

# Brymbo Heritage Area Feasibility Study

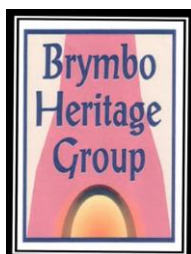
## Final Report



by

**Parkin Heritage and Tourism  
A Meredith Associates  
Lorna Jenner**

**January 2013**



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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **Introduction**

1. In developing our Final Report we prepared this Executive Summary to draw out the key points that enabled us to seek feedback from Wrexham County Borough Council, Brymbo Community Council and Brymbo Heritage Group. This feedback has been incorporated into the report.

### **The Brief**

2. We were asked to:
  - \* review and comment on the vision of Brymbo Heritage Group
  - \* consider the strategic context of the site in heritage, tourism and wider local authority terms
  - \* undertake market appraisal of the potential project
  - \* undertake extensive consultations
  - \* assess the viability of the site
  - \* assess the potential economic benefit
  - \* recommend the way forward.

The key aspirations of Brymbo Heritage Group are to:

- \* find ways to manage, protect and interpret the important archaeological, geological, industrial heritage and ecological site
- \* create a vibrant and sustainable visitor attraction with visitors who stay longer and spend more time in the county
- \* make Brymbo Heritage Area a key tourism destination in North East Wales.

### **Methodology**

3. We have done the assignment by a combination of:
  - \* site appraisal to understand the site and appreciate its heritage significance
  - \* desk research into the strategic context and market potential
  - \* extensive consultations
  - \* assessing the overall viability as far as we can.

### **The Vision**

4. The Group have summarised their vision as:

- 
- \* to develop an iconic geodome to protect, conserve, interpret and celebrate the fossil forest
  - \* to restore and refurbish No. 1 Furnace, foundry, patternmakers shops, high charging wall and immediate area, to create a working foundry and interpret the evolution of the site with working replicas, demonstrate skills etc
  - \* to restore and refurbish the Blast Colliery site (1842), reconstruct the original winding headgear and interpret Brymbo mining from the 1400s
  - \* to conserve and manage the valley as a high quality ecological area and informal countryside facility
  - \* to restore, refurbish and use the Agents House (1792) as an education centre
  - \* restore and refurbish the Machine Shop (1916) to create a large flexible space for exhibitions, concerts, conferences, training etc
  - \* develop a visitor centre.

The full project vision is attached as an appendix.

The objective is for Brymbo Heritage Ltd, a charitable company limited by guarantee, to be the vehicle by which to raise the funding to restore the site, to oversee the restoration and develop it and then to manage it with a mixture of paid and volunteer staff.

### Significance Of The Site

5. What comes over very strongly is that the site is significant at various levels:

- \* **Brymbo Fossil Forest**

Probably less than 10 fossil forests of any geological age that are preserved and open to the public. The Brymbo Fossil Forest is the best Coal Measure Forest in the world, showing plants in growth position and the coal seams that they formed. The associated coal mine within the site is an added bonus. The fossil interest has been recognised by the Countryside Council for Wales as being nationally important. Confirmation of its conservation status is provided with proposals to protect the site as a Site of Special Scientific Interest.

- \* **John Wilkinson 18<sup>th</sup> Century Ironworks**

Nationally significant... very few examples of the combination of blast furnace and foundry (1796) survive despite it being modified in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. John Wilkinson very important, but under-celebrated in the overall Industrial Revolution

- \* **Brymbo Steelworks 1884 – 1990**

Regionally and locally significant and played important role nationally in the development of steel making. Major employer in the area (2,500 at its peak). Created a community with a unique character and identity.

Was a key site in the development of heavy industry in North East Wales although was later than Bersham.

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## Visitor Potential

6. Having reviewed the day catchment, the comparative performance of other sites in North East Wales, the market potential for industrial heritage and geological sites across England and Wales, including the all important education market, we feel that depending on the level of investment (and the iconic nature of any development) it is likely that the site will attract up to 75,000 – 100,000 visitors which would include the fossil forest, ironworks core buildings, the coal mining facility and the ecological area (including an events programme).

## The Need For A Mixed Use Solution

7. What is clear is that 'heritage' alone (natural and built) will not ensure the long term sustainability of the site. This was suggested in the 2002 Feasibility Study and changing tourism and visiting patterns over the past 10 years have only reinforced this. The site needs 12 months a year usage through various facilities and activities (and income) and needs to embrace and reflect the wider needs of the community. We also need to take into account:

- \* the sheer scale of investment required to conserve and restore the site
- \* the potential sources of funding beyond heritage funding (not least the priorities in the new EU programme)
- \* the current National Heritage Strategy which emphasises jobs and training
- \* the other priorities of Wrexham County Borough Council which primarily focus on the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct World Heritage Site and Wrexham Town Centre.

There is real potential to renovate a proportion of the key heritage buildings (maybe in partnership with Wrexham Council, National Museum Wales or Glyndŵr University) to create managed workspace for creative industries. The opportunities to use indoor and outside spaces for events, conferences, concerts etc (as has been achieved in some of the major German steelworks sites) should also be investigated.

## Can The Site Be Viable?

8. Without a Detailed Feasibility Study, including measured drawings of the complex or concept designs, we only have an indicative indication of the potential. Cadw would expect a Conservation Assessment to provide a detailed understanding of the building complex, which would enable realistic proposals to be drawn up. However, what is clear is that the site is significant and worthy of fighting hard to save at all costs. At this stage, and taking into account the current deterioration of the complex, we believe there is a strong vision and every likelihood that over time that a viable scheme can be developed which would be sustainable.

## Current Condition Gives Serious Cause For Increasing Concern

9. Whilst we believe the site is important its current and deteriorating condition gives serious cause for increasing concern. The project is in a dilemma. It is owned by the developer Brymbo Developments Limited (Parkhill Estates Limited) who recognise that whilst the heritage complex is very important they have no money to contribute to saving and restoring it unless, or until, their wider development proposals are approved, the spine road can be developed and the value of key sites can be realised.

They have recently submitted a planning application for the next stage of development but even if that is approved it will be several years before any money can be made available towards the cost of conserving, restoring and developing of the heritage attraction. In the meantime the complex is seriously deteriorating and we have felt obliged that part of our effort should be directed to putting our weight behind arguing the case to secure funds nationally

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(and locally) to stop (or slow down) the rate of deterioration. This has built on (and reinforced) the efforts of Wrexham County Borough Council and the Heritage Group to influence the Heritage Minister, Cadw, National Museum Wales and others.

We have met, or spoken with, Assembly Members, local MP, Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments Wales (RCAHMW), CyMal, National Museum of Wales (Industrial History and Geology), Cadw and Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust. This has led to visits by:

- \* Royal Commission who have photographed the site and are seeking to 3D scan the key buildings
- \* Robert Protheroe Jones (Keeper of Industrial Heritage National Museum Wales) to assess the role and historical evolution of the site
- \* Dr Richard Bevins (Keeper of Geology, National Museum of Wales)
- \* Cadw agreeing to fund a Condition Survey of the key buildings if the owner agrees, the brief for the survey can be written (with help from WCBC Conservation Officer) and three tenders can be sought.

In the meantime it has been agreed, with support of the Countryside Council of Wales, that National Museum Wales will take away, conserve and catalogue the key items of the fossil forest collection for the national benefit. They have obtained grants to enable the work to be already started, which will over the next 12 months enable the collection to be displayed in the National Museum, in Wrexham Museum and others that have appropriate conditions for display. Given the opportunity to construct an iconic building over the fossil forest, the best of the specimens would be displayed there to compliment the ones exposed in position of growth.

Clearly things are happening and a momentum to support the project is slowly building up but what is really needed is action on the ground to save the key buildings. An Outline Condition Survey was undertaken by OPUS in 2010 and this suggested that some £350,000 was required to undertake basic work to stop the further deterioration of No. 1 Blast Furnace, the foundry and pattern shop (the roof of which has now broken). It is likely that the detailed Condition Survey (when undertaken) will show that considerably more money is required. Cadw will fund emergency works but their annual budget is limited and the work may well need to be phased even if contributions can be made by Wrexham CBC and (potentially) the developer. HLF do not fund emergency works but would welcome a Round 1 Heritage Grant application. However, this would need to be backed up by a detailed Feasibility Study, Vision, Master Plan and Business Plan. Our current piece of work falls far short of this.

## **The Way Forward**

10. In the circumstances we believe there should be a three strand strategy:

- \* efforts should be made to maintain the current momentum:
  - (a) the work necessary to carry out the Condition Survey needs to be undertaken with all speed... write the brief... go out to tender... obtain quotes... apply to Cadw for a grant... commission (and manage) the survey
  - (b) this will provide key information on the condition of the complex and enable a strategy for undertaking (and potentially phasing) the emergency works to be established
  - (c) RCAHMW should be encouraged to carry out the 3D scanning of the complex quickly which would inform and support the Condition Survey

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- (d) pressure needs to be maintained on all parties to ensure funds can be made available to stop the further deterioration of the complex
  - (e) NMW should conserve and catalogue the core fossil forest collection. This work has already started with monetary support from the Countryside Council for Wales
  - (f) Brymbo Heritage Group should promote the value of the site widely to the wider community and potential stakeholders and highlight the plight of the complex. This will include using video recently produced by Minimal Media in conjunction with Glyndwr University
  - (g) Following the merger of CCW, EA and FCW, from the 1<sup>st</sup> of April 2013 Natural Resources Wales will take over CCW's duties and responsibilities. It will be important to continue to gain support for the nature conservation interest at the site from the new organisation.

\* BHG (with the support of Wrexham CBC and BDL) should seek funds to prepare a Detailed Feasibility Study, Vision, Master Plan and Business Plan for the site which would provide the strategic context to enable a major Round 1 Heritage Lottery Fund Heritage Grant application to be made (indeed preparation of the application could be a part of the brief). A Heritage Grant application would either be for up to £2m (which would be approved by the Welsh Committee) or between £2-5m which would be considered initially by the Welsh Committee before being passed on to London for a decision. The size of grant sought would very much depend on the findings of the Detailed Feasibility Study. The applicant contribution would be a minimum of 10% although to be competitive we would recommend that the contribution should be more like 25-30% which would come from other funding sources. This study could be funded by Northern Marches Cymru and initial discussions have taken place. This would probably take 4/5 months leading to an HLF application being made in November 2013 and could incorporate the emergency works which cannot be funded immediately by Cadw

\* Brymbo Heritage Group should build on the current momentum and apply to the Heritage Lottery Fund for an '*Our Heritage*' grant of up to £100,000, which could include:

- (a) engaging the community by developing an oral history project recording people's memories of the steelworks
- (b) developing the educational potential of the site
- (c) developing a programme of events and activities
- (d) building a team of volunteers to continue to research the heritage of the site, organise tours, events, activities, develop the education programme, manage and maintain the ecological area and undertake the conservation of industrial artefacts
- (e) employ a Heritage Officer to coordinate this work and to build the capacity of the Heritage Group.

The '*Our Heritage*' programme provides grants of up to £100,000 with an applicant contribution of a minimum of 5% towards the project costs which meet the HLF objectives. A project of the type described above fits perfectly.

It has been suggested that the project requires a Project Officer to take the project forward. We feel that the Detailed Feasibility Study will provide some structure to their work and that

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the Group needs to first build its capacity and reputation within the community, and with funders, and have a clear vision. The Feasibility Study will provide this.

## Conclusion

11. The study has been enjoyable and rewarding and has been able to build on the efforts of Brymbo Heritage Group and Wrexham County Borough Council over the past year or so:
- \* Brymbo is a remarkable site which has national and international significance
  - \* it is important to ensure it is not lost for the nation or future generations to enjoy
  - \* to be viable and sustainable, as a heritage and geological attraction, it must be a multiuse project which creates jobs, provides training, engages the local community and generates income 12 months a year
  - \* if the capital funding can be secured for the phased development of the site then it has every chance of being viable (and is really worth striving for)
  - \* the key priorities are to:
    - (a) address and arrest the rapid deterioration of the complex
    - (b) commission a Detailed Feasibility Study to provide the Vision, Master Plan and Business Plan which will....
    - (c) enable a Round 1 HLF Heritage Grant application to be made for the first phase of the project
    - (d) develop, in the short term, an *Our Heritage* HLF application to secure up to £100,000 of funding to engage the community, undertake an oral history project, develop the educational potential, develop a programme of events and activities and build a team of volunteers managed and coordinated by a Heritage Officer.
    - (e) The Heritage Officer with the Brymbo Heritage Group will plan the phased development of the site and seek funding for this.

This is an exciting project worthy of support. We commend our report to you.

Ian Parkin  
Andrew Meredith  
Lorna Jenner

January 2013

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## 1. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

### 101 Context

Parkin Heritage and Tourism (Ian Parkin) along with A Meredith Associates (Andrew Meredith) and Lorna Jenner Countryside Consultant, an experienced consultancy team, were commissioned by the Brymbo Heritage Group (BHG) to take the feasibility study undertaken in 2002 by Donald Insall and partners, along with the current BHG Vision, and to test its viability as a major industrial heritage attraction at the site of the old Brymbo Iron and Steelworks. This to be based on the assumption that it is possible to generate the funds required to restore the site and convert the vision into a reality.

Brymbo Heritage Group (BHG) was established as a constituted group in 2004 to promote heritage in the village and to hold monthly talks (see Constitution Appendix G). It has 32 members and a Steering Committee consisting of 8 members, a bank account and a website [www.bhg.org.uk](http://www.bhg.org.uk). The study has been commissioned by BHG.

When BHG became more involved with the Brymbo Heritage Area it was decided to form a company limited by guarantee with charitable objectives, Brymbo Heritage Limited, Company No. 07720457 which was incorporated on 27 July 2011. The company has two directors, Colin Davis and Keith Williams, but does not have a bank account as it is not trading yet. It will require a bank account, with at least £5,000, if it is to apply for grants from charitable grant giving trusts. BHG have registered a domain for the company [www.brymboheritage.co.uk](http://www.brymboheritage.co.uk).

BHG estimate that it has amassed some 15,000 voluntary hours promoting the site on behalf of the local community, Brymbo Developments Limited (the owners) and the wider area of Wrexham. BHG have a verbal agreement with the Directors of BDL to use rooms in the Machine Shop and carry out work on the site. They undertake voluntary work on a weekly basis to help maintain safe access for visitors, collect and store important artefacts and to secure the complex from thieves and vandals. Colin Davis, a former employee of Brymbo Steelworks, is employed by BDL to manage the site on a day to day basis.

BHG hold monthly meetings and undertake two visits a year. They attend exhibitions, community fairs and fetes with display boards to promote the project. The Group currently exists with funds from membership fees, raffles, boot sales, donations and small grants. It sits on the Steering Group for the Communities First programme and attends courses run by AVOW. It has purchased two commemorative plaques and planted twelve 10 foot trees with the involvement of the local community and school children.

It is slowly establishing its role in the long term development and management of the Heritage Area and is anxious, after several years of inertia, to take the project forward towards reality.

### 102 The Study Brief

The study brief requires:

- \* full understanding of your vision
- \* an appreciation of the strategic context of the site in relation to heritage (particularly industrial heritage) and tourism attractions in North East Wales in general and Wrexham in particular (including the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct World Heritage Site)
- \* an appreciation of the Brymbo site in the context of regional and authority wide plans, strategies and development plans
- \* a detailed market assessment in relation to the BHG vision to understand the existing and potential market for the industrial heritage site, including undertaking a competitor review, and establishing robust visitor projections for the site

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- \* undertaking the range of consultations as set out in the brief, and others that may be required, including the local community, in order to take into account the views, advice and opinions of organisations who have an interest, or involvement, in the site including members and officers of Wrexham County Borough Council, Brymbo Community Council, other heritage attractions, national, regional and local organisations and local people
  - \* based on the findings of the research to prepare a robust 5 Year Income and Expenditure forecast including both the running costs of the project, taking into account the important role of volunteers, and the income generating potential reflecting the projected growth of visitor numbers and potential spend on admissions, retail, catering, events, activities, meetings, conferencing, training etc
  - \* preparing sensitivity analysis based on an assessment of the key determining factors including visitor numbers, operating costs, staffing and management and the income generating potential
  - \* making an assessment of the economic benefit of the project to the local economy
  - \* setting out the key next steps towards achieving the BHG vision.

Brymbo Heritage Group comprises an association of local volunteers who have been involved with the heritage site for the past two decades since the closure of the steelworks in 1990. The Group is involved in various aspects of the local communities' heritage but with key interest in the former iron and steelworks. The Brymbo area encompasses the neighbouring communities of Tan-y-Fron, Vron, Ffrith, Ffrwd, Moss, Southsea, Bwlchgwyn and Pentre Broughton.

## 103 The Vision

The BHG have summarised their **vision** for the site as:

- \* to develop an iconic geodome to protect, conserve, interpret and celebrate the fossil forest
- \* to restore and refurbish the Wilkinson No 1 blast furnace (1796), foundry, patternmakers shop, high charging wall and immediate areas, to create a working foundry and interpret the evolution of the site with working replicas, demonstrate skills etc
- \* to restore and refurbish the Blast Colliery site (1842), reconstruct the original winding headgear and interpret Brymbo mining from the 1400s
- \* to conserve and manage the valley as a high quality ecological area and informal countryside facility
- \* to restore, refurbish and use the Agents House (1792) as an educational centre
- \* restore and refurbish the Machine Shop (1918) to create a large flexible space for exhibitions, concerts, conferences, training etc
- \* to develop a visitor centre.

The full project vision is set out in Appendix C.

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The objective is for Brymbo Heritage Limited, a company limited by guarantee, to be the vehicle by which to raise the funding required to restore the site, to oversee the restoration, develop and then manage the complex with a mixture of paid and volunteer staff.

**The key aspirations** of Brymbo Heritage Group are to:

- \* find ways to manage, protect and interpret the important archaeological, geological, industrial heritage and ecological site
- \* create a vibrant and sustainable visitor attraction with visitors who stay longer and spend more time in the county
- \* make Brymbo Heritage Area a key tourism destination in North East Wales.

## 104 **Our Methodology**

As the brief and tender set out our methodology for the study has been :

**Task 1: Start Up Meeting** – held with Steering Group

**Task 2: Fieldwork and Background Reading** - site visits and desk research

**Task 3: Understanding the Strategic Context** – desk research to understand the site, local, regional and national context

**Task 4: Consultations** – numerous local, regional and national organisations and individuals (see Section 5)

**Task 5: Market Analysis** - market performance, intelligence, competitors, audiences

**Task 6: Interim Report** – background paper which identified '*where you are now and what the issues and challenges are*' that we consider will influence the overall feasibility and viability of the project.

**Task 7 : Business Planning** – at a headline level, build up a set of assumptions in relation to income and expenditure enabling us to develop a business model that could be tested.

**Task 8 : Draft Report** – drawing together all the previous work and consultations into one concise document

**Task 9 : Refinement, Next Steps and Final Report** - finalising in light of client and partner feedback.

Overall, the assignment has been undertaken by a combination of:

- \* site appraisal to understand the site and appreciate its heritage significance
- \* desk research into the strategic context and market potential
- \* extensive consultation
- \* assessing the overall viability of the project as far as we can.

## 105 **Study Management**

The study has been overseen by the BHG Committee which comprises:

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- \* Colin Davies (Chair)
  - \* Keith Williams (Vice Chair)
  - \* Nick Amyes (Secretary)
  - \* Professor Barry Thomas Aberystwyth University
  - \* Peter Appleton
  - \* Brian Stapley
  - \* Gordon Watkinson.

The Group has been supported by:

- \* Raymond Roberts Senior Geologist Countryside Council for Wales
- \* Matt Ferguson Brymbo Developments Ltd
- \* Councillor Paul Rogers Wrexham County Borough Council
- \* Gary Brown Community Development Manager Wrexham County Borough Council
- \* Hazel Hawarden Culture & Heritage Manager, Assets & Economic Development Department, Wrexham County Borough Council.

We acknowledge the help, support and advice they have given us in the course of the assignment.

## **106 Consultations And Fact Finding**

In carrying out an objective external review of the project in order to come to a professional opinion about the project's viability and feasibility we have carried out numerous consultations with local elected representatives of the community, public sector and heritage organisations, as well as Assembly Members, Members of Parliament, national bodies including Cadw, the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historic Monuments of Wales and National Museum Wales (see Appendix A).

This was prompted by our concern as to the serious deterioration of the complex over the last few years and the apparent inertia on the part of the key stakeholders to achieve any real progress to arrest the deterioration. It also reflected, and built on, various initiatives that took place during 2012 including a visit by the Heritage Minister (and subsequently representatives of Cadw, CyMAL and Welsh Government) and the Head of Geology National Museum Wales. This reinforced:

- \* the significance of the site in national and international terms
- \* the interest and commitment at the highest level to do something despite limited resources at a local and national level.

The end result has been the beginning of a momentum to move forward and our report recommends how this can be managed, maintained and used positively in the coming months. It is essential, however, that whilst every effort is made to arrest the deterioration of the physical fabric of the complex, a full feasibility study is commissioned as soon as possible which will enable a Round 1 application for a heritage grant to be made to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF).

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## 107 Conclusion

This document acts as a summary of the case to be made to develop a heritage attraction, and the implications that arise by going down different lines of development. Whilst there have been a number of consultations that have progressed the understanding of the site's heritage and chronology this report does not seek to provide a definitive heritage assessment.

However, what is clear is that Brymbo is a special site within North East Wales. It is one of a number of sites, including the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal World Heritage Site, which offer a concentration of attractions that can become a major focus for visitors over the coming years. With appropriate investment, phased over a number of years, it can become a viable attraction in its own right as part of a multi-use complex.

We now move on to consider the **strategic heritage context**.



