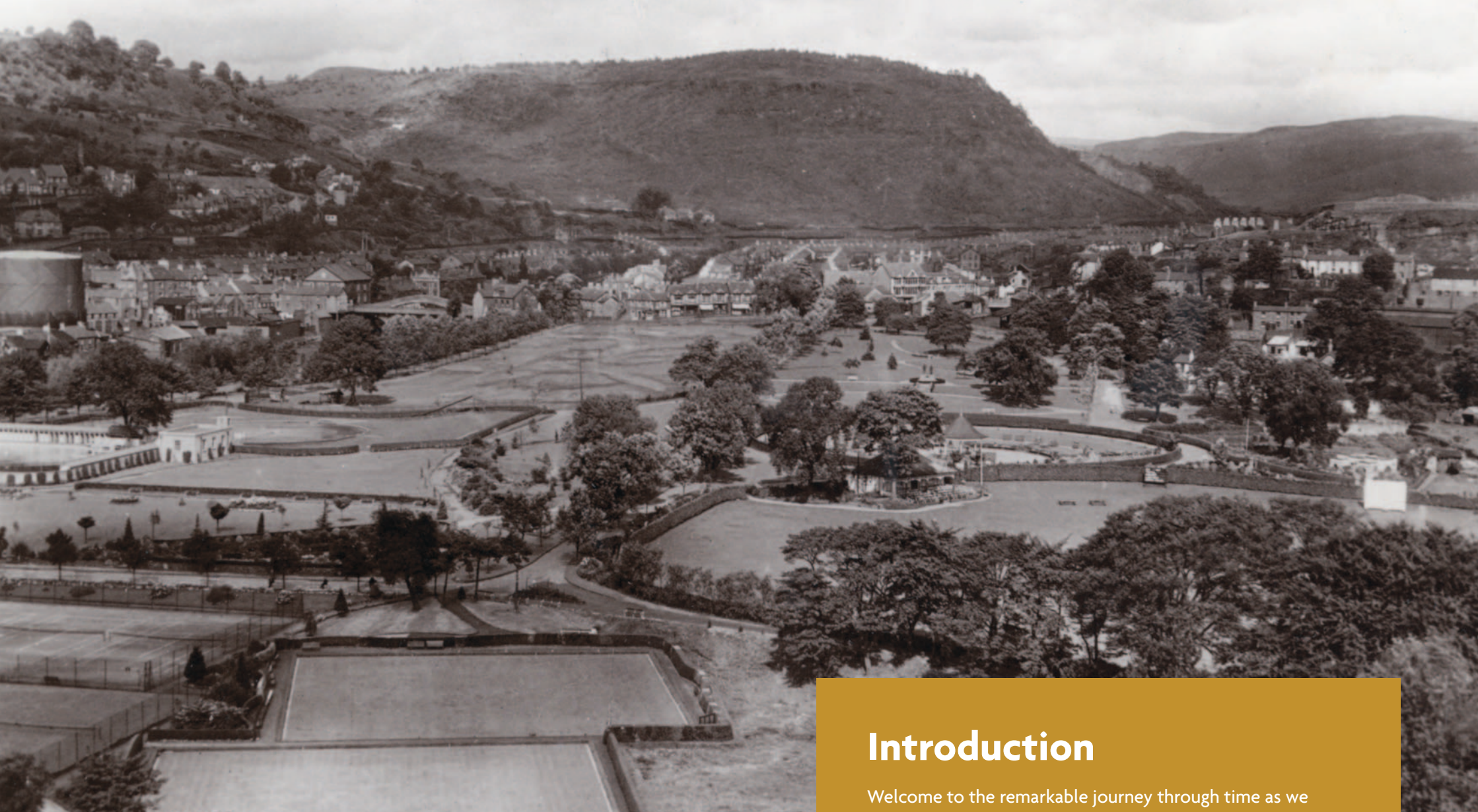




Celebrating 100 Years of Ynysangharad War Memorial Park





We would like to thank historian Keith Jones for providing the research for this booklet, and we'd like to thank the National Lottery Heritage Fund for funding the production of this booklet.

