

HERITAGE NEWS

BLAENAVON WORLD HERITAGE SITE NEWSLETTER ISSUE 9 - Winter 2009

Blaenavon Christmas Extravaganza



2009 sees the launch of the Blaenavon Christmas Extravaganza, a series of events put together by the Blaenavon Traders' Association to bring a mix of Christmas fun and entertainment to the Heritage Town. The main event is a three day Christmas Craft Market, supported by Torfaen County Borough Council, taking place in Market Square on the 4, 5 and 6 December where we have sourced some fantastic craft stalls, ideal for those looking for special Christmas gifts.

Saturday the 5 December sees Mrs Claus and her helpers bring their real reindeer to the town for children to come and sprinkle some magic fairy dust, while Santa will be making an appearance in his grotto on Sunday 6 for children to come and make their Christmas wishes.

The Blaenavon Christmas Extravaganza also includes 'Christmas in the Parlour', a special show in the Workmen's Hall on the 4 December, which will be a real festive treat, featuring two international opera stars who wowed the audience at this year's Cordell Festival. The finale on Sunday 6 will see a Living Nativity take place around the town, telling the story of Christmas, so bring your warm clothes and lanterns.

The event has been planned to turn Blaenavon into a truly festive spectacle and with the support of Torfaen Council and other stakeholders, we aim to use this weekend to act as a springboard for future Christmas events, which can only get bigger and better!

The Blaenavon Christmas Extravaganza is part of a whole host of Christmas events in the town throughout November and December, and the Traders' Association has set-up the website www.blaenavonchristmas.com which highlights everything that is taking place within Blaenavon over the festive period. Check out the leaflet inside for further information.



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visitblaenavon.co.uk

Looking back at 2009!

Stephanie Nummelin of Browning Books reflects on a year of events in Blaenavon Heritage Town...

What a great year 2009 has been! Despite generally poor weather, the minute our lovely hanging baskets and window boxes were in place, the town swung into summer mode and we were well on the way to enjoying one of the best World Heritage Days ever! The sun shone all day and we enjoyed seeing crowds of Victorians drifting up and down the street looking wonderful! Visitors returning after several years told us how lovely Blaenavon was looking and stopped to share many happy memories. It seems to me that we are making great strides in providing more

happy memories for the future.

We couldn't let 2009 slip by without celebrating the 50 years since the publication of Cordell's *Rape of the Fair Country*. We still count it as one of our bestsellers and readers are as enraptured with the novel today as the first readers were half a century ago.

As winter approaches we, as 'traders' have been busy putting together a fabulous 'extravaganza' of events that are guaranteed to delight. Watch out for posters and flyers with news of seasonal temptations to see us all through the colder days.

For more information on the 'extravaganza' please visit www.blaenavonchristmas.com.



A scene from this year's World Heritage Day



Blaenavon World Heritage Centre

Now in its second year of operation, the centre has enjoyed a successful summer, seeing a steady increase in visitor numbers and educational visits as well as many special events and exhibitions. In August, a Wedding Fayre attracted over 440 visitors and touring exhibitions have been displayed on Wales and the Slave Trade and Brunel's works in Wales.

Until December, the centre is hosting a display of photographs by Mike Thompson and Mervyn Pugh, documenting the 1984-85 Miners' Strike and the last days at Tower Colliery, Wales' last deep coalmine. An historical exhibition about the Welsh and overseas migration, entitled 'Ffarwel Cymru!' will be shown between December and February, followed by an exhibition marking the centenary of Blaenavon Male Voice Choir. Another Wedding Fayre will be held on 30 January 2010 and organisers hope it will be even more popular than the first!

For more information, phone 01495 742333, email Blaenavon.tic@torfaen.gov.uk or visit www.visitblaenavon.co.uk

If you are interested in exhibiting at the Wedding Fayre please contact Kate Fitzgerald –

Tel: 01633 648319 Email: kate.fitzgerald@torfaen.gov.uk



Wedding fayre at Blaenavon World Heritage Centre

50th Anniversary of Famous Novel



In September, the 50th anniversary of the publication of Alexander Cordell's most famous novel, *Rape of the Fair Country*, was marked by a two day event at Blaenavon Ironworks. Over 2,000 people enjoyed entertainment including the Coal House families and the Cordell Players, who performed scenes from the late author's stories.