**Current condition of the Pattern Maker's Shop**

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**FEATURES OF BRYMBO HERITAGE AREA (1)**



**Charging Wall**



**Machine Shop**



**Rear of Foundry and Pattern Shop**



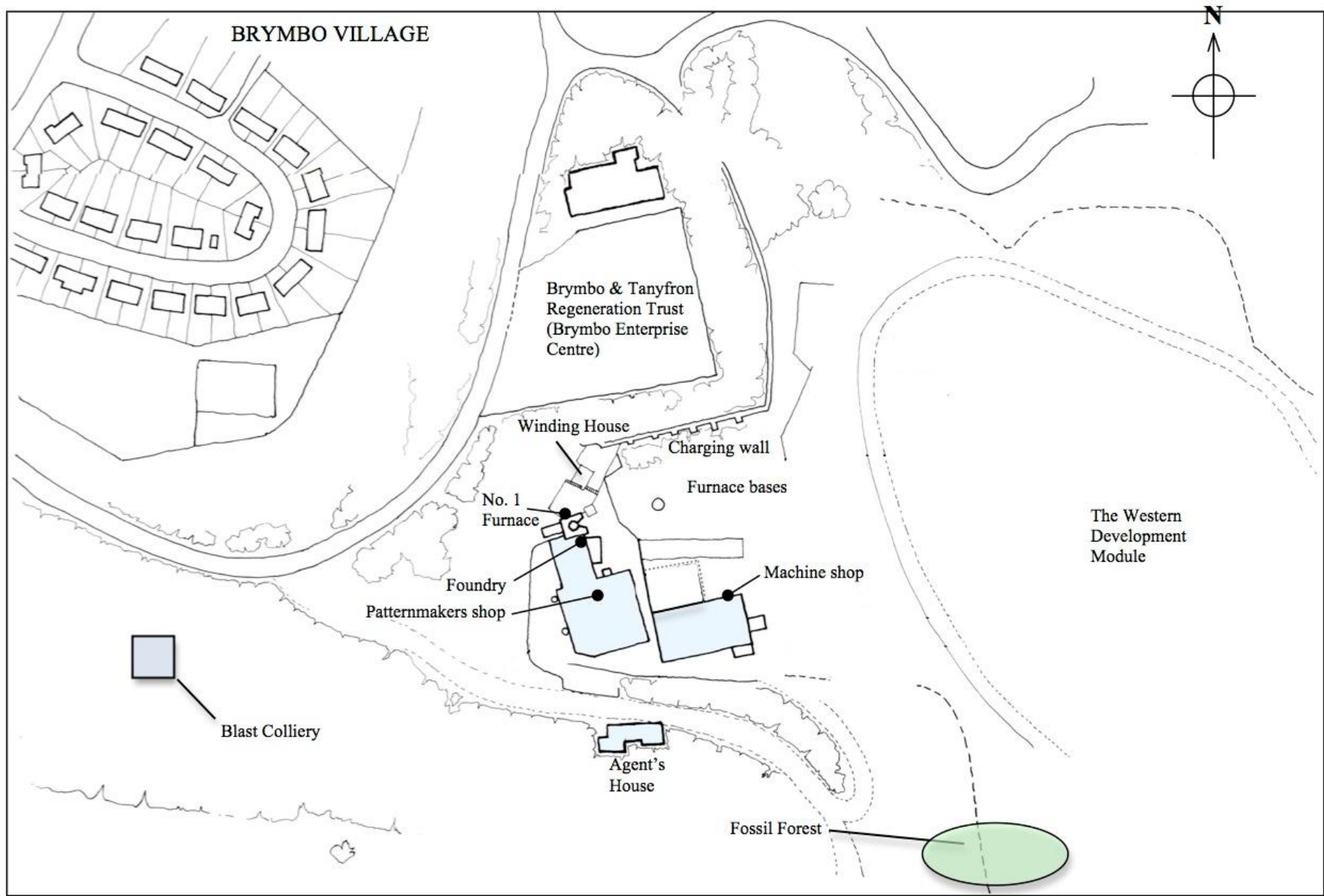
**Machine Shop**



**Cupolas**



**Rear view of Pattern Makers Shop**



## BRYMBO IRONWORKS PLAN

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## 2. STRATEGIC HERITAGE CONTEXT

### 201 Introduction

In this section we seek to set out, at headline level, the key heritage significance of the site : the elements which make it worthwhile conserving, investing in and presenting as a heritage visitor attraction and thereby seek to fulfil the objectives of the Brymbo Heritage Group. Our desk research and consultations have illustrated that there are aspects which generate different attitudes, perspectives and sometimes conflicting opinions. We seek to set out a high level approach here: there are clearly differing opinions about the technical detail.

### 202 The Significance Of The Site - Brymbo Fossil Forest Nationally and Internationally Significant

Brymbo Fossil Forest was discovered in 2005 during restoration of the former steelworks site for redevelopment. It is the only surviving fossil forest in the UK with more than 10 'trees'. Finding occasional trees (actually huge club mosses) in the Upper Carboniferous Coal Measures is not unusual but to find a stand of over 20 'trees' is **extraordinary**. Brymbo also has an abundance of other plants such as ferns and horsetails that grew below the canopy of the Carboniferous tropical rainforest.

There are only three other British fossil forests and only one, Wadsley Fossil Forest in Rotherham, is the same age as Brymbo although it has been reburied. Fossil Grove, in Victoria Park Glasgow, is open to the public but does not have the surrounding sediments or the abundant other plants found at Brymbo.

*'The stands of Calamites stems are the most important feature in the exposure and, as far as we know, the only such Calamites stands preserved anywhere. The exposure is therefore, without doubt, of both national and international importance.'*

*'The favourable disposition of the exposed rock sequence renders the development of the site for education, research and 'geotourism' a practical proposition, unrivalled in Europe.'*

Extracts from article in 'Geology Today' by Peter Appleton, Jacqui Malpas, Barry Thomas and Christopher J Cleal

Brymbo is in a unique position to show how, and where, these trees and plants grew with soils, peat (now coal) and the sandstones and mudstones that encased and preserved them. The Brymbo Fossil Forest is of great scientific value and has been included in the UK's network of Geological Conservation Review (GCR) sites and, therefore, will ultimately be protected by law as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). Brymbo is a key UK site for development not only as an educational and research resource, but also as a visitor destination of regional importance.

*'With careful management the 'Brymbo Fossil Forest' can form the centrepiece of an unrivalled display of coalfield geology, creating a spectacle unique in Britain.'*

Extract from article in Geology Today by Peter Appleton, Jacqui Malpas, Barry Thomas and Christopher J Cleal

### 203 John Wilkinson's 18<sup>th</sup> Century Ironworks - Nationally significant

Brymbo Ironworks is the sole remaining physical monument to the creative genius of John Wilkinson. In its rare completeness as an 18<sup>th</sup>/early 19<sup>th</sup> Century ironworks, the story it can tell of our nation's industrial development is without equal. It will be a cause for shame and regret in the years to come should this opportunity be squandered by allowing these structures to decay further, very soon beyond repair.

1792 – Wilkinson (1728 – 1808) acquired the Brymbo Hall Estate and moved to Brymbo from Bersham developing Brymbo Ironworks. Coal output increased dramatically, along with iron ore and fireclay, which provided the essential raw materials for the new works.

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No 1 Furnace, constructed 1796, is one of **the best preserved furnaces from this era in Britain**. The 18<sup>th</sup> century cast-house and 1840's foundry and pattern shop also remain. One of the adjacent coal mining levels, probably contemporary with the No1 Blast Furnace may also be accessible, giving the potential for the whole process to be interpreted.

John Wilkinson, '*King of the Ironmasters*', was one of the most important influences in the Industrial Revolution, whose role has, to date, been underplayed. Wilkinson's starting point was the old Bersham Blast Furnace (fragments only remain !), the first in Wales to smelt with coke and where Wilkinson developed his boring machine. Together the two sites (Bersham and Brymbo) comprise a continuum of high quality iron and steelmaking in the Wrexham area for 300 years. Indeed ironmaking in the area dates back to the Civil War.

Wilkinson **pioneered** many new uses of cast iron and **led the world** in the field of iron technology developing precision cylinder boring machines. He used this expertise to:

- \* manufacture safer and more accurate cannon (crucial in 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Century warfare)
- \* bore accurate and consistent cylinders to make the Boulton and Watt steam engines: this meant the engines did not leak steam as they had done with earlier cylinders. It proved a major technological advance in machinery driving forward the Industrial Revolution.

1796 – Wilkinson was producing about one eighth of Britain's cast iron (not all from Brymbo as he also owned ironworks in South Shropshire, Staffordshire and Wolverhampton)

There were strong links between Coalbrookdale and Brymbo through the Darby family connections which should be researched, cultivated and nurtured.

## **204 Brymbo Steelworks 1884-1990 - Regionally Significant**

Following Wilkinson's death in 1808 Brymbo's fortunes slumped.

In 1842 the industrialist and railway engineer Henry Robertson was employed to revive the ironworks, forming the Brymbo Ironworks Company managed by WH and C Darby from the Coalbrookdale Darby family

In 1884 Steelmaking was trialled at Brymbo with the introduction of the 'Basic Open Hearth Process' by J H Darby. Production was started in 1885, as the Brymbo Steel Company, **the first such steelmaking plant in Britain**

Early 20<sup>th</sup> century – the plant specialised in general engineering steels including armaments, and automotive components, (and even sent high quality special steel to Sheffield and Teesside).

Post WW2 – produced special steels for automotive applications, spring steels, mining and the oil industry.

Brymbo continued to innovate : it was the first steelworks to use oxygen for pre-refining of blast furnace hot-metal feed for the electric arc furnace process.

Brymbo iron and steel has been used in many major engineering projects:

- \* railway lines (Robertson's main profession as a renowned railway engineer)
- \* castings for many canal and railway bridges and viaducts eg. River Severn, road bridges etc
- \* Chain Bridge Llangollen

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## 205 Brymbo Colliery

- \* 1410 - the earliest records of coal mining in the Wrexham area are at Brymbo and Coedpoeth - the first recorded exploitation of the North Wales coalfield
- \* larger scale mining developed in the late 18<sup>th</sup> Century following the acquisition of the 500 acre Brymbo Estate by John Wilkinson. The many shafts and levels comprised the Brymbo Colliery, the last and most important development being the sinking of the Blast Pits in 1843, adjacent to the ironworks
- \* both coal and ironstone were raised at many locations :some pits also raising fireclay to make refractory bricks for furnace linings.
- \* 1851 - a large cobble of Brymbo coal 10' long, 6' high and 6' wide, weighing between 12 and 13 ton, was exhibited at the Great Exhibition at Crystal Palace and was awarded a Bronze Medal.

## 206 Local Significance

- \* Brymbo was a major employer in the local area from the late 18<sup>th</sup> to late 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries (employed 2500 at its peak : 1100 when it closed in 1990) so had a big influence on the surrounding area
- \* the steelworks brought more than jobs : it gave the village a unique identity and a rich pride of place
- \* the Darbys, who managed the works in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> Century were Quakers : philanthropic, but teetotal, so no alcohol sold on their premises. When WH Darby established the Brymbo Institute and Reading Room it was less successful than he hoped as few steelworkers were teetotal!
- \* the steelworkers later took over the Institute and it thrived, supporting cricket, rifle shooting, tennis and bowls clubs, financing the silver band and supplying newspapers and magazines for the reading room
- \* in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century it was succeeded by Brymbo Sports and Social Club which became the social centre for steelworkers and their families
- \* Brymbo Works Magazine provides a superb archive as it included news, historical and educational articles
- \* the village of Brymbo flourished and grew in parallel with the ironworks and steelworks. There are plenty of stories that could be told eg Brymbo Co-op. A lot has already been done through Brymbo Heritage Group but could be further extended documenting community life, and how it has changed, and looking at the impact of the works, and its subsequent closure, on the surrounding community
- \* following the closure of the site the natural regeneration of the landscape around the oldest areas of the former colliery and ironworks have become locally important ecologically.

## 207 Educational Significance

Working with the community to further develop these stories offers many approaches to informal and formal learning. The site has great educational potential which is currently exploited by guided tours led by the BHG members. The site offers:

- 
- \* an opportunity to engage with the local community, and former workforce, and to record and collect the memories of people of all ages about the steel works. It would provide an ideal oral history project (the BHG have already started doing this)
  - \* the potential to raise awareness about the significance of the site
  - \* a focus to generate local support and interest
  - \* a range of educational and interpretive opportunities. This could be exploited through a '*Our Heritage*' Heritage Lottery Fund application (see Section 7).

## **208 Conclusion**

In this section we have reviewed the heritage significance of the site. We now move on to consider the tourism context.

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## FEATURES OF BRYMBO HERITAGE AREA (2)



**Agents House**



**Inside of Foundry**



**Rear of Machine Shop**



**No. 1 Blast Furnace**



**Elements of Fossil Forest**

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### 3. STRATEGIC POLICY CONTEXT

#### 301 Introduction

A wide range of local and regional strategic documents and priorities relate to the area and set out strategic priorities. The site, BHG and any potential development should take advantage of, and make direct links to, these documents including:

- \* Wrexham Heritage Strategy
- \* Wrexham County Borough Destination Management Plan
- \* Flintshire County Tourism Strategy
- \* Wrexham Community Strategy
- \* Wrexham Community Regeneration Strategy
- \* North Wales Tourism Development Strategy
- \* Regionally Important Geological Sites (RIGS)
- \* Historic Environment Strategy for Wales, Cadw, Welsh Government

#### 302 'Making Heritage Matter' : Wrexham County Borough Heritage Strategy 2011 – 2015

The strategy builds on *Making Heritage Matter*, the first Heritage Strategy for Wrexham County Borough (WCBC), for the period 2005-2010. The strategy notes that heritage is not just about conserving the past but also about how it can contribute to the present. It sets out the overarching issues that confront our heritage and an agenda of priority areas that need to be addressed over the next five years. The vision for heritage in Wrexham County Borough is to:

*“Enable the full potential of our heritage to flourish, so that it can make the maximum possible contribution and enrich all aspects of life in the County Borough, for the benefit of local residents and visitors alike.”*

Priority areas are:

- \* raise awareness and understanding of our heritage and the contribution that it can make to everyone's life
- \* strengthen the partnerships and resources that support heritage
- \* ensure that heritage plays a full role in strengthening our communities
- \* ensure that our heritage is conserved for the benefit of future generations.

Key WCBC policies relating to heritage are:

- \* phased development of Wrexham County Borough Museum as a major facility for the region
- \* Acquisition and Disposal Policies and Procedures for Museum, Archives and Local Studies Collections in line with national standards
- \* for Wrexham people and organisations to have direct access to records as part of Wrexham's heritage

- 
- \* for officers to negotiate suitable, provisional terms for the Council to acquire the site identified as the 'Brymbo Heritage Area' and to explore the range of potential options for the long term management and operation of the area including the possibility of developing links with other heritage sites with a view to further consideration by members
  - \* development of the former Bersham Colliery Winding House and Headgear as a Mining Museum
  - \* a five year lease with the Royal Welsh Fusiliers Collection Trust to enable the Trust to relocate its archive, reference library and reserve museum collection to Kings Mill
  - \* recognition that Minera Quarry is a site of considerable interest in terms of its heritage value and potential to become a significant tourist attraction
  - \* policies relating to the conservation of the built heritage are set out within the Council's Local Development Plan and Planning policies
  - \* the Council's Economic Development Service Strategy, which includes Tourism and Regeneration, including Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal World Heritage Site and Cefn Mawr Townscape Heritage Initiative.

The areas of **key actions** to support delivery of the Heritage Strategy 2011-2015 have been grouped under three key strands:

- \* **Conservation and Collections Management** : this includes noting an action to work with potential partners to secure a sustainable future for the 'heritage area' at the former Brymbo Steelworks (Priority Areas B and D)
- \* **Community Engagement and Participation** : active engagement and participation with our heritage can help create an appreciation of who we are and where we came from and help to celebrate the increasing diversity of our community
- \* **Audience Development** : awareness of the scope of our local heritage and the information and resources that are available to the public is still limited.

The Heritage Strategy sets out **four key outcomes** :

- \* the physical remains of our built heritage are conserved and managed in line with best practice for the benefit of future generations
- \* material evidence and personal memories of our heritage are collected and maintained for the benefit of future generations
- \* everyone living in our community has the opportunity to actively engage in, or participate with, their heritage
- \* our heritage is made accessible and used by a diverse range of audiences.

Clearly, there are a couple of actions directly relating to Brymbo, together with indirect opportunities to support Brymbo through community engagement, conservation and improved access to learning and archives. Brymbo Heritage Group are advised to take these opportunities on board.

### **303 Wrexham County Borough Destination Management Plan Draft July 2012**

The Destination Management Plan will focus on the key hubs and attractors in Wrexham County Borough as these:

- 
- \* are already well established and the best known
  - \* offer the most potential for attracting new and repeat visitors
  - \* are attractive to potential sponsors and offer the best return on investment
  - \* provide a broad base which combine to provide a strong Wrexham wide offer.

The **three key 'hubs'** are:

- \* the World Heritage Site of the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and canal
- \* Erdigg Hall
- \* Chirk Castle, Chirk and the Ceiriog Valley as a combined hub.

**The key hubs** will act as the main attractors for visitors to the area and the Destination Management Plan seeks to extend the dwell time of these visitors, encourage repeat visits and, critically, promote and inspire visits to other part of the Borough. **The town of Wrexham**, as the largest in the area, should be a **primary destination** for these 'spin off' visits from each of the hubs. However, the visitor appeal of the town at present is limited and it is overshadowed by other destinations: particularly Chester.

The focus upon the World Heritage Site as one of the three hubs starts with the Aqueduct itself being an icon of the local industrial and transport heritage with a view to it, in due course, being linked to, and acting as, a portal to encourage visits to other industrial heritage attractions in the area. There is also a comprehensive **Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal World Heritage Site (WHS) Tourism Development Plan (May 2011)**. This aspires to bring heritage-led economic regeneration to the WHS corridor and to achieve sustainable economic growth by increasing the value of the tourism sector and conserving the area's heritage assets.

Product development opportunities in the Borough show that, at present, Brymbo and the Brymbo Heritage Area do not have a formal direct presence in the tourism plan and this situation will continue until any form of public attraction is developed.

Opportunities for improving the visitor experience, and increasing visitor numbers and expenditure, are:

- \* World Heritage Site status : the implementation of the recently established short, medium and long term plans to raise the quality of a visit to the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct, Trevor Basin and along the Llangollen Canal corridor are key for the authority
- \* promotion of the key assets of the National Trust properties at Erdigg Hall and Chirk Castle and the linked stories to other parts of the area
- \* raising awareness of the Ceiriog Valley as a calm and tranquil place to walk and cycle
- \* strengthened linkages between the Ceiriog Valley offer and Chirk and the surrounding areas to create a wider experience
- \* extension of the Clwydian Range AONB area to include parts of the Dee Valley
- \* addressing the quality and range of accommodation on offer
- \* using locally produced food/ drink to create a more distinctive destination experience
- \* developing visitor information on and offline

- \* improved innovative visitor interpretation and signage
- \* developing a proactive Events and Festivals Strategy designed to strengthen the profile of the area and attract more visitors.

Industrial heritage is not seen as a key theme in the County Borough's destination development at this point in time. However, in terms of its links with the Heritage Strategy (described in 302) and the contribution that heritage makes to cultural tourism and visitor appeal, then Industrial Heritage is an important strand of the existing strategy. It needs further development to consider how the different sites might be brought together. It is the lack of resources to drive this strand forward that has been the core problem.

### 304 The Economic Value of Tourism to Wrexham County Borough

The development context for the visitor economy is provided by the Wrexham Economic Prosperity Strategy (2011-16). Tourism is identified as an important sector for Wrexham with the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct, and its World Heritage status, seen as the major asset for the future. Targets in the Economic Prosperity Strategy include increasing the value of tourism from £84.39m (2010/11) to £87m by 2014 and £95m by 2015/16 and increasing visitor volume (visits) from 1.64m (2010) to 1.9m (2015/16).

Nationally recognised research (STEAM 2010) highlights that there were 1.6m trips and 2.3m visitor days to Wrexham County Borough in 2010. These generated £84m of expenditure and supported 1,600 Full Time Equivalent jobs (of which approximately 1,300 are directly supported and 300 are indirectly supported by multipliers through secondary spend activity by visitors and businesses).

Day visitors accounted for the majority of trips (78%) but were less significant in terms of spend (only generating 45% of the total spend). Visitors staying in commercial accommodation accounted for 9% of trips but 34% of spend. Visitors in non-serviced accommodation (self catering, caravans, narrowboats, etc) were important accounting for 19% of overall expenditure but only 3% of trips (a reflection of their longer length of stay compared to short stays in guest houses and hotels).

**Table 7: The Economic Impact of Tourism to Wrexham County Borough**

|                                       | Visits (%)  | Visitor Days (%) | Spend (%)     |
|---------------------------------------|-------------|------------------|---------------|
| Day visitors                          | 78          | 56               | 45            |
| Staying with friends and relatives    | 13          | 21               | 21            |
| Staying in serviced accommodation     | 6           | 7                | 15            |
| Staying in non serviced accommodation | 3           | 6                | 19            |
| <b>Total</b>                          | <b>1.6m</b> | <b>2.3m</b>      | <b>£84.4m</b> |

Source: STEAM 2010 for Wrexham County Borough Council

Data from Tourism Economic Activity in the Sub-Regions of Wales in 2007 (Cardiff Business School) highlights that in terms of Gross Value Added (GVA), tourism accounted for £37.4m in Wrexham. This represented an estimated 2% of total GVA for the area compared to an average of 4.3% across Wales.

### 305 Flintshire Tourism Strategy 2008 – 2013

Recognising that Flintshire lies immediately to the north of Brymbo it is worth considering the Flintshire Tourism Strategy priorities. Flintshire has much to offer visitors with its beautiful and

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varied landscape and the twin backdrops of the Clwydian Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Dee Estuary along the north edge which is designated as SSSI and RAMSAR, one of the most important wildlife sites in Europe and notable for the huge numbers of wintering birds. Although both areas are widely used for recreation and tourism more can be done to increase access and interpretation whilst protecting their valuable but sensitive environment. The Tourism Strategy sets out key markets, opportunities and priorities,

**The Vision** for the Flintshire Tourism Strategy 2008-13 is:

*The Flintshire Tourism Strategy will make use of the superb natural environment of Flintshire, along with the richness of its heritage, culture, language and products, to invite people to explore, understand and enjoy the county. This diverse offer will be complemented by:*

- \* *a commitment to quality*
- \* *easy access to information*
- \* *striving to ensure that every facet of the visitors' experience meets their expectations.*

The Flintshire Tourism Strategy will aim to:

- \* develop a stronger sense of place for Flintshire and raise the quality of the location as a destination
- \* increase tourism business both from adjacent and wider markets
- \* increase the value of business and activity tourism in Flintshire
- \* improve access to information for residents and visitors
- \* further improve the quality of accommodation and attractions, support the development of new infrastructure and attract and invest in high calibre staff
- \* monitor the impact of tourism and the effectiveness of interventions.

The actions in the strategy are grouped under five **Strategic Themes**:

- \* branding and marketing
- \* product
- \* quality
- \* access
- \* partnership.

