

Maesteg Welfare Park 1925-2025



Ffrindiau Parc Lles
Maesteg

Friends of Maesteg
Welfare Park

THE BEGINNING

Maesteg Welfare Park, as it is now known, was developed in 1924/25 by Maesteg Urban District Council as a facility to serve the recreational needs of the people of the Town.

The Welfare Park wasn't the first to be provided in the Llynfi Valley – Garth Welfare Park had been provided some two years earlier, however, the vision for the Park was for a facility which would surpass any of those already provided.

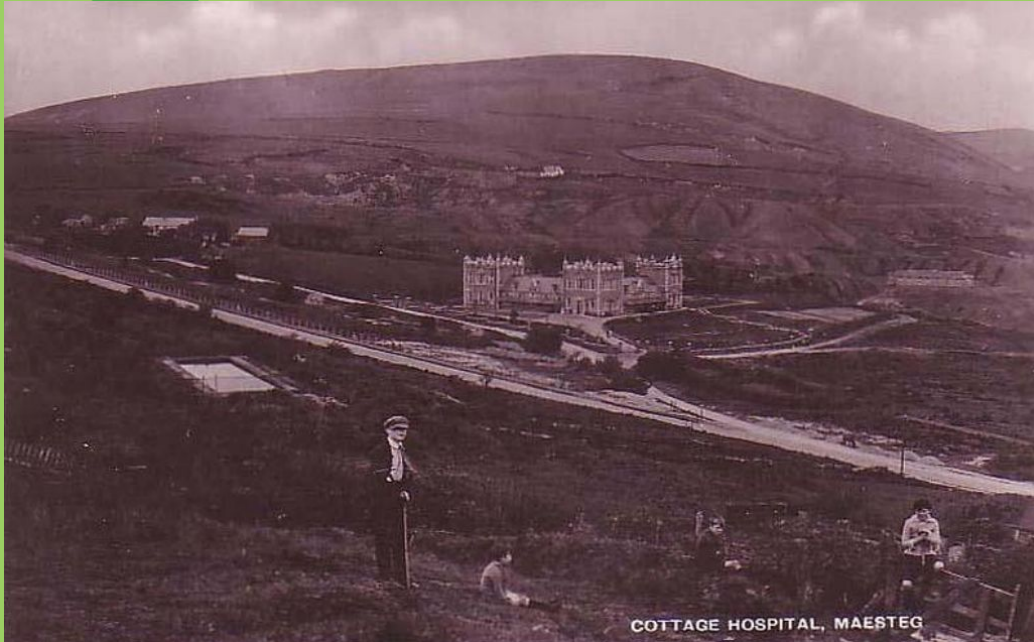
The Mining Industry Act 1920, under which one penny from each ton of coal raised is allocated to the provision of parks, recreation grounds, public libraries and institutes, paved the way for the development of many parks of this type across the industrial areas of South Wales.

Public amenity

The Welfare Park has been cited as an early example of a public amenity being provided from industrial deterioration through extensive landscaping.

The site of the Welfare Park, which is located below the Maesteg Cottage Hospital, is significant historically for a number of reasons:-

- Furnace top area for the Llynfi Ironworks 1839 to 1885
- The site of many beehive coke ovens
- Several engine houses
- Coal mine known as the “Gin Pit” (also known as Pwll Gwaith Newydd),

