

## **Sultan the Pit Pony – various contributors**

Sultan himself is made, I suppose, 99% from spoil on site.

It is a 200 metre long earth sculpture reckoned to be the longest earth sculpture of its type in Britain; which people don't often spot until it is actually pointed out to them. It was designed by an artist called Mick Petts.

He had 2 JCB drivers working down there an every day he'd a pallet full of plaster and he'd carve out a small model of what he wanted them to do on the day; because originally it was just a bund, like a slug rather than a horse to protect the area from the wind.

And then as they were working he'd drive up to the top, to the viewing point here, look down then run back down and say "take a little bit more off that leg."

And Mick says that it sort of represents the final freedom of the pit ponies when the collieries closed in 1991. When he was first constructed he didn't have a name, and it is the locals that have called him, or nicknamed him, 'Sultan', after one of the famous colliery ponies that were kept in Penallta Colliery.

I think the sculpture that Mick has created is very clever, because it uses the materials in different ways to emphasise the sculpture itself. So, for instance, the subsoil allows the grasses to grow and you can see that blowing in the wind, when it grows, like a brown shaggy pit pony.

At the top end, his eye is made out of local anthracite coal.

The hooves themselves, we just left these without anything on and you can see the coal; shale; and spoil, which is black, and it obviously looks like a horses hooves.

The original ear was a willow sculpture which, because it's on the highest point of Sultan it didn't take, so we replaced it with a metal shaped ear, and what we would like here is for you to send in your thoughts and ideas about the park so we can get some feedback about how you think the park looks and is run.

The big area behind the events area seems very open and barren but this was actually designed for Lapwings. What Lapwings need is areas where they can feed in scrapes and wet areas. So we decided we were going to put some wet areas on the site and Mick, the artist, came up with the idea of making them into huge footprints so that it looked as though Sultan had walked across the site.