### **306 Community Regeneration Strategy : Targeting communities in Wrexham that are among the 30% most deprived in Wales 2008-2012, Wrexham County Borough Council**

**The Vision** is in line with the Council's aim of regenerating communities in Wrexham. It aims for Wrexham's communities to be:

- \* *inclusive : where everyone has an opportunity to access services and opportunities to become an active citizen of Wrexham*

- 
- \* *active : where residents are able to participate in community activities, training and employment*
  - \* *attractive : where people want to live, work, volunteer and invest.*

Since 2001 the regeneration of Wrexham's rural areas has been promoted and progressed by **Northern Marches Cymru** which is a partnership board and team hosted by the Council and established to respond to the Welsh Assembly Government's rural regeneration programmes. These have included the Rural Community Action, Article 33, and the Leader/Leader + programmes, all of which have recently been consolidated and incorporated in the Borough's Rural Development Plan (RDP). Operating in two 3-year Business Plan phases 2008-10 and 2011-13, Northern Marches Cymru is currently delivering 28 projects worth more than £5m as part of the first phase.

2001 also saw the start of the **West Wrexham URBAN II** programme. This £14m community regeneration programme has supported business development, and small community groups, as well as the establishment of a network of 5 major community resource and enterprise centres across the former steel and coal areas of Brymbo, Broughton, Gwersyllt, Llay and Coedpoeth. It has been community-led from the outset, and whilst the programme itself has now ended, the focus on sustainable community-led regeneration remains.

### **307 Wrexham's Community Strategy 2009 – 2020, Wrexham County Borough Council**

The Council's aim is to make Wrexham County Borough a place that:

- \* is economically prosperous
- \* is safe
- \* values citizenship, community spirit and social responsibility
- \* enables people to reach their full potential
- \* looks after its built and natural surroundings
- \* cares for people's health.

The case for the regeneration of the Brymbo Heritage Area clearly needs to support these community aspirations and can contribute towards learning, civic pride, skills development, healthy living, community cohesion, sense of place and improving the natural environment etc.

### **308 Tourism Strategy North Wales 2010-2015, Tourism Partnership North Wales**

There is opportunity for a revitalised Brymbo Heritage Area to play an important role in the regional tourism product. The regional strategy for tourism development and partnership encompasses a broad area stretching from Anglesey and the Llyn Peninsula to the English borders around Flint and Wrexham. Brymbo is located to the north east of the region on the borders with England.

Tourism is extremely important to the North Wales economy bringing in £1.8bn of income to the region each year and supporting over 37,000 jobs. North Wales accounts for a third of Wales' tourism attracting 8m staying visitors and an estimated 17m day trips in 2007. The majority of the visitors are from the UK and holiday tourism predominates. Tourism is not evenly distributed across the region : the North West (Anglesey, Conwy, Gwynedd) accounts for 75% of staying visits and 60% of day visits with the balance of 25% of staying visits and 40% of day visits taking place in the North East (Denbighshire, Flintshire, Wrexham).

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It is quite seasonal with 70% of trips taking place in the summer six months. Volumes have remained broadly static in the region over the past decade although there has been a slight drop in real spending particularly in recent years. However, people who visit have a high loyalty making repeat trips and show high levels of satisfaction.

The strategy notes that North Wales is a special place with strong and enduring appeal. The vision for tourism in North Wales is that the region should be:

*'One of the top 5 UK tourism destinations'*.

A key strategic objective is to put North Wales firmly back on the visitor map re-establishing it as a top UK destination with more compelling and inspiring coordinated marketing getting the region talked about in a more positive way.

The challenge to achieve this is twofold:

- \* providing a tourism infrastructure and product which matches up to the quality and appeal of the region's natural assets
- \* making the potential audience more aware of the special qualities of North Wales and what it has to offer.

The strategy identifies the region's **primary market segments** as being:

- \* UK family holidays
- \* short breaks
- \* activity and special interest niche holidays.

**Key priorities** are:

- \* **projecting distinctive strengths** : to achieve the top five 'must visit' status being market driven with stronger impact and providing inspiring information
- \* **investing in product excellence** : stimulating development and investment in the core product to exceed customers' expectations. In particular, with quality accommodation, diverse attractions (investing and improving existing attractions to increase their visibility) along with strengthening excellent activities
- \* **providing an outstanding experience** : delivering a total quality visitor experience from arrival to departure through well-managed places (integrated destination management), enriching experiences and efficient transport benefiting from skilled people
- \* **working together in partnership** : improving working relationships to harness the energies of the public, private and not for profit sectors for more effective organisation, better recognition for tourism and using sound evidence to improve decision making.

### **309 Regionally Important Geodiversity Sites (RIGS)**

RIGS are specially chosen sites of local and regional geological importance. Local volunteer RIGS groups help to identify the most important places for geology, geomorphology and soils outside the nationally recognised network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs). The local authority then registers these sites, which helps to protect them for future generations to study and enjoy. The Fossil Forest is a Geological Conservation Review Site and will be a Site of Special Scientific Importance in the near future.

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Groups in North East Wales (NEWRIGS), Gwynedd and Môn RIGS and the Central Wales RIGS group operate under a national body called the Association of Welsh RIGS Groups (AWRG)

Groups choose RIGS by sites which embrace one or more of the following values:

- \* **scientific sites** which are important for ongoing research in the Earth science
- \* **educational sites** which provide an outdoor geological classroom for all ages and abilities
- \* **historical sites** which show the importance of geology in archaeological and historical constructions, the development of geology as a science (e.g. sites where certain theories were first developed) or commemorate the outstanding contributions of important geologists (e.g. graves and monuments)
- \* **aesthetic sites** which demonstrate the importance of geology to understanding and appreciating some of our most cherished landscapes and scenery.

### **310 Historic Environment Strategy for Wales, Cadw, Welsh Government, 2012**

The Programme for Government recognises the value of heritage to Wales and has introduced a number of elements including:

- \* a Heritage Bill with supporting policy activity and public engagement
- \* the key role of Cadw with its Heritage Tourism Project, Pan-Wales Heritage Interpretation Plan, Lifelong Learning Strategy and Heritage and Arts Framework.

These measures will enable the protection of the heritage and encourage public access, enjoyment and participation. The **key drivers** of the strategy are:

#### **Valuing and using our historic environment assets**

Heritage plays a significant role in the promotion of Wales as a destination.

#### **Headline issues and areas for action**

The sustainable management of the historic environment, and framework for articulating the values of heritage sites, so that they can be fully understood, protected and sensitively managed, as well as improving information resources, knowledge and understanding about the past.

#### **Heritage protection and sustainable development**

The Heritage Bill White Paper consultation will begin in the Spring of 2013. Welsh Government is seeking to support the owners of heritage assets and communities. Advocate heritage led, or heritage-informed regeneration, linked to the review of the Regeneration Strategy, will be informed by an appreciation of the contribution of historic character to local distinctiveness.

#### **Skills and opportunities**

The historic environment sector provides employment for about 30,000 people across Wales including specialist and technical jobs. The Minister is looking to Cadw, National Museum Wales and other key partners to develop a Historic Environment Lifelong Learning Framework

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so that informed, joined-up discussions can be held with education service providers and strategists.

### **Public understanding and enjoyment**

We want to ensure that heritage sites are accessible and enjoyable places both for visitors to Wales and for people who live in Wales. Developing new and broader audiences for the historic environment is a priority and we will develop new approaches to engaging and involving people in exploring and celebrating our history.

### **Economy**

Heritage and the historic environment contributes around £840 million to Wales's GVA and supports around 30,000 full-time equivalent jobs. Tourism is a significant factor. Heritage makes a wider contribution enhancing the vibrancy of places, providing memorable destinations and icons, delivering events and activities which bring towns and villages alive. There is a need to maximise the impact and visibility of Wales's heritage icons including its World Heritage Sites.

### **Partnership and delivery**

Local authorities have a key role to play in heritage management but there is an inconsistency of resourcing in terms of specialist staff and application of policy. Explore together future working models which balance local knowledge with the need for consistency and the sharing of expertise.

### **Framework for action**

Complementing this strategy will be a number of documents and programmes of activity, some underway, others beginning during 2013.

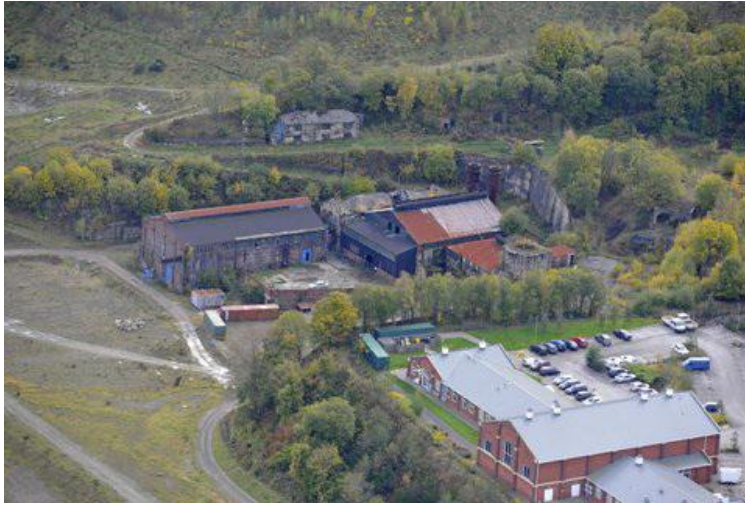
## **311 Making The Most Of These Strategic Opportunities**

These heritage, tourism, community and regeneration strategies provide the Brymbo Heritage Group with a series of key agreed local policies and approaches that can help generate funding. It will be necessary for BHG, and its advisers, to ensure that they take an outward looking approach to developing the site and not be overly focused on looking inward at the buildings and natural history assets. The case must be made to outside organisations, not just Wrexham County Borough Council, to show how investing in conserving and regenerating the site can bring wider benefits to others.

## **312 Conclusion**

In this section we have considered the overarching strategic context. We now move on to consider the **tourism context**.

**AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE HERITAGE AREA**



**Context of Heritage Area in relation to Brymbo Enterprise Centre**



**Key buildings of the Heritage Area**



**Key structures (note the condition of the Pattern Makers Shop : Agents House is seen to the right)**



**Key buildings of the Heritage Area  
(No. 1 Blast Furnace, Foundry and Pattern Maker's Shop are an integrated group below the Machine Shop)**

## 4. TOURISM CONTEXT

### 401 Introduction

In this section we consider the tourism context for the project including the market, potential customers and competitors.

### 402 Population Catchment and Attitudes to Leisure and Visiting

The Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal World Heritage Site Tourism Development Plan (2011) provides insight into potential population catchment for the World Heritage Site and, lying close by to Brymbo, can be used as a proxy measure for the Brymbo Heritage Area. The catchment population, centred on Wrexham, reaches 11.9 million adults living within a 2 hour drive time and 348,000 within 30 minutes. Particular categories of people, such as *'Wealthy Achievers'* and *'Comfortably Off'* tend to have above average wealth, and interest in heritage and culture, and could be key markets.

This pool of people can provide a target for day and short break visits in the future (around 80% of short break and day visitors travel under 2 hours to their destination). Clearly, once the visitor infrastructure is in place, public transport access promoted and site marketing and PR 'kick in', there is potential for the heritage project to reach a share of this core potential audience.

**Table1: Catchment Populations : Drivetime from Wrexham**

| <b>Population and Households</b>              | <b>30 minute contour</b> | <b>60 minute contour</b> | <b>120 minute contour</b> |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| Total Adult Population                        | 348,433                  | 2,421,251                | 11,927,595                |
| Total Households                              | 182,953                  | 1,276,565                | 6,235,685                 |
| <b>Household categories</b>                   |                          |                          |                           |
| Wealthy Achievers                             | 61,012                   | 327,852                  | 1,237,701                 |
| Urban Prosperity                              | 7,945                    | 80,554                   | 364,604                   |
| Comfortably off                               | 57,035                   | 396,129                  | 1,935,061                 |
| Moderate means                                | 14,890                   | 144,807                  | 1,042,350                 |
| Hard pressed                                  | 41,767                   | 322,760                  | 1,632,145                 |
| Unclassified                                  | 304                      | 4,463                    | 23,644                    |
| <b>Sports &amp; Leisure Profile</b>           |                          |                          |                           |
| Membership of National Trust                  | 52,390                   | 329,704                  | 1,385,921                 |
| Member of English Heritage                    | 5,992                    | 39,933                   | 249,600                   |
| <b>Exhibitions/ Outings in last 12 months</b> |                          |                          |                           |
| Art Galleries                                 | 81,958                   | 569,214                  | 2,343,768                 |
| Beauty Spots/Gardens                          | 74,187                   | 505,358                  | 2,274,092                 |
| Museums                                       | 126,415                  | 869,763                  | 3,766,949                 |
| Theme Parks                                   | 136,610                  | 964,746                  | 4,423,986                 |

Source: Visit Wales, based on CACI data, from Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal World Heritage Site Tourism Development Plan, 2011

#### 403 Competitive Positioning: Visitor Attraction Numbers In North East Wales/Cheshire Borders

We have reviewed the current performance of visitor, heritage and countryside attractions in the sub-regional area, which provide a context for local visiting levels, as well as the attendance performance at a number of 'peer' group industrial heritage attractions across the United Kingdom. These help to benchmark the potential attractiveness of the project and to identify the type of operation (local authority, National Trust, not for profit trust, etc) that has an impact on visiting and numbers:

- \* the majority of the larger attractions (publishing visitor numbers for 2009 and 2010) in the North East Wales, Cheshire and Shropshire borders area are local authority run Country Parks including near neighbours at Wepre Country Park Connah's Quay, Loggerheads Country Park, Moel Famau Country Park on the Clwydian Range and Alyn Waters Country Park on Wrexham's fringe (all 100-200,000 estimated visits)
- \* key heritage centres and museums, or major National Trust properties, see 100-150,000 visitors (Erddig, Chirk Castle, Llangollen Steam Railway and Chester Grosvenor Museum). The National Trust membership of over 4 million members creates large numbers regularly visiting sites for 'free' by use of their annual pass
- \* more modest numbers (c. 10-35,000 annual visitors) visit various heritage attractions such as Flintshire County Council's Greenfield Valley Heritage Park (Holywell), Wrexham County Borough Museum (which since reopening in 2011 has seen visitor numbers increase to 35,000), Ruthin Gaol, Denbigh Castle and Bersham Heritage Centre, Wrexham.

**Table 2: Attraction Visitor Numbers (as published in 2009 or 2010)**

| <b>Attractions within North East Wales, Cheshire and Shropshire borders (e=estimate)</b>      |   |           |
|---|---|-----------|
| Wepre Country Park, Connah's Quay   | Flintshire County Council                             | e 200,000 |
| Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal World Heritage Site (15,000 boat movements)                   | Canals and Rivers Trust                               | e 200,000 |
| Loggerheads Country Park  | Denbighshire County Council                           | e 180,000 |
| Moel Famau Country Park   | Denbighshire County Council/Forestry Commission Wales | e 160,000 |
| Erddig, near Wrexham  | National Trust  | 141,470   |
| Llangollen Steam Railway  | Independent   | 121,996   |
| Chirk Castle, Chirk   | National Trust  | 117,108   |
| Grosvenor Museum, Chester   | Cheshire West and Chester Council                     | 102,928   |
| Coed Llandegla Mountain Biking centre   | Independent   | 100,000+  |
| Alyn Waters Country Park Visitor Centre (country park itself far more: hundreds of thousands) | Wrexham County Borough Council                        | 90,991    |
| Ty Mawr Country Park, Cefn Mawr   | Wrexham County Borough Council                        | e 71,695  |
| Park Hall Countryside Experience, Oswestry  | Independent   | e 55,000  |

| <b>Attractions within North East Wales, Cheshire and Shropshire borders (e=estimate)</b> |                                |        |
|--|--------------------------------|--------|
| Wrexham County Borough Museum, (2012)  | Wrexham County Borough Council | 35,000 |
| Greenfield Valley Heritage Park  | Flintshire County Council      | 26,882 |
| Mold Food and Drink Festival   | Independent                    | 12,500 |
| Ruthin Gaol  | Denbighshire County Council    | 9,818  |
| Denbigh Castle   | Cadw                           | 9,747  |
| Bersham Heritage Centre, Wrexham   | Wrexham County Borough Council | 9,087  |
| Cambrian Heritage Railway Museum, Oswestry   | Independent                    | 6,500  |
| Minera Country Park and Iron Works   | Independent                    | 2,220  |

Source: Visits to Tourist Attractions in England and Wales 2010 for Visit England and Visit Wales

#### 404 Other Industrial and Geological Heritage Attractions

Looking at selected UK industrial heritage and geological/mining sites there appear to be four levels of visiting which are well represented across Wales:

- \* major regional attractions: Beamish Open Air Museum, Black Country Living History Museum, Ironbridge Gorge Museum all attract 300,000- 500,000 or more visitors and are very large site, multi building, multi-component living history sites that are long established
- \* mid-sized larger sites such as Quarry Bank Mill Styal (National Trust), National Slate Museum, Big Pit (Blaenavon), Cheddar Gorge (all 100,000-300,000) with a mix of private and national ownership including the National Trust
- \* other medium sized ironworks, coalmine and industrial heritage sites tend to attract at the lower level of 15-40,000 visitors eg Blaenavon Ironworks, Rhondda Heritage Park
- \* smaller localised attractions (not listed here) with only 3-8,000 visitors generally operated by local heritage societies, or as small local authority attractions, which may only be open seasonally (or at peak weekends).

**Table 3: Industrial Heritage and Geological Sites (as published 2009 or 2010)**

| <b>Geological and Industrial Heritage Attractions, England and Wales (e=estimate)</b> |                 |           |
|---|-----------------|-----------|
| Ironbridge Gorge Museum   | Independent     | 567,500   |
| Beamish Open Air Museum   | Independent     | 416,500   |
| Black Country Living Museum   | Independent     | e 300,000 |
| Cheddar Caves and Gorge   | Independent     | 235,000   |
| Big Pit National Coal Museum  | National Museum | 155,631   |
| National Slate Museum Llanberis   | National Museum | 146,864   |
| Quarry Bank Mill  | National Trust  | 127,497   |
| Llechwedd Slate Caverns   | Independent     | 90,807    |
| National Showcaves Centre for Wales   | Independent     | 69,057    |

| <b>Geological and Industrial Heritage Attractions, England and Wales (e=estimate)</b> |                 |         |
|---|-----------------|---------|
| Rhondda Heritage Park   | Local Authority | 42,148  |
| National Stone Centre   | Independent     | 40,000  |
| Great Orme Mines  | Independent     | 30,185  |
| Inigo Jones Slateworks  | Independent     | 24,610  |
| Blaenavon Ironworks   | Cadw            | 23,135  |
| Dolaucothi Gold Mines   | National Trust  | 22,255  |
| Etruria Industrial Museum   | Local Authority | 16,651  |
| Cornish Engines Camborne  | National Trust  | e15,000 |
| King Edward Mine Camborne   | Independent     | e 5,000 |

From the perspective of the Fossil Forest, the natural history 'asset' of Brymbo is not directly comparable to other sites in terms of how it currently stands as a barely accessible resource. However, examples include:

- \* the Fossil Grove operated by Glasgow City Council located within a city park in an under cover 'shed' with small exhibition
- \* the Rotherham Middlewood Wadsley Fossil Forest is not exposed to public access, being re-covered in soil adjacent to a housing estate
- \* other open air non-fossil forest, but fossil rich sites, include Wren's Nest National Nature Reserve and SSSI in Dudley and key sites along the Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site (Dorset). The World Heritage Site holds a week long annual Fossil Festival which is very successful and attracts large visitor numbers (and is attended by the National Museum Wales)
- \* internationally the most important site is Joggins Cliff (Newfoundland) which has a visitor centre and regular tours which, we understand, is not so impressive as Brymbo and yet attracts significant visitor numbers.

#### **405 Potential Audiences : Differing Segments at Visitor Attractions**

The type of visitors to attractions can be considered in a variety of ways related to segments and key audiences. In terms of published figures, the Visit Wales data provides insight into the variations between local/Welsh, other UK and overseas figures.

**Table 4: Origin of visitors by category to Welsh Attractions 2010**

| <b>Category</b>                | <b>Sample</b> | <b>Average % locals</b> | <b>Average % other UK</b> | <b>Average % overseas</b> |
|--------------------------------|---------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Historic property              | 10*           | 51.7%                   | 34.7%                     | 13.6%                     |
| Museum or art gallery          | 31            | 55.9%                   | 35.6%                     | 8.5%                      |
| Industrial or craft attraction | 13            | 36.9%                   | 41.0%                     | 14.4%                     |
| Country park/garden            | 23            | 54.9%                   | 39.4%                     | 5.7%                      |
| Railway or tramway             | 8*            | 24.5%                   | 66.3%                     | 9.2%                      |
| <b>Total</b>                   | <b>85</b>     | <b>49.7%</b>            | <b>40.9%</b>              | <b>8.8%</b>               |

Source: Visits to Tourist Attractions in Wales 2010, for Visit Wales, Beaufort Research  
\* caution: low base

Local/Welsh visitors make up the greatest proportion of visitors to Welsh *museums/art galleries and country parks/ gardens* where they account for around 56% of the visitors. This can be compared to *railways and tramways* where they account for just a quarter (25%) of visitors. Industrial and heritage sites fall between these two.

Overseas visitors are in their highest proportions in *industrial or craft attractions* (where they account for just over 14% of visitors) and *historic properties* (almost 14%).

Another specific sector is educational/school trips. In 2010 school visits to Welsh attractions accounted for a fairly small overall national share of visits amongst the attractions responding to the survey. *Industrial and craft attractions* reported the highest proportions of school visits (6.5%) compared to *country park, garden, other natural attractions* (2.2%).

A mid point of around 4% could be used for planning purposes. **However**, when specific sites across England and Wales are looked at the importance of school, educational, Cubs, Guides etc type bookings can become extremely important. The example sites below range from 16% to 57% of all trips coming from schools. These sites have been considered because they are open air museum, heritage living history or archaeological based sites.

