

Parc Cwm Darran Audio Trail Script

6. Bridge

In the middle of the 20th century we would have been floating about 20 feet above a single railway track that transported coal from this site to Workington in the north-west of England. There it was used as coke in the steel making industry and Mike has good reason to remember that each of the 50 trams were loaded with 20 tonnes of coal...

I remember during the 1972 miners strike, there was a row of trucks up there that hadn't been washed and the collieries went on strike in 1972 for 3 or 4 weeks and we ran out of coal in the house because they stopped delivering. So what we did we came up here and we dropped the sides of the wagons and whatever we had, a wheelbarrow – we would come all of the way up here with a wheelbarrow, and take the coal out of the trucks. The police came here one night and they could see what we was doing and I think they came for the same thing – they had a couple of sacks in the book – and they had seen us right, we was right in the headlights so it was no point running, so they just turned around and waited for us to fill our wheelbarrows and whatever, and we went, and you could see them come back after then.

But after that month I think there was about 20 wagons, from Brittainia, but you must appreciate there was muck and everything in them – it hadn't been sorted. You had to have a look, you know, make sure you weren't taking muck – it's a long way to wheel a bit of muck right down to the village! But when the strike was over there wasn't much coal in those wagons, it was all stone!

So here we are at the heart of the colliery. To the north we have the lake and former site of the washery. To the south a small stream runs to the right hand side of the memorial garden that is home to both the north and south shaft and a submerged pit wheel. As we make our way off the other side of the bridge we will pass the stores on our right.

Just behind the trees was a building, which was the colliery stores. You could everything in there; from new boots and helmets and gloves for the men to a small, little nut and bolt for something, to, you know, thousands of items that was used underground. So there was a big stores by here.

Whilst the bridge offers a good view of the site it was the manager who had the best vantage point, as we will hear at stop seven.

Follow the path straight ahead, through a green squeeze barrier and into the car park. Taking great care, turn right and follow the perimeter of the car park towards its entrance keeping in between the white line,. Follow the path, between the white lines, out of the car park and up the road until you come to the second kissing gate on your right. Take care you don't trip over the speed humps. This gate leads to the memorial garden; the surface in here is a fine shale material. There are no white lines to guide you around the garden. If you have a visual impairment, and you do not have a guide, it would be advised to listen to the next three tracks whilst leaning on the gate. If you are happy to enter the garden, then listen to track 7 by the black pair of trams.

Key: Narrator | **Interview excerpts** | *Directions*