

CYNGOR CYMUNEDOL DRAETHEN, WATERLOO A RHYDRI



DRAETHEN, WATERLOO & RUDRY COMMUNITY COUNCIL

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Before the Parish [or Community] of Draethen, Waterloo and Rudry came into being, the same area was made up of three separate ancient parishes; Rudry Parish [c.1307], Rhyd-y-Gwern Parish [c. 1658] and Llanfedw Parish [c.1281].

In terms of Parish, or Community Councils as they are now known in Wales, these were established by the *Local Government Act 1894* and took over some responsibilities previously undertaken by the Parish vestry.

Whereas Caerphilly County Borough Council is the current Principal Authority for Draethen, Waterloo and Rudry Community Council, the principal authority for the original Rudry Parish Council was Cardiff Rural District Council which was created in 1894 and preceded by Llandaff and Dinas Powys District Council. Llanfedw and Rhydygwern Parishes were initially administered by St Mellons Rural District Council but were annexed to Llandaff and Dinas Powys Rural District in 1895.

In 1974, Cardiff Rural District was abolished and our area came under Rhymney Valley District Council. This lasted until 1996, when it was replaced by the current Caerphilly County Borough Council made up from the merger of Rhymney Valley with the Islwyn Borough of Gwent.

Also, in 1974, as a consequence of the *Local Government Act 1972*, Rudry Parish Council became Rudry Community Council.

Rhyd-y-Gwern Parish [then Community] Council existed until 1985 when it was dissolved and its area absorbed into that of Rudry Community Council. 'Rhydygwern' is now one of the three Wards of DWR Community Council.

In 2010, following public consultation, Rudry Community Council changed its name to Draethen, Waterloo and Rudry Community Council to better reflect the areas it represented. The council comprises three wards named after the original three parishes: Rhydygwern (2 seats), Llanfedw (2 seats) and Rudry (5 seats). There are 9 seats in total.



DRAETHEN

There are records of the village dating back to 1465, where it was shown as Trayth Maghon and the current version of the name first appeared in the form Melin-y-Draythen in 1615.

The village lies within a Conservation Area with a narrower Historic Village Area. This listing, since 1976, has helped maintain the special character of the village.

The village is nestled in the Nant y Draethen valley between the hills of Coed Craig Ruperra and Coed Cefn-pwll-du (which is dotted with disused lead mines, lime kilns and quarries).

The Rhymney Valley Ridgeway Walk, the Rhymney River Circular Walk and the Llwyn Hir Forestry Walk all meet up at Draethen.

The initial development of the village centred on the old watermill, 'Melin Draethen' (a post medieval corn mill) and is strung out along the main [Rudry] road with some further dwellings along the roads leading to Michaelston-y-Fedw and Machen.

Over the years the village supported a sawmill, quarries, a trout farm, a garden centre and dog kennels but is now primarily residential with only the Hollybush Inn as a commercial property.



Hollybush

Within the Historic Village area is the Grade II listed 'The Row', a rare example of a surviving row of early 19th century workers cottages.



Another listed building of note is Bridge Cottage (Grade II) next to Pont y Draethen which leads over the Rhymney River to Lower Machen. There is evidence of a Roman settlement between the bridge and the main road at Lower Machen likely associated with the lead/silver mines in the hills of Coed Cefn-pwll-du.

It is believed that the Romans operated a lead mine under the village which runs for 120 metres underground and supposedly provides strong evidence of a counterfeit operation dating from the third century.

There is a traditional red telephone box in the centre of the village which the community council own and maintain.

The area around Draethen is known as Rhyd-y-Gwern (from at least 1567 when a forge was referenced there) and was administered by Rhyd-y-Gwern Parish Council until 1985 when it was dissolved and its area absorbed into that of Rudry Parish Council. 'Rhydygwern' is now one of the three Wards of DWR Community Council.



WATERLOO (TY'N-Y-COEDCAE)

Waterloo is a small village on the outskirts of Rudry comprising some 100 households and while it is now purely residential, it has a significant industrial history. The area was originally known as Ty'n-y-Coedcae and there is a street of that name in the village, built in 1998. The street was named after the local farm of that name and means 'the house in the wooded field'.

The English name has developed from the first street in the village, Waterloo Row, named after the Waterloo Forge and Tin Plate works which, amongst other items, made equipment for the aviation industry as there was an aircraft works at nearby Machen. Just to the North of the River is Gelli Wastad farmhouse, [where Basil and Rusty's Ice Cream Parlour operates from).

This Georgian house, which was constructed on the site of an early [at least 15th century] house, was built for the Master of Machen Forge sometime in the late 18th century. Dr William Price's Father is believed to have been baptised at the house.

At one time there was a large tin plate works which made, among other things, equipment for the aviation industry – there was an aircraft works at Machen. Waterloo Tinplate works was opened in 1875 by the Waterloo Iron & Tinplate Company with two steam driven mills – eventually expanding to four electric driven mills. The tinplate works closed in 1943 and was then used as a wartime Naval storage depot, with the remaining machinery dismantled by 1954.