**Table 5: School Visits as Proportion of Attraction Visitor Numbers**

| <b>Examples of School Visits as Proportion of Attraction Visits (as published 2010/2009)</b> |                   |                |                  |
|--|-------------------|----------------|------------------|
|  | <b>All visits</b> | <b>Schools</b> | <b>Schools %</b> |
| Beamish Open Air Museum, Co Durham   | 320,000           | 50,000         | 16%              |
| Black Country Living Museum, Dudley  | 250,000           | 80,000         | 32%              |
| Bede's World and Anglo Saxon Farm, near Sunderland   | 44,000 (2008-9)   | 25,000         | 57%              |
| Castell Henllys, Pembrokeshire   | 29,484            | 7,000          | 24%              |

Source: Visits to Tourist Attractions in England and Wales 2010, for Visit England and Visit Wales, A Meredith Associates

#### 406 Potential Audiences

The main markets for Wrexham County Borough identified in the Destination Management Plan are set out below:

**Table 6: Key Wrexham Market Segments**

| <b>Segment</b>                               | <b>Importance to Wrexham CBC (out of 5)</b> |
|--|---|
| Visit Friends and Relatives/ personal events | 5   |
| Business                                     | 4   |
| Day visitors : Attraction visitors           | 4   |
| Short breaks/holiday : Personal explorer     | 3   |
| Day visitors: Shoppers                       | 3   |
| Short breaks/holiday : Caravanners           | 3   |
| Short breaks/holiday : Boaters               | 2   |
| Day visitors: Group visits                   | 2   |
| Day visitors : Activities                    | 1.5   |
| Short breaks/holiday : Active explorers      | 1   |

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Clearly, from the perspective of Brymbo Heritage Area, the site has appeal to the leading local market segments ie. visit friends and relatives, day visitors, attraction visitors, short breaks/holiday and personal explorer.

Specific market insight can be gleaned from the Cadw '*Wales – the First Industrial Nation*' Interpretation Plan by Touchstone Heritage Management Consultants (2011). In this, research carried out by the North Wales Tourism Partnership, found that:

- \* 29% of tourists visited North Wales for a specific cultural activity and are the '*pure cultural tourists*'. They are well prepared, they will have read information before their visit and know what they are coming for. They will visit specific sites or attractions for a purpose and will be focused in their visit itinerary. They visit for cultural enlightenment as well as for entertainment. They tend to be older adults only
- \* 70% of tourists are '*casual cultural tourists*' or '*accidental cultural tourists*'. For casual cultural tourists the cultural context is important but so are other non-cultural factors. The destinations must have a variety of opportunities for activity and must include some shopping. Their purpose for visiting is for general interest with some cultural activity included. They are generally adults only or with older children
- \* these '*accidental cultural tourists*' pay little attention to specific cultural aspects before deciding where to go but are still interested in visiting a cultural site if it is within the area of their general visit. They will not have researched much before their visit and are happy to pick up information on the way that may encourage them to visit other attractions. They tend to be adults-only groups or families with older children
- \* the largest group of 'cultural' tourists are adults travelling as couples or in groups. They are mostly aged 35+ with or without children and in social groups A, B and C1
- \* the proportion of day visitors is high at industrial attractions which, again, reflects the provenance of the visitors. Recent work undertaken by Beaufort Research for Cadw bears that out. At Blaenavon Ironworks 61% of visitors are day visitors (the highest at all the Cadw sites surveyed) and it also has a significantly higher proportion of Welsh visitors. It seems that sites such as Blaenavon also appeal to a wider demographic range with 9% more visitors from the DE socio-economic bracket than at any other Cadw site
- \* the research also suggests, however, that industrial sites tend to appeal to couples rather than families. This balance may well be readdressed by injecting more 'people stories' in to how these sites are presented.

The markets for Wales as the '*First Industrial Nation*' are varied but include:

- \* the independently-minded family, attracted to Wales (or to parts of Wales away from home), at least partly by its scenery and with at most a passing interest in, and knowledge of, the industrial story of Wales
- \* adult visitors and residents with at most a passing interest in, and knowledge of, the industrial story of Wales
- \* visitors with a special interest in the industrial story of Wales
- \* local people with an interest in the industrial story of Wales/ aspects of the story which are relevant, or personal, to them (again across the socio-economic spectrum)
- \* visitors with family/friends in Wales and who, therefore, have an interest in aspects of the industrial story relevant to their hosts or personal family history

- 
- \* educational groups, from primary to University and the Third Age, as well as informal groups such as Scouts and Brownies

All this contextual research – at both the local, regional and national levels - into general tourism visiting, and more niche industrial heritage market segments, is extremely valuable to a better understanding of the potential opportunities for Brymbo Heritage Area. Without doubt the special nature of the Ironworks and Fossil Forest can draw those with particular interests. However, the site will be perceived as lying off the beaten track, so will have to become an integral part of the Wrexham/ Flintshire visitor experience in North East Wales if any substantial numbers of visitors are to be attracted.

The profile of Flintshire's visitors (in Flintshire Tourism Strategy) is summarised as:

- \* the average age profile of visitors to Flintshire is older than visitors to Wales as a whole. 37% were in the 35-54 age group and 55% were aged 55 plus. This group is expected to increase significantly in the future
- \* the proportion of visitors falling within ABC1 socio-economic grouping was 61% representing a preponderance of those with the highest potential spend and also the highest expectations
- \* the biggest single group of visitors to Flintshire (54%) are '*Empty Nesters*'. These are predominantly middle class, over 45 years old who are living with their partners, married, divorced, separated or widowed and without children in their household. This may be considered the key market for Flintshire as a region and represents one that traditionally has a good level of disposable income
- \* the other important market segment are '*Families*' (21%). These are mainly visitors who are married, or living with a partner, and have children under 16 years old in their household. The needs of this group are obviously very different from those above
- \* the main market for Flintshire is domestic tourism, in particular from the neighbouring areas such as North West England, the West Midlands and North Wales itself, especially day visitors. The large amount of visitors from regions in the vicinity leads to a high proportion being day visitors
- \* the most popular type of holiday trips were short breaks taken in the main by the '*Empty Nesters*' group. Smaller proportions of holiday makers were on their main holiday, or second holiday, and these were more likely to be family groups
- \* the average length of stay, in total, was just under seven nights : slightly less than the average for visitors to the whole of Wales
- \* using a private car was by far the most common means of transport (88%)
- \* almost half of the visitors stayed in commercial accommodation establishments such as hotels, B&B's and guest houses. Over a quarter of holiday visitors spent time utilising static and touring caravans, motor homes and tents
- \* the most common activities undertaken were general sightseeing and touring, shopping, relaxing in general and visits to the beach / seaside. Some pursuits were mentioned such as hill walking, rambling and walking
- \* reflecting the high levels of visitor satisfaction, 77% stated that they were likely to recommend the area to friends and relatives.

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## 407 Best Practice/Lessons To Be Learned From Precedent Sites

We have looked briefly at a number of UK industrial heritage attractions in order that lessons learned can be shared with BHG. We consider:

- \* the differing scales of the sites and heritage developments
- \* how they are located in differing types of visitor destinations
- \* what developmental, or operational, aspects can we share insight from
- \* methods of operation
- \* the range of approach to encouraging repeat visits and the 'animation' of the sites.

### **Amlwch Industrial Heritage Trust**

- \* Copper Mountain and port in very deprived community in North East Anglesey
- \* Trust operating for 15 years : incremental approach to funding and development
- \* modest facilities : established visitor centre in port plus trail around Mountain and underground visits (by arrangement)
- \* established Vision, Master Plan and Business Plan
- \* recently secured £1m funding to develop enhanced visitor facilities, with mix of HLF, European and others ...visitor numbers still in 15-20,000 range

### **Magna (Rotherham)**

- \* this science discovery centre/heritage attraction is in a different league in relation to its scale : demonstrates what can be achieved with vision and creativity for an exciting reuse of spaces
- \* Millennium Commission project : £46 million redevelopment of the Templeborough Steelworks with electric arc furnaces which was largest open-hearth melting shop in Europe
- \* four themed pavilions : air, earth, fire and water, which house over 100 interactive exhibits together with outdoor and water play areas. The centrepiece, Big Melt, uses stunning pyrotechnic and audio techniques to recreate steel-making
- \* whole site has attracted 300,000+ per annum at its peak although falling with economic downturn. The fall in visitor numbers, and corporate bookings, has led the Trust turning to Rotherham Borough Council for short term loans over the past 2 years (repaid) to ease cash flow
- \* a key lesson to learn is from its multi use approach to income generation including zip wire, conferencing, repeat family tickets and new small business incubator units now developed at the Fusion @ Magna Business Centre

### **Rhondda Heritage Park**

- \* local authority saved pit from destruction and created a local authority managed attraction

- 
- \* developed as surface visitor attraction with headframe and range of surface buildings with WDA/EU funding as part of community regeneration in really deprived community
  - \* second phase was £2m underground attraction (creating a walk to the coalface) to enhance/diversify the site and maintain visitor numbers
  - \* use former miners as tour guides to tell their story
  - \* visitor numbers reached 50,000 but have stabilised at around 30,000-40,000 yet still surviving and has boosted its local family play area and kids activity role to generate footfall and sustain visitor numbers

### **Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust**

- \* established as an educational charity and independent museum trust in 1967 with financial and strategic support from the Telford Development Corporation. Sir Neil Cossons was the first Director of the Museum.
- \* sits in beautiful World Heritage Site river/gorge/highly wooded environment which is a pleasant destination in own right even if you do not visit a museum
- \* Museum Trust responsible for huge estate and has developed ten attractions and Annual Passport Ticket scheme
- \* large open air museum focused on Blists Hill Victorian Town. Other sites have a strong Wilkinson connection : most obviously the Museum of Iron at Coalbrookdale
- \* diversified the product : Ironbridge Institute in partnership with the University of Birmingham. It owns two Youth Hostels operated in partnership with YHA. Has created *Enginuity* family focused hands-on design and technology attraction as an alternative to 'dry' industrial heritage
- \* has had ups and downs but has developed incrementally. It is run as highly successful business attracting c.1m visitors to Gorge (and wider World Heritage Site) and over 550,000 to the 10 museum sites per annum

### **Blaenavon Ironworks**

- \* in guardianship with Cadw : hence receives central state funding support and marketing
- \* the raison d'être of Blaenavon Industrial Landscape World Heritage Site and the town which is centrally located and forms part of a wider 'package' of industrial heritage sites to visit
- \* Big Pit coal museum part of National Museum Wales with free entry (attracts c.150,000 visitors) is close by
- \* ironworks has Wilkinson connection but only attracts 23,000 visitors per annum
- \* recent £1m investment in interpretation as part of EU Heritage Tourism Project

### **Black Country Living Museum**

- \* established in 1970s with major support from Black Country authorities and West Midlands County Council

- 
- \* Ian Walden Director and project champion (similar to Neil Cossons at Ironbridge) ran and developed the site incrementally over 30 years as a major open air industrial museum
  - \* attracted up to 300,000 visitors at its height but stabilised at around 200,000 – 250,000 pa
  - \* incremental development to diversify the experience : a major educational attraction (one third of visitors are school groups and supports National Curriculum topics)
  - \* linked to Dudley Limestone Caverns with canal trips run by separate Dudley Canal Trust : provides breadth of repeat activities

### **Greenfield Valley Holywell**

- \* large open air industrial heritage park developed by local authority in 1960s-1990s with network of industrial buildings and reservoirs down attractive valley augmented by St Winifred's Well and Basingwerk Abbey
- \* includes museum and farm park : essentially a heritage complex within country park
- \* always struggled for investment and operates as local level attraction c.15,000 visitors
- \* now managed by a Trust
- \* shop run by Trust (arguably with limited horizons and stock) with modest turnover
- \* café under new private management : high quality and more popular compared to previous Council operated facility

### **Kidwelly Industrial Museum**

- \* near Llanelli, which, at the end of the 19th Century was the tinplate manufacturing centre of the world giving the town the nickname of Tinopolis
- \* Trust was set up in 1980 by a small group of enthusiastic volunteers who wished to preserve for future generations the history of the hand mill method of making tinplate
- \* the Kidwelly Museum Trust runs the museum on a partnership basis with Carmarthenshire County Museum Services
- \* investment in interpretive exhibition and site works : fundamentally a low key free entry attraction with event days
- \* have made active use of funding bodies including Princes Trust, Prism Grant Fund, CyMAL (Council for Museums, Archives and Libraries Wales), County Council, etc

### **National Slate Museum Llanberis**

- \* as part of the National Museum of Wales the site receives state funding and is free entry
- \* workshops and buildings are designed as though quarrymen and engineers have just put down their tools and left for home giving a real feel for atmosphere of the site
- \* an array of talks and demonstrations including slate-splitting provide engaging insight into quarry life (more so than just passive exhibitions)

- 
- \* the benefit of a recent £1.6 million Heritage Lottery Fund grant has widened the accessibility and interest at the site
  - \* entrance into the site is through the well-stocked shop and there is a good quality café
  - \* additional privately run shops and businesses in car park area
  - \* it does not stand alone : fundamental part of Llanberis as a visitor destination and offers the visitor a broader day out experience than just industrial heritage with links to the richly wooded lakeside landscape of the Padarn Country Park

### **Cromford Mills**

- \* an outstanding Grade I Listed complex of mills developed by Sir Richard Arkwright from 1771
- \* Arkwright developed technology that changed the world we live in by creating the modern factory system
- \* the icon of the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site
- \* acquired by the Arkwright Society in 1979 who have lovingly and sensitively sought to restore the complex which includes 80,000 sqft of usable space : to date only 40% restored
- \* recently obtained over £4m (from HLF and ERDF) to restore Building 17 with the ground floor comprising a Gateway Centre for the World Heritage Site plus some 50no. managed workspace units on the upper four floors which will provide upto 100 FTE jobs
- \* Master Plan for site prepared which envisages another £40m (excluding VAT) is required to fully complete the site
- \* this includes Building 18, the first mill built by Sir Richard Arkwright, which will house a world class multi media museum on the life and legacy of Arkwright and as a Youth Hostel (to go into the upper floors of Buildings 14, 15 and 16)
- \* site currently attracts 100,000 visits and generates its income from retail, catering, conferences, meetings, training, events and activities and rents from 25 tenants using space in the complex.

### **Wadsley Fossil Forest, Middlewood Rotherham**

- \* large collection of in situ trees : designated Site of Special Scientific Interest
- \* former hospital site, protected since discovered in Victorian times, when some shed/huts built over the exposed trees
- \* now soil covered over, fenced off green space adjacent to housing development
- \* the palaeontology has been recorded : some samples in Sheffield Museum

### **Glasgow Fossil Grove Victoria Park**

- \* Fossil Grove is in Victoria Park to the west of the city : discovered in Victorian times as part of park creation at a quarry site

- 
- \* 11 fossil tree stumps, some of them up to 90 centimetres high, preserved in the position in which they once grew. A fallen trunk, about eight metres long and other smaller fragments of branch and root, have also survived. None of them are as impressive as those discovered at Brymbo.
  - \* a small covered 'museum' building protects the site and provides secure access. A viewing balcony overlooks the fossils and small displays provide information and interpret the site for visitors. Visitor numbers and education use is unknown
  - \* the entire collection, cared for by Glasgow Museums, is a Recognised Collection of National Significance to Scotland

There are also International examples of Fossil Forests:

- \* Lesvos Fossilised Forest (A Tertiary age forest on the Island of Lesvos, a Greek island), a European and Global Geopark which includes a 16,000m<sup>2</sup> museum
- \* La Foret Fossile Champclauson in southern France [www.foretfossile.fr](http://www.foretfossile.fr), which is suffering greatly through vandalism
- \* Joggins Fossil Cliffs, a World Heritage Site in Nova Scotia, complements Brymbo, showing the world's most complete fossil record of life in the coal ages. Cardiff University students occasionally visit the site as part of an overseas geology field excursion. The site is coastal and unreliable and not as impressive as Brymbo.

#### **408 So What Does This Tell Us?**

- \* projects like this take a long time to create...usually 10 years plus with large complex projects such as this
- \* they need a clear vision, Master Plan and Business Plan to provide the strategic context and confidence about overall viability
- \* they need a Project Champion with vision, drive and charisma to drive them forward
- \* most are independent charitable trusts but have local authority support in various ways...may have long lease arrangements from site owners and this is required to achieve some funders support, eg Heritage Lottery Fund looks for at least 25 year lease
- \* funders usually need the land ownership sorted out before they are prepared to get involved...here we still have a private developer/owner...crucial that the land ownership is resolved as soon as possible
- \* a charitable trust is in a much better position to source funding and take a project like this forward (less bureaucracy yet with access to public sector funding, charitable grant giving trusts and corporate giving)... a plural funding approach which is a pre-requisite in this instance
- \* all Trusts tend to be dedicated to the project...not general Community Trusts
- \* essential to have a strong business ethic with business skills incorporated within the team...many have had to change over the years (even the biggest and best!) to ensure sustainability and longevity Ironbridge Gorge, Mary Rose Trust
- \* essential to have diverse income streams...ability to obtain income from other businesses ( managed workspace, community use, weddings, functions and events) is crucial

- 
- \* exciting and innovative interpretation is crucial and needs to be regularly refreshed and reinvigorated
  - \* the role of volunteers is crucial in the majority of heritage sites: Brymbo already has a small core team of volunteers.
  - \* heritage audiences are inevitably narrow...need to widen the audience base by such things as children's play and events and to generate reasons for repeat visits and spend
  - \* all projects constantly reinvest (just like a new ride at Alton Towers) to maintain visitor interest...this needs on-going grant support and is a constant challenge
  - \* long term structural maintenance is crucial to ensure the built fabric does not deteriorate...the business needs to establish a 'sinking fund' to ensure this does not happen
  - \* there is a real opportunity to develop links with the other fossil forests world wide with opportunities for research, educational studies, exchange visits etc.

Some of the case study attractions, as well as the larger Open Air Museums (Beamish, Black Country Living Museum, St Fagans Museum of Welsh History, Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust etc), have extraordinary appeal as educational sites with between 20-55% of attendance coming from formal and informal learners, school groups, scout groups etc.

There is a strong visitor appeal if a site can provide a quality and distinctive participatory learning programme of activities and living history including animated events that brings the subject and period to life to the broadest audience. These two facets – education and events – are key to how the Brymbo Heritage Project must develop as an attraction with the life, vitality and uniqueness that is arguably missing at many traditional heritage attractions and which will provide a point of difference for the visitor in choosing where to go for their day out.

The value of 'friends' and volunteers who can contribute time undertaking tasks around the site, assist with fundraising and provide additional visitor services will be essential to make the project sustainable and reduce some of the revenue burden of high staff levels. Introducing costumed interpreters and some re-enactment adds another dimension to the project.

## 409 Conclusion

In this section we have considered the tourism potential and reviewed the lessons to be learnt from other attractions. We now move on to consider **feedback from our key consultations and the issues arising.**

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**AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE HERITAGE AREA (2)**



**Heritage Area from south east**



**Heritage Area with Brymbo village to rear and location of Fossil Forest in middle bottom of photograph**

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## 5. KEY CONSULTATION FEEDBACK AND ISSUES ARISING

### 501 Key Consultation Feedback and Issues Arising

We have spoken to a wide range of people representing national and local elected members and organisations as well as several national agencies that have key opinions to offer in terms of the man-made and natural heritage of the site. We have sought to draw the key points from our discussions into a series of **themes** as follows:

### 502 Significance of the site

There are some conflicting views on the exact phased development of Brymbo Ironworks and Steelworks and we do not seek to present a definitive history here. However, in our opinion, informed by the experts, several key factors of significance stand out:

- \* the ironworks complex of buildings c.1796 developed by John Wilkinson (a significant figure in the Industrial Revolution) coupled with the extent of the Fossil Forest makes the site extremely important (probably of national and international importance)
- \* however, Wilkinson does not appear to have the recognition he deserves : new book published *John Wilkinson : King of the Ironmasters* ISBN 978-0-7524-6481-7. Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust are planning major exhibition on the story of iron in 2014 which will draw out Wilkinson's role in the Industrial Revolution
- \* Brymbo is only briefly identified in Cadw Interpretive Plan Wales: '*First Industrial Nation*', does not appear to be high on Cadw's priorities and is not identified as a priority regeneration area. It is important to fully understand why this is bearing in mind the importance of John Wilkinson and to counter the position if appropriate
- \* need to work with Robert Protheroe Jones (National Museum Wales) and Peter Wakelin (RCHBAMW)...and Steve Miller from Ironbridge who is a huge advocate for Wilkinson...to raise the image and profile of Wilkinson and Brymbo with the Heritage Minister (who has already visited), Assembly Members and others to secure money to save the complex from utter collapse...lobbying at the highest level will be crucial to securing funding over the next few months
- \* Wrexham County Borough Council, whilst supportive, do not own the site at Brymbo. The authority has a focus on partnership working with the organisations involved at the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal World Heritage Site. Pontcysyllte is a key priority as it can help to raise awareness of the Wrexham area as a high quality visitor destination and begin to change external perceptions of the area
- \* clearly the fossil forest, dating back 300 million years, is an exciting and unique feature which interests both CCW and NMW. The site owner, Brymbo Developments Limited (part of Parkhill Estates Limited), have agreed to allow part of existing fossil forest collection to be sent to Cardiff for research and conservation. NMW have prepared a Memorandum of Understanding which makes it clear that the collection (once conserved) can be displayed on permanent loan at Wrexham Museum or Brymbo if and when an acceptable level of security and appropriate environmental conditions for display can be created
- \* whilst all the national organisations are interested in the site, and accept its significance, all envisage Wrexham County Borough Council playing a supporting role, working in partnership with the local group, in raising the money, restoring the site and in its subsequent management. In other situations WCBC would hold the freehold of the land, act as the 'responsible body' in the restoration and give the local group a long lease (say 99 years) once the site has been restored. In the very short term Cadw would ideally like WCBC to oversee the application to Cadw for a grant towards the cost of commissioning a Condition Survey and ensuring it is carried out appropriately. Clearly this is a potential problem (and barrier to progress) if WCBC:

- 
- (a) do not see Brymbo as a priority (with the World Heritage Site etc)
  - (b) do not have the staff resources to give to the project
  - (c) do not have any financial resources to 'oil the wheels'

### 503 Current Condition

- \* the three key buildings (Scheduled Ancient Monument) give rise to serious concern...they are in varying stages of decay...the foundry and pattern shop are particularly worrying and deteriorating fast (increasing speed of decay over last 2-3 years) : the agent's house (listed building) is also in very poor condition... nothing has happened for 10 years
- \* estimates of the cost of emergency costs (prepared by OPUS for Cadw in 2010) suggest they may be at least £350,000 although this figure is likely to have increased substantially over the past 2 years. Cadw feel this is beyond their annual emergency works budget without financial support from others. HLF do not support emergency works. BDL say they have no money until planning permission for 'enabling development' is approved (maybe Spring 2013) which will allow the spine road to be built and thereby unlock development sites which **could** release money for emergency works...however, in reality this could be 3-5 years away... whilst all the time the key historic buildings continue to decay... BDL prepared to transfer site to appropriate body (and to allow grant applications to be made to enable a Condition Survey to be undertaken) but probably need high level intervention (at Ministerial level) to secure the funding required to save the buildings
- \* crucial to raise the profile of the site and its plight...potentially use AMs to access Heritage Minister and to lobby Cadw and NMW to raise money necessary for essential emergency works to make complex wind and weather tight pending major funding...is there a case to suggest that the site be transferred to Cadw and/or NMW for long term operational management? Neither have taken over a site like this for many years
- \* Steve Miller (Chief Executive Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust) has offered his support, advice, mentoring and influence to save the complex free gratis...this should be taken up at the earliest opportunity
- \* is there a case to invite the Princes Regeneration Trust to get involved in the restoration and creative reuse of the complex?...this could also bring HRH Prince Charles to the project.

