

Ffos-y-fran news

An update from the land reclamation scheme at Ffos-y-Fran

Editor's note

Welcome to the 5th edition of the Miller Argent Newsletter.

In this edition we are going to tell you about father and son team David Davies and Jamie Sheen, who both work on the site but in different operations.

We have 7 father and son teams, one grandfather and grandson team and two sets of brothers who work together on the site.

We have chosen to write about David Davies and Jamie Sheen. They both have very different jobs on the site. David Davies (aka Speedy) is one of the six pumpsmen we have on the site. Their main responsibility is to ensure all the water treatment areas are working effectively and the water quality is within consent,

as well as overseeing all pumping operations on site. Jamie Davies is a disposal point operative. He works in the Disposal point, which is where the coal is brought up in lorries from the site and processed, which involves blending and crushing the coal ready to go out by train.

David and his son Jamie were both born in Merthyr and still live in Merthyr Tydfil today.

After leaving school David started work driving heavy machinery. He has worked in the coal industry in Wales for a number of years working on coal screening plants for Taylor Woodrow and Celtic Energy. David started work for Miller Argent in 2007 as a pumpsmen on site and



has now worked for over three years. Jamie, David's son went to school at Pen y Dre High School and then on to college to do a mechanics and welding course. After finishing college and his work based placements Jamie came to work for Miller Argent in 2008.

Latest pictures



Aerial View of Ffos-y-fran



Bronti before the big move



Identifying plant fossils



Fossil hunting at the Big V festival



Underground workings on site



Work continues

Our progress

General Site Update

In the last six months there has been significant progress on site. We have been helped by the earlier good weather this year and we were successful in achieving our 2010 targets, which is very encouraging for all the staff.

Progress continues in backfilling the initial void and already a large area has been backfilled almost to restoration levels. Work continues on advancing the cuts outside the initial void and will continue to reduce the height of the mountain. In this process we continue to come across all 30 coal seams on site, some of which have been worked in the past and some which have not. So far we have recovered over 1¾ million tonnes of coal, which means that the community benefit fund stands at a similar figure in pounds sterling. [Miller Argent continues to employ local people on site, 80% of the workforce are employed from the local area.](#)

Due to this year being the driest start to a year since 1929, according to the Met Office, we have brought in extra dust suppression equipment and bought an



additional fog cannon. The fog cannons in particular are proving to be a great success.

The community mini buses continue to be popular amongst local community groups with 85 groups now registered and using the buses regularly.

Archaeology

19th Century Brickworks Discovered



[During archaeological works on site, the remains of three buildings were discovered that were identified by archaeologists as part of a 19th Century brickworks.](#) These structures were most likely connected with the initial drying process and

subsequent firing of bricks and perhaps the mixing of clays to manufacture bricks.

Two of the structures that were discovered appeared to be a type of 'scotch kiln' comprising a rectangular shaped building with walls constructed of brick. There were six flue openings equally spaced on each of the northern and southern walls. These twelve flues provided the openings to supply the heat to the interior of the kilns once the doorways were blocked.

Internally channels distributed the heated air between the bricks that were being fired. Each of these channels were blocked along the centreline of the building for about four brick courses in height; this blocking was known as the centre bolt or 'deadman'. The purpose of these bricks was to distribute the heat evenly so that all the bricks within the kiln were fired.

Obviously the source of clay and shales suitable for brick making was readily available from the local area.

[For more information about the archaeological excavations at Ffos-y-fran go to the Miller Argent website.](#)

Community news

Miller Agent Supports Charity Bike Rally

Alan Davies, a truck driver employed on the site, organised a fundraising event in aid of a cancer research charity, due to the devastating loss of his mother at a young age from cancer. His passion for motorcycling brought him into contact with many fellow enthusiasts and this fuelled the idea of organising a bike rally for charity.

Following a great deal of planning, the morning of Sunday 27th June, dawned warm and sunny, which contributed to the overwhelming response that far exceeded the expected numbers. Over 150 bikes of all makes and sizes congregated in the Merthyr Tydfil College car park and it was clear to see with the sparkle of chrome and polished paintwork the pride and care taken with each machine by their owners.

Following the instructions of the stewards, the large convoy made their way to the Brecon Rugby Club's grounds, which was to host the afternoon's activities.

Several local rockbands provided the background music, which created a great atmosphere as well as the many 'Best in Category' bike competitions that



were keenly contested. One of the most eye catching machines was a three wheeler trike put up for sale by its creator Alan Davies to boost the funds raised for charity. The whole day went without a hitch and thoroughly enjoyed by the large crowd.