This small booklet serves as a glimpse into the park's rich history. To delve in deeper, please ask a staff member at the park about the larger booklet available online.

Introduction

Welcome to the remarkable journey through time as we celebrate 100 years of Ynysangharad War Memorial Park. Step into a world where history and nature intertwine and the echoes of valour and remembrance resonate through the tranquil surroundings. This is not just a park; it is a testament to the courage, sacrifice, and enduring spirit of the men and women who gave their lives in service of their country.

► Donated by Hazel Webb, a photo of herself and her uncle James Kirby in Ynysangharad Fields, with the Chainworks behind them.



Pontypridd Urban District Council

In 1897, the Pontypridd Urban District Council proposed transforming Ynysangharad Fields into a park, recognising the need for a community gathering place. Negotiations with the Llanover Estate, the site's owners, progressed slowly, but the community's desire for a park grew stronger with the devastating impact of the First World War. In 1919, the council launched an appeal to raise funds to purchase Ynysangharad Fields, with the Miners' Welfare Fund playing a crucial role by providing substantial financial assistance. By 1923, the land acquisition was complete, marking the beginning of the transformation into Ynysangharad War Memorial Park.

Ynysangharad Fields

Ynysangharad Fields holds a rich past that predates its transformation into Ynysangharad War Memorial Park. The area was home to a traditional Welsh farmhouse known as 'tŷ hir' or 'long house' since at least 1740. Notably, the esteemed Welsh Methodist evangelist Howell Harris stayed overnight at the farmhouse, leaving his mark on the area's history.

As time passed, Ynysangharad Fields became more than just a farmhouse and agricultural land. It became intricately intertwined with the industrial history of Pontypridd. One notable chapter in its history unfolded with the establishment of the Brown Lennox chainworks in 1818. The presence of the chainworks brought about a flurry of activity and employment opportunities in the area. It also left a lasting impression on the evolving landscape of Ynysangharad Fields in the North East part of the site.

As the town of Pontypridd experienced rapid industrialisation and the clamour of progress echoed through its streets, the needs and aspirations of the community began to shift. The demand for open spaces where families could escape the hustle and bustle of urban life became increasingly apparent. Something new was growing in the fields. The potential to develop this strategic area further, to meet this changing scenario was becoming ever more apparent.



▲ Donated by Hazel Webb a photo of the Pontypridd Urban District Council's Central Clinic.



Welcome to

Ynysangharad War Memorial Park

On August 6th, 1923, the community of Pontypridd eagerly gathered to witness the unveiling of Ynysangharad War Memorial Park. Field-Marshal Viscount Allenby, a revered military figure, played a pivotal role in the ceremony, adding solemnity and gravitas to the occasion. As the crowd gathered on that momentous day, their eyes were drawn to the park and another poignant memorial that would forever stand as a testament to the valour and sacrifice of the 5th Battalion, The Welch Regiment.



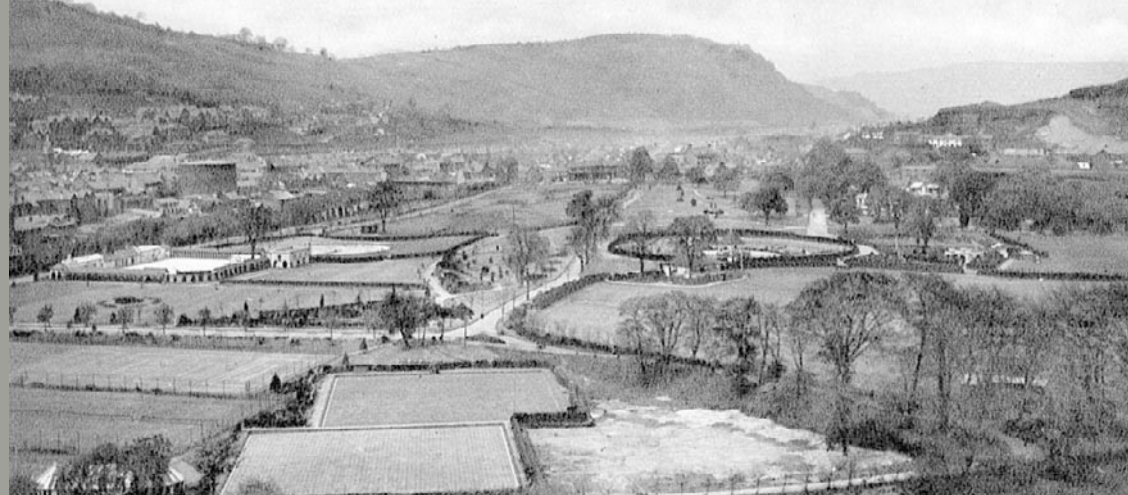
- ▲ Sheep grazing in front of the Cricket Pavilion.
- ▲ A moment of calm captured in the Sunken Garden.
- ◆ Viscount Allenby unveiling the War Memorial on the Common.