Waterloo Row was built in 1891 at Ty'n-y-Coedcae for the tinplate workers. The wall post box was installed in October 1894.

Rudry Ironworks (Rudry Iron Co.) was sited just South of what is now Waterloo Place and began life in 1828. However, the ore came from workings on Mynydd y Bwlch about 1 km southeast of the works, but it was expensive to extract and the works closed after just six years. The owner, Christopher Pope, was declared bankrupt in 1831 and the blast furnace, eight mines, three pits and one 'patch' were auctioned off. The buyers ran it for another three years but it closed in 1834 and by 1930 all the remaining structures had been demolished.

There was a tramway, the Mynydd-y-bwlch Tramroad, which connected the ironworks to the Rumney Railway at Graig-y-Rhacca.

Brecon & Merthyr Railway's Caerphilly line ran on the North side of Waterloo on the 1861 Old Rumney Railway line and, in 1891 was expanded with a second, almost parallel line built on easier gradients to allow the heavy trains out of Caerphilly to bypass the 1 in 39 incline up into Machen.

The Machen Viaduct, built in 1864, can still be seen where it used to carry the eastbound branch of the Caerphilly line over the River Rhymney.



Machen Forge and Tinplate Works by Forge Wood near the viaduct is one of the oldest iron forge sites in South Wales. The forge dates from the sixteenth century and it expanded into tinplate manufacture in 1826 until closing in 1886. The remains include the ruined stables and disused viaduct that was part of an extensive waterpower system.



Waterloo had a station [of sorts] from 1908 to 1956. The platform was made from sleepers and it had a name board and one lamp. 'Waterloo Halt' was for 'down' services only and is now built over at Waterloo Place. The section of line was finally closed in July 1964.

Others along the line were more fortunate in having some kind of shelter. This is Gwern-y-domen Halt [pic. 1957]. This was located opposite what is now Lansbury Park

On 2nd March 1935, the Rudry Parish Council wrote to Great Western Railway requesting they build a shelter for passengers at Waterloo Halt.



The Divisional Superintendent of GWR responded 20th March advising it was not their practice to provide shelters adding "If, however, you can do anything to foster business at this Halt and increase the numbers to such an extent as to justify the provision of a structure, I should be very pleased to reconsider the matter."

Also sited at Waterloo to the North of the railway line, was the Coates Brothers Paint works (Cray Valley Factory) which opened in 1952 and which later evolved into the Valspar paint division – although it produced resins, varnishes and adhesives rather than paint. It was one of the biggest employers in the area until its closure in the late 1990s with the loss of 210 jobs.

In 2007 consent was given for a large housing development for over 500 homes and a primary school but costly remediation of contaminated soil has, according to the site owners, made the scheme unviable.

Waterloo's most famous son is Dr William Price who was born in 1800 at the 17th century Ty'n-y-Coedcae farm cottage and is best known for cremation, Druidism and the Chartist movement.



The main farmhouse [noted from at least 1875] became a public house, the Green Meadow Inn, whose owners applied in 1996 for planning permission to build 13 detached dwellings on the site.

While there were many who sought to protect it for posterity, CADW did not support their efforts and in February 1997, planning permission was granted and the Inn and its cottage were demolished. In its place a new street named Ty'n-y-Coedcae emerged.



As in Draethen, DWR CC own and maintain a traditional red telephone box in the centre of the village.

RUDRY (RHYDRI)

Rudry has been known by many names over the centuries including: Rudri [1307]; Rothered [1314]; Reddery [1476]; Rudre [1550]; Y Rydri [1566]; Riddrie [1583]; Ruddrisse [1670]; Ruddry [1707] and Rhudd dre [not dated] but since at least the late 19th century it has been known as Rhydri [Welsh] or Rudry [English].

In the early part of the 19th century, there was only one main road, known as the Ridgeway Road, which ran from Caerphilly to Draethen past St James' church which dated back to 1254. Otherwise the village and surrounding area was simply paths and tracks.



1932 View from Cinders Lane to the 'S Bend' with The Old Smithy on the right. The left hand track no longer exists and the remainder is now tarmacked.

There was a path from the village to the Halt at Waterloo which was repaired by Rudry Parish Council in 1897 and named the 'Diamond Jubilee Path to mark Queen Victoria's 60th year of reign.

Rudry once had two schools, the first, Rudry National School, was located opposite St James' church, and founded in 1835 but closed in 1902 when the second, Rudry Board School, was opened just outside Rudry Village.



It still flourishes today as Rhydri Primary School.
[pictured 1932]

The Rudry National School became a Church Hall and was also the HQ of the Rudry Platoon of the Home Guard formed in 1940. After the opening of the Parish Hall in 1957, the Church Hall was used for church meetings but eventually was sold and is now a private residence.



In 1890 a Post office was opened in village at 16 Garth Place and on 15th October 1894 a post box was installed in the wall. The Post office, seen here in 1932 [left of picture], closed in 2003.