Rape of the Fair Country, which told of life in the turbulent industrial communities of Blaenavon and Garnddyrys, has had an important and lasting impact on Blaenavon. As an international bestseller, the book brought global recognition to the contribution Blaenavon and other iron-making towns made to the industrial revolution, portraying Welsh industrial history as a 'people's story' rather than just a tale of machines and innovation. The prospect of a cinematic adaptation of the novel (sadly never realised) was one of the reasons why the Ironworks, earmarked for demolition in 1970, was placed under state care in 1974. In recent years much has been done to reap the benefits of 'Cordell Country'. A series of themed Cordell Country Tours have been developed and a literature competition and a cultural festival take place annually.

For information about Cordell, visit the Blaenavon Community Heritage and Cordell Museum.



Making Blaenavon Safer

Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) was installed in Broad Street in 2007 and has since been used to make Blaenavon a safer place to live. CCTV plays a significant role in policing modern Britain and is an important tool employed by Gwent Police in bringing offenders to justice. In May 2009, for instance, several shop windows were smashed in Broad Street, causing much distress to local traders and creating a negative impression of our town. Police investigators reviewed the surveillance footage, which clearly showed a young man kicking the shop windows. This led to his identification and eventual arrest. Without CCTV this may not have been possible and Gwent Police hope that this reassures you that the cameras are being monitored and used to good effect, acting as a deterrent to anti-social behaviour in Blaenavon.

If you would like to have your say on local policing, please attend the police surgeries on the following dates-

26 November, 4pm; Blaenavon Police Station, Church Road

18 December, 10am; Torfaen Voluntary Alliance, Ivor Street

or attend the next Partnerships and Communities Together (PACT) meeting at Blaenavon Workmen's Hall at 7pm on 1 February 2010.

To find out what is happening in your neighbourhood and all about your local neighbourhood policing team visit www.gwent.police.uk and enter your postcode.

Follow us on twitter - www.twitter.com/gwentpolice

Sicrhau bod Blaenafon yn Fwy Diogel

Gosodwyd Teledu Cylch Cyfng (CCTV) ar Broad Street yn ystod 2007, ac oddi ar hynny'n fe'i defnyddiwyd i sicrhau bod Blaenafon yn lle diogelach i fyw. Mae gan CCTV rôl allweddol i'w chwarae wrth blismona Prydain fodern, ac mae'n arf pwysig a ddefnyddir gan Heddlu Gwent i ddod â throseddwyd o flaen eu gwell. Ym mis Mai 2009, er enghraifft, cafodd sawl ffenestr siop eu malu ar hyd Broad Street, ac roedd hyn wedi peri cryn ofid i fasnachwyr lleol yn ogystal â chreu

argraff negyddol o'n tref. Aeth ymchwilyd yr heddlu ati i edrych trwy'r ffilmiau gwylidwriaeth yn fanwl, ac fe welwyd dyn ifanc yn glir yn prysur gicio ffenestri'r siopau. Arweiniodd hyn at enwi'r dyn a'i arestio yn y pen draw. Heb CCTV, efallai na fyddai hynny wedi bod yn bosibl, ac mae Heddlu Gwent yn gobeithio fod hyn yn rhoi i chi'r sicrwydd fod y camerâu yn cael eu monitro a'u defnyddio er gwell, ac yn gweithio i atal ymddygiad gwrthgymdeithasol ym Mlaenafon. Os hoffech chi gael cyfle i ddweud eich dweud am faterion plismona lleol, mae croeso i chi ddod draw i gyfarfod nesaf Partneriaethau a Chymunedau Ynghyd (PACT)

yn Neuadd y Gweithwyr Blaenafon am 7pm ar y 1af o Chwefror 2010.

Am ragor o wybodaeth, ewch i Wefan Heddlu Gwent - www.gwent.police.uk



CCTV Camera in Blaenavon



What the 'National Museum' did for us

Kathryn Stowers, Communications Officer for Big Pit explains...

In the spring of 2010, it will be 30 years since Big Pit closed as a 'production' mine. Since 1983, over 3 million visitors have enjoyed the world-famous underground tour and explored the historic buildings around the colliery site. In the last ten years Big Pit has won a number of major awards, had a significant increase in visitors and therefore has been able to contribute more to the local economy.

