

STRATEGIC PLAN 2010 - 14



The IRONBRIDGE GORGE MUSEUM TRUST Limited

Charitable Trust Reg No: 603117



MISSION & VISION

Our Mission is:

“To excel in researching, preserving and interpreting, for the widest audience, the Monuments, Collections and Social History of the early industry in the Ironbridge Gorge; to enrich the visitors’ experience with live demonstrations, hands-on activities and innovative educational programmes.”

In the work that we do, we will strive to:

◦ **INNOVATE** ◦ **ENGAGE** ◦ **EXCEL**



Our Vision is:

- To make the Industrial Age and Ironbridge’s role in it, as well understood in terms of world significance as the Egyptian and Roman epochs.
- To constantly expand the number of people who are able to share in the timeless significance of Ironbridge and Coalbrookdale.
- To ensure that every visitor to Ironbridge takes away something of value - material, intellectual or spiritual.

Values:

- We are committed to serving our local communities whilst playing a national and international role in the telling of the story of Ironbridge as the Birthplace of Industry.
- Our staff and volunteers are our most precious resource and we will empower them to help us make Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust a great place to work.
- We place professional integrity and customer service excellence at the heart of everything we do.





Canal Street, Blists Hill Victorian Town. One of the elements of the major development project completed during 2009.

INTRODUCTION

Founded in 1967, the Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust Limited is a registered charity whose twin aims are education and heritage conservation. Our goal over the next 5 years is to secure our future prosperity through the imaginative use of the historic assets in our care and to remain one of the world's foremost independent museums.

The Trust cares for 36 scheduled monuments and listed buildings within the Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Site and operates 10 museums which collectively tell the story of the birthplace of the Industrial Revolution.

These museums received 560,000 visits in 2009, including around 70,000 school visits. Our aim over the course of this Strategic Plan is to increase the number of annual visits to over 600,000, including an additional 4,000 educational visits. The largest of our

sites is Blists Hill Victorian Town, which in 2009 saw the completion of a £12m development, supported by Advantage West Midlands and European Regional Development Funding. Following this generational investment, Blists Hill will form the bedrock from which to initiate our future plans to achieve operational excellence and long-term business sustainability.

As well as 10 museums, the sites in the Trust's care include a research library, a tourist information centre, two youth

hostels, archaeological monuments, historic woodlands, housing, two chapels, and two Quaker burial grounds. In managing this diverse group of assets, we will continue to pursue an active development programme which meets the Trust's charitable aims. Of key importance over the next 5 years and beyond will be the preservation and ongoing maintenance of the monuments and historic buildings in our care, together with new and innovative interpretation schemes.

In 2009 the Museum celebrated the 300th anniversary of Abraham Darby's successful smelting of iron using coke. This technological breakthrough gave the world high-quality, mass-produced iron, paving the way for the Industrial Revolution. However, as well as the many benefits which flowed from this world-changing innovation, it could also be argued that 1709 marked the beginning of the systematic burning of fossil fuels on an industrial scale and, therefore, the start of a process which we now recognise as leading to climate change. The Trust has embraced the need to embed environmental sustainability in all its work and by 2014 we will have achieved the aim of making the Ironbridge Gorge one of the most environmentally sustainable inhabited World Heritage Sites.



The Coalbrookdale 300 Festival celebrated the 300th anniversary of the world changing events that took place at Coalbrookdale in 1709. The Old Furnace, seen above, benefited from improved access and a new interpretation scheme during 2009.



Coalbrookdale by Night.
Philip de Loutherbourg, 1801.
Courtesy The Science Museum, London.





Nikki Williams of Kinki Glass holds up one of her signature items outside the Fusion building at Jackfield Tile Museum. Fusion is a centre for creative industries and makes up part of the Ribbon of Creativity running throughout the Gorge.