There was, at one time, four public houses in and around Rudry; the Griffin Inn, next to St James' church [now a private residence], the Maenllwyd [grey stone], the Green Meadow in Waterloo and the Rudry Hotel. The Griffin was the oldest with evidence of medieval masonry and speculation it may have been a pilgrim hostel at some point. The Maenllwyd dates back to the 17th century and The Rudry Hotel (known locally as 'The Monty' due to workers in the industrial era when men were paid wages there and subsequently drank and gambled them away) from the 1890s.

The Maenllwyd



The Griffin Inn



The 'Monty' was the subject of a great deal of local resistance to it at the time it opened. The hotel was built on land owned by a director of Rudry Colliery.



This is an extract from an article of the local minister [South Wales Daily News, 28th August 1891]:

Now, "R. T." states also that this intended hotel is the "only one within some miles of the Rudry Colliery. He also states that the directors or businessmen visiting the colliery have to walk "miles" for refreshments or accommodation. They can get at all times refreshment and accommodation at the Griffin Inn or Green Meadow, which is within half a mile to the Rudry Colliery, and if they consider this an unreasonable distance then we say their appetite is not normal.

Is it reasonable that any sane person would build an hotel valued at nearly £2,000 to meet simply the accommodation of the directors of this colliery, who number about seven in number, and meet about four times a year? Your correspondent also states that this intended hotel will suit the convenience of a larger number of the inhabitants than either of the existing houses."

We are not aware that we are suffering any inconvenience in this form, as all our requirements are more than fully met by the existing houses; and as "R.T." states he is not interested in the hotel it would be well for him to look after matters he is interested in."

The village also skirts Rudry Common, 225 acres with considerable landscape, wildlife, educational and recreational benefits. It is believed that in the Dark Ages, the boundary between the Silures tribe and those of Gwent was in this area but history is not clear until the time of the Normans. We do know that the Silures waged guerrilla warfare against the Romans in 48 AD and were eventually subdued in 75 AD. The Silures are believed to have spoken an early version of the Welsh language.

After the Roman, in the 5th century, the territory of the Silures tribe became the Welsh Kingdoms of Gwent, Brycheiniog, and Gwynllwg.

The industrial development of Rudry common dates back to the 14th century evidenced by small coal workings (bell pits), and iron ore was also dug from the area. Coal mining records in the Rudry area date back to 1316.

In 1665 local legislation required the bell pits to be filled to prevent stock falling down the holes.



Bell pit – Rudry Common

During World War II, the US Army used the common for their manoeuvres and both Dr William Price and his Father are known to have favoured recreation on the common.



The listed building, Gwaun y Bara, on the outskirts of the village was home to Roger Williams, the local iron master in the 1690s.

[Pic. 1932]

Industry around the village included Rudry Colliery (which closed in 1904 with the loss of around 200 jobs), Rudry Brickworks and the Rudry Lime Kilns.

Starbuck Street, in Rudry, was named after Edward Starbuck Williams of Swansea, Chairman of the Rudry Cottage Company Ltd which was formed with £5,000 capital in £1 shares, by the proprietors and workmen of Rudry Pit in May 1890, for the purpose of erecting 15 cottages to be purchased by members of the company and paid for 'by light instalments'. The land was owned by Mr Williams and on Saturday 26th July 1890, Mrs Williams laid the foundation stone for the first 10 cottages then the party adjourned for 'luncheon and toasts'.



Edward Starbuck Williams died in 1906 and was laid to rest at Danygraig Cemetery, Swansea.



CHURCHES

At one time there were two churches in the Parish of Rudry but now only St James' [Anglican] Church remains as a place of worship.

Ebenezer Independent Chapel

This chapel was built in 1794 in the ancient hamlet of Berllan-gollen between Rudry Village and the Maenllwyd. It was modified in 1821, enlarged in 1864 and again in 1903. The final chapel was in the Arts and Crafts style with a gable-entry plan and small pane round-headed windows.



The services notice on the brick pillar is headed 'Rudry Chapel' noting 'Family Service 10.30'

It was sold as a private residence in 2008 for the princely sum of £149,000.

The artifacts, including a marble tablet "Erected to the memory of our brave boys who gave their young lives in the Great War [1914-1918] of whom the world was not worthy" was relocated to Rudry Parish Hall.

Also, a bardic chair from the chapel was relocated to Rhydri Primary School. Many Welsh chapels contained bardic chairs which are created and awarded in the Eisteddfod tradition, dating back to the 12th century, of Chairing the Bard (Cadeiro'r Bardd).

St James' Church

There is evidence that the church was founded in 1254, initially as a wayside shrine used by pilgrims.

The church was used as a chapel of ease to the parish church [St Barrwg's] in Bedwas until 1914 and a parish priest was installed from 1254 until 1920.

The church records date back to 1627.

The church was restored in 1885 and in 1961 the walls of the nave and tower were reenforced and the roof was retiled. It was Grade II listed in 1963.