Highlights of this contribution include:

- Increase of 114% in annual visitor total since 2000, rising from 77,000 to 165,000, with almost half of these visiting as part of education groups, many of which are combining visits to Big Pit with other Blaenavon attractions.
- We now employ 65 staff, over half of whom live in Blaenavon, and all of whom are valleys people, putting over £1.4million back into the local economy in salaries alone. Over the past few years we have been able to remain open throughout the winter and offer year-round employment for all of our staff and an additional reason to visit Blaenavon through the winter.
- A recent study by the Welsh Economic Research Unit, showed that in addition to these direct operational impacts of Big Pit, we support strong levels of visitor spending – some £4.93 million annually. As well as the 65 people employed directly by the museum, it is estimated that some 140 further jobs are supported as a result of visitor spending in the local economy.

With this positive impact on the local economy, we are very optimistic about the future and our ability to continue to serve our local community and have a longer term impact on the life in the Blaenavon area.

'A Giant of the Pulpit'

The World Heritage Centre is currently developing a digital archive of documents and photographs, relating to Blaenavon's fascinating past. Several interesting discoveries have been made so far, including the only known photograph of Blaenavon's first vicar, the Reverend John Jones (1810-85), kindly loaned by Mrs. Pat Morgan.

The Reverend Jones, referred to by local historian E.J. Davies as a 'giant of the pulpit', was one of Blaenavon's most prominent citizens; he was renowned for his 'silver tongue' and was widely respected in the local community. He served as curate-in-charge of Blaenavon and Capel Newydd from 1841, succeeding the Reverend James Jenkins, and was elevated to the position of vicar in 1860 when the Ecclesiastical Parish of Blaenavon with Capel Newydd was created. Lewis Browning, writing in 1906, commented that the Reverend Jones was 'a remarkable man in many respects; he was beloved of all because he loved all'.

If you have any interesting documents or photographs that you would like to loan to the World Heritage Centre, please phone 01495 742333 or email blaenavon.tic@torfaen.gov.uk



Image courtesy of Pat Morgan



The Tide Turns

As we approach the end of the decade and enter into the tenth anniversary year of Blaenavon's World Heritage Status it is perhaps appropriate to reflect on the many ways in which Blaenavon has been transformed since 2000.

At the end of the last century the plight of the town was plain to see. Eighty years of economic decline had left its toll on this once prosperous industrial area. The town, with its boarded-up buildings, epitomised the negative stereotype of a depressed post-industrial community. Few believed that this industrial legacy could help revive Blaenavon's fortunes.

In December 2000, UNESCO inscribed Blaenavon as a World Heritage Site for the historical significance of its industrial landscape. At the heart of the World Heritage bid was the commitment to an ambitious regeneration programme and, since inscription, the prestigious award has been used as a catalyst in implementing positive change.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT

In 1997 a survey of Blaenavon residents revealed that most local people felt ashamed of the neglected appearance of their town. Over £15 million of public and private money has since been invested into the historic centre of Blaenavon. 75% of the dereliction in Broad Street has been made good; 500 residential and commercial properties have been renovated; car parks and public amenities have been



'Plywood City' - many of Blaenavon's shops were boarded up by the 1990s

improved; and two derelict public buildings, the former Council Offices and the former St. Peter's School, have been saved and restored to community use as the library and World Heritage Centre.

Blaenavon has had a major facelift in recent years and is now a town to be proud of; but what of the economic impact of World Heritage Status?



Following an ambitious regeneration programme, Broad Street has an attractive Victorian appearance

ECONOMIC REGENERATION

Research has shown that World Heritage Status rarely has a major economic impact on sites; Blaenavon, however, bucks the trend! World Heritage Status has helped attract major funding from a range of public bodies. The effects of such funding have not only given a boost to the local economy but have helped change negative perceptions of the town in the process. A variety of new shops have opened in recent years and stand proudly next to Blaenavon's established businesses. Public and private investment has substantially improved the Gilchrist Thomas Industrial Estate, attracting and retaining innovative companies. Property prices have risen above the national average and, for the first time in nearly 90 years, the population appears to be rising. It is clear that Blaenavon is increasingly becoming a town where people want to live, visit and invest!



TOURISM

Tourism is a growing sector of Blaenavon’s economy, in which over 100 jobs have been created or safeguarded since 2000. Blaenavon’s profile as a tourist destination is rising both nationally and internationally. The World Heritage Site, with its award-winning brand, has seen visitor numbers more than double between 2000 and 2008, with over 200,000 visitors coming to Blaenavon annually. Significant improvements have been made to Big Pit, now the National Coal Museum, the Ironworks and the Heritage Railway and two major new attractions, the Cordell Museum and the World Heritage Centre, have opened. Blaenavon now offers the visitor a range of attractions, in first class condition, open all year.

