

Historic ironworks Brymbo to tell its 300million-year story

19/03/2020



The former iron and steelworks near Wrexham, north Wales, will be transformed into a visitor attraction, community hub and business space.

Thanks to a £4,147,200 grant from The National Lottery Heritage Fund, this five-year project will bring new facilities, jobs, training and apprenticeships to the area.

It will also protect and make open to visitors the 300-million-year-old ["fossil forest"](#). The internationally important site was discovered during open cast coal mining in 2003.

Reworking an industrial legacy



The Brymbo works in the 1980s

The Brymbo works was founded by industrialist John 'Iron Mad' Wilkinson (1728–1808). Wilkinson made his fortune pioneering the manufacture of cast iron goods.

Following his successful iron smelting business and the invention of new technologies, steel production began on site from 1885. Business boomed over the following decades.

One hundred years later, fortunes had changed. Brymbo suffered heavily during the decline of industry in the 1970s and 1980s. It eventually ceased production in 1990. The site was left largely abandoned and the local community devastated, with the loss of 1,125 jobs.



Proposed Machine Shop visitor centre

A new future

Expected to attract up to 37,000 visitors per year, the restored site will:

- Restore and repurpose the Machine Shop as a **visitor centre**. This will include a heritage exhibition, shop and coffee shop, rentable office/workshop spaces and a flexible space for learning and meetings.
- Repurpose the Pattern and Joiners' Workshop as an **exhibition and function space**.
- Create a covered, protected environment for the **excavation and public presentation of the Fossil Forest**. This will enable visitors to take a chronological trip through Brymbo's story, from fossils to coal, iron to steel, closure to renewal.
- **Refurbish and repair historic structures**. These will include the Grade II* listed Agent's House, the Blast Colliery and a series of ironworks buildings including the Foundry, Cast

House and Blast Furnace.

- Deliver **a series of activities** for volunteers, people with disabilities and people on low incomes.

Find out more

Watch "Coast and Country" on ITV Wales tonight (19 March) at 9pm to find out more about Brymbo's exciting project.

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