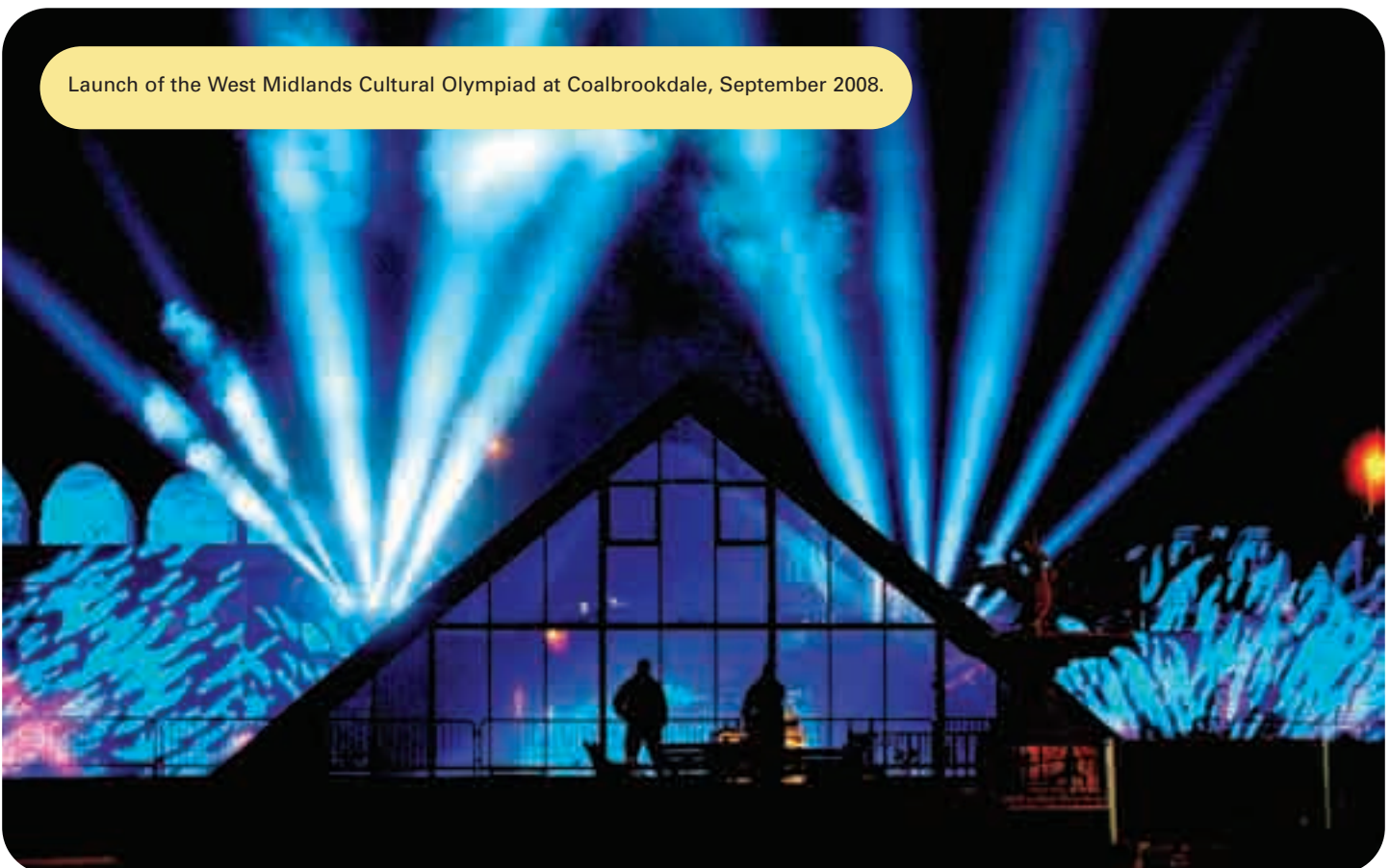
As well as working to deliver our education and conservation goals, Ironbridge also plays a significant role in the tourism economy of the West Midlands. As one of the three tourism gateways to the region, the Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Site is vital in the delivery of the West Midlands' Visitor Economy Strategy and in making our region a great place to live, as well as to visit. In terms of future tourism opportunities, Ironbridge lies only a few miles from the town of Much Wenlock, the home of Dr William Penny Brookes, the inspiration behind the modern Olympic movement. By working with both public and private partners, our goal will be to fully capitalise on the tourism potential in the run-up to and post London 2012.

The Museum is in the rare position of having its entire collections Designated of national importance. Over the course of this Strategic Plan, we will utilise our collections to support the Museum's Retail Strategy and in the creation of other sustainable commercial income streams. Linked to this Retail Strategy are the creative industries which, whilst being self-supporting businesses, also enhance our visitor offer, particularly at Jackfield Tile Museum and Coalport China Museum. The creative industries integrated within our sites are one of the Museum's unique selling points and over the next 5 years we will develop and deliver pioneering programmes designed to support both our educational and commercial goals.



Forged ironwork made in the Blacksmiths' workshop at Blists Hill Victorian Town. The items are retailed through the Trust's premium retail brand 'Made in the Gorge'.

Launch of the West Midlands Cultural Olympiad at Coalbrookdale, September 2008.





50 volunteers from locally based company Capgemini help with the relocation of the Museum's costume store to its new location within Enginuity.

By 2011, we will have completed the merger of the Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust Ltd with the Ironbridge Gorge Museum Development Trust, created a new Fundraising Strategy and commenced its delivery. In addition, we recognise the importance of marketing in achieving our strategic aims and also that the ongoing development of and support for our staff and dedicated volunteers is crucial if we are to capitalise on the opportunities ahead. Whilst the Trust continues to value its independence, both existing and new partnerships with organisations such as the University of Birmingham, Telford & Wrekin Council, Shropshire Council, the YHA and the private sector will be vital in achieving the Trust's long-term Vision.

The Strategy is divided into 3 main sections - Lifelong Learning, Curatorial and Development. In delivering against these 3 key areas, we will remain committed to our core principles of innovation, engagement and excellence and these important tenets are embedded throughout this Strategy. In setting out the Trust's main goals and aspirations 2010-14, this Strategy also seeks to set out a longer-term Vision, at least a decade into the future.



Museum employee Margaret Vincent receiving her long service award from Museum Trust President Mike Lowe.

The Coalbrookdale Literary & Scientific Institute underwent redevelopment in 2008 through Heritage Lottery Funding. The SITE is operated by the YHA as one of two Youth Hostels in the Gorge.