OUTDOOR RECREATION

It’s not just museums which make Blaenavon so popular. Much has been done to conserve and improve the distinct landscape surrounding Blaenavon. Improvements have been made to the Cycle Route, the Keeper’s Pond and the Garn Lakes. Blaenavon is now a popular walking destination, boasting a series of themed walks, including the flagship ‘Iron Mountain Trail’. The community have also got involved in looking after the landscape through volunteer and junior ranger programmes.



World Heritage Site Ranger, Alvin Nicholas, leads a junior ranger session in the landscape

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Blaenavon has always been a close-knit community, with a wealth of groups and societies. World Heritage Status has helped ensure that these strong bonds continue into the new century. Blaenavon boasts an exciting calendar of events, including World Heritage Day in which community groups and schools always participate. Blaenavon has also become an important place of study, with thousands of schoolchildren, students and researchers learning here each year. Blaenavon offers much to people of all ages and backgrounds, for both locals and visitors alike.



World Heritage Day is the highlight of Blaenavon’s busy calendar of events

THE FUTURE

Since 2000, Torfaen County Borough Council, Blaenavon Town Council and their partners, working together with the people of Blaenavon have begun to build a future on the past- but there is still much to do! Work will continue to ensure the sustainability of Blaenavon’s economy and to consolidate the protection and promotion of the World Heritage Site. The Forgotten Landscapes Project, an exciting initiative, will commence from spring 2010. The Community Campus, another major project, is scheduled to open in 2012. With these projects and other plans in the pipeline, the progress achieved over the last decade should certainly continue into the future.



Exciting Times for Heritage Railway



Image courtesy of Mr. Alistair Grieve

After a busy summer, the railway rounds off 2009 with the popular Santa Steam Specials. Running each December weekend and 21/22 December, the specials offer a family treat with sherry and mince pies for adults and a present from Santa for children. The season finishes with the New Year trains on 2/3 January, and then the volunteers take a break from running trains whilst they prepare for the biggest event in the railway's history - the reopening of the railway to Blaenavon itself!

Over the past two years and with funding from the Heads of the Valleys Programme, the volunteers have worked hard relaying track and rebuilding bridges and stations. Good Friday, 2 April 2010, is the big day when the first public passenger trains in almost 70 years leave from Blaenavon High Level Station. A special guest steam engine (a GWR 0-6-2 tank engine 5643) has been hired for the opening and an intensive service will run on 2/3 April, followed by the Easter Bunny Specials on Easter Sunday and Monday. To book, contact the Railway Shop Tel: 01495 792263. Book early to avoid disappointment.

Conserving Our Heritage

The Forgotten Landscapes Project, which will deliver heritage conservation and improved access and information, in and around the World Heritage Site, is now attracting lots of interest and the final application to the Heritage Lottery Fund will be submitted in December. A decision is expected in March 2010. With £2.5 million there is a lot we can do and we thank you for your input into the project.

To finalise plans, there's been more consultation this year including a drop-in session where approval and enthusiasm were obvious. International organisations are now becoming aware of our aims and made visits this summer, including ICOMOS UK – the body responsible for cultural World Heritage Sites in Britain.

We are looking for volunteers, so if you are interested please contact Rebecca Ward

Tel: 01633 648066. Email: rebecca.ward@torfaen.gov.uk

Visit the website to find out more about the Forgotten Landscapes Project

www.forgottenlandscapes.org



John Rodger leading ICOMOS across the Industrial Landscape



Evacuee Returns to Blaenavon

In 1940, at the age of fourteen, Leonard Street first arrived in Blaenavon. He was one of a party of school children from Walthamstow in London who were evacuated to south Wales. During his two year stay in the town he attended Park Street Secondary School and was a member of the Air Training Corps. Earlier this year, Leonard, now in his eighties, contacted Blaenavon Community Education Centre to arrange a return visit.

On the day of his visit he met Centre Manager, Linda Brown, and as they slowly climbed Park Street together Len conveyed delightful memories of his time at school and in the local area. He particularly remembered sledging down the Coity on pieces of cardboard and taking the school keys to the Police Station at the end of the school day.

Later in the day he met with members of the WEA Local History Group.

