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# Glass factory furnace is back in action as museum opens its doors

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A furnace burst into life at the weekend on the site of a famous Black Country glass factory for the first time since it closed 15 years ago with the loss of 220 jobs.

Allister Malcolm, resident glass blower at the new White House Glass Cone Museum of Glass built where Stuart Crystal once stood in Wordsley, even wore a white shirt and black bow tie for the special occasion during the official opening on Saturday.

The 41-year-old said spent 40 minutes producing the first piece of glass to be made at the landmark premises – a platter with a hint of aquamarine and a series of stripes of coloured glass with gold inclusions.

He said: "Historically this will be very important piece and so I dressed accordingly. This is a very special place."

The museum was built with £2.147 million from the European Development Fund and a £900,000 grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund for the finishing touches on the inside of the open plan silver building.

The project has been driven by members of the British Glass Foundation (BGF) formed after the news in 2009 that the area's Broadfield House glass museum was earmarked for closure. Graham Fisher, one



Resident glass blower Allister Malcolm, with a creation

of the BGF trustees, said: "I am absolutely blown away by it. I have been looking at this for months on paper but now I have seen it in the flesh it is better than I could have hoped for."

Graham Knowles, chairman of the trustees, agreed: "It has the wow factor and is far better than any of us dared to imagine.

It is the perfect way to revive a derelict glass factory. I am elated."

He added: "I do not think the glass industry has died in Stourbridge since it is still a per eminent area for glass artists."

Meriel Harris, another trustee, declared: "My main feeling is one of disbelief that we have finally done it."



The new White House Glass Cone Museum of Glass in Stourbridge

The Mayor of Dudley, Councillor Mohammed Hanif, said as he toured the premises: "It is amazing."

"Stourbridge has always had an international reputation for glass and this impressive purpose built museum is the perfect vehicle to carry on this proud tradition," he added.