1885 Renovations as reported in Welsh newspapers - 6th November 1886

On Monday morning the picturesque and very ancient parish church at Rudry, which has undergone thorough renovations at a cost of about £700, was re-opened for divine services. The Lord Bishop of Llandaff preached to a large congregation. In the evening, a thanks-giving service for the late harvest was held when the Rev. J.L. Meredyth, rector of Gelligaer, preached in Welsh. Several of the local clergy also took part in the services.

The principle subscribers for the renovations were Lord Bute, Lord Windsor and Lord Tredegar. While Lords Bute and Tredegar are very well known, not so perhaps Lord Windsor.

Lord Windsor owned an estimated 15,383 acres of land in Wales, mainly in Glamorgan and Flintshire. Of that acreage 664 was in the Caerphilly, mostly from Mountain Road to Van Road, another 678 was in the Hamlet of the Van, and another 1,218 in Rudry. Lord Windsor descended from the Clive of India family – hence Clive Street and Windsor Road in Caerphilly and the [now demolished] Clive Hotel. The Windsor Clive State is now the Plymouth Estate – Robert Windsor-Clive born 1857, the Lord Windsor, was also the Earl of Plymouth.

It is said that Oliver Cromwell sought refuge in St James' during the English Civil War but there is a lack of hard evidence to substantiate this. However, with the Puritans' well-known disregard for the trappings of Anglicanism, such a story is eminently possible as Cromwell was in the area during the war.

The war memorial and three chest tombs of the Moses family in the churchyard are also Grade II listed.



Dr William Price, born in Ty'n-y-coed-cae (Waterloo) was baptised here on 14th April 1800.

There was no school in Rudry until 1835 and while the curates of the church probably provided some basic education for its younger members, there was no record of any formal education in the Parish.

Between 1755 and 1780, forty-four marriages took place at St James' and of the eighty-eight people involved, only twenty-one could sign their own names.

PARISH HALL

On 13th June 1948, after receiving Notice in January 1948, the Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries consented to the transfer of just over 5 acres of common land to establish a Parish Hall and Social Centre [with playing fields] for the inhabitants of the Parish.

On 11th May 1953, the three Trustees of then established Rudry Parish Hall and Social Centre paid one shilling to Mountjoy Ltd for the Lord of the Manor of Sengenydd and secured the land for the inhabitants.

Management and control of the 'Trust Premises' was vested in a management committee of 12 members plus Rudry Parish Council (DWRCC), St James' Church and the Ebenezer Congregational Chapel (the Trustees).

The actual Parish Hall building was opened in 1957 after the local Home Guard, initiated funding whereby locals would contribute one shilling each week from their wages.

The hall was extended and renovated in 2009.



HOME GUARD

The Home Guard was essentially an armed citizen militia formed in May 1940 to support the British Army.

Members of the Home Guard were allocated a variety of tasks such as guarding vulnerable points, stores, patrolling the local area, manning anti-aircraft guns and searchlights. At the peak of its existence the Home Guard numbered 1.3/4 million men and was organised into 1,084 infantry battalions, 113 A.A. batteries and 27 motorised Transport columns.

Enlistment into the Home Guard was made compulsory in 1942 for certain classes of individuals.



The 6th Glamorgan Battalion covered Caerphilly, Hengoed and Ystrad Mynach and men from Rudry provided No. 3 Platoon of 'A' Company.

WWII BUNKER

There were many concrete bunkers built during the war to conceal highly secret groups known as the Auxiliary Units, or the Secret Army, set up to relay vital information about enemy movements and help mount counter-attacks as Britain braced itself for occupation during World War II.



This one is in the Coed Coesau-Whips Woodland, just South of the Maenllwyd Inn car park.

The main entrance to the bunker would have been camouflaged with soil and leaves, while the first chamber would have been made to look like a poacher's den, and behind this would have been the main chamber in which the wireless operator would have hidden.



POLICE STATION

At one time there was a police station or more accurately a police house [Ty-Sarn] in Rudry, between the village and the Parish Hall. It is thought to have had a holding cell for prisoners. It is not known when it was established but it was certainly used as such in 1893 as there is a listing for a Police Constable James Bowen at Rudry Police Station at that time. There was also a second less well-known police presence at Cwm Leyshon Cottage which housed the Ruperra Estates Police Station.



Police Station [1932]

This view shows the police station from the opposite direction [in the background]. The chimney on the left is Hawthorne Cottage and the Bridge [no longer there] went over the Tram Road.

To the right of the Police Station is a track to Tywn Sŷch.



Five years after this picture was taken, on 26th October 1937, the Parish Council wrote to Cardiff Rural District Council requesting that the 'old bridge near the police station' be removed stating it was "considered a danger because it throws motorists out of their seats when passing over it. This bridge was constructed over 50 years ago to carry a small mineral tramway under the road and has not been used for at least 40 years and is not likely to be ever used again."

The eventual response on 7th January 1938 stated "I am to inform you that the warning to motorist signs have now been erected and in view of the work that has recently been carried out to the bridge, it is unlikely that the County Council will incur further expenditure at the present time in removing the bridge."

