

Industrial Revolution-era sites in the Forest of Dean being restored

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Darkhill Ironworks after vegetation clearance

Work is being undertaken in the Forest of Dean to ensure some of the area's most important built heritage is restored.

Built heritage refers to human-made sites which are part of the Forest's heritage, including several Industrial Revolution-era sites in the [Forest of Dean](#).

The Foresters' Forest's 'Built Heritage' project, which is funded by [National Lottery Heritage](#), has carried out work to help conserve some very important sites.

Sue Middleton, programme manager for Foresters' Forest, said: "I know many people enjoy exploring our Forest and coming across the remains of our heritage and wondering what it was and how it was used and who worked there.

"It is thanks to the specialist knowledge of some local Foresters that helped us focus our funding on conserving important sites that help tell the story of our Forest."

Dark Hill Ironworks and Titanic Steelworks, Trafalgar Colliery, and Blakeney Limekiln have all benefited from attention.

Darkhill Ironworks & Titanic Steelworks

This site near Ellwood is a Historic England Scheduled Monument because this is where British Steel started, with the pioneering work by metallurgist David Mushet and his son Robert Forester Mushet (1811-1891).



Darkhill Ironworks before vegetation clearance

The remaining structures are now easier to see because of bracken and ivy clearance.

There have also been repairs to stone structures due to root damage and weathering, including repairs to rotten wood shoring.

Some reinstatement of walls is planned for the coming months. This provides an interesting site to visit, where our built and natural heritage interacts.

Trafalgar Colliery

The colliery also has a significant claim to fame in that it was the first in the world to use electricity for motive power underground when Sir Francis Brain installed electrically driven pumps in 1882.

In addition to the obvious benefits of electric light over candles and gas, electricity could be supplied to all parts of the colliery via small flexible cables instead.

The advance in safety and productivity was huge. There is very little to be seen at the site of the colliery (in the Woods near Brierley) nowadays but there is the base of a chimney remaining.

The conservation works included excavation of the chimney base and rebuilding it partially by salvaging stones from around the site, and replacing capping stones.

Source: <https://www.gloucestershirelive.co.uk/news/gloucester-news/industrial-revolution-era-sites-forest-4220649>