



CLYDACH IRON WORKS

Established in 1795, this important ironworks was one of the first to use coke rather than charcoal for smelting, thus helping preserve Clydach Gorge beech woods. Just before its mid-19th century decline and final 1884 closure, over 1,300 people, including some 133 children, were employed here either at the furnaces or producing coal, limestone and ironstone from workings higher up the valley. Financial problems and inability to compete with more-efficient larger works operating between Hirwaun and Blaenafon would end iron-making here. During its early period the works were operated by the Frere family, whose Clydach House nearby, would be birthplace of Sir Bartle Frere who, as High Commissioner of South Africa, was instrumental in starting the Zulu Wars.