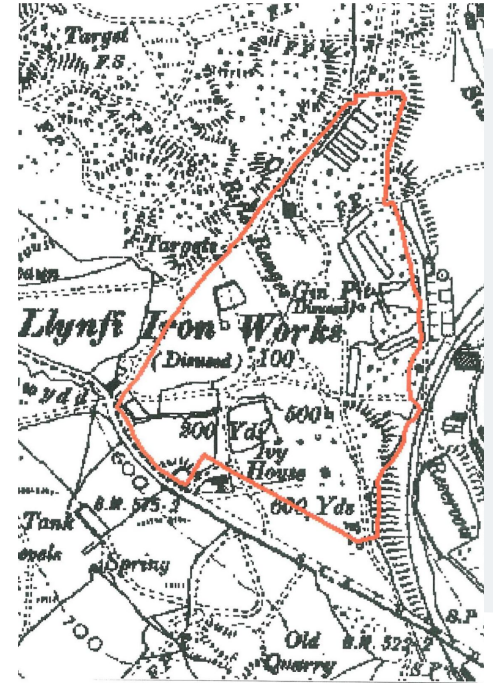


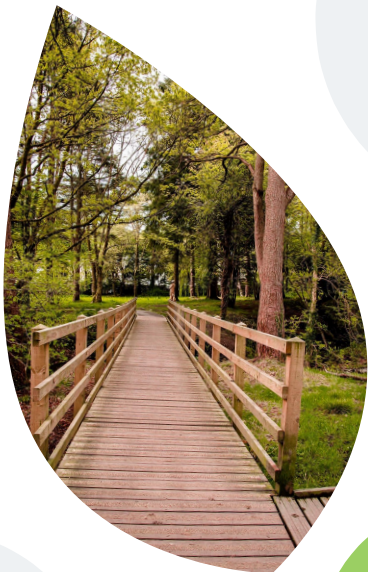


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The location of the Welfare Park has been outlined on the reproduction of the 1900 Ordnance Survey Plan below, on which are shown the sites of the Ironworks, the Gin Pit and various other industrial features.

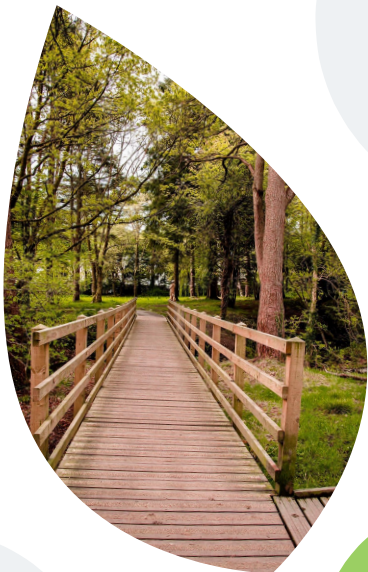
The “Gin Pit”, thought possibly to be a shortened version of Engine Pit, although it has also been suggested that the name relates to the mining term for a winding mechanism - a gin, was the scene of the worst mining accident in the Llynfi Valley – three boys and eleven men died in an explosion on Boxing Day 1863.





Gin Pit

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Origins of the park

The development of the new park, known at that time as the Neath Road Welfare Park Project, was initiated in 1922 when the Urban District Council in conjunction with the Miners Welfare Committee set about identifying a suitable site for a recreation ground.

By the Summer of 1924 the project had reached the stage where funding for delivering the scheme and for the future maintenance of the Park needed to be secured, land formally acquired and formal plans and tenders for the scheme drawn up.

Funding

Funding for the scheme was obtained from a variety of sources. A formal trust was set up by the Urban District Council in order to receive a grant from the Miners Welfare Fund. The value of the grant was £4,000. In addition the support of the Maesteg District of Miners was sought to agree a levy on wages of one penny per week per miner for the ongoing maintenance of the park. This support was forthcoming as was the support from other workers such as Council employees, railwaymen, shop assistants and schoolteachers who also agreed to a levy on wages - school teachers for instance paying up to six pence per week. The amount raised annually for maintenance through the levies was estimated at about £800 per year.

Job advert for the first Groundsman and Caretaker of the Park

Maesteg Urban District Council

- Welfare Scheme

- Park & Recreation Ground

- The Council invite applications for the post of Groundsman and Caretaker for the Park and Recreation Ground, Maesteg.

