

Learning Activity – KS2

This resource provides learning activities for your students using People's Collection Wales.



Blaenavon Ironworks



RCAHMW and NMW

Introduction



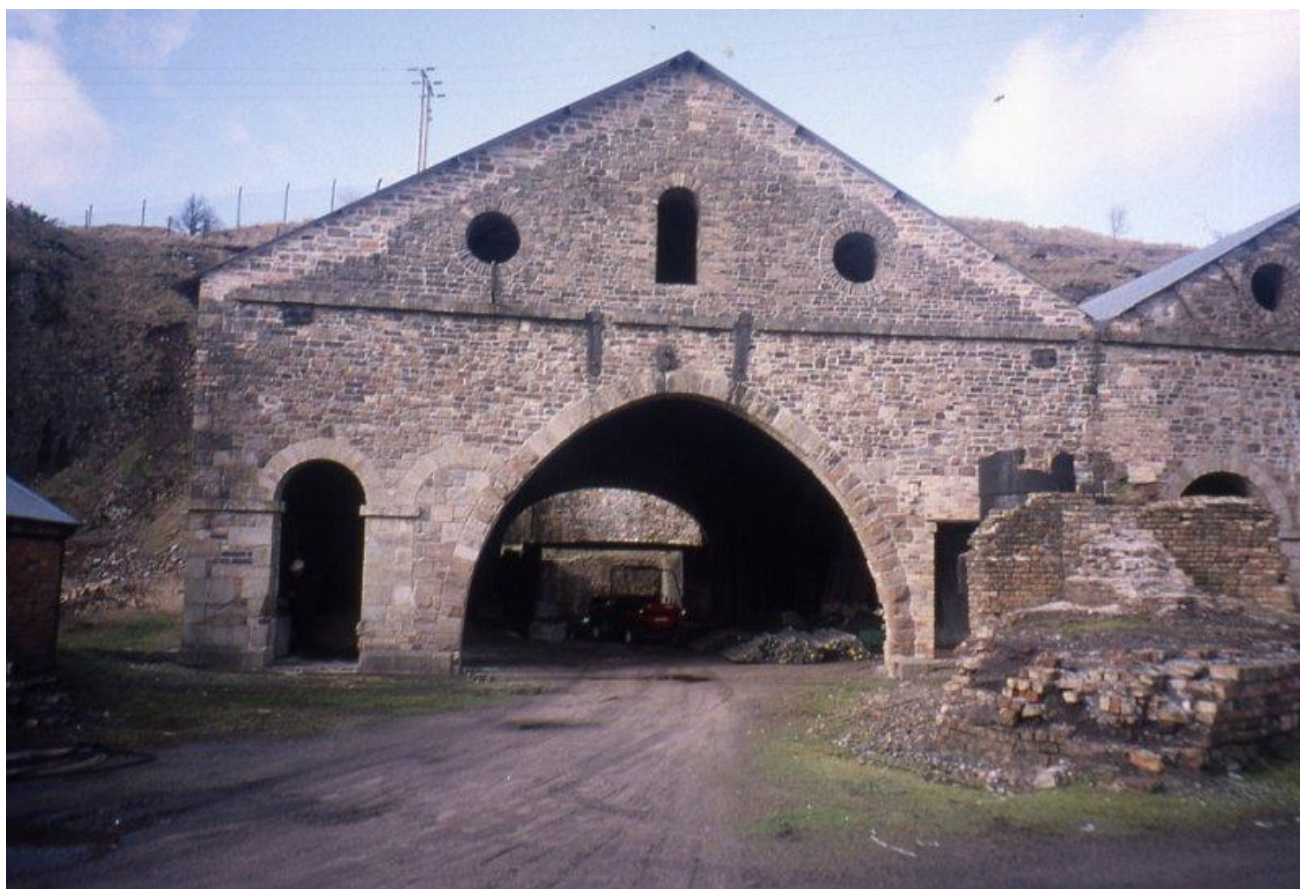
Blaenavon Ironworks

This unit contains interactive resources suitable for pupils investigating the changes that happened in Wales between 1760 and 1914, with opportunities to develop thinking skills through an historical enquiry and to discuss the impact of the ironworks on Blaenavon, which is regarded as one of the birthplaces of the Industrial Revolution.

Tasks and learning objectives

1. Location: How has Blaenavon changed over time?
2. Making iron at Blaenavon
3. Why Blaenavon?
4. Working conditions at the ironworks
5. Interpretation of an historical site (a)
6. Interpretation of an historical site (b)

Task 1. Location: How has Blaenavon changed over time?