HIGHWAY ROBBERS

Not what you might imagine in Rudry but in September 1906 a charge of Highway Robbery was made at Caerphilly against Louisa George, described as of ill-repute and of no fixed abode and George Bateman, a Rudry farm labourer. The allegation was that the woman stole a watch and part of a chain valued at £2/10s as well as 8s/9d from Thomas Jones, a Rudry farmer and then gave the jewellery to Bateman. They were both convicted and sent down for a month with hard labour.

COAL MINING

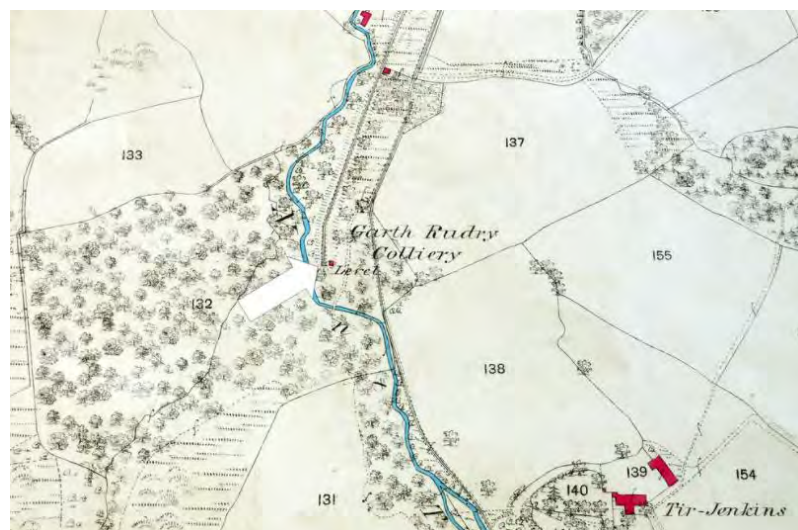
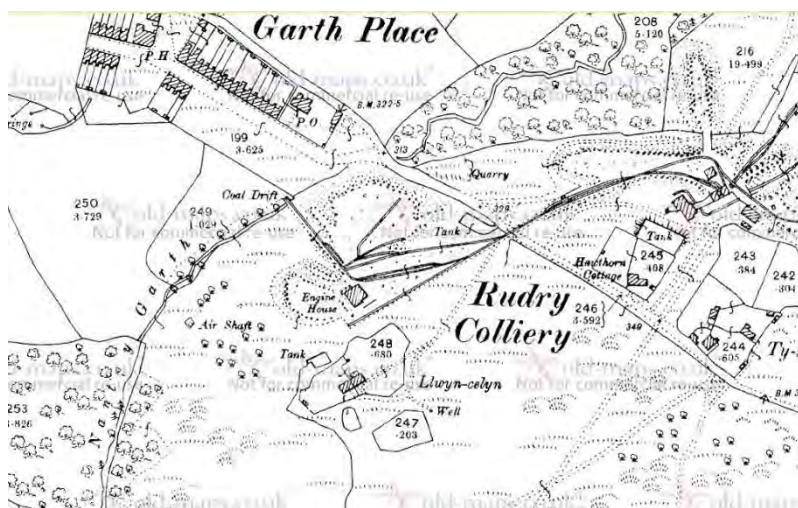
Coal and iron ore mining in the area of Rudry Common and Mynydd Rudry is recorded as far back as 1316 and continued, intermittently, for the next 600 years. It is still possible to recognise the sites of early coal- workings by the small crater like depressions which are the remains of bell pits. Bell pits were shallow vertical shafts sunk to exploit ironstone or coal seams close to the surface. Upon reaching the coal or iron ore, the shaft was widened to extract as much material as possible without collapse.

They varied in size depending on the nature of the rock, but on average they were 5 to 7 metres deep, about 2 metres in diameter at the top, widening to about 4 metres at the bottom, giving them a bell-like shape. Once the ore or coal was extracted, the pit was abandoned and filled with material excavated from a new adjacent pit.

