

CEGB

1963

ASBRIAW

1984





BEGINNINGS

In 1952 when The Leys, as it was then known, was chosen as the most suitable site for a new power station, it was envisaged that it would form part of a "triangle" of major power stations to supply the growing demand for additional electricity for both industrial and domestic users in South Wales.

With Uskmouth 'A' to the East and Carmarthen Bay Power Station to the West, both of which were under construction at the time, Aberthaw was ideally situated between them and also close to Cardiff and Port Talbot.

The site was perfect for technical reasons too. There was an ample supply of cooling water from the sea and ash disposal areas were available. It was also within a reasonable distance from the South Wales coalfields with an adequate rail link.

The presence of rock close to the surface over part of the land was another favourable factor as this rock would support the extremely heavy loads involved.

Aberthaw was an appropriate choice to help in the post-War industrial development of South Wales, as for centuries the port was one of the busiest in the area, rivalling Cardiff in importance during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Local wool, skins, hides, farm produce, lead and later iron ore were exported to Europe and from 1640 there was a steady West Indian sugar trade.

Luxury goods which included tobacco, wines, perfumes and soaps were imported and gave rise to Aberthaw's alternative 'industry' – smuggling.

This thriving business was carried out in a most successful manner by keeping a close watch on the local Customs Officer who lived at the port in Marsh House, the old building on the eastern bank at the northern end of the Thaw diversion.

As soon as it was known which side of the river he was going to be, the smuggled goods were landed on the other bank and by the time he had galloped almost to Cowbridge, the nearest crossing point, the contraband had long disappeared.

One very important visitor to Aberthaw was John Wesley who landed at 5 am on the morning of April 19, 1744 having crossed the Bristol Channel from Somerset during the night.

The port flourished until the mid-19th century, but sanding up of the river became so bad that by 1900 shipping was restricted to a few stray ketches.

With the building of the new Power Station Aberthaw was once again put back on the commercial map of South Wales.



The transporter bringing the 132kV generator transformer to Aberthaw 'A' in

THE OFFICIAL OPENING

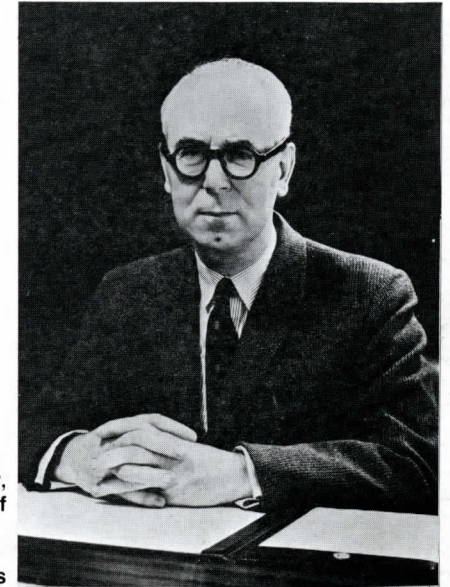
The station was officially opened on Tuesday, October 29, 1963, although it had been producing power for the national grid since February 1960.

The ceremony was performed by County Alderman Thomas Evans, chairman of Glamorgan County Council and during the ceremony he was presented with a silver casket by Mr F.H.S. Brown, deputy chairman of the CEGB.

The formal opening took place in a marquee specially erected on the access road because the main administrative block was not complete. All guests were then taken on a guided tour of the station which was looking its best in the dry, sunny weather.

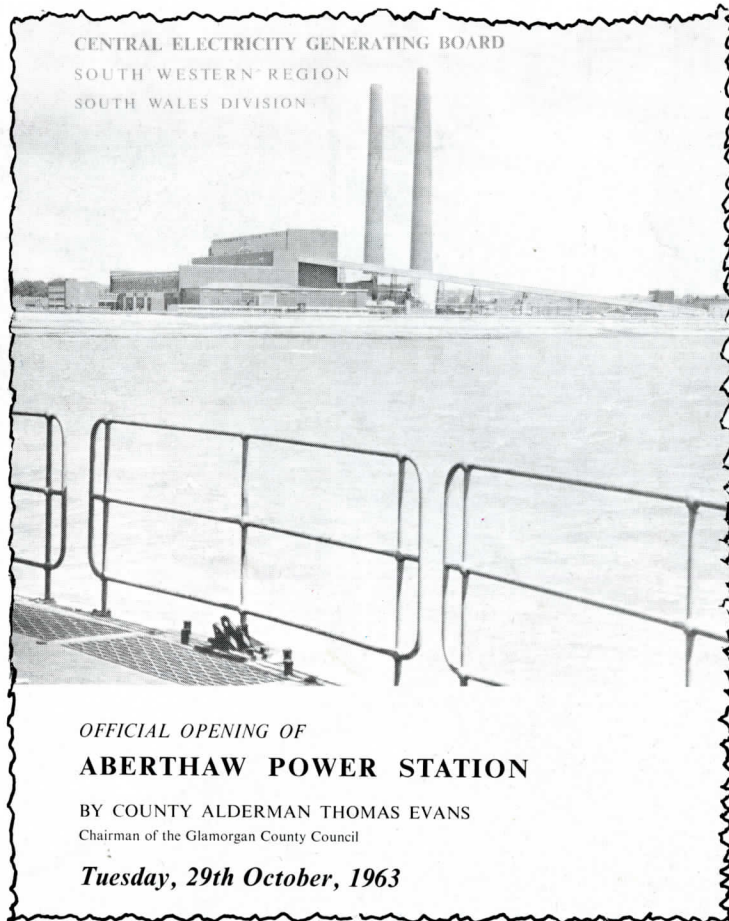
As soon as the administrative plaque had been unveiled and the guests departed from the marquee, a team of fitters quickly removed the plaque and rushed it over to the foyer of the main administration block where the wall had been plugged ready for it to be fitted into position before the civic party entered the building.

This swift move caused some of the guests to think that two plaques had been made for the ceremony and they were much impressed by the efficiency of the station!



Aberthaw's first Station Manager, Russell Beardsworth, who was head of the station from 1959 to 1967.

County Alderman Thomas Evans unveils the plaque in the marquee.



Prior to the ceremony, County Alderman Evans and Mrs Evans were the main guests at a celebration lunch hosted by the CEGB in Barry.

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"Aberthaw 'A' was one of the happiest stations I have worked on, and the staff relationships absolutely tremendous. She was undoubtedly the pride of the South Wales power stations."

These were the words of a former member of staff at Aberthaw and are echoed by those still at Aberthaw who were first to join the site team on the 2nd November, 1959.

- D.G. Peddle
- H.M. Draisey
- S.F. Jerram
- H. Raybold
- A.T. Garmston
- E.A. Hill
- G. Garland
- M.G. Jones
- K. Clare.