In a powerful gesture, Viscount Allenby unveiled the memorial on the Common, paying homage to those brave soldiers who had fought and perished in the defence of freedom. It stands as a tangible symbol of remembrance, a constant reminder of the bravery and selflessness exhibited by the people of Pontypridd.

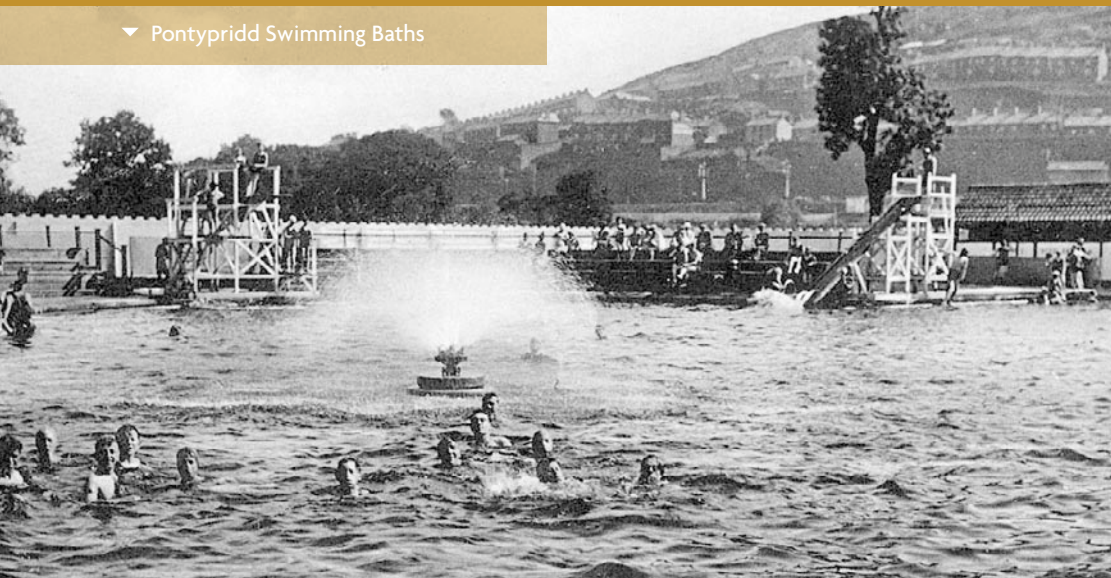
From the 6th of August 1923 onwards, the park became a place of remembrance and reflection, symbolising the resilience and unity of the community.

The Miners' Welfare Fund

The Miners' Welfare Fund was vital to the park's development. Established in 1920, the fund provided financial support to improve the social conditions of colliery workers. Their generous contributions, including £4,000 towards acquiring Ynysangharad Park, ensured the park's development. Further funding of £2,500 supported the construction of swimming baths, leading to the opening of the Lido in 1927. The Miners' Welfare Fund's contributions secured the park's status as a community space.



▼ Pontypridd Swimming Baths



The National Lido of Wales

On July 30th, 1927, the Chairman of the Pontypridd Urban District Council officially opened the Lido. The Miners' Welfare Fund played a crucial role in funding around 90% of the construction costs. The Lido featured a distinctive design and became a cherished venue for swimming and leisure activities. Despite facing challenges and closures, the Lido underwent restoration in 2015, thanks to significant funding from National Lottery Heritage Fund, European Regional Development Fund and Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council.

