

CLYDACH IRON WORKS

SO 230 131 – AT FOOT OF HILL ON A465 BETWEEN GILWERN - BRYNMAWR ROAD.



Clydach Ironworks was situated in a beautiful location, rich in industrial archaeology, tramroads and pathways. The nearby beech woodlands are some of the oldest in Wales. The ironworks was established in 1795 near the site of an earlier works and forge and continued operating until 1884.

This important ironworks was one of the first to use coke rather than charcoal for smelting and this helped to preserve the ancient beech woodland.



Just before its mid- 19th Century decline and final closure in 1884, 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 the inability to compete with the more-efficient larger works operating between Hirwaun and Blaenafon ended iron-making here.

During its early period the works were operated by the Frere family, whose Clydach House nearby, was the birthplace of Sir Bartle Frere who, as High Commissioner of South Africa, was instrumental in starting the Zulu Wars.



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