

Breaking the mould - Paul Cooke

Hi, my name is Paul Cooke. I am Team Leader for Sustainable development and Living Environment within the Council, but during the development of Parc Penallta I worked for Groundwork Caerphilly as Project Manager for the project.

The 'Breaking the mould' project came about as part of the millenium programme to regenerate coal tips and areas of spoil. So, the idea was that every site, of the 21 sites for Groundwork UK, had similar on-site to link them together. So the idea was to design a sculpture which could be used in different locations, in different ways. So various workshops were done with children and people involved in the various sites, design a sculpture which could be used in different locations - 'Breaking the mould' is the result of that.

What happened is that the artist, Andrew McKeown, would come to site and he actually had a version of the model, made out of polystyrene, in the back of his van. So we identified a location and he put the various pieces in a way that seemed appropriate for the site. So the taller pieces that you can see are pointed towards Tyler Town colliery and the others are arranged to make a seating area around the 'seed'; to make an interesting sculpture. There are various different versions of this on 21 sites around the UK.

I really like the sculpture. When the idea of getting a sculpture to fit on the 21 sites was originally thought, I thought it might be very difficult to do. I don't know how well it works on other sites but it certainly seems to work very on Parc Penallta, because it is about reclaiming land, and it is about new beginnings and the steel seed coming out of the old concrete block seems very, sort of, apt for the site itself.