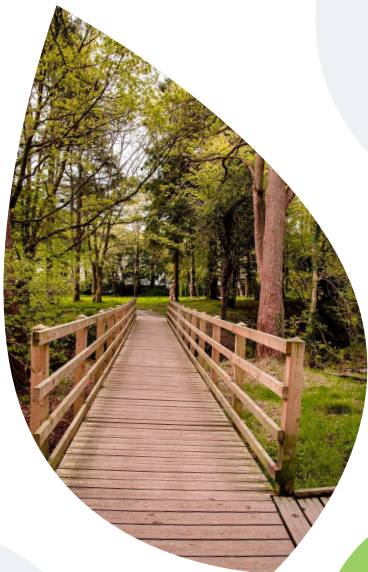
Applicants must have had previous experience of Greenkeeping and general care and handling of turf. Experience with the general upkeep and maintenance of hard Tennis Courts will also be considered.

The wages will be at the rate of £3 per week.

Applications, accompanied by copies of not more than two recent testimonials should be sent to the undersigned not later than the first post on Tuesday, the 14th April, 1925.

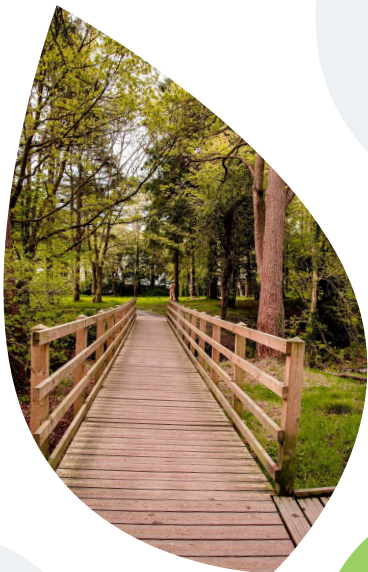
Dates the 1st Day of April, 1925

(Signed) A. KING-DAVIES, Clerk to the Council, Council Offices Maesteg.



Land use

Part of the land now known as the park, was Tairwaun Farm, but eventually all 22 acres were transferred to the Urban District Council at a minimal fee.



The Opening

Opening of new Arena

The official opening of the new arena at the Maesteg Park will take place on Sunday next, August 14 at 8 p m when a community singing festival will be conducted by Mr W J Watkins. On Wednesday, August 27, a grouped open-air radio dance will be held 6.30 'For particulars see advertisement'.

The new arena, which has been given the title "Maes-y-Han" is the conception of Mr Evan Davies, surveyor to Maesteg Council, and was planned, designed and a carried out under his supervision, with the assistance of Mr Burton the Foreman. It was commenced under the scheme of the Society of Friends to provide insurance stamps for unemployed. It is an outstanding feature as there is nothing like it in South Wales, if indeed anything comparable in Great Britain for beauty of design and spacious capacity.

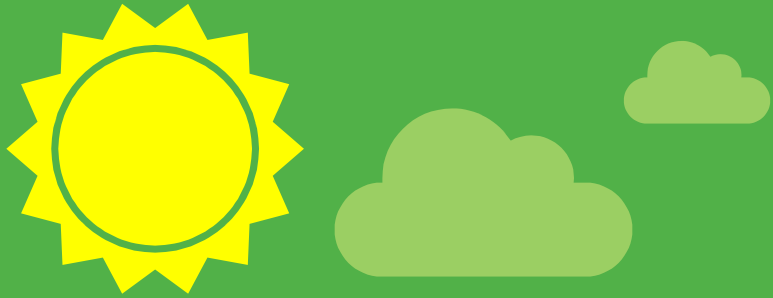
Its terraces have been built by unemployed miners, as also have its green lawns and the network of intersecting asphalt paths. Its cost was borne by the Society of Friends and the Unemployment Grants Committee, the ratepayers portion being the small amount of £300. Some idea of its spaciousness can be obtained when it is stated that it has two terraces six feet wide intersected with neat alcoves. The total flow area of the arena is 4,915 square yards of which 800 square yards have been asphalted for various social purposes.

Article from 1925

Maesteg Welfare Park

Celebrating 100 years.





More
History
coming
soon