Blaenavon Ironworks, Blaenavon

The first task, location, uses maps and plans to learn about Blaenavon, a World Heritage Site, and investigate how the town has changed since the early nineteenth century.

Use the maps and plans, in the following link, to investigate changes in Blaenavon.

[The location of Blaenavon Ironworks](#)

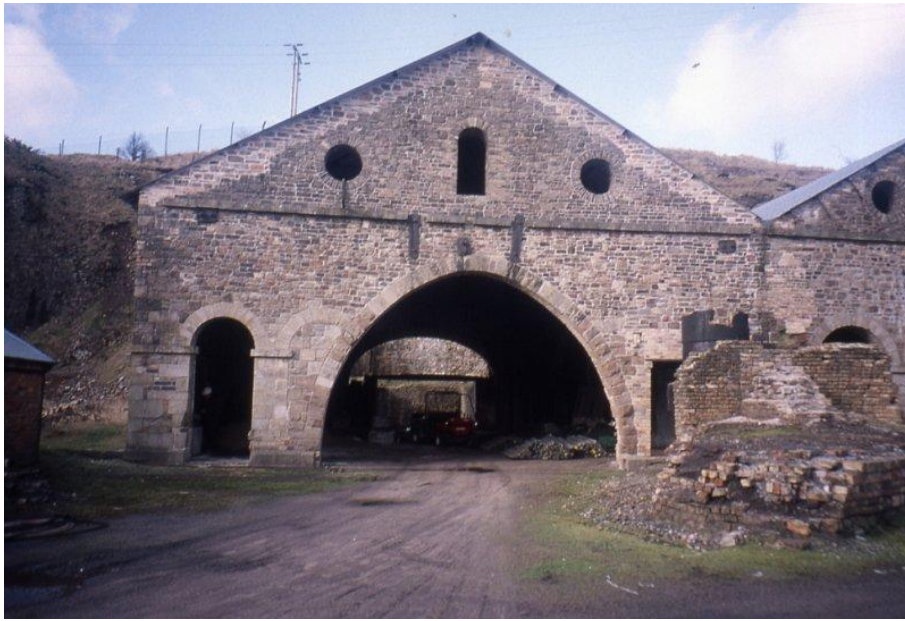
Record how Blaenavon has changed over time and why.

Discuss the sources used in this activity. How useful are old plans and maps? What information can we gather from these sources? What further information do we need to gain an understanding of what life was like in the past?

Link to image on People's Collection Wales

[Blaenavon Ironworks](#)

Task 2. Making iron at Blaenavon



Blaenavon Ironworks, Blaenavon

This task is based on using images to find ‘clues’ from the past.

Look at the images in the following links.

Discuss (think, pair, share) what can be seen in the images, what is happening, when, where, why?

[World of Work \(a\), Blaenavon Ironworks](#)

[World of Work \(b\), Blaenavon Ironworks](#)

Discuss: What can't the images tell us? What else would you like to know about this place? Who/what can help us find out?

Look at the aerial photograph of Blaenavon Ironworks today. What remains are visible today? Can you recognise some of the buildings?

[World of Work \(c\), Blaenavon Ironworks](#)

Can you find other sources to investigate the history of Blaenavon ironworks?

Link to image on People's Collection Wales

[Blaenavon Ironworks](#)

Task 3. Working conditions at the ironworks



Blaenavon Ironworks, Blaenavon

This task is based on using historical written sources from the period to learn more about the working conditions at the ironworks.

Follow the instructions given in the activity:

Commissioners Report

Many children were injured or killed as a result of working in coal levels, bell pits or around ironworks. What were the possible dangers to young people working at the ironworks?

After reading the extracts from the Commissioners' report discuss the source provided. *How can the report help us to find out about daily life at the time? Are these reports useful? Can they be taken as a true representation?*

Complete this task by discussing the outcome of the Commissioners' Report; how Lord Shaftesbury campaigned for the 1842 Mines Act and what had changed in Wales by 1901.

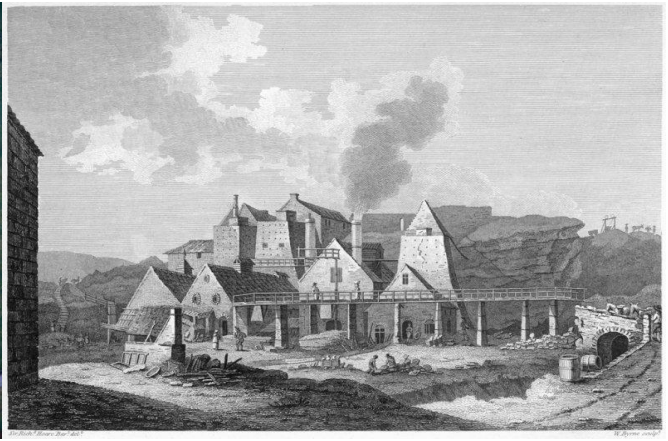
Do young children continue to work today?