### 504 Developer (BDL)

- \* undertook comprehensive land reclamation of the steelworks site after closure including the extensive open space and woodland along New Road
- \* marketed over half the site and development taken place...very proactive in community consultation and involvement at that time
- \* original plans envisaged extensive redevelopment of the site for commercial uses generating new jobs and employment : but this did not happen, following the development of Wrexham Enterprise Park and changing needs for employment zones. Reverted instead to housing...and then economic downturn and resulting inertia for the last 5/6 years

- 
- \* keen to see the heritage area handed over to responsible body but no money to support emergency works
  - \* resubmitted planning application for next phase of development at the end November 2012... but even if approved (likely to be Spring 2013)... then s.106 agreement has to be drawn up, negotiated and signed, land needs to be marketed as developer plots and then development take place...funding for any aspect of heritage area still several years away unless 'pill' can be sweetened!
  - \* at present Brymbo Heritage Group have an informal agreement from the Directors of BDL to use the Machine Shop as their base and to carry out work on site. Colin Davis, a member of the Group and former employee of the Steel Works, is an employee of BDL employed to manage the site on a day to day basis
  - \* key funders would like to see BDL proactive to ensure the future of the Heritage Area. Whilst they attend project meetings (and have agreed to allow the Condition Survey to be undertaken) they are reluctant to make any financial contribution
  - \* it is crucial that arrangements are made in relation to land ownership to satisfy potential funders. This may require Wrexham County Borough Council, or Brymbo Heritage Limited, to take a legal interest in the Heritage Area site (either the freehold or a long lease) to ensure the project is eligible for grant. This is a crucial issue that needs to be tackled over the next few months (and certainly in the Detailed Feasibility Study).

## 505 Taking The Project Forward

- \* of the utmost urgency are the emergency works to the key buildings but particularly the Pattern Shop and Foundry to arrest the serious deterioration
- \* of equal importance is the protection of the fossil forest until a permanent solution for its display and interpretation can be afforded
- \* the likely capital cost of the whole project (updating 2002 and 2006 building costs figures) is probably in the region of £20-25m and it is inevitable that the project will need to be phased...but in such a way that each phase is operationally sustainable and can achieve the objectives of the respective funders
- \* a key priority is to create a multi-use site which engages the community and can generate income every day of the year including managed workspace, an area for events etc
- \* it is important to build on the work of BHG over the past few years but increase the momentum and raise public awareness of the project locally and nationally...there are real opportunities to improve intellectual access by digitising the collections (photographs and documents), recording the memories of local people (oral history), developing educational resources and creating an app : building on the work and website of the BHG and the film created by Minimal Media. This could be done in partnership with Glyndwr University using an *Our Heritage* HLF grant...and done quickly if everyone agrees. Heritage Lottery Fund have indicated that they would be pleased to receive a bid and would encourage it as 'a first step on the ladder' with a view to building up to a larger bid in time
- \* need to structure the overall visitor experience and create a visitor 'hub' in one building rather than create various facilities (including new additional structures) which potentially add to the capital and revenue costs

- 
- \* the aspiration to create the overall attraction in 5 – 10 years is probably optimistic : the key is to arrest further deterioration and prepare a detailed Feasibility Study to provide the strategic context to allow a programme of phased funding bids to be prepared
  - \* the role of Wrexham County Borough Council is crucial. They have helped and supported Brymbo Heritage Group in a myriad of ways over the last eight years or so. Funders will have confidence if the Council continues to play a role
  - \* it has been suggested that the Prince's Regeneration Trust may be interested in being involved in the project. The Trust, which has a track record of heritage projects over 15 years, can operate in a variety of ways:
    - (a) offering support to community groups in developing a project eg. attending meetings, providing advice and mentoring and even writing specific reports where appropriate. This has been the case at Cardigan Castle where all their costs are absorbed by the Prince's Regeneration Trust
    - (b) buying sites and acting as property owners and project lead eg. Middleport Pottery Stoke on Trent. Here they have secured grants to restore the complex and envisage passing the site on to an appropriate organisation for the public benefit once the restoration is complete
    - (c) acting as project manager based on a fee as they did taking the Bletchley Park project from HLF Round 1 to final approval and then implementation.

There would be value in speaking to the Trust (Conservation Officer Edward Holland [Edward.Holland@princes-regeneration.org](mailto:Edward.Holland@princes-regeneration.org)) to assess whether they could assist the project in any way.

## 506 Learning Opportunities

*'I think the site has great educational potential across the age range.'*

**Paul Nolan Humanities Advisor, North Wales**

He recommends contacting the RCAHMW Education Officer

### Curriculum Cymreig

Any studies of the local area and how it has changed are particularly relevant for this cross-curricular theme.

*'Learners aged 7–14 should be given opportunities to develop and apply their knowledge and understanding of the cultural, economic, environmental, historical and linguistic characteristics of Wales. Learners aged 14–19 should have opportunities for active engagement in understanding the political, social, economic and cultural aspects of Wales as part of the world as a whole.'*

- \* a site visit to Brymbo would be particularly relevant for KS2 pupils:
  - (a) History (looking at changes to people's lives in the locality)
  - (b) Geography (looking at how and why places and environments change)
  - (c) Science (looking at rocks, fossil forest)
- \* KS3 pupils are less likely to visit due to curriculum constraints but staff would value educational materials related to Brymbo (encouraged to study subjects within the local context) especially for KS3 pupils studying the Industrial Revolution

- 
- \* the bulk of the existing educational sources focus on South Wales coal mines and industry so materials that focus on the industrial development of North Wales would be particularly welcome
  - \* Brymbo Heritage Group have already created a valuable archive and begun to gather oral histories. This is a useful base on which to build. There is enormous educational potential in documenting community life, and how it has changed, and to look at the impact of Brymbo Steel Works, and its subsequent closure, on the surrounding community
  - \* maybe there is potential for groups being shown round the steelworks site by former steelworkers?
  - \* North Wales Miners Association have funding for a mobile classroom (former library vehicle): this could potentially include information on Brymbo?

### **The Welsh Baccalaureate**

This relatively new scheme of work gives great opportunities for older secondary school pupils to get involved at Brymbo in a more lasting way. Many local secondary schools already offer it to both GCSE and A level age groups and others are likely to be developing programmes.

The Welsh Baccalaureate offers significant volunteering opportunities... each student at the higher level has to undertake 30 hours volunteering so there is great potential for developing an ongoing programme of volunteering, assisting with the digitisation of records, practical scrub clearance, ecological recording etc

### **Higher Education**

Glyndwr University have shown interest in developing a partnership involving both teaching and research. Yale College may also be interested.

Minimal Media, graduates from Glyndwr, have recently produced a short film about the plight of the Brymbo Heritage Area as part of the awareness raising process. There is great potential for involving them both in the development of learning materials and interpretation in the short term and in the development and management of the site in the longer term.

There are several examples of similar partnership projects involving academic institutions and heritage sites eg. the ongoing programme to restore, interpret and develop Hafod Copperworks site in Swansea where Swansea University are working in partnership with the local authority and the British Steel Archive Project in the North East of England which is a partnership between Teeside University and Durham County Archives.

The restoration of the buildings could include the design and development of managed workspace for creative industries for graduates.

### **But...important to recognise that although education and learning are critical to any funding application to the Heritage Lottery Fund (amongst others):**

- \* education is unlikely to be a key source of income
- \* there is lots of competition as there are already numerous education providers in the Wrexham area WCBC Museum Service, WCBC Countryside Service, Groundwork Trust, North Wales Miners Association
- \* there are opportunities for joint working, especially with North Wales Miners and using the expertise of WCBC Education Officers

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## 507 Staffing, Management And Governance

- \* it is crucial that the project aspires to be of the highest quality
- \* customer care is key...in Trustees, staff and volunteers
- \* a not for profit company with charitable status is the most appropriate model to go forward
- \* it should be a Trust dedicated to the delivery of the project
- \* if considered appropriate the Brymbo Heritage Group should strengthen its membership, build its capacity and seek to be the Trust to take the project forward.
- \* there is already a lot of work to do (which will only grow) and there is a strong case to seek funding for a Project Officer to support, guide and strengthen BHG. This should be seen as a priority.

## 508 Where Is The Money Coming From?

- \* the heritage significance of the site is so great that the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) is an obvious, and high priority, source of funding. HLF applications for less than £2 million match are decided by the Wales Committee in Cardiff. Bids over and above £2million are considered outside the Wales Committee, and in competition with UK-wide schemes, making any application even more widely competitive
- \* it is likely that the maximum HLF grant would be £4-5m but that is only achievable with a high quality visitor experience and a strong emphasis on '*people*', '*heritage*' and '*communities*'...the new HLF outcomes... and, above all, can prove to be viable and sustainable
- \* if the project creates managed workspace for creative industries or similar (potential link with Glyndŵr University) then there is potential EU funding under the next EU programme post 2014 (and it is quite possible for the Trust to apply for it)
- \* other funding sources are available in relation to (a) regeneration (b) community (c) learning and training (d) natural heritage and this could include Countryside Council for Wales (or the successor body), Welsh Government programmes, RDP, Community Facilities Activities Programme, Communities First etc.
- \* corporate giving by major businesses in the region through sponsorship and social programmes eg. Tata Steel, Airbus, Sharp Industries etc should be investigated
- \* there are a number of smaller funders that may be relevant for different elements eg Environment Wales give funding for feasibility studies, staffing and project management. WREN give grants for environmental improvements and public access work. Esmee Fairburn Trust will fund innovative, sustainable projects and also support educational initiatives. The Ingenious Grant from the Royal Academy of Engineering may support educational projects that interpret engineering eg working machinery, hands on models. The Association for Industrial Archaeology give small restoration grants (£2-£15K towards projects). The Charles Hayward Foundation have a particular interest in industrial heritage and have suggested that Brymbo may be a project they would be prepared to support. We include a longer list of potential funders in Appendix D.

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## 509 Destination Brymbo?

For the heritage site to be successful there needs to be more than just a stand alone heritage 'experience'. The village location, not on any main traffic route or public circulation should ideally offer more for the casual visitor to see and do including walking, refreshments, activities, other heritage/cultural places to see etc:

- \* how do we create a memorable visitor experience?
- \* what do visitors want from a visit to Brymbo?
- \* does the site focus on the Ironworks and the fossil forest or also include the ecological zone of the valley and coal mining?
- \* how do we widen the visitor profile through children's interactive play, 'train' ride, the valley landscape, the introduction of sculpture
- \* can the woodland valley side along New Road become part of a joint environmental : heritage 'country park' linked as an attraction?
- \* but each additional element has a management implication... can only be achieved incrementally.

## 510 Can The Project Achieve Realistic Visitor Numbers?

- \* visitor numbers...and visitor spend are crucial to overall viability
- \* the site is a 'little off the beaten track' and Wrexham is currently not perceived as a strong visitor destination (although the National Trust sites at Chirk Castle and Erdigg achieve over 120,000 visitors per annum) and the World Heritage Site offers enormous potential
- \* Bersham and Wrexham Museums, with Council funds and promotion, remain modest in visitor numbers although since Wrexham Museum reopened in 2011 visitor numbers have increased to 35,000 per annum and are expected to increase still further over the next two years to 50,000 per annum. These sites are in more accessible locations than Brymbo
- \* major focus on tourism through Destination Management Plan with World Heritage Site

## 511 Can The Project Attract Sufficient Partnership Funding?

- \* this could be a real challenge but a phased approach (once land ownership is resolved) would be achievable
- \* Glyndŵr University could become a key partner and further discussions and negotiations will be crucial
- \* the key is to match heritage with economic regeneration, training and jobs, community regeneration, volunteering and providing something special (almost spectacular) with the fossil forest... the geodetic dome offers this
- \* linkages with other organisations could ensure the long term sustainability of the valley eg. North East Wales Wildlife Trust or Groundwork North East Wales could help ensure the valley is managed in the short term (and potentially funded).

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## **512 Generating Sufficient Volunteers**

- \* volunteers already are, but will continue to be, key to the success of the project
- \* heritage projects are an attractive proposition for volunteers : but needs the growth of a new generation of local active volunteers to boost the team (succession planning is crucial). This is something Heritage Lottery Fund would support
- \* there is enormous potential to offer a wide range of volunteering opportunities research, guiding, site interpreters, wardens, oral history, events planning and management, retail, catering, administration, conservation management etc
- \* this would need to be linked with training (with the opportunity for accreditation)
- \* potential for involving secondary pupils through the Welsh Baccalaureate and Glyndŵr University students seeking work placements and volunteering opportunities
- \* volunteers need managing and a Volunteer Coordinator would be crucial... this could also be supported in the short term by the Heritage Lottery Fund.

## **513 Sorting Out The Land Ownership**

- \* critical for any grant related to the buildings or the landscape : a lease of at least 25 years will be required by the Heritage Lottery Fund
- \* it is understood the owners (BDL) are prepared to transfer the land to an appropriate body but a key issue for everything is the construction of the spine road although acceptable arrangements for short term use of the site maybe necessary to ensure the survival of the buildings
- \* however, transfer of the land brings issues of public liability insurance, responsibilities for the care of the buildings etc. It is usual for sites like this to be vested in a local authority who become the 'responsible body' for grants with a long lease granted to a company limited by guarantee with charitable status to take on the ongoing management and operation of the site once restored. There is no reason why the land could not be vested in the charitable company but, from experience, funders like to see the strength of local authorities behind larger projects like this. This issue needs to be addressed as part of the detailed Feasibility Study.

## **514 Achieving Effective Management**

- \* the key to success
- \* a combination of permanent staff and volunteers managed by Trustees
- \* ensuring integrated management in relation to all parts of the site including the valley
- \* who takes the project forward to achieve effective management needs careful consideration. BHG are current 'custodians' and have the passion, background and commitment but arguably need to be strengthened and embrace 'succession planning' in order to 'bring in' younger people with a range of business skills dependant on the nature of the overall project including managed workspace etc. This will need to be considered in more detail as part of a detailed Feasibility Study (see Section 7 below).

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## 515 Opportunity To Establish A Collection

- \* collections can include archives, images and artefacts
- \* need to digitise the existing documents
- \* potential to create a museum as part of the project that seeks accreditation...the support of CyMAL is key.
- \* CyMAL support is dependent on close working with WCBC Museums Service. They also have small funding pots but are only open to an accredited museum ie. WCBC
- \* the Arnold Palmer Centre, the Wrexham County Archives, should also be involved
- \* WCBC Museums have relevant collections which they would be willing to loan for display on the site subject to meeting the usual Museum standards
- \* the fossil collection, once the high quality and representative objects are conserved, catalogued and better understood through National Museum Wales, could be displayed as a temporary measure, in Wrexham County Museum. A Memorandum of Understanding between the National Museum Wales (which already has a loans/display arrangement with the County Museum), Brymbo Developments Ltd and Brymbo Heritage Group has been prepared which will ensure the collection, which comes from Brymbo, can be presented in Wrexham or Brymbo in the future
- \* Wrexham Museum will be showing the '*Trapped in Time*' exhibition from the Grosvenor Museum, Chester, opening late April 2013, which contains material from Brymbo Fossil Forest (the second time material from the site has been exhibited in the Museum)
- \* however, for any collections to return to Brymbo there needs to be a display space designed to national standards of environmental and security control. Collections bring a management responsibility : this needs to be considered in detail in a detailed Feasibility Study.

## 516 Overarching Need For A Project Champion

- \* the project needs a Project Champion with the vision, knowledge, understanding, drive and charisma who can have a high profile in raising awareness and support... BHG has successfully 'recruited' Professor Barry Thomas, with his academic profile and wide range of contacts nationally and internationally, to take this role on
- \* however, it is important that the role encompasses all aspects of the project : natural heritage, industrial heritage, community engagement, learning, partnership building and fundraising
- \* pushing the industrial, geological, social and community aspects of the site, as well as being advocate to raise external awareness and lobby is crucial at this stage of the project
- \* the champion needs to be backed up by strong business management.

## 517 Creating A Viable Business

- \* the bottom line is that the project must be viable

- 
- \* many heritage sites have failed, or had to change, because they have not placed sufficient emphasis on running the business (even the most successful!)
  - \* heritage rarely, in itself, pays without secondary income including retail and catering, meetings and conferences, workspace, events and functions (even weddings), leisure learning, film, television and photographic shoot fees, community use etc
  - \* commercial income from managed wet and dry managed workspace for creative industries (potentially linked to course development at Glyndwr University) has real potential and provides another reason for visitors to come all year round.

## 518 Summary Thoughts

These factors all indicate there is a clear need to balance the aspirations of the Brymbo Heritage Group, both short and long term) with the practical realities of what is needed to safeguard the heritage assets and breathe new life back into the site. What is required is enormous in magnitude and the obstacles to overcome are complex and depend heavily upon factors that the Brymbo Heritage Group has limited direct ability to manage including significant fundraising, creating a sustainable long term solution and ensuring financial viability through operating multiple activities and income streams.

At present, however, there is no overarching, and agreed, vision and no detailed Feasibility Study, Master Plan and Business Plan. This is essential in order to make an application to the primary funder... the Heritage Lottery Fund. It needs to look at:

- \* the disposition of uses across the site
- \* the key elements of risk
- \* land ownership (to ensure the project is eligible for grant)
- \* the capital cost, phasing and sources of funding
- \* the revenue implications of each phase (by means of a 5 year Profit and Loss Projection)
- \* governance, staffing and management.

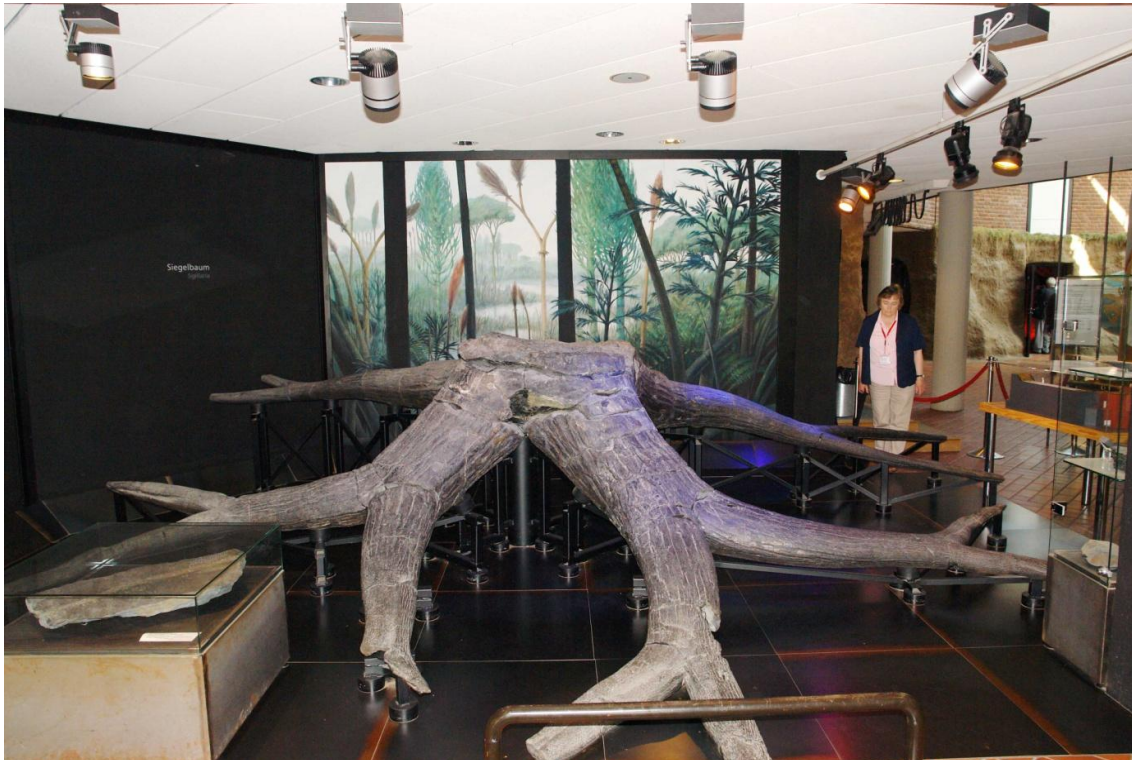
It will need to cover all the key issues identified above and provide a clear way forward. Whilst it is crucial to arrest further deterioration (although it is recognised that this could take several years to achieve) there is also a need to move forward. We believe this is the most appropriate way to do so. This approach was proposed several years ago and discussions were held with Heritage Lottery Fund. At that time we understand that it was not possible to progress because of land ownership issues. We hope arrangements can be made this time to allow funding applications to be made, and works to be carried out, to ensure this important complex can be secured for future generations to enjoy.

## 519 Conclusion

In this section we have considered the findings of our consultations and identified the key issues. We now move on to consider the **potential scale of development** and consider the **overall viability** of the project.

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**SPECIMENS EXTRACTED FROM OTHER FOSSIL FORESTS**



**Stigmaria root system on display in centre in Osnabruck, Northern Germany**



**Stigmaria root system excavated from a quarry in Clayton near Bradford (1886)  
on display in Manchester Museum**

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## 6. POTENTIAL SCALE OF DEVELOPMENT

### 601 Introduction

In this section we consider potential visitor numbers based on a variety of scenarios, who the visitors are likely to be, the likely cost of the development and whether or not the site can be viable.

