

14 May 2012
[Accessibility help](#)
[Text only](#)

MID WALES

[BBC Homepage](#)
[Wales Home](#)

Penrhos Playing Fields

Last updated: 05 July 2006

For more than a century, Ystradgynlais was part of the South Wales coalfield with hundreds of local people employed at the Ynysgedwyn Colliery. The site closed in the 1960s and what was once a derelict piece of industrial land is now home to a range of recreation facilities.



[more from this section](#)

Ystradgynlais

[Coelbren's Bee Keeper](#)
[Local Photographs](#)
[Penrhos Playing Fields](#)
[Phototour](#)
[Steve Meo](#)
[Then & Now Slideshow](#)
[Useful Info](#)
[WW2 Memories](#)
[Your Town](#)
[Ystrad Art Club](#)

Written by Huw Williams from Ystradgynlais:

"In 1967 the Ynysgedwyn Colliery, which had existed on this site, for over 100 years closed for the last time. For more than a decade the colliery slag heap and the pit head baths stood as monuments of remembrance to the hard work which had been performed under the ground. Due to potential hazards the 40m high slag heap was levelled in the early 1970's and the resulting wasteland was seeded and left to develop naturally. The derelict pit head baths were eventually converted into a thriving Youth and Community Centre in 1978.

In 1982 a Youth Training Scheme was set up and started work in reclaiming part of the site for sporting and recreational use by the community. Unemployed young people guided by experienced leaders supported by a local plant hire firm managed to remove pieces of conveyor belts, bits of machinery and other waste from the area. Drainage ditches were dug out, two football pitch sized areas were levelled and grass seed was applied to the surface. Unfortunately monies supporting the Scheme ran out before the project could be concluded and the fields lay unplayable for another ten years. The Youth Club, in particular, suffered from this frustrating situation because local youngsters had no other playing fields available to them.

The Youth Club continued lobbying local Town Councillors and Powys County Council and eventually obtained advice from a local landscaper(Cenydd). With a small budget the Youth Club members themselves paid for some initial work which caused one field to become playable.

This proved an immediate success not only to Youth Club members but also to other young people in the area. It proved that there was need for recreational facilities in the area.

A new junior club ,called Penrhos Utd was formed which progressed into it's current membership of over one hundred young people between the ages of 8 and 15, who play on Saturday mornings in the Neath and District leagues.

A 'planning for real' exercise conducted by the Communities First Project in May 2002 identified the need for improved recreational and



[BBC Local](#)
[Mid Wales](#)
[Things to do](#)
[People & Places](#)
[Nature & Outdoors](#)
[History](#)
[Religion & Ethics](#)
[Arts & Culture](#)
[Music](#)
[TV & Radio](#)

Local BBC Sites

[News](#)
[Sport](#)
[Weather](#)
[Travel](#)

Neighbouring Sites

[North East Wales](#)
[North West Wales](#)
[South East Wales](#)
[South West Wales](#)

Related BBC Sites

[Wales](#)
[Cymru](#)
[Canolbarth](#)



sporting facilities in the Penrhos area of Ystradgynlais. People suggested improved footpaths, cycle ways, skateboard facilities and

playing fields.

As a result of this public consultation, Powys CC obtained Wales Assembly Government monies in late February 2002 to enable improvements to the Playing Fields. With the support of the Communities First Project, Powys County Council, Ystradgynlais Town Council and the Forestry Commission reclamation work, started twenty years earlier was completed.

The fields are well used, the Skateboard Park is continuously busy, the local footpaths and open ground is well walked by local residents, access to the Sustrans cycle route is appreciated and the area is generally considered a picturesque and pleasant area."

Written by Huw Williams from Ystradgynlais.

your comments

Shaun Dowdeswell Amsterdam

I used to attend the youth centre and cannot speak highly enough about Hugo, Cenydd and the rest of the staff there. It was a very good place to go and probably saved a lot of us youngsters from getting into trouble and the like. Good luck and all the very best.

Mon Feb 15 15:01:27 2010

John O'Hara, Bristol

Hi Huw, glad you wrote this, very interesting the transformation of the site, hope you are all well

Mon Aug 31 15:39:03 2009

Jeff Morgan, Melksham, Wiltshire

I have fond memories of Ystradgynlais where I grew up in the 50's and 60's. My Uncle Ernest was an engineer at Ynysgedwyn Colliery. Once, on hearing a change in the tone of the winding engine he suddenly got up from a meal and wasn't seen for 2 days. I had the experience of eating bacon and eggs cooked on a shovel on the footplate of a steam engine.

Mon May 18 11:28:30 2009

Winifred Card, Clinton, SC USA

My grandfather, John Griffiths, was a miner in the Ynysgedwyn Colliery. After losing a fourteen year old son in a mining accident, he became active in trying to establish a Labor Union, for better working conditions, hours, wages, etc. for the Miners in the early 1900's. Winifred Card

Thu Feb 12 10:16:10 2009

Andrea James from ystradgynlais

I dont remember the old colliery as I'm am only 20 years old..but I have been attending the youth centre from the

age of 11 and am now currently working there..the facilities here are well used by young people all over the village...and because we are open four nights a week it keeps the young people out of harms way...I am honoured to be part of such a succesful project.

Fri Jun 20 11:09:20 2008

mead, william, cowplain, hants

In 1944 I and my sisters were evacuated_close to the colliery _ and remember it flooding after heavy rain. We would climb the slag heap, collecting coal for the fire, and sledging down to the bottom on an old railway sleeper. I have happy memories of Wales and the kindness shown by everyone. Thank you, regards, Bill

Tue Jan 30 10:58:09 2007

This site is now closed and cannot accept new comments.

Archive Terms of Use

This document is made available for archival or reference purposes and should only be used for private (non-commercial) purposes. These pages may contain materials or content which do not belong to the BBC and in particular materials or content which belong to members of the public whose identities may or may not be known. Whilst the BBC had the necessary rights, permissions and clearances to include and publish them as part of the former 'Where I Live' BBC website, the BBC may not have the right to allow users to use, copy or exploit them or to distribute them to others. No such usage is permitted and the BBC cannot process requests for permission to do so. For more information about deleted or discontinued web pages on the BBC, go to: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/help/web/mothballing/>