RUDRY COLLIERY

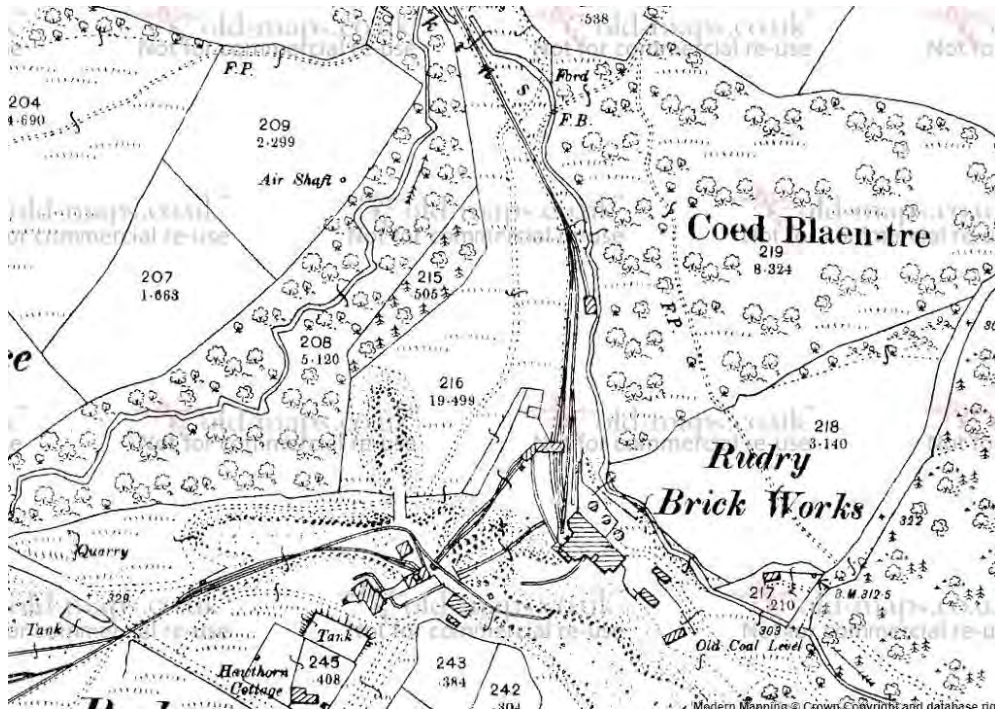
Garth Rudry Colliery was opened South West of Tir-Jenkins around 1872 by Price, Bradbury & Co, passing to Nicholas & Johnson as the Rudry Merthyr Colliery. In 1888 a new pit and level were opened by the village under the Rudry Merthyr Steam & House Coal Colliery Ltd but this was abandoned in 1899 – the pit was 254 feet 6 inches deep. It supplied fireclay and coal for the nearby brickworks.

Mining continued under Rock Vein Colliery Ltd with 31 men in 1900 rising to 137 in 1902 - but that went bankrupt in 1905. The mines were thought to have been reworked on and off until the 1930s, probably under Rudry Rock Vein Colliery Co. Ltd which was certainly in existence in 1922.



RUDRY BRICKWORKS

Rudry Brickworks was opened in the 1860s and by 1878 was owned by Nicholas and Johnson. In 1885 it was the 'Rudry Merthyr Steam & House Coal Colliery and Fire Brick Co Ltd' which went into receivership in 1895 but the company was still managed by A Johnson. The brickworks is thought to have finally closed around 1899.



There were at least 8 types of brick manufactured over the years: this is a 'Type 4'.



RUDRY IRON MINE

The site of the mine is some 300 metres south of the Maenllwyd in the area of Cwm Farm. An incline was driven down the base of the limestone to the east of the road. About 2,000 tons of ore yielding 50% iron were obtained between about 1868 and 1876 when the mine closed due to drainage problems which were probably related to groundwater flow.

There is still a spring or well on the western side of the road. And there was also a shaft in the field immediately to the west of the road. This has reopened through collapse several times and has had to be filled in.

RUDRY IRON WORKS

The Ty'n-y-coedcae Balst Furnace was started by Christopher Pope of the Rudry Iron Company in 1828 but only operated until 1834. It was a freestanding tapered square tower constructed from local pennant sandstone with four arches, one being a tymp arch, for tapping the iron and slag, the others for the cold air blast pipes. By the 1930s all structures had disappeared and the remains covered but it is listed as an ancient monument.

WERDDU LIME KILNS (Grade II Listed)

There were numerous lime kilns dotted around the Parish, the most notable and preserved of which are at Wernddu on the western edge of the Parish.

Lime kilns were widely used in Britain from the 17th to 20th centuries to burn limestone for use as a fertiliser and in mortar. Many small banks of kilns were built in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries near roads or other transport routes, and usually close to quarries.



These mid-19th century kilns were first shown on 1883 Ordnance Survey, possibly serving a small quarry on the North side.

This group is typical in scale and construction for the period, while the large kiln chamber with 2 draw holes is unusual.

The last house to be built using lime from these kilns is believed to be The Old Manse in Rudry.

IRON BRIDGE (Grade II Listed)

The cast iron bridge was erected in 1829 for Lord Tredegar as part of a carriage drive [Kings Drive] between Ruperra Castle and St. Michael's Church at Lower Machen.

It forms part of a Public Right of Way but was closed to the public in 2008 for comprehensive restoration funded by Cadw, Heritage Lottery Fund and Countryside Council for Wales.



It was re-opened in October 2011 and has won two awards; the Historic Bridge & Infrastructure Awards 2011 and the ICE Wales Cymru Roy Edwards Special Award for Conservation.



LEAD MINES

The lead mines around Draethen are thought to be the oldest mines and industrial sites in Monmouthshire, dating back to the pre-Roman era. They have been worked on and off until the mid 19th century when such mining became unviable financially. The area is covered in old pits, levels and shafts including these named ones [there are numerous others!]:

Draethen mine

The North-Eastern string of very old pits runs up the hillside from Rhyd-y-Gwern Lane and are likely the oldest mines.