### 602 Potential Site Audiences : Core 'Users or visitors' and reasons for visiting:

The attraction and its components of industrial heritage, geological heritage, ecological area/country park and associated facilities including café/restaurant and meeting facilities will attract a range of audiences including:

|                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| Educational : formal   | Schools from county and North East Wales. Glyndwr University/ Yale College etc, and some educational groups from North Wales/ North West England   |
| Educational : informal | Scout/ Guide/ Boys Brigade / University of the 3 <sup>rd</sup> Age, etc  |
| Special interest       | Academic and subject interest : industrial heritage, palaeobotany, ecology, etc  |
| Local community        | Wrexham/Flintshire communities / former Steel workers  |
| Day visitors           | Generally up to an hour travel distance although realistically under 45 minutes unless the attraction is a major 'must see' draw. Referral/ links with other local heritage, especially Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal World Heritage Site will strengthen the visitor numbers  |
| Casual tourists        | Staying in the local, or broad surrounding area, or passing through en route to another destination. May be using commercial paid accommodation or with friends/relatives. Power of local recommendation will be important   |
| Friends catch up       | Users of a "destination café" : friends/family catching up using the quality café as the primary venue rather than the heritage attraction in its own right eg. Caffé Florence Loggerheads Country Park, Restaurant Mountain Centre Brecon Beacons National Park                 |
| Business               | Users attending business meetings on site/ Enterprise Centre/ nearby whose primary purpose is not to visit the heritage asset but who make a visit as a secondary activity because they are there  |
| Special Event          | To an extent these audiences fall across all the above groups. However, the driver of a visit is a special event or activity at Brymbo that makes it extra worth the effort to visit. This is using the heritage site as a venue for interesting, themed, visitor focused events |
| Corporate/event        | Attend an event/ special activity/ business, arts, charity fundraising led, product launch, etc that visit the site, or hire out a venue for a purpose, whereby the site is a venue for another purpose of visiting.   |

### 603 Potential Brymbo Heritage Site Components and Initial Visitor Estimates

In order to begin to develop a view as to the feasibility of a heritage attraction being operated in the future we need to build up a series of estimates of the potential scale of the operation. Without a clearly defined product, or accurate costings, the following has to be an initial

estimate taking into account many unknown factors about the site and its surroundings. Examples of potential visitor numbers, and range, are indicated below. They are dependent upon the scale of 'offer' provided to attract people to the site. In reality, the numbers depend entirely upon:

- \* the **phasing** of the heritage site buildings and the areas open to the public and the quality of the surrounding environment. It is undeveloped as at 2012, or an evolving building site, or, in the future, fully developed as a new homes, retail, school etc.
- \* the **scale** of development/investment in the historic component. This can vary from small scale 'patching up' with basic displays to major restoration of the whole site
- \* the level of **marketing and innovative promotion** of the site as a heritage attraction
- \* the **cost of entry** and associated perception of **value for money** which affects potential repeat visits.

**Table 8: Potential Phasing and Scale of Visitor Numbers**

| <b>Priority Phased Building Component</b>  | <b>Phase/ Timing</b>   | <b>Possible Annual Visitor Numbers</b> | <b>Issues</b>  |
|--|--|--|--|
| Increased presence on the site with HLF etc funded low key interpretation, trail leaflet, guided tours, download app, audio guide, etc using Machine Shop as focus of visitor activity | Immediate 2013/2014  | 3,000 – 4,000                          | Work with Glyndwr University/ others on <i>Our Heritage</i> HLF bid and development<br><br>Enhance website and content for range of visitors<br><br>Develop educational resources/visits<br><br>Generate donations. Charge for tours |
| Scheduled Monument 'core building' emergency works. Add to perception that the site is becoming accessible. Add to core tour/visits  | Possible 2013-2015   | 4,000 – 6,000                          | Any emergency works will temporarily make areas inaccessible. May have limited actual effect on numbers but could organise a couple of major event weekends annually   |
| 'Basic' static industrial heritage led Ironworks exhibition with reference to fossil forest.   | 2015/2016 as emergency works completed   | 7,000 - 10,000                         | Based in Machine Shop or Foundry?<br><br>Free entry/ donations or charge modest entry charge?<br><br>Develop events programme<br><br>Build education visits  |
| Higher specification exhibition with more 'wow' factor. Industrial heritage processes using interactive media presentation, process/ mechanisation, tours, etc                         | First phase restoration dependant upon whole BDL site development site looking 'completed' | 15,000 – 20,000                        | First phase restoration<br><br>Larger costs for main buildings to house bigger exhibition<br><br>Higher level entry charge as a full quality visitor experience  |

| <b>Priority Building Component</b>  | <b>Phase/ Timing</b>   | <b>Possible Annual Visitor Numbers</b>   | <b>Issues</b>  |
|---|--|--|--|
| Fossil forest : modest exposure of geology, with intermediate permanent covered protective structure and modest exhibition            | Phase either in tandem with Ironworks or secondary follow on                                   | 15,000 - 20,000.<br><br>If same time as Ironworks then some overlap and potential duplication of numbers | Potential initial phase to make the fossil resource available to be followed by 'big all singing approach' in the future   |
| Fossil forest : high specification building, site conservation, 'national' quality exhibition and geo/eco-logical media/ interactives | Later phase because of sheer cost of building and exhibits                                     | 35,000 – 50,000  | Higher level entry charge as a full quality visitor experience<br><br>Scale of audience numbers depends on the level of innovation and wider natural history/ living species/ automated palaeo species |
| 'Country park' visits to the natural ecological area and woodland slopes of the wider development zone                                | Early- mid phase including environmental improvements, paths, access etc around whole BDL site | 20,000 – 30,000<br>Outdoor visits, separate from/and in addition to attraction visiting                  | High level of repeat local visits, walking dogs, children riding bikes, etc. Only a small proportion may directly engage with the site or spend on the heritage site in the café/shop                  |
| Complete heritage site including coal mining, Ironworks core buildings, fossil forest, country park and ecological areas              | Final stage  | 50,000 – 75,000 (with geo-dome maybe up to 100,000)  | Full visitor experience comprising both free unfettered access to countryside/ country park elements and chargeable visitor attraction   |
| Business units – underpin the heritage component by generating income and localised footfall all year round                           | Early phase  |  | To generate an income stream in addition to visitor admission and secondary spend in the heritage component.   |

This suggests that the site may operate at three levels:

- \* early years heritage facility comprising Ironworks and/or fossil forest 15-20,000
- \* free countryside access 20-30,000
- \* major heritage site (ironworks and fossil forest) 50-75,000.

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## 604 Potential Capital Development Costs

At this point in time it is very difficult to estimate the potential capital cost of the restoration of the site as a multi-use heritage attraction. There appears to be no detailed plans of the site : BDL say they do not have any (although we understand the respective County Record Offices in Ruthin, Mold and Wrexham have not been thoroughly investigated). Further, the only estimates of cost that seem to be available are now over 10 years old. At that time it was suggested that the project would cost between £3-4m but that was before:

- \* the fossil forest was discovered
- \* the building complex deteriorated to its current condition.

Cadw commissioned a situation report (prepared by OPUS) on the condition of the Scheduled Ancient Monument in 2010 which estimated that immediate emergency works would cost in the region of £350,000 but we understand the buildings have deteriorated considerably since then. We will know more when a full Condition Survey is undertaken over the coming months (see below).

Brymbo Heritage Group recently undertook an initial measurement of the key structures (for the purposes of this study) which has identified the potential floorspace available for use as follows:

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| <b>Building</b>  | <b>Footprint (m<sup>2</sup>)</b> |                  |
|--|----------------------------------|------------------|
| Machine shop   |                                  |                  |
| ground floor   | 418 sqm                          |                  |
| basement   | 228 sqm                          |                  |
| possible mezzanine over ground floor                           | 418 sqm                          | 1064             |
| Foundry  |                                  |                  |
| ground floor   | 600 sqm                          |                  |
| foundry extension  | 300 sqm                          | 900              |
| Patternmakers shop   |                                  |                  |
| ground floor   | 145 sqm                          |                  |
| first floor  | 145 sqm                          |                  |
| second floor (storage only)                                    | c.100 sqm                        | 390              |
| Joiners shop   |                                  |                  |
| ground floor   | 50 sqm                           | 50               |
| Agents house   |                                  |                  |
| ground floor   | 72 sqm                           |                  |
| possible mezzanine floor                                       | 36 sqm                           | 108              |
| Blast colliery   |                                  |                  |
| lamp room  | 36 sqm                           |                  |
| winding house  | 92 sqm                           |                  |
| basement   | 80 sqm                           | 208              |
| <b>Total Footprint of Existing Industrial Heritage Complex</b> |                                  | <b>2,720 sqm</b> |

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**NB.** Excluding No.1 Blast Furnace

With the pro bono support of Peter Rice, a Cardiff based Quantity Surveyor with over 30 years experience of heritage projects, we have developed an Outline Cost Plan for the industrial heritage element of the project. This is set out below:

**Concept Costs (as at 21 January 2013)**

| <b>Element</b>                                | <b>Concept Cost<br/>'000</b> |
|---|------------------------------|
| <b>Restoration/Redevelopment of Buildings</b> |                              |
| 2720 sqm @ average £2500/sqm                  | 6,800                        |
| <b>Energy Generation</b>                      |                              |
| Centralised plant and distribution            | 500                          |
| <b>Site External Works</b>                    |                              |
| Site clearance/re-contouring levels           |                              |
| Car parking/paving/steps                      |                              |
| Retaining walls/fencing/railings              |                              |
| Landscaping                                   |                              |
| Drainage                                      |                              |
| External lighting                             |                              |
| Site security                                 | 750                          |
| <b>Infrastructure</b>                         |                              |
| Site access road                              |                              |
| Highway junction                              |                              |
| Incoming utility services                     | 750                          |
| <b>Interpretation Works</b>                   |                              |
| Small exhibition                              |                              |
| External interpretation                       |                              |
| Restoration of heritage engineering           | 500                          |
| <b>Sub Total</b>                              | <b>9,300</b>                 |
| <b>Fees and Charges</b>                       |                              |
| 15% of £9,300k                                | 1,395                        |
| Project Management and Fundraising            | 200                          |
|   | 10,895                       |
| <b>Contingency</b>                            |                              |
| 20% of £10,895k                               | 2,179                        |
|   | 13,074                       |
| <b>Inflation</b>                              |                              |
| 1Q 2013 to 1Q 2019 - say 20%                  | 2,615                        |
| <b>Total Estimated Redevelopment Costs</b>    | <b>£15,689m</b>              |

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The costs are built up based on a unit cost for the restoration/redevelopment of the buildings plus site works etc. To this we have added fees and charges, a contingency @ 20% and an inflation figure over the next 6 years of 20%. **This gives a total cost of around £15.7m.**

The discovery of the fossil forest is a huge asset and a liability. Having been exposed the fossils deteriorate. The core collection of those extracted is to go to the National Museum of Wales (Cardiff) for cataloguing and conservation but the remaining items will inevitably deteriorate. Further, although the main body of the fossil forest has been re-covered with soil it is understood that it, too, will deteriorate through water percolation. We understand that the only way to ensure this unique geological feature will not deteriorate still further is to cover it with a structure of some kind with appropriate environment controls. This has been likened to a dome similar in concept to the Eden Project. The geological features could then be exposed and the full glory of the site could be conserved and explained with high quality interpretation coupled with appropriate visitor facilities. **Estimates of the cost, without any detailed feasibility, range from £5-15m.**

**If we add the cost of a geodesic dome to the cost of the industrial heritage (say £10m) then the overall capital cost of the project is some £25m. At this point in time, without any detailed feasibility work being carried out, we believe that this is a reasonable order of magnitude figure to work with.**

This should be put into context with other sites like Ironbridge Gorge which has evolved over 50 years : they have invested some £30m over the last 15 years developing Blists Hill, two new museum sites, two flagship youth hostels and conserving several listed buildings and Scheduled Ancient Monuments.

## 605 What Does This Mean?

Such a sum of money is unthinkable in the current economic climate. The Heritage Lottery Fund has supported the restoration of canals eg. Kennel and Avon Canal with grants of over £10m and major museums like St Fagan's National History Museum (£15m)...HLF can give grants of up to 90% but, being realistic and competitive, a more likely figure is 60-65%. The strength of the case to be made is fundamental and there needs to be clear evidence that the project can be viable and sustainable at the end of the day.

Match funding then becomes the challenge : there will be opportunities to apply for EU Competitive grants under the new ERDF programme 2014-2019 (related to jobs, training, innovation and economic development) and there is also the potential for Welsh Government support. There are also a wide range of charitable grant giving trusts who support registered charitable trusts by giving grants from £1,000 to £1m or more. Competition is stiff and 'cold calling' normally achieves no more than 20% success. It is important for the project to have a well connected 'patron' who can help 'unlock doors'! We have made an initial list of potential funding sources as Appendix D. However, it is important to recognise that these sources of funding are unavailable until Brymbo Heritage Ltd has charitable status. It is possible to get the company registered as a charity for tax purposes by HMRC for nothing but there is no guarantee that this will be accepted by grant giving trusts. It is important to obtain charitable registration as soon as possible.

A realistic strategy is to consider:

- \* whether there are ways to reduce the cost by not fully restoring buildings eg. creating large spaces for events, exhibitions etc...and may be restoring such areas for more intensive use later
- \* undertaking essential emergency and consolidation works and then phasing the rest of the project over 10-15 years
- \* ensuring that every phase is realistic, achieves the required outcomes of funders and is proven to be sustainable.

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What is clear is that:

- \* the site is very important...we have said it is of national and international importance
- \* its natural, cultural and industrial heritage is not enough, in itself, to create a viable and sustainable facility (our visitor numbers are unlikely to exceed 100,000 even when the whole site is redeveloped to the highest quality)
- \* the complex can only be viable if it is mixed use, engages the community and is used 364 days a year
- \* for this to happen it must include areas which can generate regular and secure income eg. from managed workspace, a public house, facilities which the community use daily or it contains facilities which are used by an academic institution like Glyndŵr University or Yale College (to become Coleg Cambria when it merges with Deeside College in August 2013)
- \* it is important that the new facilities do not duplicate other local facilities eg. Brymbo Enterprise Centre but complement and augment them.

**All successful heritage attractions have to be multi-use, whether it be Ironbridge, Black Country Living Museum, Beamish or Cromford Mills, to ensure they are used every day of the year and generate income from a variety of sources to be sustainable.**

**If this model is adopted at Brymbo then we believe it is possible to restore and develop the site in phases as a viable and sustainable attraction.**

## **606 Current Condition Gives Serious Cause For Increasing Concern**

Whilst the discussion above is very much in the future the current and deteriorating condition of the industrial heritage site gives serious cause for increasing concern. The project is in a dilemma. It is owned by the developer Brymbo Developments Limited (part of Parkhill Estates Limited) who recognise that whilst the heritage complex is very important they have no money to contribute to saving and restoring it unless, or until, their wider development proposals are approved, the spine road can be developed and the value of key sites can be realised.

They have recently submitted a planning application for the next stage of development (November 2012) but even if that is approved it will be several years before any money can be made available towards the cost of conserving, restoring and developing the heritage attraction. In the meantime the complex is seriously deteriorating and we have felt obliged that part of our effort should be directed to putting our weight behind arguing the case to secure funds nationally (and locally) to stop (or slow down) the rate of deterioration. This has built on (and reinforced) the efforts of Wrexham County Borough Council and Brymbo Heritage Group to influence the Heritage Minister, Cadw, National Museum of Wales and others. Indeed, on-going lobbying led to visits during 2012 by Assembly Members, the local MP, the Heritage Minister and Officers from Cadw, National Museum of Wales, CyMAL and Welsh Government (Housing).

We have met, or spoken with, Assembly Members, local MP, Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments Wales (RCAHMW), CyMAL, National Museum of Wales (Industrial History and Geology), Cadw and Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust. Notes on these meetings are attached Appendix F. All were enormously supportive and have offered advice and support in various ways.

This has led to visits by:

- 
- \* Royal Commission who have photographed the site and have agreed to 3D scan the key buildings (which will provide reasonably accurate measured drawings externally and internally where it is safe to go into the building)
  - \* Robert Protheroe Jones (Keeper of Industrial Heritage National Museum of Wales) to assess the role and historical evolution of the site. Discussions are on-going and this can only strengthen the case for the significance of the industrial heritage
  - \* Cadw agreeing to fund a Condition Survey of the key buildings if the owner agrees, the brief for the survey can be written (with help from WCBC Conservation Officer) and three tenders can be sought. BDL has agreed in writing and the brief is currently being written. It is hoped that the Condition Survey can take place in April/May 2013 which will give a clear indication of the cost involved in emergency works.

In the meantime it has been agreed that National Museum Wales will take away, conserve and catalogue the key items of the fossil forest collection for the national benefit. They have obtained grants to do this work over the next 12 months which will enable the collection to be displayed in the National Museum, in Wrexham Museum and others (potentially including Brymbo) that have appropriate environmental conditions for display. A Memorandum of Understanding has been prepared by National Museum of Wales which sets this out.

At the same time our discussions with Glyndŵr University have led to a short video being prepared which describes the present plight of the site which can be used to raise the image and profile as grants are sought to take forward the project.

Clearly things are happening and a momentum to support the project is slowly building up but what is really needed **is action on the ground to save the key buildings**. An Outline Condition Survey was undertaken by OPUS in 2010 and this suggested that some £350,000 was required to undertake basic work to stop the further deterioration of No. 1 Blast Furnace, the foundry and pattern shop (the roof of which has now broken).

It is likely that the detailed Condition Survey (when undertaken) will show that considerably more money is required. Cadw will fund emergency works but their annual budget is limited and the work may well need to be phased even if contributions can be made by Wrexham CBC and (potentially) the developer. HLF do not fund emergency works but would welcome a Round 1 Heritage Grant application. However, this would need to be backed up by a detailed Feasibility Study, Vision, Master Plan and Business Plan. **Our current piece of work falls far short of this.**

## 607 The Way Forward

In the circumstances we believe the way forward should be a **three pronged strategy**:

- \* efforts should be made to **maintain the current momentum**:
  - (a) the work necessary to carry out the Condition Survey needs to be undertaken with all speed... write the brief... go out to tender... obtain quotes... apply to Cadw for a grant... commission (and manage) the survey. This should be completed by June 2013
  - (b) this will provide key information on the physical condition of the complex and enable a strategy for undertaking (and potentially phasing) the emergency works to be established
  - (c) RCAHMMW should be encouraged to carry out the 3D scanning of the complex quickly which would inform and support the Condition Survey
  - (d) pressure needs to be maintained on all parties to ensure funds can be made available to stop the further deterioration of the complex. This should include

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discussions with Cadw as to how much they could contribute to emergency works during 2013/14. Pressure should be brought to bear to secure other funds through the Heritage Minister to ensure a reasonable first phase can be undertaken

- (e) NMW should be helped/supported, as appropriate, to conserve the core fossil forest collection
- (f) Brymbo Heritage Group should work with Glyndŵr University to promote widely to the community and stakeholders the recently produced video highlighting the plight of the complex
- (g) Brymbo Heritage Group, Wrexham County Borough Council and Brymbo Developments Limited need to enter into negotiations to ensure the project is eligible for grant. Funders require the applicant to have a freehold or long leasehold interest in the land. Either WCBC or Brymbo Heritage Limited will need a long lease (ideally 99 years) or the freehold to secure large grants. Interim arrangements may need to be made for emergency works grants but a clear strategy needs to be agreed by the time a Round 1 HLF application is made and be executed as a condition of a Round 2 grant (this is likely to be early 2016)

- \* Brymbo Heritage Group (with Wrexham CBC and BDL) should urgently seek funds to prepare a **Detailed Feasibility Study, Vision, Master Plan and Business Plan** for the site which would provide the strategic context to enable a **major Round 1 Heritage Lottery Fund Heritage Grant** application to be made (indeed preparation of the application could be a part of the brief). The budget cost for this should be c.£25,000

A **Heritage Grant** application would either be for up to £2m (which would be approved by the Welsh Committee) or between £2-5m which would be considered initially by the Welsh Committee before being passed on to London for a decision. The size of grant sought would very much depend on the findings of the Detailed Feasibility Study (which would be advised by the Condition Survey). The applicant contribution would be a minimum of 10% although to be competitive we would recommend that the contribution should be more like 25-30% which would come from other funding sources.

This study could be part funded by Northern Marches Cymru and initial discussions have taken place. The study would probably take 4/5 months to complete leading to a Round 1 HLF application being made in November 2013 or February 2014 and could incorporate the emergency works which cannot be funded immediately by Cadw

- \* Brymbo Heritage Group should **build on the current momentum** and apply to the Heritage Lottery Fund for an **'Our Heritage' grant of up to £100,000**, which could include:

- (a) digitising the collections of the Group and drawing out community images and objects for recording
- (b) engaging the community by developing an oral history project recording people's memories of the steelworks
- (c) developing educational resources and stimulating the educational potential of the site (from pre-school to university level and life long learning)
- (d) developing a programme of events and activities that is proactively marketed to education, community and visitor groups

- (e) building a team of volunteers to continue to research the heritage of the site, organise tours, events, activities, develop the education programme, manage and maintain the ecological area and undertake the conservation of industrial artefacts
- (f) employ a Heritage Officer to coordinate this work and to build the capacity of the Heritage Group.

## 608 Potential Programme

The strategy is likely to involve:

|   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| * | <b>Condition Survey</b>  | January 2013 – June 2013  |
| * | <b>Emergency Works</b>   | Phase 1      Late Summer 2013<br>Phase 2      2014<br>Phase 3      2015 |
| * | <b>Detailed Feasibility Study, Vision, Master Plan and Business Plan</b> | May – October 2013  |
| * | <b>Our Heritage HLF Application</b>                                      | March/April 2013  |
|   | Approval   | June/July 2013  |
|   | Project over two years   | August 2013 – August 2015   |
| * | <b>HLF Heritage Grant Application</b>                                    | Either November 2013 or February 2014                                   |
|   | Round 1 approval   | March 2014 or June 2014   |
|   | Development Phase  | April 2014 - October 2015 or<br>August 2014 - February 2016             |
|   | Round 2 application  | November 2015 or February 2016  |
|   | Round 2 approval   | March 2016 or June 2016   |
|   | Work on site   | Summer 2016 – Summer 2018 or<br>Autumn 2016 – Autumn 2018.              |

This is a long term project. We are only talking about the first phase of a project that could eventually take 10-15 years to complete. A phased approach is both realistic and worthwhile.

## 609 Conclusion

In this section we have considered:

- \* the potential visitor projections
- \* the potential capital cost
- \* a model for sustainable development
- \* the strategy for the way forward
- \* the potential programme.