The Sporting Legacy of the Park

Ynysangharad War Memorial Park celebrates a rich sporting heritage with its well-maintained cricket field, bowling green, and football pitch. These facilities have provided recreational opportunities for locals and visitors, nurturing a strong sense of community.



▲ Onlookers enjoy a cricket match, image donated by Roy Hope.



The Bandstand

The Bandstand in Ynysangharad War Memorial Park has a rich history that dates to its triumphant opening on July 24th, 1926.

Despite a delay caused by rainfall, Councillor A. Seymour and Mr Cyril R. Morgan led the ceremony, accompanied by The Musicians' Union Orchestra and the Great Western Colliery Silver Band. Today, the Bandstand remains a much-loved venue for music and merriment, hosting various performers and leaving a lasting impact. In 2022, a rejuvenation journey began with support from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, restoring the Bandstand to its original design and adding a magnificent weathervane inspired by Albert Edward Parfitt's original design. The Bandstand now stands resplendent and ready to welcome melodies again, serving as a testament to the park's commitment to being a land of song.

▼ A photo taken before a concert in the Bandstand.



A Land of Song

Within Ynysangharad War Memorial Park stands a tribute to Evan James and James James, who gifted Wales its national anthem, "Hen Wlad Fy Nhadau."

The memorial unveiled in 1930, honours their contribution to Welsh cultural heritage. The campaign for the memorial began in 1929, with local teacher Rhys Morgan leading the appeal for contributions. Designed by Sir William Goscombe John, the memorial features bronze figures representing poetry and music, symbolising the essence of the anthem. It stands as a reminder of the enduring power of music to unite a nation and fills us with pride in Ynysangharad War Memorial Park.



▲ Photos of the celebration.

Challenges Faced

Ynysangharad War Memorial Park has overcome various challenges throughout its rich history, strengthening its bond with the community.

Notably, Storm Dennis in February 2020 caused significant damage, including to the beloved Lido and the 'Marks & Spencer' footbridge that connects the park to the town centre. Despite these adversities, the park and community have shown remarkable resilience. Immediate efforts were made to repair and restore the affected areas, ensuring safe passage for visitors. It is worth noting that the

park was temporarily closed during the Covid-19 pandemic. When the gates reopened, the park blossomed into a haven of solace and reflection for all who sought respite. The determination to overcome challenges is a testament to the unwavering dedication of the park and the community, strengthening them together.



CALON
TAF



Thank You, From the Heart

Ynysangharad War Memorial Park would like to express its deepest gratitude to the National Lottery Heritage Fund for their invaluable contribution to securing a prosperous future while honouring our rich heritage. The most recent funding has facilitated the restoration of key features within the park, including the Bandstand, Sunken Garden, and Toilet Block. Additionally, new interpretation has been implemented to enhance the visitor experience, complemented by a diverse program of activities. The funding has also provided Canolfan Calon Taf, a brand-new centre within the park which provides a dedicated classroom space, an outdoor garden with raised flower beds, and a greenhouse. A true community hub that will invigorate the spirit of learning, encourage active engagement and foster a sense of togetherness.



▲ Photos of Canolfan Calon Taf alongside our lovingly renovated Bandstand.



As we enter a new era, we look forward with hope and determination. The park's enduring spirit, supported by recent revitalisation efforts and community support, ensures a bright future. Ynysangharad War Memorial Park will continue to be a place for celebrations, quiet reflection, and outdoor activities.

In celebrating the park's centenary, we pay homage to the past, embrace the present, and shape the future. Every visitor who enjoys our facilities brings joy to our hearts. Let us carry the spirit of this remarkable park as we move forward, united in our commitment to cherish, protect, and pass on this invaluable treasure to future generations.

Embrace the enchantment of Ynysangharad War Memorial Park, where nature, history, remembrance, and community intertwines. Immerse yourself in the vibrant future that awaits and join us in shaping the timeless narrative that unfolds within these cherished grounds.

By preserving and nurturing this beloved park, we honour the sacrifices of the past. Together, we can forge new memories, inspire future generations, and create an enduring heritage.