

Valley's mining heritage steals the limelight

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Yr actor Michael Sheen a Phennaeth Cymru CDL Richard Bellamy

A new exhibition unveiled this weekend at the South Wales Miners Museum in Port Talbot was visited by locally born Hollywood star Michael Sheen, who went back to his Port Talbot roots to see first hand how the museum is bringing mining history into the 21st century.

Thanks in part to National Lottery players, the Past 2 Present project will breathe new life into the story of one of Wales' foremost mining communities. As well as preserving the museum's current collection for future generations, many of its artefacts will be digitally logged to ensure their heritage is not lost.

Newly created interactive 'info-points' will also mean each visitor can also enjoy a bespoke guided tour of the museum at the touch of a screen.

[quote=Actor Michael Sheen]"The history of coal mining runs through each and every one of us like a rich seam... It is vitally important that we honour that and I'm so glad to know that this museum will do just that."[/quote]

Visiting the museum, internationally acclaimed actor Michael Sheen remarked: "The history of coal mining runs through each and every one of us like a rich seam. The values and spirit of its communities run in our blood. It is vitally important that we honour that and I'm so glad to know that this museum will do just that."

Importantly, nearly £350,000 from HLF has helped attract crucial project match funding from other bodies. All this means that museum volunteers will receive better training in collection management, while local schoolchildren can learn about the importance of the coal industry to the cultural fabric of the Afan Valley today and in years gone by.

Coal mining was once one of Wales' biggest industries. Booming between the 18- and early 1900s, it played a key role in Britain's Industrial Revolution. But throughout the 20th century coal fell out of favour as technology improved, leading to the closure of all but a few pits and leaving the towns that once depended on coal for their livelihood to find a new purpose.

Why not pay a visit to the new and improved museum this half term with the family?

Visit the [South Wales Miners Museum website](#) for more information.

To find out more about how to apply for HLF support, please contact the Wales team via email: wales@hlf.org.uk.

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