

Ebbw Vale Notes

An extension of the line to a new northern terminus, Ebbw Vale Town station was opened on 17 May 2015.

Ebbw Vale is a town in Wales whose name means "valley of the wild horse" in Welsh. [Untruth: the town motto is Always carry a mac.](#)

Ebbw Vale Iron Works, which later became the Ebbw Vale Steelworks, opened in 1778, followed by the opening of a number of coal mines around 1790.

Now has a population of roughly 33,000. In relatively modern times the area was a quiet uplands spot in rural Monmouthshire. With only about 120 inhabitants at the end of the 18th century, Ebbw Vale and the whole area was transformed by the Industrial Revolution.

Steel from Ebbw Vale was used to construct the Sydney Harbour Bridge.

At its height (1930s-40s), the steelworks in Ebbw Vale was the largest in Europe, although it attracted very little attention from German bombers during World War II. By the 1960s, around 14,500 people were employed at the steelworks. The end of the century witnessed a massive collapse of the UK steel industry. A strike in 1980 was followed by closures and redundancies which resulted in the dismantling of many of the old plants. In 2002 only 450 were employed in the old industries, and by July of that year the final works closed.

Aneurin Bevan, the Labour Party politician who was main architect of the National Health Service (NHS), was the Member of Parliament (MP) for Ebbw Vale from the 1929 general election until his death in 1960, when he was succeeded as MP by Michael Foot.

In 1992, the Ebbw Vale Garden Festival was the last National Garden Festival. It was sited on the south side of the recently demolished steel works.

Clock Sculpture

It took just days for Ebbw Vale's new time piece to earn the nickname the Marmite Clock because residents can't decide whether they love it or hate it.

The 11 metre high stainless steel town clock is officially named Echoes because it is engraved with the words of townspeople, the final design of the clock was a direct result of a number of consultations undertaken between artist Marianne Forrest, local businesses, schools and the community of Ebbw Vale.

The clock includes a number of integral design features and materials associated with the former steelworks and coal industries and even glows at night.

The main arc of the clock is constructed in stainless steel and the clock face is reminiscent of pit head wheels.

Glyn Ebwy, the Welsh name for Ebbw Vale, translates in Welsh to mean Valley of the Wild Horse and the arc of the structure represents a horse's neck.

Time Piece - Marianne Forrest (artist / sculptress) and Katherine Worthington (stone carver). Katherine completed a 2 year diploma course at Weymouth College in letter carving. Katherine also hand delivered the heavy stones from London to Wales.

Marianne Forrest: 'Designer and maker of wristwatches, Pocket Watches and Timepieces of all sizes including Public Art works. Trained as a silversmith I found the constraints of the material led me to explore a variety of materials from stone and glass to fur and twigs in a vast array of possibilities that is still an adventure. My largest piece to date is in Ebbw Vale, North Wales, a 10.5 Metre High Town Clock that cantilevers over the main High Street with the words of the local community carved into its base. Finished in 2009 it is fast establishing itself as a landmark piece that draws in tourists and sightseers to this small Welsh town'.

The balls: "But people are complaining they are getting so hot in the sunlight that you can "fry an egg" on them and people are getting burnt."

<https://www.katherineworthington.com/sculptures/ebbw-vale>

Dragon sculpture, Bank Square, Ebbw Vale

Heart of the Furnace, dragon sculpture, Bank Square

As part of the regeneration of the former steel (and coal) town of Ebbw Vale in the South Wales valleys a series of public art works were commissioned.

This is called 'Heart of the Furnace, Calon y Ffwrnais', and is a 4 metre high stainless steel dragon created by South Wales blacksmiths Sam Pask and William Holland of Phoenix Forge which stands in Bank Square.

The public space known as Bank Square was created in 2014 as part of the town's regeneration. Its centerpiece is a dragon, made of stainless steel and standing four metres high.

The sculpture refers to the iconic dragon on the Welsh flag and to Ebbw Vale's history as a centre of steelmaking. It was made by Phoenix Forge blacksmiths of Carmarthen.

Bank Square is named after the building on its north side. This was home to the local branch of the Midland Bank and later of HSBC (which took over the Midland in 1992).

The kink in Bethcar Street at this point reflects two phases in the street's development. In the mid-19th century, the street north of here was defined by rows of buildings each side of Bethcar Chapel and opposite. It wasn't possible to build along the street further south because the road was flanked by a steelworks reservoir on the east side and a tramway embankment on the west.

By the late 1890s, the north-west corner of the reservoir had been filled in. This allowed several new buildings, including the bank, to be squeezed in. Space was so limited that the new buildings' fronts protruded beyond the street's earlier buildings, creating the street's kink.

<https://historypoints.org/index.php?page=dragon-sculpture-bank-square-ebbw-vale>

People:

[Michael Foot, Member of Parliament \(United Kingdom\)](#) (MP) for the Ebbw Vale constituency from 1960 to 1992

[Steve Jones](#), athlete, world marathon record-holder 1984

[Mark Williams](#), snooker player, born in Cwm

[Nathan Wyburn](#), Pop Culture Artist