Central mines

A small group of mines on their own beyond the top of the North-Eastern mines and above the South-Western group. These are more substantial and have two shafts which were marked on the 1875 maps as 'old'.

South-Western mines

The South-Western group have mostly collapsed into shallow depressions. Some may have been worked in Victorian times as there appears to be the route of a watercourse or track leading down to the small quarry and limekilns at Primrose Cottage.

Clive mines

The Clive mine [on the edge of Cwm Leshon quarry], the Clive United mine and the West Clive mine started work in 1850 and were owned by the Hon. Mr Clive. A tramroad ran from the mines to the dressing floor in Cwm Leyshon where a horse-whim and water wheel were installed. Flooding and ventilation were serious problems and the venture failed in 1854 having only produced about 36 tons of ore that year. There were apparently efforts to re-open the mines in 1871 but this may have been thwarted by Lord Tredgar whose agent complained of the use of water from Draethen Brook for washing lead, since his tenants in the village used the water for household purposes.

Cwm Leyshon mines

Just after the quarry entrance and the lower limekilns, the tramway from the Clive mines to the washery comes in from the left on a low embankment as it reaches the upper limekilns and an adit [horizontal passage for access or drainage] beside the path. On the right are the walls and foundations of a couple of buildings. Another small adit is off on the left further up the hill and an open adit is at the bottom of a pit where the paths split. Further up the left hand path the site of a rectangular airshaft is fenced off and another collapsed airshaft can be seen behind the quarry fence.

Maen Llwyd mines

Once thought to be Roman, these haphazard small workings are more likely to be from the 18th century. They are about 10ft deep, up to 7ft high and 10ft long.

SILVER

Ores taken from Coed Cefn-pwll-du by Rhyd-y-Gwern Lane have been found to have a reasonably high silver content - between three and six ounces of silver to the ton. This proportion of silver is much greater than in any other lead ores found in South Wales.



CWM LEYSHON QUARRY

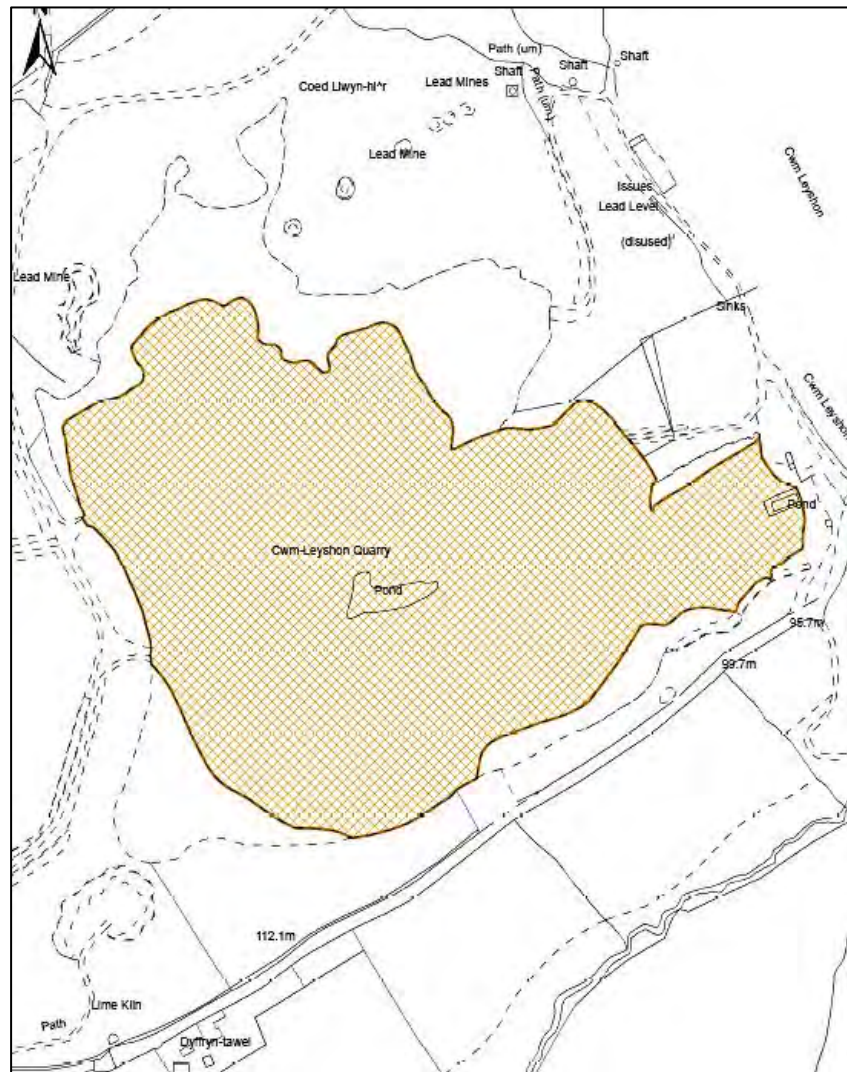
A small quarry was in operation in 1875 but today's massive quarry stems from the roadbuilding of the 1920s.