We now move on to **the conclusions and next steps.**

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## 7. CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

### 701 What Has Been Achieved?

The study has been both enjoyable and rewarding and has been able to build on the efforts of Brymbo Heritage Group and Wrexham County Borough Council over the past year or so. What is clear is that:

- \* Brymbo is a remarkable site which has both national and international significance
- \* if Brymbo Heritage Group are to play a leading role (and we assume they are), then they need to strengthen the skills and capability of the Group and become a registered charity
- \* it is important to ensure the complex is not lost to the nation for future generations to enjoy
- \* the agreement of, and active support, of BDL (the owners) is crucial
- \* the role of Wrexham County Borough Council is also crucial. They have the professional skills and experience and can give essential support and back up to Brymbo Heritage Group...this will also be expected by all funders
- \* there is an urgent need to secure funding to undertake essential emergency works
- \* it is unlikely to be viable and sustainable as a heritage attraction alone : it must be a multi-use project which creates jobs, provides training, engages the local community and generates income 12 months a year
- \* in the current economic climate the project must be phased as a series of packages each of which will require a cocktail of grants the most critical of which is the Heritage Lottery Fund. Other funding is likely to come from ERDF, Welsh Government and charitable grant giving trusts
- \* projects like this require 'development' funding over several years to support staff and specialist consultants, in order to manage the project, to build the momentum and raise the large sums of money required
- \* with a clear vision, drive, commitment and a dedicated team of trustees, consultants and volunteers it is realistic to envisage that each phase can be viable and sustainable.

### 702 Key Priorities

The key priorities are to:

- (a) urgently address and arrest the rapid deterioration of the complex: it will be important to maximise the support from a variety of sources to secure the funds required
- (b) commission a Detailed Feasibility Study to provide the Vision, Master Plan and Business Plan which will set out a phased development strategy and will...
- (c) enable a Round 1 HLF *Heritage Grant* application to be made for the first phase of the project
- (d) develop, in the short term, an *Our Heritage* HLF application to secure up to £100,000 of funding to enable Brymbo Heritage Group to engage the community, digitise the Group's collections, undertake an oral history project, develop the educational potential, develop a programme of events and activities and build a team of volunteers managed and coordinated by a Heritage Officer.

This is an exciting project worthy of support. **We commend our report to you.**

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## **APPENDIX A : LIST OF CONSULTEES**

### **Brymbo Developments Ltd**

Andrew Foster                      Director Parkhill Estates Limited  
Matt Ferguson                      Brymbo Developments Limited

### **Wrexham Borough Council**

Steve Bayley                      Head of Assets and Economic Development  
Gary Brown                      Community Development Manager  
Joe Bickerton                      Regeneration Programme Manager  
Paul Tincello                      Wrexham Projects Manager  
Hazel Hawarden                      Culture & Heritage Manager  
Anna Irwin                      Conservation Planning  
Steve Grenter                      Heritage Services Manager  
Chris Henshaw                      Tourism Officer  
Emma Broad                      Ecologist  
Cllr Paul Rogers                      Wrexham County Borough Council Councillor (Brymbo)

### **Brymbo Community Council**

Cllr Bruce Woodfine-Jones      Chairman  
Cllr Ken Monti                      Vice Chairman

### **Other organisations and agencies**

Sally Harrison                      Associate Director: Student Experience, Glyndŵr University  
Pip Perry                      North East Wales Wildlife  
Carys Edwards                      Finance Director Brymbo Enterprise Centre  
Richard Heaton                      MD Read Construction Holdings Ltd  
David Millington                      Chair Wrexham Heritage Forum  
Sophie Watson                      Clwyd Powys Archaeological Trust  
Steve Miller                      Chief Executive Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust  
Matt Thompson                      Senior Curator Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust  
John Freeman                      Trustee IGMT, Former Chairman Broseley Local History Society  
(formerly the Wilkinson Society)  
Margaret and Alan Jones              North Wales Miners Project  
Dewi Davies                      Strategy Director, North Wales Tourism Partnership  
Liz Girling                      Development Manager, Heritage Lottery Fund

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|                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| Paul Nolan             | Humanities Advisor, North Wales  |
| Anne Mackin            | Deputy Head, Castell Alun  |
| Marc Jones             | Headteacher, St Mary's School, Brymbo  |
| Jacqui Malpas          | Geologist, AWRG/NEWRIGS  |
| Linda Tomos            | Chief Executive CyMAL  |
| Ken Skates AM          | Assembly Member for Clwyd South  |
| Mark Isherwood AM      | Assembly Member for North Wales, Shadow Minister for Communities and Housing |
| Susan Elan Jones       | MP Clwyd South   |
| Dr Kate Roberts        | Inspector of Ancient Monuments, Cadw   |
| Richard Kevern         | Casework Team Leader, Protection and Policy, Historic Environment Cadw       |
| Robert Protheroe-Jones | Curator (Heavy Industry) National Museum of Wales                            |
| Richard Bevins         | Head of Geology National Museum Wales  |
| Peter Wakelin          | Secretary, Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historic Monuments of Wales   |
| Louise Barker          | RCAHMW Recording and Investigation Team Leader                               |

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## **APPENDIX B : BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Making Heritage Matter : Wrexham Heritage Strategy 2011 – 2015  
Wrexham County Borough Council

Wrexham Destination Management Plan July 2012  
Wrexham County Borough Council

Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal World Heritage Site Tourism Development Plan (May 2011)  
Wrexham County Borough Council

Economic Value of Tourism to Wrexham 2010  
STEAM

Flintshire Tourism Strategy 2008 - 2013  
Flintshire County Council

Wrexham Community Regeneration Strategy 2011 – 2012  
Wrexham County Borough Council

Wrexham Community Regeneration Strategy 2009 – 2020  
Wrexham County Borough Council

Tourism Strategy North Wales 2010 – 2015  
Tourism Partnership North Wales

Regionally Important Geodiversity Sites (RIGS)  
Association of Welsh RIGS Groups

Historic Environment Strategy 2012  
Welsh Government

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## **APPENDIX C : VISION OF BRYMBO HERITAGE GROUP (SEPTEMBER 2012)**

Contained within the Brymbo Heritage Site in North East Wales is a unique opportunity to develop a world class tourist attraction encompassing history, geology, ecology, education, culture, employment and community benefits.

The project will integrate economic regeneration with educational and environmental gain. It will provide a vital rural workspace whilst conserving the historic buildings, the fossilised forest and the natural ecology area.

The design and development of the site will incorporate green energy concepts such as solar panels, geothermal heating, rainwater storage and septic tanks to minimise energy costs.

The Brymbo Heritage Group's vision for each specific part of the site is as follows:

\* **the 300 Million Year Old Fossilised Forest**

Design and built an iconic suspended roof structure to cover and enclose the fossil forest.

Excavate and expose the fossils leaving them in their growth positions to create a visual spectacle of a 300 million year old forest.

Install a boardwalk protective system around the fossils for visitor access.

The building should incorporate special effects and audio systems to mimic tropical forests sights and sounds, video interpretation area, conference, CCTV and toilet facilities. We envisage guides with geological knowledge to assist interpretation.

\* **the 1796 Wilkinson Ironworks**

Restore and refurbish No. 1 furnace, the foundry, patternmakers shop, high charging wall and immediate areas.

Recreate a working foundry to demonstrate re-melting, casting and pattern making skills.

Interpret the evolution of the site with atmospheric audio visual presentations to capture the essence of iron making.

House within the building full scale working replicas of the original Boulton and Watt Furnace Blowing Engine and the steam driven pipe turning lathe.

Utilise parts of the buildings to demonstrate ancient crafts and skills.

Illuminate No. 1 furnace, the foundry and high charging wall to create a spectacular vision at night.

Expose and illuminate the foundry 'day adit' tunnel as an added attraction.

Drain the rising 'red ochre' stained water into a newly created 'reed bed' outside.

Excavate the heart of No. 1 furnace to allow visitors the 'inside' experience.

\* **the 'Blast' Colliery Pit 1842**

Restore and refurbish the colliery buildings, pit shaft 'Heapstead', retaining wall and immediate area.

Reconstruct the original winding 'headgear' over the pit shaft incorporating a visitor viewing and listening point.

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Within the colliery buildings tell the story of 'Brymbo Coal Mining' from the 1400's with artefacts and audio visual presentation.

Protect the fine examples of railway rolling stock and remount on railway track.

Incorporate into the winding house a small refreshments area and toilet facilities.

\* **the Ecology Area**

Starting at the blast colliery 'lower' level install a 1.5m wide high level visitor walkway, past the new ponds up through the woodland to the old railway turning point.

Recreate the 'higher' level track to allow visitors to return via the blast pit.

The ecology area has many species of flora, fauna and wildlife. It also contains other interesting industrial artefacts.

\* **the 'Agents House' 1792**

Restore and refurbish the 'Agents House' to create a multiuse, flexible educational centre for all ages and purposes. The building will incorporate all the latest 'state of the art' educational facilities.

\* **the 'Machine Shop' 1918**

Restore and refurbish the machine shop to create a large flexible facility for exhibitions, concerts, conferences, employment, training, archiving etc.

Incorporate into the building a new mezzanine floor over the basement, an overhead crane relocation and illumination of the basement level 'Wilkinson Wall'.

\* **visitor welcome and site management centre**

Design and build a single storey centre, which blends in with the ironworks 'identity', with adjacent car park. The centre will be utilised to welcome visitors and provide administrative facilities for the site.

Transport to carry visitors with disabilities to each of the attractions will be available. The building will also have an information point, souvenir shop, toilets and a base for site guides.

It is envisaged that the site will have secure fencing and CCTV coverage, suitable access roads and pathways, good lighting and signage.

We assume that WCBC will provide heritage signage throughout the county.

The site management, promotion, security and maintenance will be provided by a mixture of salaried and volunteer staff.

Brymbo Heritage Ltd is planning to lease the site from Parkhill Estates (Brymbo Developments Ltd) for 99 years at a peppercorn rent.

The transformation of the site is to be funded mainly by Heritage Lottery grants with individual applications made for each attraction.

The new road planned to run adjacent to the site will provide excellent access and all the major infrastructure supply points.

Brymbo Heritage Group, September 2012

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## APPENDIX D : LIST OF POTENTIAL FUNDERS

In addition to Heritage Lottery Fund, ERDF Competitive Programme and the Rural Development Programme (Northern Marches Cymru) this can include:

### **Esmee Fairburn Foundation**

- \* the potential visitor projections
- \* looking for enterprising and sustainable projects and take pride in supporting work that might otherwise be difficult to fund
- \* has a Finance fund that makes Social investments
- \* education and learning is a key sector for funding
- \* the arts sector is a key sector which includes museums including digitisation of collections etc
- \* they will fund salaried posts

### **Ingenious Grant from Royal Academy of Engineering**

- \* could be relevant for developing working machinery and models in conjunction with an engineering Company and the educational sector (The Teeside Steel project obtained an award)

### **Association for Industrial Archaeology**

- \* give small restoration grants (£2-£15K towards projects in recent years)

### **WREN** (landfill money due to proximity to Chirk Bank)

- \* main and small grant scheme – main scheme up to £75K
- \* needs to have free public access so might only be suitable for environmental area, creating pathways etc.

### **Environment Wales**

#### **Pre –registration**

- \* pre-project grants – up to £6K – feasibility studies / business plans etc  
***could this be used as a match fund for Northern Marches?***

#### **Funding for Registered Projects**

- \* management grant : £1-12Kpa for maximum of six years
- \* can help fund new posts within registered projects
- \* project grant : up to £10K can help project materials and equipments

### **Princes Regeneration Trust**

- \* generally provide advice and support rather than direct grant aid for heritage-led regeneration projects
- \* they can run community planning days, route mapping, undertake options appraisals and business planning
- \* can assist with grant applications and project management

- 
- \* take on the overall management of some high profile projects

### **Charles Hayward Foundation**

- \* grants up to £20K, with occasional larger grants, to fund projects of an exceptional nature
- \* they may fund for up to three years (mentions up to £15K per year for three years)
- \* industrial heritage is one of their key funding strands
- \* they predominantly fund capital costs but may fund start-up or development activities
- \* *'we would like to enable things to happen that would otherwise not happen'*
- \* *'we prefer funding a project in its early stages rather than finishing off an already well-supported project'*
- \* sounds spot-on for Brymbo

plus a wide range of other trusts including:

Clarks Family Trust

Ironworkers Company Charity

Wolfson Foundation

CHK Charitable Trust

29 May 1961 Charitable Trust

Grocer's Charity

Clothworker's Foundation

Garfield Weston Foundation

John Paul Getty Junior Charitable Trust

Tudor Trust

Henry Smith Charity

Sainsbury Family Trust

Trusthouse Charitable Foundation

Paul Hamlyn Foundation

Rank Foundation

Biffa Environmental

Lafarge (Aggregates)

Viridor (Landfill)

Veolia (Landfill)

Leche Trust

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Headley Trust

Pilgrim Trust

John Ellerman Foundation

Lloyds TSB

Barcapel Foundation

Foyle Foundation

D'Oyly Carte Charitable Trust

Clare Duffield Foundation (dedicated learning spaces)

Monument Trust

Dulverton Trust

Bernard Sunley Charitable Foundation (buildings of historic interest)

The Worshipful Company of Skinners

Mercer's Company Charitable Foundation (Listed Buildings)

Lord Barnaby's Foundation (preservation of buildings of historic interest)

Manifold Trust (architectural conservation)

The Oglesby Charitable Trust

The Sylvia Waddilove Foundation UK (preservation of buildings of historical significance)

H.B. Allen Charitable Trust

Idlewild Trust

February Foundation

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## APPENDIX E : OPUS LETTER ON EXISTING CONDITION OF SCHEDULED ANCIENT MONUMENT

26 January 2010

Dr Sian Rees  
Cadw  
Plas Carew  
Unit 5/7 Cefn Coed  
Parc Nantgarw  
Cardiff  
CF15 7QQ



*Our reference:*  
CS7151.03 / MW

Dear Sian,

*Your reference:*

### **BRYMBO STEELWORKS HERITAGE AREA BLAST FURNACE No. 1, WILKINSON FOUNDRY & PATTERN MAKER'S WORKSHOP**

Further to our joint visit to Brymbo Steelworks on 19 January 2010, I provide my initial observations and recommendations for any remedial works deemed necessary in the short term, until such time as an end use is established for the buildings known as:

- Blast Furnace No.1
- Wilkinson Foundry
- Pattern Maker's Workshop

I have also included indicative broad brush budget costs for the anticipated works.

#### **Inspection:**

An overall brief visual inspection was made of the three named buildings on 19 January 2010. The day time temperature during the visit was at or just above freezing and the previous week's snowfall was extant throughout the site area.

The inspection was made from the various ground levels around the site; the upper ground level to the side and rear of the structures provided a general view over the roofs of the foundry and pattern makers workshop.

The general poor condition of the roof to the foundry provided only limited access internally within the building; the subterranean buildings set off the foundry at the rear of the building were not entered or inspected. The roof of the pattern maker's workshop was in extremely poor condition and had partially collapsed under the weight of recent snowfalls. In the interest of safety the site owners prohibited access into the building; the assessment of this structure was made by the limited view provided through an opened double door.

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Website: [www.opusinternational.co.uk](http://www.opusinternational.co.uk)

Registered in England & Wales  
Company Reg No: 2847568  
Reg Office: Willow House, Brothertonwood  
Court, Great Park Rd, Birstby BS32 4QW

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## **Blast Furnace No.1**

### **Observations**

The blast furnace is a large stone masonry structure, which, considering that it dates from the late 18<sup>th</sup> Century is in reasonable overall condition. The outer shell of the structure is formed using coursed rough dressed stone with an inner lining of refractory brick.

The furnace structure has suffered various distortions and fractures during its long life the majority of which are consequential to the high temperatures involved in the iron smelting process; some movement may also be attributable to initial and long-term ground movements beneath the furnace. A significant distortion is evident in the flattening of the crown of the stone arch to the front of the furnace; this appears to have been subsequently remedied by the introduction of a brickwork arch beneath the masonry arch.

The upper section of the structure is restrained at its outer corners with iron tie bars and pattress plates; these were intended to restrain the immense expansion forces generated in the furnace and to ensure the stability of the masonry structure.

Internally, the refractory brickwork is in fair condition; although individual areas of brickwork have been extensively damaged by exposure to high temperatures and subsequent weathering over time. Areas of brickwork have spalled away from the furnace lining leaving voids in the structure.

### **Short term recommendations & indicative budgets**

Immediate remedial works are of a very minor nature but include:

- The periodic treatment and removal of vegetation from the structure by roped access personnel - **£1,000.00** (every 3 - 5 years)
- The installation of some form of lockable gated barrier to prevent unauthorised access into the structure - **£1,500.00**

## **Wilkinson Foundry**

### **Observations**

The present day foundry building is an adaption and extension of the original foundry built around the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century.

The foundry structure is part sheet clad steel frame and part load bearing masonry; these in turn provide support to the roof structure which comprises steel trusses with and over cladding of corrugated sheeting. The masonry walls are a combination of stone and brickwork.

Concerns for health and safety restricted access within the building; however the nature and extent of the building's most significant defects are immediately evident.

The most apparent defect is the overall poor condition of the roof covering; large areas of sheeting have suffered extensive corrosion leading to localised collapse and gaping holes to the sky. In other areas corrosion has resulted in 'dinner-plate' and larger sized holes in individual sheets in many locations throughout the roof area. Where visible, the rainwater goods are in poor condition.

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The result of the above is that rainwater freely enters the building and this is evidenced by the general damp conditions within the foundry.

With the exception of the roof covering, the structural fabric appears to be in fair overall condition; although the ingress of rainwater and lack of periodic maintenance has given rise to an extremely damp environment within the building with consequent dampness in the masonry and the corrosion of structural steel members of the roof trusses and supporting steelwork.

The ground floor area is littered with discarded redundant equipment and general debris.

Unauthorised access is currently available to all areas of the foundry presenting a considerable liability to the current site owners

### **Short term recommendations & indicative budgets**

Immediate remedial works should include:

- Remove and replace areas of missing and defective roof cladding, associated gutters etc. Such works will require extensive areas of scaffolding to provide safe access to the roof and the poor condition of large areas of the roof will impact greatly upon site issues of health and safety - **£140,000.00**
- Prevent unauthorised access to the structure by temporarily blocking up openings in the building envelope at ground level - **£8,000.00**
- The periodic treatment and removal of vegetation from the masonry fabric using hydraulic aerial platforms - **£5,000.00** (every 3 - 5 years)
- Allowance for further on site investigations and consequential remedial works - **£30,000.00**

### **Pattern Maker's Workshop**

#### **Observations**

The pattern maker's workshop also dates from the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. This two, part three storey building comprises: external walls of load bearing stone masonry, with numerous infill and reconstructions in brick; intermediate timber and concrete floors and a slate covered traditional pitched timber roof.

The building as a whole suggest a long history of structural modification to suit and adapt to the changing demands of a working pattern shop; this is evidenced by the infilling and forming of openings and the extension on the rear end of the building.

The building is currently in a severe state of dilapidation and sections of the roof have collapsed under the weight of recent snowfall; concerns for health and safety prevented an internal inspection of the building. As a result of the recent collapse short lengths of masonry have been destabilised at eaves level; cracking and displacement of stonework is evident in these areas.

It is apparent that areas of roof slating are unstable, particularly along the eaves and ridge line and slate falls to ground level must be anticipated.

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Rainwater ingress has advanced the deterioration of the internal aspects of the building and the roof collapse has impacted upon the stability of the division wall between the foundry and the workshop giving rise to a visible lean.

It is understood that a tall chimney originally sited on the side elevation, has been recently taken down due to concerns for its ongoing stability and associated safety issues.

The building is maintained under lock and key and no access is currently permitted.

#### **Short term recommendations & indicative budgets**

The workshop building is in need of a complete structural and architectural overhaul. Concerns must be expressed for the ongoing structural integrity of what remains of the roof structure. This has impacted to varying degrees upon the stability of the supporting walls and intermediate floors.

The temporary protection of this building will make considerable financial demands and, with currently no end use in sight, consideration should be given as to its cost effectiveness as monies would be better spent on the full blown restoration of the building.

- Erect scaffolding to external perimeter - **£20,000.00**
- Remove existing roof covering and structure and provide temporary stabilisation/support to the masonry and intermediate floors - **£75,000.00**
- Undertake repairs to masonry - **£7,500.00**
- Erect temporary trussed timber rafters or scaffolding roof frames and fix roof sheeting as temporary weathering - **£50,000.00**
- Allowance for further on site investigations and consequential remedial works - **£15,000.00**

From the above, a broad brush estimate for the minimum works required to protect these important industrial buildings exceeds **£350k** and many of the costs could be considered abortive when the an overall restoration of these buildings is eventually considered. The anticipated total cost of full restoration and adaption of these three buildings is estimated to be in the order of **£3 million** and when added to the temporary works proposed above presents a total future expenditure of **£3.35 million**.

I trust that this information is of use to you in determining a way forward for the site but should you wish to discuss these matters further or require additional information please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



Martyn Western  
Director – Heritage and Conservation



Photo 1: General view of Steelworks site with Blast Furnace No . 1 (right) and Wilkinson Foundry (middle with extension to the left).



Photo 2: Wilkinson Foundry (extension) with Pattern Maker's Workshop to the rear.



Photo 3: View rear elevation of the Wilkinson Foundry.



Photo 4: Interior of Wilkinson Foundry.



Photo 5: Condition of Foundry roof structure.



Photo 6: Pattern Maker's Workshop - side elevation (with Wilkinson Foundry behind).



Photo 7: Poor condition of roof to Pattern Maker's Workshop.



Photo 8: Interior of Pattern Maker's Workshop.

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## APPENDIX F : NOTES OF MEETINGS WITH KEY INDUSTRIES/ORGANISATIONS

### TELEPHONE CONSULTATION WITH LINDA TOMOS OF CYMAL ON 6<sup>TH</sup> NOV

She was positive but somewhat cautious about Brymbo. The minister has given them a 'watching brief'. Whilst they are very supportive, unless WCBC are prepared to take a lead on heritage developments at Brymbo, WAG are unlikely to back it in a big way.

Their meeting with WCBC was really an information exchange and no decisions were made. The minister hoped there could be a synergy between the housing development and the heritage development but it looks as if this may not be possible.

She felt the feeling at the meeting was that the way forward was a smaller scale social enterprise option, possibly involving the existing local enterprise unit, developing a small-scale local facility that would be an integral part of the north east Wales heritage offer.

CyMal themselves can provide professional support and advice and guidance but only have a small grant pot (£10K max) that is only open to museums or those working towards accreditation. Brymbo Heritage Group could access it if they were working with Wrexham Museum but are not eligible on their own.

Cadw also have a small grants pot that does not have the museum eligibility criteria, in addition to their larger grant pots.

