

Parc Cwm Darran Audio Trail Script

5.The Washery (2:10)

05_washery (1:27)

The Washery started at the south end of the island there and it extended up to where the reeds begin there. It was quite a big building. It covered most of the collieries boundary. They had shaker conveyers, you know, with different diameter apertures in the plates and what it was, the coal used to come up the shaft in trams, it would go in a tumbler then and emptied into a conveyor and then it would go onto a screen and they had men then, what they call picking off the screens, and they used to pick muck off the screens and chuck that onto another belt. But the smaller stuff, because you couldn't pick everything, it used to go in a big washbasin, but because muck was heavier was coal, the muck used to sink to the bottom and the coal would float. And then 'cos the water was circulating all the time, the coal would be taken off and it would go down again and then water would go through the sieve, so all you were left with at the end then was a very small coal as we called.

But what they used to do years ago, they had a big tower full of water and as the water was circulating, this tower was full of dirty water. But because there was no restrictions on what you could put into the river years ago, on the weekend, they would empty this tower in the river.

Try to imagine the scene as Mike remembers - a stark and imposing building awash with noisy machinery pumping away 24 hours a day, 6 days a week. The water tower, casting a shadow over where you stand now, with water as black as tarmac cascading into the river that plots the same course as the path today. This wasn't a place for wildlife. It wasn't really a place for people and at stop 6 we will discover where all this coal went

Follow the path (between the white lines) around the lake until you come to the wooden bridge and listen to track 6 on the bridge.