

# Great Archaeological Sites in Blaenau Gwent



## 5. SIRHOWY IRONWORKS



There were a number of ironworks in the area now covered by Blaenau Gwent County Borough, which provided all the raw materials they needed – iron ore, limestone and fuel, charcoal at first but later coal to make coke. The Sirhowy ironworks (SO14301010) are the only one where there is still something to see.

The works were opened in 1778 with one blast furnace. Although it was originally blown by water power, in 1799 the owners invested in a Boulton and Watt steam engine. This gave them enough power to blow a second furnace, which started production in 1802. In the early years of the 19th century, the pig iron produced at Sirhowy was sent to the Tredegar works a little further down the valley where it was refined, until 1818 when the Sirhowy works were sold and started to send its pig iron to Ebbw Vale. A third furnace was added in 1826 and a fourth in 1839. But by the 1870s iron smelting at Sirhowy was no longer profitable, and the works finally closed in 1882.

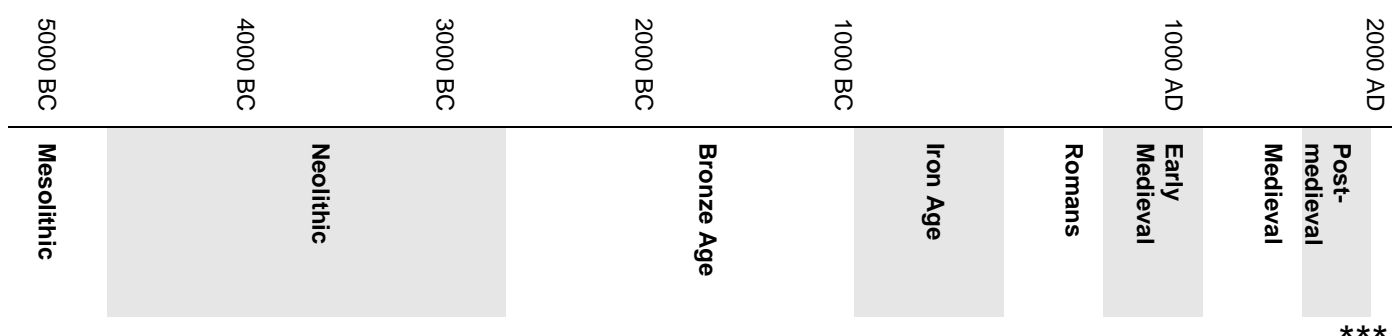
Like all ironworks in South Wales, the furnaces were built against a steep bank which enabled the ironworkers to load the charge of iron ore, limestone and coke or charcoal fuel more easily at the top of the furnace.

All that is now left now are the remains of a bank of blast furnaces with the arches that would originally have linked them to the casting houses in front, and the building that originally housed the waterwheel. A lump of slag from when it was in operation ca still be seen.



Sirhowy Ironworks are on the north-eastern side of Tredegar in Graham's Yard (NP22 4QP). Maps: OS Landranger Series sheet 161, Explorer Series sheet outdoor Leisure 13.

### Timeline (the asterisk indicate the time-span)



You can learn more about this site, and other similar archaeological sites in Wales, by going to <https://www.archwilio.org.uk/arch/>. Please read and observe the Conditions of Use. Sirhowy Ironworks have the PRN (Primary Record Number) 02220g, and you can search for other similar sites here too. You can contact us via social media or through the methods given at the bottom of the page. See more about the ironworks of South Wales via the industrial pages on our timeline <http://www.ggat.org.uk/timeline/timeline.html>