary with a variety of special events throughout the year - so please come and join us!