Len writes "...meeting John [Harris], Graham [Jenkins] and Terry [Parsons] was quite serendipitous and generated a great deal of interest as well as reminiscences.....Thank you for turning a visit into a memorable day."

Len is now in close contact with the history group and has alerted two friends to the group's project, both of whom were in Blaenavon with him as evacuees. They all hope to be able to make many contributions to the group's proposed book, chronicling the town's history between 1900 and 1951.



(L-R) Terry Parsons, Graham Jenkins, Leonard Street & Linda Brown

Faciwî yn Dychwelyd i Flaenafon

Ym 1940, ac yntau'n 14 mlwydd oed, fe ddaeth Leonard Street i Flaenafon am y tro cyntaf. Roedd yn un o blith grŵp o blant ysgol o Walthamstow yn Llundain a gafodd eu mudo i Dde Cymru bryd hynny. Yn ystod y ddwy flynedd a dreuliodd yn y dref, mynychodd Ysgol Uwchradd Park Street ac ymunodd â'r Corfflu Hyfforddiant Awyr. Yn gynharach eleni, cysylltodd Leonard, sydd nawr yn ei wythdegau, â Chanolfan Addysg Gymunedol Blaenafon i drefnu ymweliad â'r dref unwaith yn rhagor.

Ar ddiwrnod yr ymweliad, bu iddo gwrrd â Linda Brown, sef Rheolwr y Ganolfan, ac wrth iddynt gerdded yn

hamddenol gyda'i gilydd ar hyd Park Street, adroddodd Len ei atgofion hyfryd am ei gyfnod yn yr ysgol a'r ardal leol. Roedd yn cofio'n glir iawn yr adeg pan aeth i sledio lawr pwll y Coity ar ddarnau o gardbord, a'r arfer o fynd ag allweddau'r ysgol i Orsaf yr Heddlu ar ddiwedd diwrnod yr ysgol.

Yn ddiweddarach y diwrnod hwnnw, bu iddo gyfarfod ag aelodau o Grŵp Hanes Lleol WEA.

Ysgrifennodd Len "...roedd cwrdd â John, Graham a Terry yn bleser o'r mwyaf a oedd wedi ennyn cryn ddi-ddordeb yn ogystal ag atgofionDiolch i chi am sicrhau bod yr ymweliad hwn yn ddiwrnod bythgofiadwy."

Mae Len nawr yn cadw mewn cysylltiad agos â'r grŵp hanes ac mae wedi tynnu sylw dau o'i gyfeillion at brosiect y grŵp, gan i'r ddau ohonynt hwythau ddod i Flaenafon gydag ef fel faciws. Mae'r tri ohonynt yn gobeithio cyfrannu'n helaeth at lyfr arfaethedig y grŵp, fydd yn cronico hanes y dref rhwng 1900 a 1951.



100 Years Old and Busier Than Ever!

As Blaenavon Male Voice Choir prepares to celebrate its centenary in 2010, the choristers have been busy piecing together the institution's proud history...

Formed in 1910, the choir's first conductor was Evan Williams, who had trained at the London College of Music. Gordon Williams was the first accompanist. His successor, the award-winning pianist, Joseph Morgan, later became Professor of Music at Cardiff University.

A performance of 'The Flooded Mine' in 1925 portrayed the harsh working conditions and featured coal drams and a live pony on stage at the Workmen's Hall! The choir also played an important social role, performing for wounded troops during the Great War and maintaining a distress fund for its members.

After the Second World War the choir experienced hard times. Membership dropped and the choir was without a conductor. In 1954, however, Jean Williams was appointed as conductor. She transformed the choir, leading it through a period of unprecedented success nationally and internationally. The present conductor, Gareth Whitcombe, a brilliant musician, has continued this success since 1988 and the fine sound produced by Blaenavon today is the envy of many a choir.

An exhibition about the choir will be shown at the World Heritage Centre in February.



Blaenavon Male Voice Choir performing for the BBC Coal House series (photograph courtesy of Mr. Ian Cooke)

St. Peter's School

The World Heritage Centre is in the process of compiling a history of St. Peter's School, the historic building in which the centre is now based. We would be interested in including the memories or anecdotes of past pupils. So if you are willing to share any memories (good or bad!) about your school days, we would love to hear from you!

