

Llanishen Notes

Llanishen station built in 1871 – some of the cottages/booking office still remain. Rhymney railway line built in competition to the Taff Vale railway, to bring coal down to Cardiff Docks.

Lisvane Reservoir was built first.

Untruth: It followed complaints from the local Pimms factory in Cyncoed that the poor local water quality was impacting their manufacture.

The origin of [Lisvane & Llanishen Reservoirs](#) may be traced back to the 19th Century. Cardiff underwent rapid growth as a major coal-exporting port with the opening of the West Bute Dock in 1839 and the construction of the Taff Vale Railway that supplied the dock.

Trade and the population increased but the town's utility services did not keep up. Insanitary conditions led to major outbreaks of diseases such as typhoid and cholera. When the link between these diseases and contaminated drinking water was finally understood, Cardiff Corporation took steps to provide a proper and adequate water supply for the town.

Lisvane Reservoir

An Act of Parliament in 1860 proposed the creation of the Lisvane Reservoir to store water from the Llanishen, Nant Mawr, Nant Draw, Nant Felin and Nant Dulas streams.

Construction of a new storage reservoir at Lisvane began in 1864 and it was completed a year later in 1865.

Filter beds were also constructed on what would later become Llanishen Reservoir.

Taf Fawr Scheme

The population of Cardiff continued to grow and, by the end of the 1870s, water was again getting in short supply. Cardiff Corporation came up with a radical solution; to build a number of reservoirs in the Taf Fawr valley of the Brecon Beacons and constructing a thirty-two-mile pipeline back to Cardiff where the water could be stored in a new holding reservoir adjacent to Lisvane Reservoir.

The reservoir is one of the reservoirs constructed as part of the Taff Fawr scheme for supplying water to Cardiff and was completed in 1886.

Llanishen Reservoir

Under the auspices of Borough Engineer John Avery Brandon Williams, work started on Llanishen Reservoir early in 1884 and was finished in 1886. It was created on largely flat land with a surrounding bank of earth with a clay core and hand-cut stone on the inner surface.

Following the completion of Cantref Reservoir in 1892, water began to be piped down to Llanishen via the new infrastructure. When the Taf Fawr Scheme was completed, the pipeline could deliver up to 12 million gallons a day to Llanishen Reservoir which itself could hold 317 million gallons of water.

The hand-cut stone lining and much of the original valve gear, pipework and fish traps may still be seen.

Today, Llanishen Reservoir is designated as a listed building, recognising the innovative engineering that went into its construction.

A New Scheme & A Change Of Use

In the mid 1960s, Cardiff Corporation built a new reservoir at [Llandegfedd](#), just outside Pontypool (also a Welsh Water Visitor Attraction) which became the primary water supply for Cardiff. The filter beds in Allensbank Road were decommissioned in 1968 and water from Llanishen was pumped up to the Wenallt Reservoir in Rhiwbina, from where it continued to be used as an emergency backup supply, only capable of providing three million gallons per day.

In the mid 1970's it was decided that Llanishen Reservoir had come to the end of its useful life. It was not drained but ceased to receive water from the Taf Fawr pipeline and was just kept topped up by rainwater.

Llanishen Reservoir started being used as a venue for sailing in 1967. The landing jetty was constructed in 1968 and Cardiff Education Authority set up a sailing centre in 1968. The reservoir continued to be used as a sailing centre and a fly-fishing club until 2004 when the two reservoirs were acquired by Western Power Distribution

There is no connection to local streams, such as the Nant Fawr, which runs around the edge of the reservoir, so it was initially filled by rainwater. However, 32 miles (51 km) of pipework, some 24 inches (610 mm) and some 29 inches (740 mm) in diameter, was installed to connect it to the reservoirs being built on the upper Taff Fawr, and once they were operational, Llanishen was fed with water from that source.

The reservoir was used for water supply until the mid-1970s when it became redundant. It was then used for leisure activities and for 'topping up' the adjacent Lisvane Reservoir

The power distribution company WPD inherited Llanishen reservoir when it bought the former utility company Hyder.

Since 2002 it has tried unsuccessfully to build houses on the site.

Western Power Distribution (WPD) lost a bid to build 324 houses at Llanishen reservoir, which was emptied in 2010.

In 2013 Both Llanishen and Lisvane reservoirs were sold to Celsa UK, which owns Tremorfa steel works in the city.

In January 2016, Welsh Water acquired both Llanishen and Lisvane reservoirs from CELSA Group on a 999-year lease, which allows Welsh Water to use both reservoirs for water supply and recreational purposes while also allowing CELSA UK to continue to take its water supply from the Lisvane reservoir.

Nature:

Winter: Great crested grebe, little grebe, tufted duck, pochard, mallard, coot, moorhen, black-headed gull, common gull, lesser black-backed gull, herring gull, cormorant, mute swan and grey wagtail.

Other species that are regularly seen include Canada goose, wigeon, teal, grey heron, shoveler, goldeneye, great black-backed gull, kingfisher, great spotted woodpecker, green woodpecker, pied wagtail, fieldfare, redwing, sparrowhawk, buzzard, tawny owl and raven.

Plus:

common toads

25 species of waxcap mushrooms