

Parc Cwm Darran Audio Trail Script

2.Ogilvie View (3:00)

This vantage point offers a great view of the walk ahead. Directly in front of us the path - that we will be soon following - snakes its way down towards Ogilvie Lake, complete with its small tree covered island. Steep-sided woodland plantations to our left and right appear to wrap around behind the lake enclosing it in the valley floor, but this wasn't always such an idyllic vista...

02_mike_view (0:55)

Well, looking south from here the first area you would come across, where the reeds are by there. They were sidings, what I call sidings, where they kept the empty trucks.

There was one track coming up the side of the colliery where one British Rail engine would used to pull all of the trucks up - about 50 at a time. And it used to come up to here, and then it used to feather off into 3 or 4 tracks, and they used to put so many trucks into each track, and they would go under the washery and you would have a bunker under the Washery where all the washed coal was and whatever size they wanted they would put into each individual trucks.

And the actual Washery or coal preparation plant, you see the island in the middle of the lake? That was the washery, as we termed it.

Mike Iles spent 30 years working here at Ogilvie Colliery and beyond the vast washery you may be able to make out the domed-remains of the north pit shaft. Whilst the south shaft no longer exists, two trams mark its position and we will visit these at stop 7.

Back then, rather than bird song, it would have been noisy machinery drawing coal from the earth and conveyor belts and trucks transporting material that would have filled the air until its closure in 1975. The air would have been thick with dust and nearly all that you can see now would have been black.

To your right a train line ran right through what is now the upper-level car park. This was the main passenger line, but trucks filled with coal joined the main line a quarter of a mile further south. Today, the former railway line is a quiet cycleway linking the villages of Bargoed to the south and Fochriw to the north.

Let's now head down to the colliery site itself and take a closer look.

Using the rail on top of the wall as a guide, head down to the tarmac car park and turn left. Keeping the low wall to your left, carefully head towards the car park entrance and over the stone-set speed hump. Turn right onto the main path and follow this as it gently descends towards the play park on the right, the audio trail route is bordered by white lines from here on, keep in between these as you walk. Listen to track 3 at the stopping mark on the path