Over £2,000 was raised on the day with more money to follow. Alan would like to thank everyone for their generous support, especially Miller Argent who donated the t-shirts to all participants.

Bronti the Dinosaur reaches its new home!

On Friday 17th September, Bronti the dinosaur made the last leg of his journey to his new home Ysgol Santes Tydful. The school put a bid for the dinosaur from Dan-yr-Ogof Show Caves and were successful.

Having no way of transporting Bronti, Andrew Owen of the school's PTA contacted Miller Argent and asked if we would be able to help.

Miller Argent with the help of KJ Services Ltd managed to transport the dinosaur by flatbed lorry to it's new home at the school.

Unfortunately Bronti ate too much at his last home and so to transport the dinosaur, his head had to be removed from the body. Bronti's head made a dramatic entrance on the 17th September, as it was flown in by helicopter and landed in the school's playing field to the music of Jurassic Park and the chanting of the school children.



Croeso catref Bronti

Once Bronti's head had touched down and photos taken, the next task was to re-attach it to the body, so Bronti was whole once more. Attaching the head was a delicate and tricky task undertaken by

Miller Argent and KJ Services Ltd, but the operation went well. Bronti will now be the focal point of the school's new nature garden and hopefully greatly benefit the school.

The Environment

Ffos-y-fran's Great Crested Newt population is flourishing

Every year Miller Argent surveys the Great Crested Newt population that were translocated to their new home in the Cwm Golau Valley in 2005-2008. About 100 Great Crested Newts were translocated during this time and the indications are that this population is flourishing in their new habitat. In the surveys that are carried out every Spring there are signs of adults, eggs and juvenile

newts. In the 2010 survey the number of adults was almost double that of previous population estimates.

The Great Crested Newt is the largest newt species found in the UK and can easily be identified by its black appearance and orange undercarriage. It is a protected species under European law.

Geology

Miller Argent have been involved in a number of fossil hunts this year along with Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council and Ben Evans of the National Museum of Wales. One such event was 'The Big Valley Festival' hosted by Taff Bargoed Communities First at Taff Bargoed Park, Trelewis on Wednesday 18th August. This was the 7th annual Big Valley Festival hosted by Taff Bargoed Communities First, the first being held in 2004.

The event aimed to showcase the work of the voluntary groups and organisations within the Taff Bargoed Valley, and the work of the Communities First Partnership Board. Local services and facilities were promoted, and a wealth of advice and information on a range of topics from education and training to waste management and budgeting money was available. The event offered fun activities for all ages including water zorbing,

inflatables, a rodeo bull, face painting, a fossil hunt, archery and a petting zoo; and was a chance for the talented young people of Taff Bargoed to perform for their community on the main stage. The RESPECT youth choir performed a few songs including one they had written themselves, which was a great hit with the watching audience.

Liaison Committee

A vacancy has arisen for a residents representative on the Site Liaison Committee who currently meet every two months to discuss progress and issues relating to the site. Anyone interested should write to Miller Argent at the address below to request an application form.

Group Legal Action Against Ffos-y-fran Fails

The latest in a series of unsuccessful challenges against Miller Argent has been rejected by the High Court. Miller Argent would like to make it clear it is committed to working with the community and will continue to deal, investigate and action if necessary any complaints in a professional manner.

Hours of Operation

Excavation

Mon to Fri 07.00 – 23.00 hrs
Saturday 07.00 – 17.00 hrs

Coaling

Mon to Fri 07.00 – 19.00 hrs
Saturday 07.00 – 13.00 hrs

Blasting

Mon to Fri 10.00 – 13.00 hrs
14.00 – 16.00 hrs
Saturday 10.00 – 13.00 hrs

General Information

Miller Argent (South Wales) Limited

Cwmbargoed Disposal Point
Fochriw Road, Merthyr Tydfil
Mid Glamorgan CF48 4AE

Tel: 0870 111 5600

Fax: 01685 845 029

Email: maadmin@millerargent.co.uk

For further information please visit our website:

www.millerargent.co.uk

Emergency Contact

We have an out of hours [hotline telephone number](#) and [emergency mobile number](#) for any urgent enquiries, complaints or suggestions for the activities that are progressing on-site.

The numbers are:

[0800 988 8444](tel:08009888444)

[0789 496 8914](tel:07894968914)

Each enquiry will be recorded, investigated and dealt with.