Link to images on People's Collection Wales

Blaenavon Ironworks, Blaenavon

Blaenavon Ironworks, Blaenavon

Task 4. Interpretation of an historical site (a)



Blaenavon Ironworks, Blaenavon

Preserving and Conserving Historical Sites

What evidence is left today?

Look at the aerial photograph of Blaenavon Ironworks. What remains are visible today?

Can you recognise some of the buildings seen in the lithograph and the reconstruction drawing from the modern photographs?

Blaenavon Ironworks looks like this today because of the conservation work of Cadw. Discuss why it is important that historical sites are cared for and preserved for the future. *What could have happened to Blaenavon Ironworks?*

Look at the photograph taken in 1977.

<http://www.coflein.gov.uk/en/site/20853/images/STACK+SQUARE%2C+BLAENAVON/>

Do you recognise the buildings? In 1970 the buildings were due for demolition as an 'eyesore' and 'a public danger'.

Today Blaenavon is a World Heritage Site <http://www.worldheritagesite.org/sites/blaenavon.html>

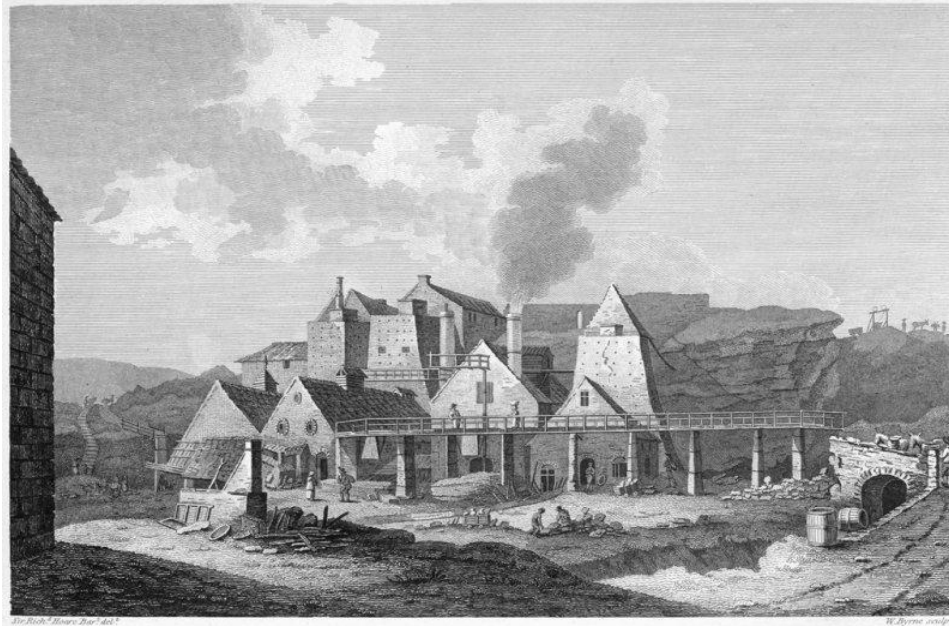
– a site judged by UNESCO <http://whc.unesco.org> to be of 'outstanding universal value'.

Discuss how Cadw and other similar organisations decide what or where to protect and conserve. Is it easy to decide what to conserve? How would you decide? Is collecting historical evidence important?

Link to images on People's Collection Wales

[Blaenavon Ironworks](#)
[Blaenavon Ironworks](#)

Task 5. Interpretation of an historical site (b)



Blaenavon Ironworks, Blaenavon

Interpretation of an historical site – reconstruction drawings

What evidence can be used to create a reconstruction drawing?

Look at the colour reconstruction drawing of Blaenavon Ironworks created for Cadw, discuss how useful such images are to help us understand historical sites and visualise the past.

What evidence is left today?

Michael Blackmore created the drawing in 2002. How do you think the artist went about creating this drawing? What do you think the artist used to help him decide what to include in this picture?

Think about the evidence you have seen. Would the artist need to investigate the site and look for evidence? What type of evidence do you think the artist would have found most useful? Would he have used the lithograph from 1801? Is everything in the drawing a true record of what happened in the ironworks in around 1863?

If you were to create a reconstruction drawing of an historical site what evidence would you use to create your image?

Link to image on People's Collection Wales

Blaenavon Ironworks