National Museum Wales have no physical presence in north east Wales and it could fit with their strategic planning but, in the present economic climate, there is unlikely to be any serious development up here. The primary focus for National Museum Wales development is the St Fagans refurbishment.

National Museum Wales already have an exhibition room at Wrexham Museum and there might be scope for strengthening / building on this. Cymal could give a supporting role via Wrexham Museum. It is important to work closely with WCBC Museum staff.

Re major interpretation of a steel working site, it's unlikely that funding would come for a national facility as lots of money has recently gone into the General Offices at Ebbw Vale (a good model of mixed use - commercial, educational and interpretive uses on the former site). They now house Gwent Archives and have a steelworker's exhibition.

She suggested a range of other contacts

#### Useful contacts

Elizabeth Bennett, the archivist from Swansea University is currently doing a Steel Industry Archive project. I had a chat with her and all they are doing at the moment is gathering data as to where all the information is currently stored. They would like to include info on Brymbo on that database.

Elizabeth suggested that we look at the Copperopolis project in Swansea where the history dept at Swansea university are working in partnership with the local authority.

She also mentioned the British Steel Archive Project, which was a partnership between Teeside University and the county archives. It was a big £1.6million project lasting for 3 years (April 2008 – Dec 2010) <http://www.britishsteelcollection.org.uk>

Both projects might be useful role-models for developing a partnership between Glyndwr and Brymbo, giving ideas for the Your Heritage project and beyond.

Consider including the Arnold Palmer Centre (the Wrexham Archive service) in the list of potential partners - HLF would want a permanent home for any collection and they already have some records of Brymbo.

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## NOTE OF MEETING 14 NOVEMBER 2012

**Richard Bevins**            **Keeper of Geology NMW**

**Caroline Butler**        **Head of Palaeontology (fossils) NMW**

- \* was aware of Brymbo but no contact until last 18 months
- \* got involved through CCW : held several meetings up there
- \* primary concern is material that has already been collected : some outstanding elements but will deteriorate without conservation
- \* want to take them to Cardiff...undertake appropriate conservation 'in house' : NMW is the only organisation in Wales that has the skills and experience to do so
- \* to do the work they need ownership of the material but have drawn up Memorandum of Understanding to confirm their philosophy is entirely professional/honorable and they want to ensure the collection is conserved to the highest standards and then made accessible to all (and particularly any facility created in Brymbo and in nearby Wrexham Museum). Also want to create a temporary exhibition in NMW associated with their Geological gallery
- \* Brymbo Heritage Group (prompted by Barry Thomas) recognised the importance of this action and agreed
- \* have sought grants of up to £50,000 from John Paul Getty Charitable Trust and other charitable trusts (plus CCW) to employ a conservator for 12 months to undertake the work. Plus a grant of £3,000 from the Curry Fund to create a website so the material can be viewed on line. If they do not get the grant they will still conserve the material (because it is so important) but it will take longer
- \* Barry Thomas well known to NMW...used to be a keeper of Palaeontology. He is probably the foremost expert (has been researching/writing) and has said that Brymbo includes new type species
- \* NMW operates to current international museum standards of high quality conservation and accessibility...for example, they attend the Fossil Festival in Lyme Regis every year plus display at Royal Welsh Show and National Eisteddfod
- \* only three sites of this kind in UK and probably less than 10 in the world – Rotherham buried...the Glasgow one now run by independent group (not sure of visitor numbers)...Joggins Cliff (Newfoundland) is a long cliff (like Jurassic Coast) with visitor centre and tours (up to 4 hours). Developed with Federal money but not as an impressive site as Brymbo
- \* but how important is Brymbo...very significant indeed...shows the whole sequence...ironstone, coal and diatec(?) sequence...the calamites stand is probably unique in the world!
- \* to cover...conserve and interpret to national standards (with high security, environmental controls and visitor facilities) could cost c.£12-15m
- \* the issue is could it be viable? How many visitors can it attract? Where would the money come from? Are people interested in geology? Probably require a Getty or Gates or Rockefeller to fund! Would HLF consider that scale of investment?
- \* could NMW lead? They are not in a position to make any commitments. They have a Vision and 10 Year Plan including St Fagan's, New Museum of Natural History, Roman Legionary Museum in Caerleon...and something like this would need a strategic change of direction

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agreed by the Director General (and supported by Welsh Government)...already have a partnership arrangement with Wrexham Museum who received a grant from CyMAL to upgrade a gallery to national standards...they are seeking partnerships rather than new initiatives! But...anything possible!

- \* nobody would do anything without some initial assessment of visitor numbers and viability (worth getting visitor numbers at Joggins Cliff)
- \* could create a spectacular facility (like the NMW Geology gallery)...walkways through the strata, beautiful time lapse reconstructions, 3D diaramas etc
- \* priority is to conserve what has been exposed to ensure its longevity...which gives time to develop a long term strategy and find the money to create a high quality facility subject to viability...this would compliment a parallel strategy in relation to the built fabric.

**CONVERSATION WITH PETER WAKELIN SECRETARY  
ROYAL COMMISSION OF THE ANCIENT AND HISTORICAL MONUMENTS OF WALES  
16 NOVEMBER 2012**

- \* cannot expect much from CyMAL... they feel Wales already has too many museums (or heritage attractions)... but can help with training, collections care etc
- \* multi-use regeneration the key... but must be flexible... as is happening in Germany... minimum intervention : maximum flexibility of use (there are wonderful examples)... use huge power halls for parties, conferences, music etc with minimal physical intervention once created a watertight environment... creates characterful environments which allow imaginative after use (and generate revenue!)
- \* pattern shop used to be full of remarkable patterns... where are they now?
- \* foundry/casting floor ... clear... repair roof... provide electric supply... provide temporary toilets... create space for events... theatre etc
- \* do not necessarily need to spend a lot of money on conservation... need clear vision, clear promotion and marketing, good access and connectivity
- \* scheduled 1991. Wilkinson a key feature in Industrial Revolution... he was an innovator... first person to apply steam directly to blowing iron... rather than using the steam engine... one of the early makers of steam engines... used to pump water up in Coalbrookdale!
- \* the furnace, the casting shop and pattern shop are really important and are a central integral part of the story (only Moira Furnace Leicestershire is more complete)... they are 'as complete' as they come!
- \* Cadw reluctant to take on additional sites... only 3 sites gone into guardianship since 1990 (out of 133)
- \* there are a number of other sites around Wales which are in a 'powerless' condition eg. Cyfartha Castle, Elyn Pit Pontypool, Neath Abbey Ironworks... why is Brymbo so important... what sets it apart... really need to keep working with local contacts and... local community to change attitudes and potential... and secure the conservation funding necessary to ensure it is not lost forever
- \* can we/should we phase the consolidation if that would make it easier eg. drainage, vandalism, water penetration etc and even add temporary structure on the top of the key buildings eg. phase over 2/3 years... even £50,000 likely to make a difference in the short term

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- \* Cadw likely to be prepared to assist with emergency works... can occasionally fund 100% (but match funding would make it easier... and it could come from the developer, Wrexham CBC and possibly trusts)... really worth serious negotiation!
  - \* Royal Commission can assist with recording the key structures at risk as they are... Louise Barker to do work... has been speaking with Steve Greuter eg. by photography or 3D scanning... work really important and will feed into the wider studies (conservation work)... if deteriorates further than we have recorded it!
  - \* it is a wonderful site... enormous potential... without spending huge sums of money to create a 'heritage attraction'... rather create attractive heritage... generating flexible use... maybe get buildings watertight and then design for variety of uses eg. village square, restaurants, shops etc
  - \* not necessary to spend millions of pounds in the short term...need to stop deterioration and then create flexible use BUT:
    - where does the money come from? Cadw and Minister
    - gives time to find long term solution... similar to the fossil forest!
    - if can make weather tight (and cleared) then offers the setting which can be used for a variety of uses.

#### **NOTE OF MEETING WITH ROBERT PROTHEROE JONES KEEPER OF HEAVY INDUSTRY NMW 19 NOVEMBER 2012**

- \* he is a specialist in the industrial history of Wales (but had not visited Brymbo for 20 years)
- \* he asked whether the furnace wall was scheduled...I was not sure!
- \* also asked whether it was a RICs site and SSSI...again, I could not confirm
- \* Bersham is the local exemplar...not major upstanding remains but nice site only 3 miles away...but low visitor numbers
- \* in that context Brymbo will have to stand in its own in revenue terms
- \* fits into the wider national spread of sites...not a completely unique structure...some elements unique and well preserved...others missing altogether
- \* citation is vague and no one has gone back to undertake a more detailed assessment in 20 years...it was clearly a rushed job!
- \* Robert wants to revisit and review his paper in the light of physical evidence of the various buildings
- \* NMW going through 5<sup>th</sup> round of voluntary redundancies...now moving into formal redundancies...not a good time to ask for help...NMW not taken on another site for many years...rather, it is seeking to divest itself of responsibility...the 'gap' in provision in North Wales is being met by formal partnerships with Wrexham Museum, Oriel Ynys Môn etc
- \* industrial heritage (and particularly iron and steel) very difficult to market
- \* recognises creative re-use essential but need massive investment to realise even part of the potential...and surveying the buildings is a start but is not arresting the decay!

- 
- \* need to update the 2002 Feasibility Study and use that as the basis of a Round 1 HLF bid
  - \* likely that the lower portion of the blast furnace is original...but the top altered c1820(?)...the cast house is probably on the original footprint...there are a number of blast furnaces but not too many foundries
  - \* wonders whether 'petrified forest' is a better title than fossil forest
  - \* need to be careful re visitor numbers...what is the existing North Wales visitor market...links with Pontcysllyte...Wrexham Museum, Erridig etc...remember the spectacular failure of the Earth Centre...how many visitors do Geoparks attract? How much of a 'draw' is geology?
  - \* Robert provided list of references...he is seeking a grant from a large Esme Fairburn grant to NMW to digitise the Luther Griffiths collection...he was an engineer at Brymbo in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century...collection contains surviving notes, manuscripts and photographs...another valuable contribution to understanding the significance of Brymbo
  - \* St Fagan's have developed a National Sound Archive...if we were to pursue an oral history project then links with them (and the People's Collection) would be valuable.

#### **MEETING WITH KEN SKATES AM ON 19 NOVEMBER 2012**

- \* recognises must resist being precious...must use the heritage creatively
- \* must work in partnership with others
- \* but must be ambitious eg. influence NMW to play a stronger role and maybe even establish a 'presence' in the North East
- \* WG working with local authorities to achieve affordable homes...need to achieve regeneration and heritage...create jobs...provide heritage skills and engineering training...working with Glyndŵr University and Yale & Deeside College...provide incubator units for manufacturing...talk to Wrexham Training
- \* can we create some sort of facility for events
- \* need to provide educational opportunities...particularly fossil forest and ecological aspects
- \* can we start with the machine shop...tidy site...get rid of any H&S issues...work with Glyndŵr etc
- \* explained WCBC questioned managed workspace...Destination Management Plan focuses on Wrexham Town Centre and WHS...and Wrexham heritage priorities are Bersham and WHS...always a reason why Brymbo not a priority...he will take this up with Chief Executive...but he feels there are strong links between Brymbo and Cefn Mawr
- \* will talk further with Minister (21 November) and with WCBC...and will do all he can to support and influence to ensure the site does not deteriorate further
- \* recognises must be a phased approach.

#### **NOTE OF MEETING AT CADW 20 NOVEMBER 2012**

**Kate Roberts                      Senior Inspector (Gwynedd and Clwyd/Powys)**

**Richard Kevern                  Inspector (Gwynedd and Clwyd/Powys)**

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- \* Ken Skates AM arranged site visit June 2012...led to Ministerial visit end July
  - \* Heritage Group made presentation...Minister asked civil servants to go up to Wrexham in September to discuss the issues (Richard Kevern, Linda Tomas and Catherine Beard)...another meeting to be arranged for January 2013
  - \* it was suggested Cadw could fund a more comprehensive condition survey of the key buildings (OPUS study was a couple of days)...this was discussed further later
  - \* Kate highlighted that any future use of the SAM will need to take cognisance of the Ministerial Strategy on Heritage (launched October) and Conservation Principles...both available to download on the Cadw website...key considerations...linking heritage with regeneration...local value...sustainable development. This means Cadw will accept reasonable intervention to see a heritage building used
  - \* Cadw has established a regeneration team (to reflect the Minister's commitment to regeneration and heritage) but Brymbo not included in a regeneration area...not clear why!
  - \* it is felt important that the key significances should be drawn out and a statement of significance prepared...this needs to be a broader appraisal and recognise the values of the site...historical, associated values eg. key individuals, aesthetic values, community values
  - \* may be able to ask Royal Commission to bring out the significances as they are doing the recording
  - \* Cadw already funded the OPUS study...and WCBC has funded an archaeological appraisal which includes statements of significance
  - \* Cadw will fund a condition survey (updated OPUS survey)...need to apply for a grant eg. Heritage Group or WCBC...need to draft brief...requires fully detailed survey and specification. Title will not be an issue (but agreement of the owner will be valuable) but someone (ideally WCBC must take on the project management)
  - \* assuming cost has gone up to say £600-700k that is way beyond the ability of Cadw to fund...will need match funding from Wrexham CBC, developer and (maybe) the Minister...and the need to phase over 2 years should be considered
  - \* Cadw will also fund (or contribute to) a detailed feasibility study which could be the precursor to a Round 1 HLF bid. HLF will require a Conservation Management Plan or Conservation Statement
  - \* ideally do survey in February/March 2012 (after winter snows) to ensure the condition after winter is included : ideally link in with Royal Commission recording
  - \* Cadw would welcome mixed use development to ensure long term viability but will want to ensure the key features/attributes are retained and the heritage setting of the structures is not compromised by the nature of the wider development
  - \* Cadw investment in Blaenavon despite low visitor numbers reflects Cadw ownership and in the World Heritage Site designation (Brymbo unlikely to ever become a WHS even with the fossil forest)...Cadw pursuing the slate industry as a possible multiple site WHS (like Cornwall) ...is that a threat or opportunity for Brymbo?
  - \* pleased we are exploring opportunities with Glyndŵr...Minister very keen on heritage skills training and conservation skills...should really follow this up

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- \* need to pursue the condition survey urgently...ideally involve Anna Irwin Conservation Officer WCBC...write brief...obtain three quotes...make application to Cadw so the work can be undertaken in March...need Anna/WCBC to project manage
  - \* to get wider support to fund the consolidation eg. Minister must have a clear and sustainable (and viable) vision
  - \* project must be based on multi use approach...and needs a project champion and figure head
  - \* there will be opposition to a major heritage attraction without secondary income to make it sustainable...need year round usage and income generation...and community involvement.

## **NOTE OF MEETING WITH IRONBRIDGE GORGE MUSEUM TRUST 11 DECEMBER 2012**

|                      |  |
|----------------------|--|
| <b>Steve Miller</b>  | <b>Chief Executive</b>                       |
| <b>John Freeman</b>  | <b>Trustee Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust</b> |
| <b>Matt Thompson</b> | <b>Senior Curator</b>                        |
| <b>Ian Parkin</b>    | <b>Parkin Heritage and Tourism</b>           |

1. Ian Parkin summarised the current position and, in particular, the findings of the consultant team proposing a three strand strategy for the way forward:
  - \* do everything possible to arrest the further deterioration of the built fabric
  - \* seek funding to undertake detailed feasibility study which will provide a development strategy for a phased restoration of the site and enable a Round 1 HLF '*Heritage Grant*' application bid to be made
  - \* apply under the '*Our Heritage*' programme to undertake a project which engages the community, digitises the collections, incorporates an oral history project and builds the corps of volunteers.
  
2. The strategy was warmly applauded and various suggestions were made:
  - \* IGMT reiterated the offer to assist, support, mentor and be an advocate for Brymbo Heritage Group in any way possible eg. recently supported a group in Lancaster to secure and implement a '*Your Heritage*' project
  - \* offer exhibition space to promote the importance of Brymbo and the Wilkinson connection (developing proactive links of this kind with other projects reflects the approach advocated by the Museums Association)
  - \* have a source of potential volunteers who need/want work experience through the Ironbridge Institute (eg. could also undertake specific project as part of their course work eg. on retail, marketing etc)
  - \* IGMT undertake paid consultancy eg. Conservation Management Plan (which could be really useful) and have an archaeology field unit (again, a useful asset)
  - \* have an '*Industrial Buildings at Risk*' Officer (funded through English Heritage). Unable to give direct support but would be able to 'pick his brains'

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- \* have 435 active volunteers : their Volunteer Co-ordinator would be happy to advise and support Brymbo Heritage Group in the development of the potential corps of volunteers (also have created a Volunteer Handbook which would be available)
  - \* could provide PR for the project eg. article in Ironbridge newsletter, reference on IGMT website...use of Facebook and Twitter
  - \* will reference Brymbo, and the work of John Wilkinson, in the major new exhibition in Museum of Iron (2014)
3. John Freeman (Trustee) closely connected with Richard Clowes who was a former Board Member of GKN in 1991...now a Trustee of Charles Hayward Foundation...may be prepared to consider an application for funding. This has now been confirmed.
  4. Michael Derby (Trustee), direct descendant of the Derby's at Brymbo, would be keen to visit. Should be invited.
  5. Further, Richard Partington Chief Executive Wrekin Council wrote his thesis on Wilkinson!
  6. The group re-emphasised the importance of a mixed-use solution to ensure long term sustainability
  7. Please keep informed of progress. Eager to help in any way!

**NOTE OF MEETING WITH MARK ISHERWOOD AM  
11 DECEMBER 2012**

**Mark Isherwood AM  
Lorna Jenner  
Ian Parkin Parkin Heritage and Tourism**

1. Very supportive...was influential in inviting the Heritage Minister to the site earlier in 2012
2. Feels Wrexham County Borough Council can (and should) play an important role to give strength and solidarity to the overall credibility of the project, funding applications etc.
3. Would be prepared to help in any way eg. making representations to secure Brymbo as a Strategic Regeneration Area...and to promote Brymbo to North Wales Tourism Partnership in order to strengthen tourism infrastructure particularly if it can create jobs and apprenticeships.
4. He asked questions of the First Minister about Brymbo being a candidate for infrastructure investment.
5. Please keep informed on progress. Happy to help in any way!

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## APPENDIX G : BRYMBO HERITAGE GROUP CONSITUTION

### 1. NAME and AIMS

- 1.1 The Group shall be known by the name of **BRYMBO HERITAGE GROUP** hereinafter called the Group.
- 1.2 The aims of the Group shall be to promote the study and understanding of and interest in local history and heritage in its broadest sense, including relevant research in relation to the history of Iron and Steel manufacture at Brymbo. The Group shall also develop a community archive making information accessible to all; within legal and other constraints.
- 1.3 The Group has been established by members of the local community and will enable people to record their memories and reminiscences and preserve those memories as part of a community archive.
- 1.4 The Group intends that these activities will add to the quality of life and engender pride in the local community about their heritage. It shall also actively link the generations so that they understand, appreciate and help sustain local heritage. Engaging local schools and colleges is seen as a key part of this process.
- 1.5 The Group will have a Web Site.
- 1.6 The Geographical area covered by the Brymbo Heritage Group shall include the immediate communities of Brymbo, Tanyfron, Southsea, Moss and other locals communities and sites as appropriate.

### 2. MEMBERSHIP

- 2.1 Membership of the Group shall be open to all individuals, societies and other bodies that are in accord with the aims of the Group as stated in paragraphs 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, & 1.6.
- 2.2 A register of Group members will be maintained by the Membership Secretary and will be available for inspection.

### 3. GROUP STRUCTURE

- 3.1 The Group consists of a general membership and an elected Management Committee. Membership is open to anyone who has an interest in the activities of the Group and agrees with the terms of the Groups Constitution. A meeting open to all members elects the management Committee annually. Members of the Management Committee make appointments to the following posts annually:

**Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer and three ordinary members who shall form part of the Executive Committee.**

The Executive Committee shall invite observers, or co-opt specialists from time to time; this shall be determined by a simple vote by the Executive Committee acting on behalf of members and shall be renewable every three months. The Chairperson shall have the casting vote.

- 3.2 An annual general meeting will be held every twelve months. Not more than fourteen months shall elapse between one Annual General Meeting and the next.
- 3.3 The Brymbo Heritage Group shall have a bank account. The authorised Signatories should be: Chairperson, Treasurer and Secretary in any combination of two.

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#### **4. MEETINGS**

- 4.1 The Group will normally meet monthly, one of which meetings shall be the Annual General Meeting.
- 4.2 For the purpose of the Annual General Meeting **six weeks notice** will be given.
- 4.3 Extraordinary General Meetings of the Group may be called by the Executive Committee subject to the agreement or at the request of one third of the paid up membership.

#### **5. ALTERATION OF THE CONSTITUTION**

- 5.1 The Constitution of the Group can be altered in whole or in part only by the Annual General Meeting or by an Extraordinary General Meeting convened for that purpose. [4.3]

#### **6. GROUP PROPERTY**

- 6.1 Currently the Group does not have any property. Should any funding or opportunity be forthcoming to purchase Equipment, Manage Property and or Properties pertinent to the aim of the Group, an addendum to this document will be provided.

#### **7. SUMMARY**

- 7.1 This Group does not intend creating complicated systems and will use this Document as the basis of Group Policies and Practice. All members both existing and new will receive a copy of this document. Amendments to this Constitution can only be made at an Annual General Meeting or Extraordinary General Meeting.

#### **8. CHANGES TO CONSTITUTION**

- 8.1 A two thirds majority of members present and voting at any duly convened Annual General Meeting or Extraordinary General Meeting with respect to which notice has been given, of the matters to be taken into consideration thereof, shall have the power from time to time to make such Additions, Deletions or Alterations of the Constitution of the User Group which as to them seem requisite and convenient for the regulation, government and advantage of the User Group, its representatives and property, provided that no Addition, Deletion or Amendment shall be make at any time.

#### **9. WINDING UP**

- 9.1 The User Group shall be dissolved if a resolution to the effect is passed by a majority of two thirds of those present and voting at a General Annual Meeting or an Extraordinary Meeting held for that purpose. If upon the winding up or dissolution of the User Group, there remains after the satisfaction of all debts and liabilities, any monies and property whatsoever the same shall be paid to or distributed among the current Trust or Company, represented by members of the User Group.

#### **10. ADDENDUM**

- 10.1 The Group has been successful in gaining funding through a number of grants for computer and presentation equipment. This equipment is available to members, upon request to any committee member, for the purpose of 'Group' Heritage work.