The quarry is dormant rather than closed, leaving the very solid remains of tipping docks, storage bins and buildings.

Opposite the entrance are two large limekilns which ceased work when the quarry expanded around 1927.

Between 1967 and 1969 production was mechanised and reached 300,000 tonnes per annum in the early 1970s.

Mineral production ceased in December 1985, although mineral was removed from stockpiles after that date.



The plant has been demolished but Hanson UK [the owner] states that the quarry is held in reserve and is maintained in a condition where stone extraction can resume should market conditions allow it. The next review to renew or cease permission to operate is set for 27/10/2025.

Cwm Leyshon Cottage was the site of the Clive mines washery and also the Ruperra Estates Police Station. The cottage is private but a tunnel and other earthworks are believed to still exist.



RUPERRA CASTLE

The name Ruperra (Rhiw'r-perrai) means 'slope of the pear tree' – in South Wales 'perrai' is often used instead of 'gellyg' and derives from the Old English 'peryrige' meaning pear tree. In 1550 Ruperra was recorded as Rhiw r perrai with various versions of the name including Ruperra Demesne in 1795 and Rhieperra in 1833. It has now resumed the name from 1717 - Ruperra.



Ruperra Castle is a rare example of a Jacobean Renaissance mock castle built in 1626 by Sir Thomas Morgan, 'Surveyor of the Wood' to King James I and Steward to the Earl of Pembroke.

The site originally belonged to the Lewis family and Morgan was married to the Lewis family heiress, Mary Lewis. There was Lewis family property on the site from at least the 15th century and Morgan completely rebuilt it in 1626 soon after he was knighted.

Sir Thomas Morgan's grandson, also called Thomas Morgan, was master of the estate when King Charles I visited in 1645, after which the Royal Coat of Arms was added to the heraldic panel. He died in 1655 and was succeeded by his sister Elizabeth, who was married to Sir Edmund Thomas of Wenvoe.

At this stage Ruperra became a secondary residence to Wenvoe and later also to Cefn Mably, through the marriage of William Thomas's widow to Sir Charles Kemeys.

Ruperra was eventually sold in 1704 by Sir Edmund Thomas to John 'the Merchant' Morgan, a junior member of the Tredegar House Morgans and on his death the estate passed to his nephew. By 1763, the two estates of Ruperra and Tredegar were united but in 1792 the Morgan line failed and the estate passed to Jane Gould (nee Morgan) after her husband, Charles Gould, agreed to change his name to Morgan by Royal Licence.

In 1859, Charles Morgan was made Baron Tredegar who was succeeded by Godfrey Charles Morgan, 1st Viscount Tredgar and a captain in the 17th Lancers at the infamous Charge of the Light Brigade, who lived at Tredegar House and whose brother Frederick made Ruperra his family home.

Ruperra passed to Frederick's son Commander Courtenay Charles Evan Morgan in 1909 who was married to Lady Katharine Carnegie and after Courtney died in 1934 the property was placed for sale but no buyer could be found. The house was emptied and its contents sold or moved to Tredegar House or the London residences.

During WWII, Tredegar House was billeted and in December 1941 a fire gutted the property. It became a shell and has never been occupied since.

In 1962, when the last Lord Tredegar died, Ruperra Castle was sold for £16,000. Changing hands several times it remains in private ownership.



CEFN MABLY (Cefn Mabli)

The name Mably commemorates Mabli the only daughter and child of Robert Fitzhamon, the 'Norman Conqueror' of Glamorgan, who was the first person to build a house there in the 12th century. Mabli is the Welsh version of Mabel.

During the Civil Wars the house was besieged by the Parliamentary forces, but successfully defended by Sir Nicholas Kemeys; The King's room is so called from Charles II who slept in it, and the Bishop's room from Compton, Bishop of London, his Majesty's companion at the time.

The original house was largely rebuilt by Edward Kemeys, the High Sheriff of Glamorgan in the late 16th century [depicted on the right as in 1680] and was described by the Cardiff Times in 1893 as one of the finest and most historic country seats in Wales".



Cefn Mably was originally set in 6,000 acres including a deer park of some 1,300 deer. The park was said to contain some 'magnificent' oak trees and, in 1739 the branch of a single oak tree was cut down which weighed 31 tons (about the weight of 4½ elephants). The tree was capped with lead but fell down on 17th October 1779 and found to be 56 feet long with a circumference of 21 feet. Using modern calculations, it suggests the tree was at least 350 years old.

Cefn Mably was eventually inherited by Sir Charles Kemeys Tynte (1710-1785) in the mid-18th century and then acquired in 1920 by Evan Morgan, 2nd Viscount Tredegar, son of Commander Courtenay Charles Evan Morgan and Lady Katharine Carnegie.

Tredegar made the building available to the local health board at a subsidized rate and it opened as a tuberculosis sanatorium in 1924, joining the National Health Service in 1948 and becoming a geriatric hospital until its eventual closure in 1983.

The abandoned building was badly damaged in a fire in 1994 and subsequently became derelict.



In the early 2000s it was restored and converted into luxury apartments.