Please contact Nathan Matthews for more details

nathan.matthews@torfaen.gov.uk

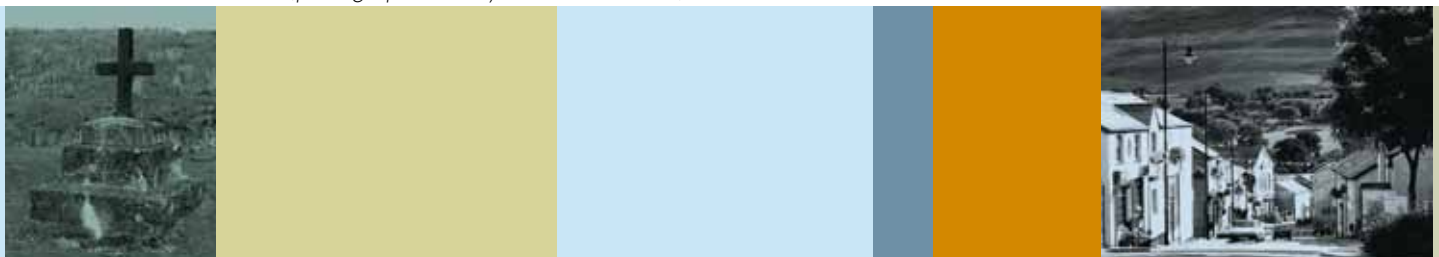
01495 742333

New Sports Facility

A grant from the Heads of the Valleys Programme has secured a new sports ground for Blaenavon's local schools and community groups.

The new multipurpose pitch, located on a previously abandoned tarmac area to the rear of Queen Street, includes an all-weather surface with goals, a shelter, fencing and lighting. Schools and youth groups will be able to use the facility near Hillside School for a range of sporting activities including football, tennis and basketball.

The improvements were organised by Communities First Blaenavon, working with partners in Torfaen County Borough Council, Gwent Police, Bron Afon Community Housing and the local community. The installation of the pitch was made following a grant of £50,000 from the Heads of the Valleys Programme, a 15 year project led by the Welsh Assembly Government, working to regenerate communities in Torfaen, Blaenau Gwent, Merthyr Tydfil, Caerphilly and Rhondda Cynon Taf by fostering economic growth and facilitating environmental improvement.



Community Singing Days

The Welsh National Opera is coming to Blaenavon Workmen's Hall on 6 February 2010, offering a one day community singing course, absolutely free! Professional musicians, Kate Woolveridge and Miriam Bower, will lead you through a selection of songs from the musicals and opera. So come along for a day of fun with your friends and neighbours and help revive the Welsh singing tradition!

Blaenavon Workmen's Hall

6 February 2010,
10:30-4:30pm

To sign up or for more information please phone:

029 2063 5061 or email claire.cressey@wno.org.uk

Govilon Information Pack for new residents



The Govilon Heritage Group isn't just about 'heritage'. They have developed and published a special 'Govilon Information Pack' and distributed a free copy to every home in the village. A copy will be presented to new residents as they move into Govilon. It's designed to answer the first questions everyone asks when moving into a new area. The pack contains a frequently-updated list of all village organisations, clubs and societies, contacts for local schools, public services, travel information and local businesses. Of course, there is a copy of the Govilon Heritage Trails leaflet too.

Young residents, Megan Evans and Annabel Mills, who are working towards their Bronze Duke of Edinburgh Award, carried out some of the research for the leaflet, designed the folder, and delivered it to all 550 homes in Govilon. Mrs Baines, Chairman of Govilon Heritage, said, "Megan and Annabel helped us for the 'Community Service' section of their Award. Their hard work is much appreciated; already we've had some very encouraging comments from all parts of the community."

The project was made possible by a Community Environmental Grant from Monmouthshire County Council.

Become a volunteer ranger!

Volunteer Rangers help look after World Heritage Site trails, rebuild dry stone walls and take part in many other countryside activities. If you are interested in volunteering contact Blaenavon World Heritage Site Ranger Alvin Nicholas on 01495 742335 or e-mail Alvin.Nicholas@torfaen.gov.uk.

Beth am ymuno â ni fel ceidwad gwirfoddol?

Mae Ceidwaid Gwirfoddol yn helpu i ofalu am lwybrau Safle Treftadaeth y Byd, ailgodi waliau cerrig sychion a chymryd rhan mewn nifer o weithgareddau eraill yng nghefn gwlad. Os oes gennych chi ddiddordeb mewn gwirfoddoli, cysylltwch ag Alvin Nicholas, Ceidwad Safle Treftadaeth y Byd Blaenafon, ar 01495 742335 neu e-bost Alvin.Nicholas@torfaen.gov.uk.



Coming Events

An Evening of Poetry

27 November 2009

Llanwenarth Baptist Chapel, Govilon,
7.30pm

Bring a favourite poem and take part... or just come to listen to the readings of others. Anne-Marie Barber will present a selection of poems from her new book, with the theme "A Journey through Time".

Free Entry. Refreshments and home made biscuits.

The Blessing of the Crib

30 November 2009

Market Square, 7pm

Annual ceremony in which Blaenavon's Christmas Lights are switched on

'At Home with Mother Christmas'

29 November 2009 & 5/6, 12/13
December 2009

Festive fun and cheer at Big Pit with music from local bands and choirs
Big Pit, 11am-4pm, £1 per child
Tel: 01495 790311

Christmas Storytelling

3 December 2009

Tales for young & old, told by award-winning local author Daniel Morden
Chocs Away, 6pm, FREE
Tel: 01495 790089/01495 790790

Christmas in the Parlour

4 December 2009

A Victorian evening of Christmas tales, carols and music
Blaenavon Workmen's Hall, 7pm, £10 per ticket
Tel: 01495 790926 or visit Form
Contemporary Craft for tickets

Christmas Markets

4/5/6 December 2009

Festive local produce markets, with street entertainment and music.
Market Square, 10am-4pm

Santa Steam Specials

5/6, 12/13, 19/20/21/22 December
2009

Travel by steam train to Santa's Grotto, where there will be presents for children and sherry and mince pies for adults.

Blaenavon Heritage Railway, 10:30am-4pm, special fares apply - book ahead to avoid disappointment
Tel: 01495 792263

Mrs Claus, Reindeer and Sleigh

5 December 2009

Come and meet Santa's reindeer and elves. Broad Street Car Park
10am-4pm

Santa's Grotto

6 December 2009

Come and see Santa in his Grotto and tell him what you would like for Christmas!

Blaenavon Heritage Town
10am-4pm

Living Nativity Play

6 December 2009

Wrap up, bring your lanterns and a good voice and join us for a walk around Blaenavon town following the story of the birth of Jesus
Library Car Park at Lion Street,
5.30 - 7.00pm

Blaenavon Local History Society -

'Campaigns, Coronations, Advertising Revolution: Shopping since the 1950s' by Sharon Ford

10 December 2009

Blaenavon Workmen's Hall, 7pm, £2 for non-members
Tel: 01495 792661

Father Christmas Sleigh Event

13 December 2009

Join Santa as he follows a sleigh route around Blaenavon, finishing at the World Heritage Centre for hot drinks & mince pies.

Blaenavon World Heritage Centre, 6pm

Tel: 01495 793123

Nine Lessons & Carols

20 December 2009

St. Peter's Church, 6pm

Family Crib Service

24 December 2009

St. Peter's Church, 6pm

Horeb Chapel Candlelight Service

24 December 2009

Horeb Baptist Chapel, 6pm

Midnight Mass

24 December 2009

St. Paul's Church, 10:45pm

Horeb Chapel Christmas Service & Communion

25 December 2009

Horeb Baptist Chapel, 10am

New Year DMU Specials

2/3 January 2010

Relax at the start of the New Year with a train ride onboard a Diesel Multiple Unit
Blaenavon Heritage Railway
Tel: 01495 792263

Wedding Fayre

30 January 2010

Blaenavon World Heritage Centre
Tel: 01495 742333

Blaenavon Male Voice Choir

Centenary Exhibition

February 2010 - April 2010

An exhibition looking back on 100 years of the local choir
Blaenavon World Heritage Centre,
9am-4pm (Tues-Sun) (Exhibition may be closed for special events/meetings so phone ahead to avoid disappointment)

Community Singing Day

6 February 2010

One day singing course, led by professional singers
Blaenavon Workmen's Hall,
10:30am-4:30pm
Tel: 02920 635061

Blaenavon Local History Society

- 'Thomas Jeremiah of the 23rd Regiment of Foot' by John Evans

11 February 2010

Blaenavon Workmen's Hall, 7pm, £2 for non-members
Tel: 01495 792661

Blaenavon Local History Society -

'Gwent in the First World War' by Peter Strong

11 March 2010

Blaenavon Workmen's Hall, 7pm, £2 for non-members
Tel: 01495 792661

